



Tech Tuesday: Dangerous Content

A Digital World with No Boundaries

By Kendra McGuire

Today's parents are deciding what age is appropriate for their child to have a tablet or smartphone. Many times we justify the phone as a tool for safety as it helps us know where our children are at all times. But this feeling of security needs to be tempered with the reality that these devices, without safety controls, allow children the opportunity to visit the world's darkest places, see the most vile and violent acts, and allows predators to contact them any time day or night. This Tech Tuesday, read on to explore the dangers of the digital world.

Depression & Suicide

In several recent studies, teens and young adults who spent the most time on Instagram, Facebook, and other platforms were shown to have a substantially higher (13%-66%) reported rate of depression than those who spent the least time on them.

An increase in depression occurred in tandem with the rise in smartphone use. A 2017 study of over a half million 8th-12th graders found that the number exhibiting high levels of depressive symptoms increased by 33% from 2010-2015. In the same period, the suicide rate for girls in that age group increased by 65%.⁽¹⁾ In 2018, suicide was the #2 cause of death among 10-24 year olds.⁽²⁾ These rates have been skyrocketing during the pandemic.

1-<https://www.common sense media.org/mental-health/does-social-media-cause-depression>

2-https://americashealthrankings.org/explore/health-of-women-and-children/measure/teen_suicide/state/ALL

3-<https://www.childhood2movie.com>

Our Faith

Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of things that cause sin. Such things must come, but woe to the one through

whom they come.

Matthew 18:6-7

Predators & Inappropriate Content

The majority of high school and even middle school girls in the U.S. with regular access to smartphones have been asked by a peer or predator to share a nude or compromising photo of themselves and/or have been sent a sexual text.⁽³⁾

According to Bark's 2021 Annual Report analyzing 3.4 billion messages across multiple texts and apps:

- Nearly 10% of tweens and 21% of teens encountered predatory behaviors online.
- Bark alerts for predators are sent when a conversation is sexual in nature and there is a confirmed age difference.

According to the Integrity Restored website:

- The average age a child is first exposed to internet pornography is 11.
- 80% of 15-18 year-olds have had multiple exposures to internet pornography.
- The largest single population of internet pornography users are 12-17 year olds.

Today, many people and organizations are speaking out about the harmful effects of pornography. Some are calling it a public health crisis. According to the website Culture Reframed, "extensive research has shown that pornography undermines the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical health of individuals, families, and communities. These studies also demonstrate that pornography shapes how we think about gender, sexuality, relationships, intimacy, violence, and gender equality."



Crisis to Cure: Steps You Can Take Today

BY CLAIRE THERESE HEYNE

#1 - Prayer

Praying daily, especially as a family, is a powerful (albeit invisible) remedy. Christ can cure anything, if we cooperate. It's not too late to start a family prayer routine! Prayer can pervade every aspect of our lives and fosters the one relationship for which we are all made: relationship with Jesus.

#2 - Communication

Talk to your child regularly and make sure he/she feels safe confiding to you any struggles and fears, especially regarding technology. This can be awkward at first, but it is beyond worth it.

#3 - Don't Assume

Even the most dedicated and devout parents often assume these crises are not an issue in their family or with their children.

Bark's 12 Most Dangerous Apps for Kids

1. Snapchat
2. Instagram
3. Discord
4. Yik Yak
5. Among Us
6. Twitter
7. Omegle
8. Hoop
9. Kik
10. Vault apps
11. Roblox
12. Yarn



A Look Ahead & Further Learning

The dangers that exist in the digital world are at the fingertips of every child with a device. It is time to make sure our children are safe not only when they go out, but also when they stay home on their devices. Next Tuesday, we will share practical tips and resources to help parents protect children online.

Check out these websites to learn more about this week's topics:

- www.integrityrestored.com
- www.apa.org/topics
- www.protectyouneyes.com