

Q Alex Hetherington (researcher)

A Woman with son (aged 7)

Q The focus of the questions is going to be very much on technology and play. By technology we mean physical things like mobile phones, tablets, cameras, any kind of game consoles or computers, but also different media like apps, websites, things like Netflix. A little bit of background before I begin, how many children do you have?

A One.

Q How old?

A Six.

Q We can get straight into the questions if that's all right?

A Yes, that's fine.

Q There are five groups of questions we've got to through. The first group is about your child's play and technology use. Are there any main examples of technology use in your child's life?

A He uses a tablet. It's an Amazon Fire 1. He usually sometimes will get my iPad as well if I let him.

Q Are there any particular activities he likes to do on the tablet?

A YouTube and games as well quite a lot.

Q Does he go on YouTube Kids?

A No, just regular YouTube.

Q Does he have any favourite content on YouTube, anything he gravitates towards?

A Usually the same YouTubers, their channels.

Q Do you have any names, do you know then?

A There's one, Kid Sitter. There's another guy, Zebra Gamer. This is sad that I know this.

Q No, it's not.

A Or is it being responsible maybe?

Q How about on the iPad?

A Same thing really.

Q What games does he play? Does he have any favourites?

A Mario.

Q Does he play that on the tablet?

A Yes. He plays it on my phone as well.

Q Does he play while watching television at all?

A No, not really.

Q Does he watch Netflix at all? Is he interested in CBBC, CBeebies, anything like that?

A We did have Netflix, but we got rid of it because we weren't really using it. He does watch kids' channels, but he's not real that bothered about. CBeebies is long gone, he's too old for that he says. CBBC, a bit. It's mostly Nickelodeon he watches.

Q Does he have any favourite shows?

A Henry Danger. What's the other one called? I can't remember the other one. It will come to me probably.

Q Is he interested in Minecraft at all?

A No, not really. He's watched one of my friends' sons play it, who is 14, and he said he wanted to play it and I said no because you're not old enough and that was that pretty much.

Q Does he have any physical toys that relate to his digital interests?

A He's got a few little figures that are from Mario, Mario, Luigi, Bowser. Not really any others, no.

Q Does he ever play with those at the same time while he's on a device or is it very much a separate activity?

A It's separate.

Q Does he have any other digitally enabled toys, things like maybe a Leap Pad, education tablets, maybe robots, anything like that?

A No, not really.

Q Does he have any toys that are internet enabled?

A No.

Q How about anything that involves augmented reality or virtual reality?

A No.

Q Does he ever play with any artificial intelligence systems, things like Alexa, Siri, or Google Home?

A Yes, we've got Alexa, so sometimes we'll play games on her.

Q Does he do anything else? Does he ask her questions?

A Yes, silly ones. He gets frustrated because she can't always understand what he's saying.

Q What about music, does he like to play music?

A No, we tend to stream music through YouTube through the TV if anything.

Q Does he play outdoors a lot?

A Yes, when the weather is fine, obviously. Yes, he loves it outside.

Q Does technology ever feature in that play outdoors?

A No.

Q That's the first of the questions. The next questions are specifically about LEGO. Does he own any LEGO? Do you have any LEGO in the household?

A Yes.

Q How much would you say?

A We've got a big yellow container. I don't know how many pieces it had, but it came as like you get a lot of different LEGO, and then from then he's had all the sets bought for him, the ones that you have to follow instructions to make the model of. He's got three or four of those kits.

Q How about any other LEGO stuff, like maybe accessories? Has he seen any of the LEGO films?

A Yes, he's got the first one. I've just bought him last week the second one for Christmas. He wanted the LEGO movie for the PlayStation game, so I've told a relative to buy him that as well, which they have.

Q Has he got a PlayStation or is that something that's coming for Christmas?

A It's not his. It's in the house, my husband bought it years ago before he was even born. He uses it as well basically.

Q Have you been to Legoland?

A No.

Q What kind of new toys do you think LEGO could be developing for the digital age?

A More games. They could do robots, that sort of thing, it fits with it. I remember there was LEGO Technic when I was at school. I'm showing my age now because it was really new then. Kids would still like that now though. If I bought that for my son, he'd think that was really good.

Q We're moving on to the second set of questions now. This is about your views on children's play and technology. When it comes to digital toys, games and apps, who makes the choice about what your son gets to play?

A Me or my husband.

- Q Does your son ever come to you with things that you've not heard of and ask if it's okay to play them?
- A Sometimes, yes.
- Q Where do you think he gets these things from?
- A Kids at school. He tends to talk and hang around, not hang around with, play with, chat with older kids, the ones that are four or five years older than him in the playground in the morning, and they all play it because they're older, all my friends' kids.
- Q When you're making a choice about whether or not he can or can't play something, what guides that choice?
- A If there's an age limit for it. If I know if other people play it, if I think it's violent, not suitable, that kind of thing. Addictive, but then anything can be, really.
- Q In your view do you think certain kinds of devices in digital play, on toys and games and apps and things, do you think that can promote play?
- A Yes, I'd say so.
- Q Why do you think that is?
- A If you can play things two player, that kind of thing, you're playing against somebody, aren't you, or there's another part of it where it might make kids want to go out and do something related to it.
- Q On the other side do you think certain devices, digital toys, or apps can limit play?
- A Yes.
- Q How do you think that is?
- A Because they get too into it and they don't want to put it down and they don't want to do anything else instead.
- Q Do you think certain kinds of devices, digital toys, and apps can promote creativity?
- A Yes.
- Q Why do you think that is?
- A We have had, although it was when he was younger, like the CBeebies app and it had lots of things on it where you can draw and make up a story or sing, dance, that sort of thing.
- Q Do you think on the other hand devices, digital toys, and apps can limit creativity?
- A I'm not really sure. In some ways, yes, because some of it is not that creative, it's just playing a game.

- Q When your child is using technology, would you say that they're actively engaged in what they're doing, are they really instead and focussed?
- A Yes, definitely.
- Q Do you sometimes struggle to get them away for technology?
- A Yes.
- Q How does that usually go?
- A Sometimes it's okay. I find it's better if I say, ten minutes time, he does know a bit, he can't tell the time by himself, but he has a concept of it. So I'll say, half past five, in ten minutes time, when the clocks is on this hand, you've got to put that away. But if I just say, put it away now, he'll say, five more minutes, so I just give him a deadline, which tends to work.
- Q Do you think that when playing with technology your child finds it to be meaningful? Do you think it's relevant to his everyday interests?
- A Yes, I'd say. It's just what he's into, it's what he enjoys. I'd say some of it links to like the LEGO with the films and the game, so it's relevant to what he's interested in, I guess.
- Q When he's playing with technology does he try out new things? Does he try to make improvements to what's going on and what he's doing?
- A In a way, yes. He watches all these YouTubers that do the walkthroughs for the games, which I find very odd because I'd only watch them if I actually played that game, but some of them, he plays Mario, and the he'll watch people doing the walkthrough. He'll even say to me, and I've been playing too forever, and I don't think I'm that bad to be fair, he'll say, mom, I know how you do this bit, you do it like that because I've seen it, so he remembers and links the two.
- Q That's something interesting you mentioned there. Is Mario an interest that he's adopted from you? Is it one of your interests that he's taken up?
- A Possibly, yes. Yes, actually, because I had the game on my iPad first and then he found it on there and said, oh, can I play this, and, yes.
- Q Are you a big gamer otherwise or is it just that one thing?
- A I'm not, really. I bought a Wii when it came out, I'm not really that fussed. My husband is, he's big into it, but I'm not.
- Q Is your son particularly interested in some of your husband's games? Is he showing an interest, is that something he wants more involvement with?
- A My husband plays World of Warcraft, so he's not really going to be. He knows what it is and he knows if he sees characters, that's World of Warcraft. He's asked questions about it to my husband and he's just told him but not more than that, no.
- Q A little bit out of his age range.

A Yes.

Q That's the second set of questions. We'll move on to the third set now. This set is about children's emotions and wellbeing and technology use. Do you think that playing with technology can have an effect on children's emotions and wellbeing?

A Yes.

Q What makes you say that?

A Sometimes, from my point of view, it's more when you say that's it, that's enough, and you're met with a barrier, like, just five more minutes. And if you say, no, and it makes him really silly sometimes, just watching these YouTube dies and things. I don't know what it is about it, but if he watches it for too long, that's why we always have a time limit. He just goes wired, for want of a better word, really silly and ridiculous. When you say, no, that's enough, then he'll start having a bit of a tantrum.

Q Do you think he's perhaps copying some of the content creators that he's watching? Do you think that's part of it?

A Could be. I never thought of that, but, yes.

Q How do you think he's usually feeling when he's playing with technology?

A I think he's quite happy, excited.

Q Do you think you see any other emotions in him when he's playing with technology?

A Maybe he's concentrating on it sometimes and he's generally intrigued, but that's about it really I'd say.

Q Does he ever get frustrated? I know you mentioned he gets a little bit frustrated when he has to stop, does he get frustrated while playing?

A If he can't do it, the bit on the level then, yes. Don't we all?

Q Does he ever get bored of playing with technology?

A Rarely. He will turn it off of his own free will, although that's mostly when it's 2% battery life.

Q Is there any other reason he turns things off? Does he ever sometimes just stop because he's bored of what he's doing and he's not interested anymore?

A Yes, sometimes. It is rare though.

Q Is the way that he becomes bored, do you think that's similar to the way he becomes bored playing with physical toys or is it a different thing?

A Probably the same, actually. He will just suddenly stop you'll say, oh, don't you want to play that anymore, and he'll say, no, I'm bored.

Q When playing with technology that allows for social interaction would you say that he engages well with others?

A Yes, I guess so.

Q Do you think certain types of technology can support social play?

A Yes, I guess so.

Q Why do you think that is? Can you think of any examples?

A It depends on what kind of things it is that they're playing with, but there's some tech out there where you can play with it other kids, like robots or whatever. But not so much tablets, although obviously you can play against people, but you don't know who they are. He will say sometimes, oh, I'm playing against, run off some big, long user name. Oh, yes, that's nice.

Q The tablet is internet enabled, is he online with it?

A Yes.

Q That's the third set of questions. Onto the fourth set now, this is more about parent's role in technology mediated play. When your child is playing with technology, do you ever play with him?

A Yes.

Q How does this usually take place?

A He'll be sat next to me. He's always in the same room, we never let him have devices out of the room with us. It might just be, oh, mum, look at this and we'll look at it.

Q Is this usually in the same room or does it take place around the house?

A In the same room most of the time.

Q Is that the living room?

A Yes.

Q Does it usually take place at a similar time of day?

A Yes, I guess so. He usually has it for a little bit, a half an hour or so after school, but not every day, and then on the weekend a bit more.

Q Are there any different times when he's playing with technology where you think it's easier for you to be involved with him?

A I guess if I've not got anything else to do around the house. It sounds terrible, but it is, yes. If I can sit down and I've got a bit of time, oh, let's see what you're doing, but it is an easy option to give him that while I get on with stuff, I'll be honest.

- Q Do you think it's easier to take an interest in what he's doing when he's on YouTube or when he's playing a game? Do you think there's much of a difference there?
- A Playing a game. I'm not interested in what he's watching on YouTube. Well, I am for the content, but generally not.
- Q You've answered this a little bit, so it's asking you to repeat yourself, so I'm sorry for that, but when you're using your own devices does he ever ask to play on them with you?
- A Yes, sometimes. Yes, he will be, like, oh, what have you got there, mom, let me have a look, can I play?
- Q Is this very different to what he plays on his tablets? Is there anything he can only access on your devices?
- A I don't think there is anything different from mine. I've just got Mario. I'm not really one for playing games on my mobile. That's the only game I've got, so it's the same really.
- Q Do you ever initiate play with technology?
- A Yes, sometimes. I'll say stuff like shall we put the Wii on? Do you want to play on that? I know my husband said, mostly when I'm out, probably to keep him entertained, they like playing WWE on the PS4, so we'll ask, do you what to play this?
- Q Are there any kinds of places where he gets to play with technology with different members of the family, extended family, grandparents or anything like that, that you don't have?
- A Not that we don't have, no, because my brother has got a Wii, so we'll play Wii Sports around there. He's got a few different games to my phone and my mum's phone. He started downloading them on her phone now.
- Q That's the last question from that set. The last set of questions, and this one is more about your general perceptions of different technologies. Do you think certain technologies offer more positive or negative experiences for your son?
- A A bit of both, really. Some of it can be negative, but it's however you use it, that's with determines it, I'd say, how you use it.
- Q What do you think is a particularly positive effect that it might have on your son?
- A He can learn a lot using technology. He's having fun, that's a positive. He's engaging with something.
- Q How about particular negative effects?
- A It can be difficult to get him off it because it's a bit addictive and difficult to get him to do other things instead.
- Q Are you concerned at all about the safety aspects of internet enabled toys?

- A Not really, no. I don't think so, no.
- Q How about data privacy, is that something that bothers you at all?
- A Not really because I'm quite careful with it.
- Q Do you think your children's use of technologies influences family life in a positive way?
- A Yes, in some ways.
- Q What ways are those?
- A For example, Alexa, we can play games on her, we can play music on her, and it's just a fun environment then, entertaining.
- Q Do you think on the other hand your child's use of technologies can influence family life in a negative way?
- A Yes, sometimes when you shout at him, you've got to turn it off, and he has a tantrum and runs upstairs, that kind of thing.
- Q Do you have any future concerns about his use of technologies that you don't think is relevant at the moment but you might be worried about in the future?
- A I don't think so, not really. I know he's going to want to play Fortnite, that's the one he asks to play all the time, and I'll say by the time you're old enough to play it, nobody else will. There will be something else in its place.
- Q Last question then, what advice or guidance would you offer to new parents on issues relating to technology and safety?
- A You've just got to be really aware of what they're looking at, keep an eye on them, parental controls. He has that on his Kindle Fire tablet, so he can't download anything. Keep them with you in the same room. There isn't a problem in playing with them, as long as you're keeping tabs on him, that's what I'd say.
- Q That's it, we've been through all the questions.