

Q Alex Hetherington (researcher)
A Man with daughter aged 5

Q Okay, wonderful. There are a few things I need to go through first. First is a little bit of background. How many children do you have?

A We've got one.

Q Just one and how old are they?

A Five.

Q Five, okay. So are lot of the questions are going to be involving technology. When I say technology, I mean the obvious stuff like mobile phones, tablets, cameras but also different kinds of software like apps, websites and digital games. Does that make sense?

A Yes, that's fine.

Q Do you have any questions before we start?

A How long is it going to take, roughly?

Q Anywhere between 20, 25 minutes or 40 minutes, usually.

A Yes, that's fine.

Q Okay, wonderful. So we'll start with the questions. The first is more of a general question about how technology features in your child's life. So what kind of technology do they have? What kind of devices do they use?

A She doesn't have any devices for herself because she's only five but she's got access to an iPad from me or from my wife that she can use but that is limited, of course, for what she can use it for.

Q Does she use your phone at all, at any time?

A Sometimes, yes, when we go out for coffees. We've got some apps downloaded for her to play with when we are out and about. She can access the phones.

Q Is there any kind of games console in the household at all?

A Yes, we've got an Xbox but she doesn't use it yet. It's mainly me.

Q So you'd say her main tech use is the iPad, is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And how much time does she spend on that in a given week?

A Two to three hours during the week, I think?

Q Okay, right. So what type of activities does she gravitate towards on the iPad?

A We've got the CBeebie's app downloaded there. We've got YouTube Kids and

then we've got some games to do with princesses and all that stuff, that she can dress them up. She's got a slime game that she can make her own slime. What else has she got? We've got something from LEGO. I think that's the majority. She's got some stuff from school as well to do. I can't remember the name and one is to do with adding up numbers. That's more the educational stuff.

Q Which of these activities on the iPad would you say she spends the most time with?

A At the moment, it's the slime game and the CBeebies app. She loves the CBeebies app and sometimes she goes on YouTube Kids and then she's looking at the videos from Barbie. Kids playing with their Barbies.

Q When she's using the iPad, is she supervised, normally or does she have some time alone with it?

A No, she's supervised.

Q Is that usually yourself or your partner?

A It's mainly my partner. I sometimes am there, myself but it's very often, when she comes back from school or in the late afternoon, early evening before we have tea.

Q Sorry, you broke up there.

A It's late afternoon, early evening. Sometimes we take it in turns to supervise her but we always see that someone supervises because it was a few months back probably longer. We were thinking, what is she watching and she went into YouTube, instead of YouTube Kids and it was something that suddenly was a bit dodgy. What's all this about? It became all horrible and they were hitting each other and we switched it all off because you can't look at this.

Q Okay, right. Does she watch television at all?

A Yes.

Q Does she play with other things while watching television or is it an either, or kind of situation?

A When she's watching telly, she's mainly watching telly. She's very engrossed when she's watching television. It's very difficult to get her out of the telly. Yes, that's our experience. It's quite difficult.

Q You mentioned she likes the CBeebies app. What are her favourite shows on that?

A It's Mr Tumble and the Octonauts. I've forgotten what the other one's called. In the Night Garden, she's past all of that. It's mainly Mr Tumble and she loves the Dr Ranj stuff. Then she's getting more and more interested in the programme where they show her how the washing machine is made. That's mainly on the telly then, that she starts to get interest in those things.

Q Yes, okay. Interesting, thank you. Does she have any physical toys that relate to her digital interests at all?

A She does. She's got Barbie. She's got LEGO. She's got some Playmobil. She's got some My Little Pony. She had some stuff from In The Night Garden. She occasionally still plays with it, not much really. But then not so much for Mr Tumble because I haven't seen an awful lot from Mr Tumble. But she's very much into Frozen at the moment, like so many. She's got Frozen dolls and all of that. She hasn't seen Frozen 2 yet but she watches Frozen the DVD over and over again.

Q Okay. Does she have any other kind of digital toy? Anything like a LeapPad educational tablet? Any kind of robots? Anything like that?

A No, not really. No.

Q Any toys that are internet enabled that you haven't mentioned so far?

A No, none of them.

Q No Furbies, nothing like that?

A No, say it again?

A No, she doesn't have Furbies, no.

Q Nothing like that, okay. Has she ever had the chance to play with any kind of augmented reality or virtual reality?

A No, not yet.

Q No, not yet. How about any kind of artificial intelligence assistance like Alexa or Siri?

A Yes, yes, she loves Siri. When she's on the tablet, she knows how to get Siri on and so she's asking Siri all sorts of questions. We've got an Alexa as well and so she starts switching all her own music, when we've got music on. It's really funny actually. When we put music on, she goes on and asks Alexa, put this music on and then back on.

Q So is it an Alexa Home help that you've got and then just Siri on the tablet and the phones?

A Yes, it's mainly on the tablet. We've got Android phones and we've got an iPad, so she doesn't know yet about the Google Assistant and that sort of stuff. She doesn't know how that works but she knows how to get Siri on.

Q Does she ask it questions? Does she ever ask it for information?

A Yes, even the other day she was asking what's the weather forecast? I couldn't believe it. I went all teary. Sometimes she's just talking to Siri, like having a conversation. She thinks she can just talk to Siri but then Siri doesn't respond in a way that she wants Siri to respond and then she gets annoyed.

Q Okay. Does she ever ask it jokes or anything like that?

A No, not really. She's not really into her jokes. It's mainly the normal conversation. She says to Siri, what's my name? On my wife's tablet, she even

managed to change the name. Siri actually says, my child's name. Suddenly there it was there, so she managed to do that to the phone.

Q Kind of impressive.

A Yes, I know. Some parents were saying, you will be surprised how quickly she gets the hang of it and it's true. She actually knows more sometimes from the tablet than we do because there are things on there that I think, how did she get this on there?

Q Does she play outside very much?

A She does. We've got a garden. It's a big mess now of course, this time of year but she loves playing in the garden. She's very much into all her role play and that sort of stuff. Playing princesses and doctors, and ponies and Barbies. She likes playing outside.

Q Okay, no worries. Do you ever notice that when she's playing with physical toys or outside, or anything like that, can you see the influence of her technological use in that play? If that makes sense?

A Not really, no. It's very much a distinction between the two. She plays differently when she's outside, than when she's on the tablet. For example, when she watches a YouTube video, from Barbies, that's the only thing she does and she's just watching, and when she does the games as well, she's very focused on what's happening. And then when she plays outside or when she plays with her toys, she's very random. Everything can come up in her play. What's been happening during the day. We think it's very much that she's processing what's happened during the day, when she's playing.

Q Okay, thank you. This next little bit is specifically about LEGO. You mentioned a couple of times that you've got some LEGO. How much LEGO would you say is in the household?

A We've got a fair amount of LEGO. She still has some Duplo. We haven't got rid of that because she still plays with it and then she's got some LEGO Friends. She's got a few sets of that. She's got some LEGO Disney or the princess-type stuff and probably, she's going to get some LEGO Frozen for Christmas from her uncle. He talked about it the other day.

Q How about any other kind of LEGO products? Any kind of accessories, bags, anything like that?

A She's got a pencil holder from LEGO, where you can put your pens and crayons, and that's sort of it. She's got some LEGO movies, the DVDs. She loves those. Absolutely loves them.

Q Has she seen them all? Are there any that she hasn't seen?

A She hasn't seen the last one. She's seen the first one. She's seen the Batman one and she hasn't seen the last one but again, that's potentially a Christmas present, the DVD.

Q Have you ever been to Legoland at all?

A No, not yet.

Q No worries. That's the end of the first set of questions. We'll go onto the second set now. The first one's a little bit hypothetical. What kind of new toys do you think that LEGO should be developing for children in the digital age?

A Oh, that's an interesting question. One of the things that pops in my head at the moment, is she has some LEGO sets and we lost the boxes, and we also lost the instructions in what it should look like.

I've never looked at this before but it would be interesting if LEGO would make an app. Sometimes the LEGO sets that they've got, where they can look at them and can see how they need to put them together. Instead of a set of instructions, you actually hear someone explain to them, that's what you need to do but also, when you've got certain sets, what other things you could make with those things. I also think what could be great is that you have personalised LEGO sets. For example, if they make a picture from somewhere on the tablet. Then upload this in the apps and then you actually can order a LEGO set box, to make that stuff.

I don't know what budget we're talking about but definitely the first part. I think where they can actually see, this is how I need to put my set together, when you've lost your instructions because that's what happens. I mean, you can't keep track of all those cardboard boxes and instructions, when they lose them. Because it's quite a task for us as well, the parents. I'm saying this now because we did this a few weeks ago. She wanted her sets back together, as they were. We had to go on the internet, find the thing and zoom in to see what it roughly looked like, so that would be useful.

Q Yes. Okay, I think I understand. The next question is, when your daughter's using digital games, who makes the decisions about what she's allowed to do and when?

A It's a mixture of both. Sometimes she come to us and asks, can I play on the tablet and sometimes we say, no, not now but you can later or sometimes we say, yes, that's fine. When we sometimes go out for coffees or something, she sometimes asks, can I use your phone mummy or daddy, for a little bit because she knows that we sometimes want to chat or we've got friends with us. Then it is, yes, all right, you can. It's a mixture of both of who decides to do what.

What she does is mainly up to her but she knows now. In the beginning it was quite difficult to get that balance right but she knows now which apps she can use. On the iPad, we've got one screen that's got all the apps that she can use and she's got it now. She knows, I can go on that screen and that's the apps that I can use.

Q Does she ever come to you with new apps that you've not necessarily heard of, that she might have got from somewhere else?

A No, I think she's still a bit young for that. Having said that, she came home one day from playing with one of her friends, with this slime app. Oh daddy, we have this slime app, so we had to contact the parents to ask, what app is she on about and we checked it out to see that it was fit. That's the only time so far that she

asked for that. I imagine in the next couple of years that that will change.

Q Yes. Do you think, that in your view, certain types of devices or digital toys or apps can promote play?

A Yes, I think it can work together. It stimulates their creativity and imagination because they can do certain things that potentially they couldn't do but they can through the app. Yes, when she's looking at certain things, like the Barbies playing and that sort of stuff. It feeds her imagination about what she can do with her Barbie doll and how she could play.

Q Do you think on the other hand that certain kinds of technologies, devices [inaudible], could they limit play?

A It could be if we don't guard it. It could be a draw away from the human interaction and the human play because I think it's very important that they play together as well. I think that's something broader in our whole society. What could become a big issue.

Q You've kind of already mentioned this in your last answer. I'm going to ask again, so sorry if you have to repeat yourself. Do you think that certain kinds of devices or digital toys or apps can promote creativity?

A Yes, definitely. Yes, absolutely. I think we have some puzzle apps and also she's got a drawing app, where she can do drawing and colouring in the app. And I can see when she does that and she has a piece of paper, she starts copying the drawing that she's seeing on the app and that helps her creativity and she starts adding stuff to the app. And that's what I like seeing, that's why I think technology works together then.

Q Do you think on the other hand that certain kinds of devices or technologies could limit creativity?

A There is a danger that you start to become so reliant on your technology, that you start to think that technology will solve it for me and I don't need to think out of the box any more. I don't need to be creative anymore because if I have an issue, I just ask Google or Alexa, or Siri and they will give me the answer or they will tell me how to do it. In some way that can have the wrong effect. I think with all these things, it's finding the right balance between it all and I think that's the difficulty sometimes. I'm very interested in what technology does to kids and screen time and all that sort of stuff.

I went to a training evening, a couple of weeks ago. They were talking about screen time and the way they explained it was people from our generation, from parent's generation, we are visitors of technology. We go to technology. We do something with technology and then we continue with our lives. He said, our kids, they live technology. You can compare it with shopping. You got to the shop. You can go in and get what you need, and you walk out again. Literally, the kids that are growing up now, they live in the supermarket. They live in technology. It's part of them and I think there could be a danger that they become too reliant on technology.

Q Thank you, it's really interesting, thank you. The next question you've also kind of answered a little bit, so apologies if I'm asking you to repeat yourself. When your daughter is using technology would you say that she's very actively engaged and focused on what she's doing?

A Yes, very focused. It's difficult to get her away from it once she's busy with it. Sometimes we use a timer, sometimes we have to warn her. It's another five minutes and the tablet goes away or we're going to have tea, or lunch or whatever. Sometimes we need to prepare her for if the time is over because if we do it sudden, then there is a tantrum because she hasn't finished yet what she's doing or she's in the middle of creating something on there, or colouring something or whatever.

Q Do you think she finds her play with technology to be meaningful? Is it relevant to her everyday interests?

A I think so, yes.

Q What makes you say that?

A The school has given us access to some sort of app where she can do adding up and counting of numbers. It's for all the years. She is doing the Year 1 stuff. She's quite happy to do that. It really interests her to get going with it and do those things. I hope that answered your question?

Q Yes, I think so. Thank you. When she's playing with technology, does she want to try out new things? Try to make improvements to what she's doing? Does she ever set herself challenges?

A Not with the normal games but with the school apps, with the counting, she can earn coins with it. Our daughter's very competitive and that really sparks something in her. She really wants to improve and wants to get better, and sometimes she can do the challenge again. And she does it again until she gets them all right and that's where I can see she is very competitive with those things. Not so much with the games. Like with the CBeebies app, I notice it less than with the school stuff. Because also in the school stuff, she can see the lead table, not by name but she can see where she is on the leader board, in her class and that's clearly challenging her to get more and more, and higher and higher points.

Q Yes, okay. Thank you. So moving on to the third set of questions which is about children's emotions and well-being when it comes to technology use. The first question's fairly straight forward. Do you think that technology use can have an impact on children's emotions and well-being?

A Yes.

Q How do you think that takes shape?

A I think it can make them happy. It can make them sad when it's been taken away. It can make them angry when you take technology away. It can make them content when they use it or when they are watching something on there.

Yes. It definitely has an impact on their emotion.

Q What would you say is the most common emotion that you see in your daughter when she's playing with technology?

A I think contentment.

Q Does she ever get frustrated at all? You mentioned she can get quite frustrated if you take technology off her. Is there ever anything in the content or the games that frustrate her, perhaps?

A Sometimes when she doesn't win or when she doesn't find out what to do. I think that's getting better because she's getting older. She's developing, so she gets more understanding of some of the games but in the beginning, when she started. It was sometimes hard for to understand, what do I need to do now? Sometimes we could see she was getting frustrated. I said, what's the matter and it doesn't work, it doesn't work, and so then we would have to explain to her what you need to do.

It's also sometimes in a new app, when we download something new. You need to sometimes go through with her, this is what you need to do and that's how it works. She can get frustrated sometimes there.

Q Does she ever get bored of playing with technology?

A Yes, as bored with playing with toys as well. We've got a daughter with a very active mind and she doesn't like to do the same thing for a long period of time. She likes variety and sometimes she can sit there for 20 minutes, completely engrossed in what she's doing or even watching telly, or watching a film and suddenly, the film is still on and she's doing something completely different because she got bored. It's the same when she's on the tablet or it can be that she's doing some sort of game, switches it off in the middle of it and goes to something else because she clearly was bored.

Q Okay. Do you think that when she gets bored with playing with technology, is that similar or different to when she gets bored of playing with physical toys?

A I would say it's similar, yes.

Q When your daughter's playing with technology that allows for social interaction, if there is any. Would you say she engages well with others?

A Not really, no. Because she's so focused on what she's doing that it's very difficult to grab her attention and if we do, we notice that she only listens half to what you say or what you ask her to do. Especially, when we are giving her warnings to stop with using technology. We make sure that she repeats what we said, so that we know that she understood that it's almost coming up to the time to stop with it.

Q Yes, okay. Do you think that certain kinds of technology might better support more social play?

A I think so because sometimes when she's got friends around, they're sitting together around the tablet doing stuff or watching Barbies together. In that sense it can help, so that sort of stuff.

- Q That's the end of the third lot of questions. Let's move on to the fourth set now. This is about your role, as a parent, in technology mediated play. When your daughter's play involves technology, do you ever play with her?
- A Sometimes, yes. Sometimes we do. We've done this several times with the school stuff. With the counting and the numbers and that's the stuff we do together. Sometimes we do the games in CBeebies. We play together. I can't get myself watching Barbie YouTube films. I can't do it. I can do the games but not for DVDs.
- Q Yes, okay. You've kind of already answered this one, so I won't repeat the question. When you're on your devices, does your daughter ever ask to join you on what you're doing?
- A Sometimes. She's asking, what are you doing daddy, what are you doing, can I see, can I see. Yes, sometimes. It's mainly the boring stuff because I'm writing work emails or I'm catching up with the news. Sometimes we look at the weather forecast together. I don't know where she got that interest from but she suddenly had an interest in the weather forecast.
- Q Is there any other technology that she has access to with another family member, your partner, you mentioned. Godparents, any kind of grandparents, anything like that?
- A No. My wife's parents have sadly passed away and my mum, she doesn't live in England, so she's got no grandparents around. The godparents have tablets but they don't have kids' apps on there, so she doesn't really have access to those things.
- Q Does anybody use technology to initiate play with your daughter?
- A Not really, no.
- Q Okay. Do you think there's a particular reason for that?
- A No, I've never thought about it really.
- A Okay, so we're on to the last set of questions now and this more about your general perceptions of technologies. The first question is, do you think that technologies offer more positive or negative experiences for your daughter?
- A I think at the moment, a more positive experience.
- Q Yes, do you think that that's something that might change in the future?
- A It might do. I'm fully aware of the online bullying and social media, and all that sort of stuff. I hear enough from kids that are in Year 6 and secondary school, as they were being bullied through social media. It might change at some stage. The technology may not be as friendly anymore as it is at the moment.
- Q Yes. Do you have any more concerns about safety [inaudible], because you mentioned bullying? Is there anything else you're worried about there?
- A I think screen addiction. I think that's very real, for us as well. Yes, and the social

interaction. I'm amazed to hear that certain secondary schools are banning mobile phones because kids have to have a conversation with each other. It's the generation that is growing up. They don't know how to have a normal one-to-one conversation anymore because they do everything online.

There is another danger, losing touch with reality. What I mean is, when you're on social media, you can portray yourself on there however you want and you can put a picture on there. You can be amazing or you can be completely opposite and that's also how they sometimes can see other people. If you only look at what you can see online or find online, there is a danger there as well, that you lose touch with reality.

Q Yes, okay. That makes sense. Do you think that is something that will have a particular impact on your daughter at the moment or sometime soon or is that something that you think is perhaps more relevant to adults?

A I think that's more relevant to adults and teenagers, once they have access to the social media type apps.

Q Yes, okay. Do you have any concerns about data privacy at all, in relation to your daughter?

A Not at the moment.

Q Not at the moment. Okay, no worries.

A Again, that might change. Once she starts having social media [unclear]. I think we aren't aware of this as parents. We limit who can access our Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups, and we regard our privacy wisely enough that it's not all out there. We don't want to leave a massive digital footprint for our daughter already, on the web.

Q Do you think that your daughter's use of technology influences family life in a positive way?

A It's hard to tell really. If it's positive or not?

Q I think we can move onto the last question which is, what advice or guidance would you offer to new parents, no issues relating to technology and safety.

A Have clear boundaries regarding screen time. I think when they grow up and understand clear boundaries and knowing beforehand, how and when will they get their own mobile phone, their own tablet. How will you deal with those? Making sure that you've got the right parental controls in place because there is an awful lot of stuff on the web, unfortunately, that isn't nice and that we need to protect our kids from. That's the biggest advice I can give them, I think.

Q Okay, thank you. Is there anything else that you would like to say about anything that we've talked about?

A I don't think so. It would be interesting to know what you do with all these responses?

Q I know some of the participants in some of the other research activities do get a

report but I'm not sure if telephone interview participants do? I can find out for you if you would like?