

Q Alex Hetherington (researcher)
A Woman with 3-year-old son

Q My name's Alex, I'm calling from the University of Sheffield for our interview.

A Yes. Yes, that's right. That's fine. Okay.

Q There are a few things I need to go over before we start the questions. I just want to explain a little bit about the study and some of the words that I'll be using.

A Okay.

Q Firstly, this idea of technologies. When I'm talking about technologies or the idea of the digital, I mean digital devices such as mobile phones, tablets, cameras, video game consoles, as well as computers. I also mean the idea of media as well, such as apps, websites, and digital games.

A Okay.

Q So, there are a lot of questions that will feature technology, and there are a lot of questions about the idea of the digital. So I just want to clarify that that's what's meant by this idea, as we go into the questions.

A Okay, that's fine.

Q We're also interested in any making and tinkering that your children are involved with, any kind of creative coding they might do at school, and anything involved with virtual reality or augmented reality. Does that make sense?

A Yes.

Q We're also interested in different kind of play. A little bit of background, how many children do you have?

A Just the one.

Q Just the one. And how old are they?

A He's three years old.

Q Three years old.

A Yes.

Q No worries, okay. So we'll go straight into the questions. Does your child like to play with any particular apps or devices?

A Mostly the mobile.

Q Mostly the mobile. And is there any particular apps that they use on the mobile?

A There's just like, you know, letters tracing apps, he likes doing them, and YouTube. That's what he likes, playing and racing games.

Q Playing a racing game. Okay. Is there any kind of particular content that they prefer to watch on YouTube?

- A Cars [unclear] and Thomas the Tank Engine, and stuff like that. Anything to do with cars, really.
- Q Okay. Is there any particular time of day when they use the mobile?
- A Sorry?
- Q Is there any particular time of day when they use the mobile?
- A When he's not... Because he's [unclear] at school, so in the morning and in the evening.
- Q In the morning and in the evening. Is it your mobile, personally?
- A Yes.
- Q Yes, okay. Is he usually supervised on the mobile?
- A Yes.
- Q Yes. Okay. So he doesn't usually have it alone. Okay.
- A No.
- Q How do you think your child is feeling during this time?
- A He's okay. He loves it for a little while, because he's a bit hyper normally, so he just sits for a little while and then he'll get calm, and then he'll run off again. So he's just a bit calmer than normal.
- Q Okay. Thank you. Do they play on the mobile while watching television?
- A Sorry?
- Q Do they play on the mobile while watching television?
- A No. If he is watching television it's on the phone.
- Q Okay. Are there any other apps and online sites that they use or visit? Things like Netflix, CBeebies?
- A No. He does watch cartoons on Wi-Fi.
- Q Okay. Does he play any video games?
- A No.
- Q No. And are there any other apps... Other games that he plays on the phone, on the mobile?
- A No, I think it's just them two that he really plays.
- Q Okay. Do they have any physical toys that relate to their digital interests?
- A He's got, when he watches a movie, or something, and then he'll get Lightning McQueen, and then he'll get the car, and stuff like that.
- Q Okay. Are there any other examples of that that you can think of?

- A Thomas the Tank Engine, he's got that, and lately he's been watching Frozen. So he's not got anything yet, but he's said he wants it, so...
- Q Okay, thank you. Does he have any other toys that are digital or involved with technology? Things like Leap Pads, educational tablets, robots, things like that?
- A He's got a robot, but I don't think it's educational.
- Q Okay. Does he have any internet-enabled toys?
- A No.
- Q No, nothing like that. Okay. Has he ever played with anything involving augmented reality or virtual reality?
- A No.
- Q No, okay. And has he ever played with any kind of artificial intelligence assistants, like Alexa, or Siri, or Google Home?
- A Yes, he plays with Google and Alexa.
- Q Okay, and what's that like? How does that go?
- A He really enjoys that, because he, things like, especially on Alexa, he did play with Google a bit more, but now because Alexa's on the TV and he can just press the remote control, he prefers doing that while he can see something on the screen as well.
- Q Okay. So does he usually talk to it, ask it questions?
- A Yes, he'll normally ask it to play a game with him, or something like, guess the animal's voice, and there's a noise and then he'll have to guess what animal it is.
- Q Okay. Thank you. Does his play in outdoor spaces feature technology in any way?
- A Yes.
- Q Yes. How?
- A Technology, like, if he is playing outside sometimes he'll take his mobile outside and sit down outside and start playing again, and stuff like that.
- Q Okay. When he's playing without technology being involved do you ever see the influence of technology?
- A Sometimes when he is playing he'll start playing like what he's seen in YouTube recently, and he'll start playing those kinds of games of what he's heard about recently on the TV or anything, so he'll just pretend to play like that. So he does have it in his mind.
- Q Okay. Can you think of any specific examples where that's happened?
- A When we watched Frozen and then he was pretending to be Elsa and running around trying to free things, and stuff.

Q Yes, okay, thank you. Does your child own any Lego, or similar products?

A He has building blocks.

Q He has building blocks, but not Lego ones. Okay.

A Yes.

Q Okay, thank you. So that's the first group of questions.

A Lego is a bit small for him, so I'm just worried about he might put it in his mouth or something, that's why.

Q Okay. Thank you. That's the first group of questions, so we'll move on to the second group now, there are five in total. So this group of questions is about your views on children's play and technologies. So, who decides which devices and digital toys and games and apps your child gets to use?

A Mostly me.

Q Mostly you. Do they ever ask to use anything else other than what you've allowed?

A No, because I won't download it or anything for him if I don't think it's right.

Q Okay. When he's watching things on YouTube, is he allowed to search for things or do you look at things first to make sure he can see them?

A Well, we just go to the main page and then he'll pick a video which one he wants to watch and I'll sit with him, yes.

Q Okay. In your view, what types of devices of digital toys, apps can promote play, and why do you think that they can?

A I think watching cartoons or something like that can [unclear] condition try to do it, play like that, and actually, with their friends and stuff, and role play, and stuff. So I think that's really good.

Q Okay. Do you think devices, digital toys and apps can limit play in any way, and why do you think that might be?

A Yes. I think it can because if they're constantly on it and you don't put a time for them then they won't actually have any movement or play. They'll just be sitting down, which is not really good. So I think they need... A limit on it's good. But if it's too much then they're not going to be able to play with actual things, actual toys.

Q Okay. Thank you. Do you think devices, digital toys, and apps, can promote creativity? And if so, why do you think this might be?

A I think it can, because there's this app where you press the letters, and stuff, and that [inaudible] if I just write with a pen and paper. So...

Q Thank you. Do you think that digital devices, toys and games, and apps, might be able to limit creativity, and if so why do you think this might be?

- A I don't think they'll limit creativity. I think they'll just help but again, with the time limit. They need to spend time with real pen and paper and an app. If it's just constantly an app I don't think it will be as good.
- Q Okay. When your child gets a little bit older are you planning on buying Lego for them?
- A Yes, because we had it when we were small, and we really enjoyed it, and my son, he likes building stuff and breaking it down again and building. So I think he will, once he's four at least, or...
- Q Okay. When that time comes is there any kind of Lego project that you think Lego should be making for the new, digital age?
- A I've not really seen what kind of products they've been making, but something like to build cars and stuff, I think that would be really interesting for boys.
- Q Okay. When playing with technology, how far is your child actively engaged? Are they very interested and focused on what they're doing?
- A I think yes, when he gets [unclear] thing he can do pretty much a lot with it, so he knows how to use everything, and call and stuff, and so I think he is [unclear].
- Q Do you think that he finds the play meaningful, and has an effect in his everyday interests outside of that play?
- A Yes, I think so. Because he seems to be, he remembers what he's watched and stuff, and then he brings it into his normal play time as well, so I think it does mean something.
- Q Can you think of any specific examples where that's happened?
- A When he's been watching something that happened in Thomas, and then one of the engines was sad, because he was watching in the morning and he said, oh, he doesn't... He was sad because he didn't like the snow. And then he went up to my mum, his grandma, and he was saying, you don't like snow as well, so you're sad. And then he was asking her about it as well. So I think it does help him question things more.
- Q Thank you. When playing with technology, how far does your child try to make things out and try things new?
- A When he's like... He's not really tried anything that's new for a while now, so it's just the same apps that he's been using for a while now. But when you show him once, he'll know how to carry on with it then.
- Q Okay. So that's the end of the second section. Onto the third section now, this is about play with technology and children's emotions and wellbeing. So the first question is, do you think that play with technology has an effect on children's emotions and wellbeing?
- A I think it makes him a bit calmer, because he can actually sit down for a bit. But I think that's all it really does. Because he'll just [unclear] running about and stuff.

- Q Okay. When playing with technology, what kind of emotions do you think your child is feeling?
- A I think he gets excited and gets happy, and gets curious.
- Q Do you think that he's ever frustrated at all?
- A Sometimes, yes, especially with the writing, when you're doing the writing, and it's not as, it doesn't come as straight line as he wanted. Then he gets frustrated at it, when he can't actually write properly. I say, that's because you're small, but no, he does, he thinks it needs to be perfect. So I think he does get frustrated sometimes.
- Q Thank you. Do you ever think that your child gets bored with playing with technology?
- A After a while he definitely will get bored, because he can't sit down [unclear] for too long, and then he'll need to actually play with some physical things. So, yes.
- Q Okay. Do you think that this is similar to the way that they might get bored with non-technological play, or is it different?
- A Yes. I think with non-technological, like something else, I think he would leave one toy and play with another toy, while this he would have to leave altogether, not go to another technology thing. So, yes, I think it's a bit different.
- Q Okay. When playing with technology that allows for social interaction, if there is any, would you say that your child engages well with others?
- A He does, yes.
- Q Okay. What makes you say this? What leads you to think that way?
- A No, I just think that.
- Q Okay. Are there any particular types of technology that you believe support more social play?
- A I think games, like two-player games, or something like that, or something like they can play with their... Actually Alexa and Google, I think that's the most good thing that, right now, because they can put a game on and play with everybody, and move around with it as well. And if you put an app on that says, let's do exercise or something, like for children, and then they'll tell them to do star jumps, and stuff, so I think that's really good.
- Q Thank you. This next section is about parents' roles in technology, technology-mediated play, so this is about your role. When your child's play involves technology do you ever play with them?
- A Yes, most of the time. Because he's an only child so we play with him anyway, but especially when it comes to technology, one of us will always play with him.
- Q Is there any particular space that this happens in, any particular places?
- A In our living room, because we've got the TV and Google, so when we're playing

with Google or Alexa we'll all be playing together.

Q Okay. Do you think that there are any particular devices or apps that are better than others for playing together with your child?

A I think Google and Alexa, I think they're the best.

Q Okay. Sorry, I'm just going over one of the questions, you've kind of already answered it so I'm not going to ask you to repeat yourself. Are there any devices or apps that your child can only access with other family members?

A No.

Q No. Nothing with any grandparents, or anything like that?

A No, just the usual [unclear], but yes, that's [unclear].

Q Okay. Do you ever initiate play with technology with your child?

A Yes, sometimes when he's [unclear] they can come and play with Alexa or something, and he'll get [unclear] but sometimes I have to start it up for him.

Q Okay. Right. I'm going to move on to our last section of questions now. We've flown through this one. So this is more about your general perceptions of technologies. So, do you think certain technologies offer more positive or negative experiences for your child?

A I think it's equal, it depends on how much technology, because it can be a good thing or a bad thing.

Q Yes. What makes you say that? Can you give me some examples of each?

A Yes, because it's like a child's watching something for 20 minutes or something, I don't think that will make... That will be really good for him. But if he's sat down watching it for two hours then I think that's really bad for the child.

Q Okay. Do you have any concerns about your child's experience with technologies?

A I just get concerned that, because if he's got a mobile [unclear] and then it's not good for his eyesight.

Q Right, okay. Where have you gotten that idea from? Is there any particular place that you have gotten that kind of information about what you think is good and bad?

A No. Just I think we've just grown up thinking like that, so that's about it.

Q Okay. Thank you. Are you concerned about, in the future this is, the safety aspects of internet-enabled toys?

A Yes. I think so. Because technology is something that I'll only trust if I'm actually with my son, I wouldn't be able to feel comfortable just letting him do something on his own.

Q Yes. Do you have any concerns about data privacy in relation to your child?

A No.

Q No, not at all. Okay. Do you think that your children's use fo technology influences family life in a positive way?

A Yes, I don't think it has much of an effect on his family life.

Q Okay. I think we'll move on to the last few questions now. Do you have any further concerns about your child's use of technologies?

A No.

Q Okay. Last one, then. Is there any advice or guidance that you'd offer to new parents on issues relating to technology and safety?

A Just limit their time and not let htem go on it for too long at once. I think that's just the main thing.

Q Okay. Thank you very much. You've gotten through all the questions.