



## *Screenwise* by Devorah Heitner

### Think you might want to read this book?

*Screenwise*, by Devorah Heitner, was written with parents in mind, but there are many helpful parallels to education. She offers a more nuanced look at the potential harm of technology use. When children are connecting, consuming, or creating online, they are engaged in quite different processes; being clear about specific expectations within those parameters will make more sense to children and us. She also

calls off the wolves on some parental concerns (e.g., most teenagers aren't looking to meet new people online and almost all digital interaction is polite and caring) and walks the reader through what the reality of the digital landscape is for kids. The overarching message is to engage with children in their digital world and seek to mentor more and monitor less. This book is a relevant read for anyone seeking advice on guiding children (and parents) digitally.

### What would Socrates ask?

- How do you feel about the times when the family is physically together but each on their own device? Does how you feel depend on what everyone is doing with their device?
- How well do we teach students that their information is being mined for the purposes of others?
- What if schools referred to the purpose of computer time as either “to connect,” “to consume,” or “to create”?
- What if we asked students, “Would you like to learn using a textbook, laptop, or tablet before we begin a lesson/unit/course?”
- What if we all taught children to identify bullying and equipped them with the tools to act when it happens?

### Research

- According to the latest research from Dubit Worldwide, three and four-year-olds can select their own apps, and many children know how to make videos and take photos by the time they are five.
- A study conducted by Alexandra Samuel revealed that kids who are mentored by their parents get into less trouble in their digital world.
- Research shows, most kids don't want to connect with strangers online. Most kids, most of the time, use technology to connect with those they already know.
- Families usually fall into one of three categories in terms of their digital relationships: “Limiters”, “Mentors” and “Enablers”.
- There is evidence that sleepovers are where the worst digital decisions are made.

### Concepts

- “Digital Natives”- while technology may be ubiquitous for children today, it doesn’t mean they know how to decipher what information is accurate, how best to interact online, or how our information is constantly being mined and then used by others.
- “Alone Together”- the common modern day occurrence when a family is physically together, but each person is on their own device.
- “Slacktivism”- when people post political opinions/memes but don’t actually do anything to impact change.
- “Techno-optimists”- believe that... freed from having to remember a lot of facts, our brains can now focus on higher level endeavors like linking together ideas/concepts and therefore the world should improve.
- “Techno-cautionists”- believe that... we are all skimming and scanning and we are no longer engaging in deep reading/learning and therefore we should be nervous about the future.
- “Dislocation”- the energy draining task/process of constantly having to refocus after brief digital interruptions.

### Quotes from the author

- Our kids need help, even if they think they don't. Even if *you* think they don't. It's up to us as parents (and teachers) to ensure that we are helping our kids develop the skills they need to be “screenwise”.
- ... you are the most important screenwise model for your kids.
- The most important insurance against your children having bad experiences is letting them know they can come to you. Even if they have done something they regret, they need to feel that they can talk to you about it. If kids don't feel isolated they are far less at risk.
- It would be convenient if filters and roadblocks stopped kids from accessing inappropriate content, but they don't consistently do this - worse, these tools let parents think, “Okay, I've installed an app: I don't need to mentor my kids.” This is why monitoring cannot substitute for mentoring.
- Online games are like regular board games. You, as a parent, can approach this idea with judgment or you can see it for what it is, a parallel world. But this world still centers around making connections with other human beings.
- Think of a portion of your kids screen time this way: “they want to connect with their friends” rather than “they want to use their device.” The device matters less than the motive. Your job is to look past the device and help them be a better friend, a better citizen, and a better person.
- There's a balance here: we want to teach them judgment, but we also want to help them be less judgemental. As parents, we should never judge kids’ photos in mean-spirited ways. You may think, “He looks like he's trying to be a thug,” in that picture, but it's better to say, “What impression do you think he's going for?,” and let your child discern for himself how that's working out.
- Remember picture day at school? I hated picture day. For today’s kids, every day is picture day.

- ... we all need to remember that the people in the room are more important than the people buzzing in our pockets or in our hand.
- Mentors don't want to *catch* their kids doing the wrong thing; they want to *teach* their kids to do the right thing.

**Organizations/schools working on answers**

- [Raising Digital Natives](#)

**Gateways to further learning**

- [Become a Google Power User in Minutes](#)
- [TEDX- Young programmers: think playgrounds, not playpens](#)
- [Cool MomTech](#)
- [Geek Dad](#)
- [Madison Holleran's Friends Share Their Unfiltered Life Stories](#)
- [Middle School Misfortunes Then and Now, One Teacher's Take](#)

**Referenced books with the potential to impact leading and learning in education**

Author(s) Last Name	Title
Gardner and Davis	<i><u>The App Generation</u></i>
Levine	<i><u>Tap, Click, Read</u></i>
Pang	<i><u>The Distraction Addiction</u></i>
Getting Smart	<i><u>Smart Parents</u></i>
boyd	<i><u>It's Complicated</u></i>
Wiseman	<i><u>Masterminds and Wingmen</u></i>
Wiseman	<i><u>Queen Bees and Wannabees</u></i>

The applicability of this book to education is ...



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