

Q Lydia Hall (researcher)
A Woman with son (aged 10)

Q All right. So, I'm going to ask you the first question now. So, how do you think technology features in your son's play?

A It features in my son's play most of the time.

Q Okay, and what sort of toys does he like to play with?

A He likes to play with LEGO and Playmobil.

Q Okay, and how often would he do that?

A He would probably do that most days, along with technology, but the technology plays a part in the games he plays with LEGO and Playmobil.

Q Right, okay, can you explain why?

A If that makes sense.

Q Yes, how does it play a part in that?

A So, he would recreate the games that he's played on technology.

Q Right, okay. Do you think it's particularly significant to him?

A Yes, very significant.

Q How would you know that? How would you think he's feeling as he's playing?

A That's a really good question. I think playing with the toys outside the technology is about him being able to recreate but control the outcomes. So, when you're on a game, they're in control about you levelling up or whatever, whereas, when he's recreating his own he's in control of that.

Q Does he play on his own, mostly, with the LEGO and Playmobil or does he play with anybody else?

A On his own, with us, with his friends.

Q Does your son play while he's watching TV?

A Not particularly, I wouldn't say.

Q So, do you feel like he's more engaged in what is going on, on the television then?

A If he's watching television, he's watching television, generally. If he's playing, he's playing.

Q So, do you think that your son's engagement with apps and online websites, so we've got YouTube, Netflix, CBeebies, CBeebeec, ITV, impacts on his play?

- A Yes.
- Q And how so? How do you think that? In what way does it impact?
- A Well, it's the recreating again.
- Q Okay. What sort of things does he like to recreate?
- A So, he recreates... So, he might, I don't know, be on knights' things, or things he's seen on TV about knights and castles and things. He would recreate those.
- Q Do you feel like his play changes, then, every time that he plays the same game, for example?
- A Yes, definitely. So, it goes in phases.
- Q Right, okay. So then, how does it change?
- A So, he's been watching, is it, Dino [unclear], or something, on Netflix. So, the LEGO play is very Dinosaur orientated. And then he went to a Minecraft party on Saturday, so it's all about Minecraft. So, his LEGO, he wants Minecraft LEGO, and he's building some of the LEGO figures from Minecraft.
- Q So, it is quite influenced by what he's seen on other sorts of media, for example, as to how he plays?
- A Yes, absolutely.
- Q Does your son ever play video games on a mobile or a tablet?
- A A tablet, yes.
- Q Can I ask what sort of games he would like to play?
- A It's the building games. So, Minecraft or you're creating a world or you're... Like you get the castle ones that you start off with nothing, like Farmville and those kinds of things. Those are the kind of...
- Q No, carry on.
- A They've always been the kind of games when he's creating something.
- Q Does he like to play those games on his own?
- A On his own and with his friends. Because, now, he is starting to play with his friends, they've got Xbox Live accounts, so he's joining up with his friends to build worlds and things.
- Q How often do you allow him to play on the Xbox, for example?
- A Daily.
- Q Would you have a limit on that, timewise?
- A I've tended not to limit it because he tends to self-regulate. Now, I know if he's on it all the time that he's feeling a bit stressed. So, I've figured out when he's relaxed and when he's stressed. And, actually, I don't object if he's stressed and he needs that as an outlet. And that's fine.

But I find on a weekend that he'll play for a bit on his games and then he might do a bit of LEGO, and then he might watch TV, and he might play out for a bit. So, as a general rule, he would self-regulate, so I've rarely needed to step in. On a weekend, if it gets to afternoon and he's been on it all morning, I might say come on, you need to come off it now and do something else. Yes.

Q You've just said that you can tell when he's feeling stressed because he's on there a lot more often, why would you think that is?

A I suppose it's the escapism, isn't it, because I can sense when he... He is a kid who's got a higher level of anxiety than normal, so I can sense...

Q Do think your son has any interest in physical toys that would relate to his online digital interests, so, for example, Minecraft or figures...?

A Oh, absolutely, yes.

Q Can you tell me about them?

A He has a lot of Minecraft LEGO and Jurassic LEGO. And it's more about him having the... It's more about giving him the tools to be able to recreate as well, so, obviously, that's going to be harder if you don't have any dinosaurs. Or it's going to be harder if you don't have whatever. So, it's generally related to that, the kind of toys that he wants.

Q Does he ever play with physical toys at the same time as playing with the digital sort of toy?

A Oh, yes. Yes. Well, quite often he's watching Minecraft because he watches the YouTubers building things. But he doesn't necessarily watch them or recreate it on Minecraft. He might watch them and recreate it with LEGO.

Q So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. So, does your son ever play with toys that are digital, I've got an example here, like a laptop or on a robot, or like a LeapPad toy? I don't know whether they're a bit more preschool...?

A I think they're more preschool. He didn't have a LeapPad.

Q So, how about a laptop or a robot?

A No.

Q Okay, that's fine. And does your son ever play with internet-enabled toys? So, for example, here, Furby is probably, you could probably say, is an internet-enabled toy.

A No.

Q Right, okay, that's fine. And does your son ever play with augmented reality? So that would be on Snapchat, and you have... You know where you can switch the camera facing forward, and there's always a thing, like an object. Or you've got Pokémon Go as well. It's like an augmented reality.

A Yes, he did go through a phase of Pokémon, but it was a short phase.

Q Why do you think he got bored playing with that?

- A Well, I think it's the... I don't know. You don't know... He can go to the PokeStops and things, but you don't know when they're going to pop up, so it's less instant. I think that's it. I think he just... Yes, I think that's it.
- Q Okay, yes, I understand that. How about virtual reality?
- A He has done a bit of virtual reality. Sometimes you see these booths. Yes, he loved it.
- Q Can you tell me about where he would have done that?
- A He did that... He has done it here but can't remember where that was. But he's done it on holiday. So, yes, both the times I can think of... He did it in Turkey and then he did it in Thailand. They had these booths in the shopping malls.
- Q Do you remember what sort of games he was playing with?
- A One of them was shooting zombies. I think they were shooting games when you're shooting monsters or zombies.
- Q Does your son ever play with any artificial intelligence assistance, so like Google, or Siri or Alexa?
- A He talks to Siri quite a lot.
- Q Do you know what sort of things he likes to do?
- A Well, he asks ridiculous questions to see what the answers are.
- Q Okay, anything else?
- A No.
- Q And does your son play... When he's playing outside, does it feature any sorts of technology?
- A He tends to be recreating again. Recreating scenarios from TV programmes or subjects from TV programmes, or video games.
- Q So, do you think that, then, the influence of digital technology comes across through his play while he's outdoors?
- A Yes.
- Q Yes, okay. And next question is does your son own any LEGO products?
- A Millions.
- Q Okay, can you tell me what sorts of products he owns?
- A He's got a lot of the LEGO City stuff. Minecraft. Jurassic. A lot of vehicles. Also, he has the fire station, fire vehicles, and police vehicles. So, he's gone in phases with all of those. Same with Playmobil. So, he likes to build up a set. So, there's a house, and there's a car, and there's a... He builds worlds.
- Q How about with the online stuff?

- A Does the same thing. In fact, I've realised that that's all his play is about, recreating worlds and building those up. It's quite interesting, actually.
- Q Yes. How about other aspects of the LEGO brand, so items such as films, does he like the films, if so, which ones?
- A Yes, he has seen the films, but I don't know much about the films. He's watched them with me husband. And he watches the... Is there a Star Wars LEGO thing?
- Q Yes, probably will be.
- A A series, I think it is, isn't it?
- Q Yes. On Netflix?
- A Yes, I think so.
- Q Yes, I think I know what you... I think there is one, yes.
- A In terms of other stuff, he's been and bought bits and pieces. But he's more interested in the sets.
- Q Okay. Has he ever been to Legoland?
- A Yes.
- Q Okay. Next question is who decides what sorts of devices or digital toys that your son can play with?
- A I suppose me and his dad. But I have to say, we're fairly loose about it, we're not strict. Because I think technology... We're in a different world. It's another world to when I was younger. Yes, and actually, I think he's benefited a lot from technology. His vocabulary and his imagination. Yes, I think he's benefited a lot from it.
- Q You know when you do decide what toys that he can play with or apps that he can use, what do you think guides your choices?
- A The age ratings but, also, other people's experiences. So, people I work with that have got younger or older children and what they say about games and technology.
- Q So, in your view then, what sorts of devices or digital toys do you think promote play?
- A I think they all promote play.
- Q In what way?
- A That it's kids can't be imaginative without having some tools or ideas to be imaginative with because kids don't know what's possible, do they? So, they need to be shown, I think, what's possible for their imagination to expand. And I think, probably, all types of technology feed that.
- Q Yes. Okay, same question but what sorts of toys or digital devices would limit play?

A I can't think of anything that would limit... Well, I suppose there would be toys that you could only do one thing with, and they would limit play because you can only do one thing with them. But I can't think of any specific examples.

Q Yes, that's not a problem. And same question, in your view, what sorts of devices or digital toys would promote creativity?

A Again, I think all of them.

Q Is there any specific that you can think of that is particularly... That you think is really creative, would encourage creativity?

A Well, I think Minecraft and things that there are endless possibilities. There's some that I suppose your creativity might be limited because you can only create what's available within that. But I think Minecraft and things are endless, which I think is probably... I think that's probably where the crossover comes between Minecraft-type games and LEGO and Playmobil. It's that endless possibilities.

Q How about with limiting creativity, is there any sorts of devices, or toys, or games, or apps, even, that you think might limit creativity?

A Maybe the shooting games. You're just going and shooting people. Because there's no creativity there, is there?

Q Right, okay. Next question. So, what kinds of toys or products do you think that LEGO should be developing for children in this digital age?

A The toys that have unlimited possibilities. I quite like the LEGO ones, the ones that you don't just build in one way. Almost like you get a set and here are the things you can do with them.

So, I had Meccano, motorised Meccano, and the set I have, you could build six different things. And there were instructions to build six different things. And I find with LEGO that it's a bit... I know it can then all go in a box and you can build whatever you want, but I think for some kids that might be difficult. I think that depends on how creative a child you are. You see, I would have been useless as a kid with a box of LEGO. I used to build the same thing over and over again.

So, I think having... I don't know, there would be a set that it would give you a booklet and you can build these 12 things from it. And I think that would be good for kids that are, possibly, less creative.

Q So, do you feel like having a set, then, where they can build X amount of objects per se, do you think that the creativity would come in by doing slightly different building of said blocks?

A Yes.

Q Does that make sense?

A Because that's almost like being able to build these eight things, that showing you that there are other possibilities.

Q So, when playing with technology, then, how far does your son be actively engaged in what he's doing?

- A Always actively engaged in what he's doing.
- Q How can you tell that?
- A Because he's focusing on what he's doing. And sometimes, the house could fall down around him and he wouldn't notice.
- Q Okay. And do you think that technological sorts of toys are meaningful to your son? And if so, how do you think that he can relate his everyday experience to the toys? So, do you think it's meaningful to him and his everyday interests?
- A Oh, yes. Yes, really meaningful.
- Q And again, how can you tell that?
- A I think because they feature so much in his life, and he seeks those things out.
- Q Yes, all right. So, next question is how do you think that your son tries to challenge himself or make improvements when he's playing with his digital toys?
- A I think by... He's interested in books that give instructions on how to do things that he doesn't know how to do. And interested in YouTube videos on how to do things that he doesn't know how to do.
- Q Do you feel like he does try to make improvements every time he plays?
- A Always. Yes, absolutely.
- Q Do you think that there is a link between playing with technological devices or toys, or just playing generally, and between children's emotions and wellbeing?
- A Yes, I do think there is a link. And I think it's, possibly, depending on the child. Because there are some games that I think impact negatively. So, I think it does.
- Q Can you tell me what sorts of toys they would be, then, that it would limit, if you feel like it impacts him negatively?
- A You mean the games?
- Q Yes.
- A Yes. So, Roblox is one, we've deleted that a couple of times. He's got a second chance on that, so we'll see how that goes. But I find that it's the ones where you can't level up without getting duels or coins, and he almost gets a bit obsessed by it. And that's the reason why I haven't let him have Fortnite because, apparently, that's very much like that.
- And there are two separate people who have said don't let him on Fortnite because he will just pester your life out for money, for coins and whatever, whatever. So, I've said no to Fortnite, but I didn't know what Roblox were about. I would have said no to that had I known. Because Minecraft is a really positive thing for him. Yes.
- Q And you know when your son is playing with his toys, do you think that he is happy and cheerful?
- A Yes. Yes, definitely.

- Q So, what sorts of other emotions do you think that your son is involved in while he's playing with digital toys?
- A Well, I think he's excited if he can do something that he hasn't been able to do before. Proud when he's achieved something. Then there's a social aspect when he's playing with his friends. So, he's an only child, so I'm good with that because that's a chance for him to interact with his friends when his friends aren't around. And that makes him happy. He's a very sociable child. Yes. I can't think if anything else I don't think.
- Q Yes, that's okay. So, what types of technology do you think that your son would be likely to get bored with?
- A I think the ones that limit his options. So, the games he gets bored with are the ones he might play for a couple of days, but they don't really do anything other than the main point of the game. So, I think the ones that are less creative.
- Q Can you give me an example?
- A So, I don't know, there are games where you bounce balls and you have to get them into holes, and you level up, and once he's done a few levels, it's a bit boring, so that game will come off. He likes things to change, rather than doing the same thing over and over again.
- Q Okay. So, do you think when he gets bored while he's playing those sorts of games, that it's a different sort of being bored that does not involve games that revolve around technology? Does that make sense?
- A I think it's the same thing, isn't it?
- Q Yes.
- A The toys that do one thing or a game that does one thing. I think it's the same. Although, I suppose the difference would be is that he might not pick up the toy in the first place, whereas technology means you can try something out. Whereas, he might not have that toy available because he's not asked of that toy because he knows it's going to be boring. Does that make sense?
- Q Yes. It does.
- A All the toys he owns are ones that he's asked for, generally.
- Q So, when your son is playing with his technology sorts of toys, do you think that he's engaged socially with other people, generally? So that can either be with the game that he's playing or with the people around him.
- A Generally, with the game, not with the people around him.
- Q What sorts of technology toys would support social play, in your view?
- A I suppose the... Because, actually, he's playing with my husband on the Xbox at the moment, so I suppose that's more sociable.
- Q Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

A So, they'll probably be playing Minecraft. And they'll both be in the same world, and they'll be building things side by side, and going and looking at each other's worlds and showing each other how to do certain things.

Q Next question, so when does your son's play... When your son's play involves technology, do you ever play with him, and how?

A I rarely do. I refuse to play Minecraft because I'm just not even going to go there because he'll want me on there all the time, so it's just easy to say no right from the start. But we might play games... There are a couple of games, really simple games, that we like, that we'll try and beat each other, but we don't play together, we play separately on our own phones and iPads to see who can get the best score.

Q What games are that then, please?

A They're the, I don't know... There's a snake one that you pick up coloured blobs, you have to avoid dying. So, it's whoever can pick up the most blobs before dying. That's been a fairly long-running one, actually. So, we might play separately, or we might play sat together.

Q Can I ask what sort of device that's on?

A iPad.

Q Right, okay, so it's an app?

A Yes, it's an app.

Q Are there any sorts of digital toys, or games, or apps that you think are better than others for playing together with your son?

A No. It more depends on the games, really, rather than the devices, I think.

Q Next question, does your son ever ask you to play on your phone or your iPad or the computer?

A Yes.

Q He does?

A He does.

Q What sorts of things does he like to play on them?

A On mine?

Q Yes.

A The simple games, again, but he gets bored with them. I like Candy Crush and I like the boring games that he doesn't really like. So, he might play a bit, but he gets bored.

Q So, would you play those sorts of games together then?

A Yes, those are the kinds of games that we might play together, but he only seems particularly interested if they're competitive. Yes, so he might play on his device

and I'm playing on my phone and we're seeing who can get the highest score. But if he were playing it on his own and I wasn't playing, he'll have a couple of games, then he'd get bored.

Q Are there any sorts of devices or apps that your son can only access with you or another family member around?

A No.

Q Okay, that's fine. Do you ever initiate any sorts of play using technological toys, with your son?

A No, not usually.

Q And how about your husband, would he ever do that?

A How about what, sorry?

Q Your husband.

A Yes.

Q Would he ever initiate play using technological...?

A Yes. Yes, he would, yes.

Q Can you give me an example, please?

A So that might be going on the Xbox and playing a two-player game.

Q What sorts of games does he like to play on the Xbox?

A Minecraft... What other games do you play on Xbox, Jack? Blur. I don't know what that is. Oh, car racing. Yes, car racing, Minecraft.

Q Right, okay. Do you feel that certain sorts of technology toys would offer more positive or negative experiences for your son?

A No, I don't think so.

Q Do you have any concerns regarding your son's experiences with digital technology?

A No. Not so far, anyway.

Q Okay, and why do you think that you feel that way?

A Because I see, actually, that the technology has enhanced his experiences and his imagination and his creativity. It exposes him to things that I don't think he would otherwise have been exposed to.

Q Are you concerned about any of the safety aspects of internet-enabled toys?

A The only aspect I'm worried about is that he's... Because he's of the age that he wants to play with other people, that I don't know, necessarily, who he's playing with. So that's starting to creep in now.

Q What do you think has shaped that particular concern?

- A I guess because you hear horror stories. Horror stories of people being groomed online. But we've talked to him about it and he knows that he doesn't share any personal details. So, he's got a username, not his real name, and that kind of information.
- Q And then, are you concerned about data privacy in relation to your son?
- A Yes.
- Q You are. What sort of concerns would you have about this?
- A Just that people might know more about him than I would expect because it's quite easy to find out information from little snippets. So, yes, I would be concerned, but that's why I'm conscious that he doesn't share any personal information.
- Q And then, what do you think shaped that worry?
- A I don't really know. I suppose I'm quite a private person, so I think that's quite possibly inbuilt.
- Q Do you think that your son's use of technology influences his family life positively?
- A Yes.
- Q Can you tell me how?
- A Family life or him, I suppose that's two different things. I'm not sure it does enhance family life, really, actually. Because some of the things are quite solitary pursuits. When he's playing Minecraft on his iPad, that's not something that you necessarily engage in with other people. Yes, that's when I start to tell him that he needs to come off it because if I don't feel like I'm getting an opportunity to engage with him as much as I would like. I don't want him to spend the whole of his childhood staring at an iPad.
- Q So, do you feel that, then, his use of technology has a negative influence on family life?
- A It could do. I can see how easy that would be. It isn't, but it could do quite easily.
- Q Do you have any concerns about your son's use of digital technologies?
- A No.
- Q Okay. And if you did, what sort of things would you do about it?
- A Well, I would limit his time. There's only been the odd occasion that I've needed to do that. As I say, he, generally, self-regulates. So, I'm okay with that.
- Q And then, final question, what sort of advice or guidance would you offer new parents on issues relating to data privacy and safety, in relation to their child?
- A I would just say you need to be having conversations with your kids. You need to engage with them, not just leave them on their own without being aware of what it is they're doing. Because if I didn't know what he was doing... I know that he's

talking to other people when he's on certain games. But that's only because I've seen what those games are. So, it would just be aware of what your children are doing.

Because it would be quite... There was an incident a couple of weeks ago, when a girl had said something, he assumed it was a girl, she said she wanted to go into this room and have sex with him. And he was completely freaked out, so we had to explain that, actually, she doesn't know who he is, she doesn't know where he is, and she was probably just being silly. But if people ask him for information, just be aware that there are people on games that haven't got good intentions. But I use that as a way of educating him a bit more.

So, actually, it was a positive thing, really, because nothing bad was going to happen because they didn't know who he was.

Q Okay. Could I just ask what game that was on?

A That was something on Roblox, I think.

Q Okay, that was the last question.