

Q Alex Hetherington (researcher)
A Man with daughter (aged 8)

Q So, a little bit of background. How many children do you have?

A Two.

Q Two. And how old are they?

A My daughter has just turned eight and my son is five.

Q Son is five. Okay. So, for the questions I'm going to be asking you today, I'd like to ask you if you can keep just one of your children in mind when answering the questions.

A Sure.

Q A lot of the questions focus on technology, so it might be more appropriate to think about the older one, if that's okay?

A Yes, I'd say so. Yes.

Q Okay. And of course, you can talk about them if it's relevant, if they're ever interacting with technology and things like that. If ever it seems appropriate to the question, don't be afraid to mention it, just try and keep one in mind when thinking in regards to the answers, if that's possible.

A Okay.

Q Okay. So, all the questions do involve technology and, by that, I mean the obvious stuff. So, things like mobile phones, tablets, cameras, physical devices, but also different kinds of media, apps, websites, anything like that. So, it's more of a general term than you might initially expect it to be in a lot of the questions that I'm talking about. So, if anything pops to mind, where you think, okay, that's kind of technology, it might be relevant, don't be afraid to mention it. Just go for it, that type of thing [?].

A Okay.

Q Okay. So, we'll go straight into the questions. I've got five sets of questions and this first set is about your child's play and technology. So, could you give me a little bit of background? How does technology feature in your child's life?

A So, we're not mean parents, but we tend not to be the parents who sit them in front of an iPad permanently. So, I think, at her age, she's using it quite a lot at school. They did in primary school; they introduced it to the lot. They use the interactive screens at school; they use iPads at school. At home, she doesn't have her own technology, shall we say. We have an iPad that the family use together. They use it independently on their own from time to time, but it's not one that they keep in their room or have purely to their own devices. Phones are a no-no at the moment, which is a bit of a reprieve, I guess. We've got a few years before that kicks in.

In terms of TVs, we have a smart TV at home, so we use that a bit. Not so much

on the smart TV functions. I think they tend to stick to the usual simple stuff, like flicking around the channels, and DVDs, and that sort of stuff.

So, we don't probably interact with the smart TV as much as maybe some people might do all of the iPad-type activity on the TV. We tend to keep that a bit more traditional. We are not quite there in terms of cameras, yet. We are contemplating, actually, for this Christmas, for her getting a camera that she's able to start taking pictures. Not a digital camera, per se, but there's a kid's version where you can do almost old-style polaroid-type prints on that sort of thing, so that's next on the agenda for her. That's probably it, really, I would say. Yes.

She's pretty basic, I'd say, at the moment. There are friends of her age who probably do a lot more and who have been given hand-me-down iPhones that they don't use as phones, but they have internet access and that sort of stuff. So, she uses ours, so she understands the concepts of playing around with apps, and messaging, and that sort of stuff, but doesn't have that direct ownership herself.

Q Okay. No problem. There are no game consoles or anything like that in the household?

A We have an old-style Nintendo Wii. It was something I never got into as a child, strangely. A bit of the old Game Boy style stuff, but I never owned any of the proper gaming consoles, so it's not something we've actually introduced to them at this stage through our own use, I guess.

So, we bought a Wii. Maybe the games on that are a bit more childish and a bit more fun, but the graphics are much more basic in that respect. So, that's something the kids do and they've had a few goes on that sort of thing, like the bowling apps and that sort of stuff, but not anything in terms of a PS4 or an Xbox One or anything like that.

Q Yes. Is the Wii something that gets regular use or is it something [overtalking]?

A No, it's more of, shall we say, a festive-type device, if that makes sense. It'll come out at that sort of time of year where it's fun and the family are round and you can have a bit of fun doing that sort of stuff.

Q Yes, absolutely. Okay. So, is the main technology use... Would it be fair to say that it's the phone, your phone, whether it's yours or your partner's?

A It would be the iPad, I would say, for them.

Q [Overtalking].

A Yes. They go on our phone every now and again, but that's more when we're going to bed. She's a bit of a bookworm, to be honest, so she loves things like Wordscapes game, that style of thing. So, we might do a bit of that on the phones, just at bedtime, but the iPad I would say is more... As you learn to realise, these days, they get a lot of their schoolwork already, at her age, on iPads.

Q Okay. How much time would you say she spends on the iPad in a given week?

A I would say probably, in the week, maybe three or four days, Monday to Friday,

she'll probably spend half an hour-ish a night on it, and that's normally to do with school-type activities, rather than personal stuff. Most of the stuff they tend to do is just on the TV from there. And then, at the weekends, they would naturally get a bit more time on the iPad. So, probably maybe an hour a day on the weekends.

As I say, without trying to be mean parents, we try not to let them just sit in front of it for hours on end. They would, quite happily. When they go to their nan's house on a Thursday, no doubt they get a lot more time on it than they would here. So, maybe that one day a week they might get another hour or so.

Q Okay. Does she ever play while watching television at all?

A Does she ever what, sorry? Play on the iPad?

Q Just play in general while she's watching television.

A Yes, her and her brother do. Yes.

Q Yes. Okay. How does that usually go on? What kind of activities does she usually play while watching television?

A You mean on technology devices or just in general?

Q In general. Both, really.

A Okay. Well, on a technology device, it would be much the same thing. They'll just play very simple games on there, in terms of colouring games or games where you've just got to do the simple things we've already talked about. In terms of play, it's anything and everything. Her brother loves his train set, so he's normally winding those round the room. She's just had a birthday, so we've now got a mountain of toys we've got to try and find a home for. So, she's a bit more traditional. She likes playing with her dolls and that sort of thing, but she's quite a big bookworm, as I say. So, normally, when she's not messing around, she'll quite happily sit down with a book and just start reading.

Q Yes. Okay. Does she watch many media apps, things like YouTube, maybe Netflix or CBeebies, anything like that?

A Yes. She's got long hair, as most girls of her age. It takes a long time to dry when she gets out of the bath. They'll typically sit down and that's the time when they tend to watch more stuff on the app, rather than playing games. It's across anything, to be honest. It could be CBeebies. We've got the Sky Kids app, the iPlayer Kids app, the sorts of things on there. We've got Sky Go on there where, obviously, they can pick the kid's TV programmes off that. So, yes, I would say a complete range of those sorts of apps, depending on what sort of programme they want to watch.

They do use YouTube as well. Not YouTube Kids, we don't have that downloaded, just the generic one, so we would always tend to be supervising that. But, they're very rarely just left on their own devices for hours on end to the iPad to what they want, if that makes sense.

Q Yes, absolutely. Is there any kind of content that she prefers, that she gravitates towards?

- A Yes. Not massively. It's just the typical stuff. They tend to follow what they watch on TV, so they search out the kind of programmes. So, things like Vampirina. Stuff that's on the kid's TV channels that they would watch in the week. PJ Masks for my son, for example. Again, that sort of stuff. They don't tend to go hunting out content that they haven't seen before. They're very much, if they know they'll like it, they'll go and find another episode of it.
- Q Yes. Okay. You mentioned, occasionally, there is some game playing. What kind of games are played on different devices?
- A So, again, it's not so much the arcade-type games and stuff; it's more of the Wordscapes one I mentioned she really enjoys. They've inherited a bit of Candy Crush from my other half, so they see that and they like that. Although, that gets quite difficult quite quickly, so they get a bit bored of it. It's very simple games, not the sort of modern gaming-type activity, where everything becomes very realistic and futuristic. It's much more traditional, almost like platformy-type games and skill games, maybe, shall I say, if that makes sense, with stuff that they've got to move things around and do stuff on.
- Q Okay. So, more like puzzle games, would you say?
- A Yes, more traditional, more stuff that's a bit more like that, rather than the genuine new gaming experience that, obviously, I guess I've probably got a few more years before they start discovering that for themselves.
- Q Okay. Does your daughter have any physical toys that relate to her digital interests?
- A Only in so much as where they get bought dolls or things that maybe relate to the characters. I would say probably less my daughter, more my son, actually. I think boys tend to be a bit easier to buy. My daughter's fairly traditional, in so much as she'll enjoy playing with the Barbie-type dolls, but she doesn't tend to watch those types of programmes. Whereas, my son would be much more... He'd quite happily watch a cartoon and then you'd buy him characters associated. Like Toy Story 3, an example, where he would have Toy Story characters. She doesn't tend to have that so much. And more the things she plays with outside don't tend to be directly linked to the programmes she watches or the things she plays with.
- Q Okay. Does she have any toys with a digital component, maybe like an educational tablet, like a LeapPad or [inaudible] like that?
- A No, she doesn't, actually.
- Q Nothing?
- A No, very few [?]. We never bought those for them. We did contemplate the Kindle-type devices for them at one point last year, but never really went through with it. At the moment, so far, with the time they spend on it, I think we might invest in a second iPad, but they wouldn't be ones that we would say to them, this is yours and you own it. It would still be, this is a family device which you can have time on.
- Q Yes. Okay. Other than the ones you've already mentioned, are there any other

toys that she has that are internet-enabled?

A No. The only other thing she has electric would be she has her own CD player in her bedroom, but that's connected to the radio, but not internet-enabled.

Q Has she ever had an opportunity to play with any kind of augmented reality or virtual reality toys?

A No, not that I can think of, unless they maybe have done it on a school trip that they've been on, where they've possibly done something like that. That's a possibility, but not something I'm immediately aware of.

Q Okay. How about any kind of artificial intelligence assistants, something like Alexa or Siri?

A No. Strangely, we've avoided that so far. They have, obviously, been round other people's houses and family's houses where they have it and found it highly entertaining.

They've played a bit around on phones, with our phones, where you can ask it questions, but it's not... I have to say I'm probably a bit backward, IT-wise, when it comes to that sort of thing. My sister's very much up with that sort of thing and I'm not, so I walk into her house and she talks to her Alexa to turn the lights on and off. Whereas, we've not gone down that route, in our house. We're probably way behind the curve. So, it's not something we do at home, therefore we've not really introduced them to it ether, at the moment.

Q Okay. Does she play outdoors a lot?

A Weather dependent, I would say. Both kids are really not massive outdoor kids. She's much happier sat in, reading a book, than playing outside. Obviously, when the weather's better, we encourage them outside and they're quite happy to go and play on the bikes, but I would say no. No worse than average, but they're not outdoors kids who would be... She's not, I'd be outdoors every second if I could, if that makes sense.

Q Yes, absolutely. When your daughter's not playing with technology, do you ever see the influence of technology during that time?

A In what sense, sorry?

Q Does she ever take inspiration from her time with technology, maybe with pretend play? Does she pretend to be or do something that she's seen, maybe [inaudible] things like that, or does she use a different language that she might, I don't know, have seen a Youtuber use? Things like that.

A Not necessarily. Well, I wouldn't say it stems from technology. I did hear her the other day talking about... Her and her friend made up their own language and she was explaining that to me, but I don't know whether that's necessarily stemmed directly from technology, things that she's seen, or whether that's just one of those things that kids find funny to have made up themselves, to be honest.

Q Yes. Okay. No worries. I think that question is specifically... We've seen a lot, in different studies, of kids taking an American twang from American Youtubers

and things like [overtalking].

A Oh, really?

Q Yes.

A Yes. And I guess, maybe, that's because we don't let them spend hours on it. They tend to have stuck, so far, to just watching programmes that they already see on TV, rather than necessarily following YouTube channels of specific individuals, shall we say.

Q Yes. Okay. No worries. So, we're getting towards the end of the first set of questions.

This next little bit is specifically about LEGO. Is there much LEGO in the household at all?

A A reasonable amount, yes, and we have more coming for Christmas. It's one of those great presents, isn't it? It's a very easy present to buy because they love doing it, although we're now getting into the realms of the expensive ones. I think that's the problem. And then how much of it is very specific, these days. When I was a kid, I just remember getting a box of LEGO bricks, whereas, now, it's all about the specific item that you want to build. So, yes, I would say no more than any person you would expect in a house, we're fairly average, but, yes, they both have a reasonable amount of LEGO sets that they do reasonably frequently, and more coming.

Q Could you take a guess of how many, just [inaudible]?

A Yes. I would say they've probably got over 20 each, in terms of the different sets you can build, but that ranges from the really small boxes that you can buy for £5 in Tesco to the ones that are coming for Christmas that are more like £50 or £60, or something. So, there's a broad spectrum of what that includes.

Q Yes. Okay. No worries. How about any other kind of LEGO stuff? Things like accessories, any kind of bags, clothing. Any of that?

A No. A T-shirt. A couple of T-shirts we have which were bought for them, but, yes, no, I wouldn't say... No bags or anything like that, but, yes, we do have a couple of LEGO T-shirts that were bought for them.

Q Have your son or daughter seen the LEGO films? Have you seen those as a family?

A Yes.

Q What did we think of those? Enjoy them?

A Yes, very much so. Yes, enjoyed that.

Q Okay. Wonderful. Have you been to Legoland?

A Yes. Not for a while, actually. We went a lot more when the kids were pre-school age because you could obviously go outside weekends and term time, which meant you could go on days where you could do a lot. Kids are not great at queueing, understandably, at a young age. So, you know what these places are

like, now. When you go on a Saturday or Sunday, unless you get lucky, you can stand in a queue for an hour and a half. So, I would say probably not over the last couple of years, but, before that, we used to go... We're not far from Windsor, so we used to go there quite a lot with them.

Q Is it something you'd want to do more in the future [overtalking]?

A Absolutely. I think once they're able to stand and queue. My daughter probably would be better at it, I have to say. But my son, at the age of five, being a boy who can't sit still, standing in a queue for an hour is not really an option without getting a bit out of control.

So, I think once they're much more of the accepting that, if we're going to go, then they have to queue, then, yes, definitely. Because me and my sister are both big theme park fans. We're guilty as sin of taking a day off work together every year and going, without the kids, to Alton Towers. So, it's definitely something they enjoy and, once they're happy with the queueing principle, I think we would definitely take them again.

Q Okay. This next question's a bit more hypothetical. So, what kind of toys or products do you think that LEGO should be developing for the digital age?

A Oh, blimey. Now, there you go. I'm not the most creative person, so that's a difficult one for me. I don't know. I guess, for me, my use of technology and what I imagine they [unclear] is the interactive side of things. I would imagine, possibly, kids being able to create their own LEGO online and then almost possibly being able to get it made, if that makes sense.

Q Yes, absolutely.

A So, something they can build on an iPad with the fun of them enjoying doing that, but then with the ability to actually then almost place that as an order through the company. That's something I could imagine that kids would probably quite enjoy, just seeing it come to reality. I'm not sure, beyond that, to be honest. I think, to be honest, the sky's the limit with technology, these days, so I'm sure that people are much cleverer at this sort of stuff.

I'd be almost interested [?] to do a focus group with kids. I don't know if you do that sort of thing.

Q We do.

A Could you? From the words of... Literally from their mouth. They'd come out with brilliant stuff, I would think.

Q We do and we do exactly that. [Overtalking].

A That would be amazing. I would love to see that.

Q It's great. It really is a good time. They really do have some excellent ideas. Okay. So, that's the end of the first set of questions. Going to move on to the second set, now. This is about your views on children's play and technology. So, when your daughter's playing with technology, who is it that gets to make the decision about what she does, and when she does it, and how she does it?

A At the moment, it's us, completely. Again, maybe we're a bit backward compared to some parents, but we haven't relinquished that control yet. I think, over the next year or two, obviously we need to... We've been talking through with the school about, as they get towards secondary school age, then getting them... They'll need their own phones and that sort of thing. It's don't do that as a shock to the system, as you send them off to secondary school; they need to be brought into it in advance of that.

So, I think that's something, over the next year or two. They're already starting to come home and talk to us about internet safety. She was talking to me the other day about what they were doing and that sort of stuff. So, at the moment, I would say we're probably still in control of everything. But, that's something, over the next 12 to 18 months, I think we need to start to consider differently to make sure that she's equipped with the skills she needs to make sure she's safe herself.

Q Yes. Makes sense. Okay. I'll rephrase this one. Does she ever come to you with things that you've not necessarily heard of or you're not familiar with and asked for your permission to use them or look at them? Maybe a particular kind of content, perhaps, things like that?

A I wouldn't say particular types of content, necessarily, but apps, yes. They had iPads in her primary school that they used, where they'd have lots of gaming apps that they would have time during the week they could just play on them. And so, she would come home and say, oh, I've played on this, can we download this? So, yes, very much. I wouldn't say, beyond that, really, anything in terms of content on YouTube or that sort of stuff. That, really, still stems from her TV viewing habits, as opposed to her just roaming around the internet looking for things.

But, definitely on certain applications, where they've been at school and played those, and she's come home, or she's been round a friend's house and they've been playing on the mum or dad's phone, or where we've been round friends or family, and someone's got a phone, and a game on. That sort of stuff.

Q Yes. Okay. In your view, what kinds of different devices or apps are able to promote play?

A When you say play, sorry, any types of play or...

Q Yes, any kind of play. Just unrestricted, whether that's... You can clarify, if you want, and say, yes, physical play, that's better at that, technological play...

A I don't know, really. Because of the way she is, she... I say intellectual's [?] the wrong word for an eight-year-old because she's quite that way inclined, I think, and most of the stuff she does on there, she finds quite stimulating. So, it promotes the sort of play, in inverted commas, that she enjoys.

I wouldn't say there's anything that she does on technology that necessarily promotes her to suddenly go outside and do physical play, if that makes sense. There are no sorts of applications that she's using at the moment that have really driven any sort of physical play off the basis of technology. I think it's mostly more mental stimulation or the hand-eye coordination type stuff.

Q Yes, absolutely. Do you think, on the other hand, there's any kind of interaction

with technology that might limit her play?

A Not so much, so far. As I said earlier, I think she's probably more naturally a sit in and read a book kind of kid anyway, as opposed to the technology limiting her going outside. If she wasn't on the iPad, she'd probably rather go and read a book than necessarily go outside. So, with the nature of the way she is, I don't think it's limited her outdoor play. I think it's just the way she approaches her spare time, maybe.

Q Yes. Okay. Do you think any of her technology use can promote creativity?

A Yes, I would say so. I think technology used in the right way is brilliant for anything. And certainly, with kids, if you're not just letting them sit there watching videos all the time, then the apps... We've got a friend whose son's autistic and apps have been brilliant for him in developing his hand-eye coordination. I specifically remember an app where it was like buttons dropping down a page and they had to cut, with a pair of scissors, things across the screen, and my daughter loved playing with that.

So, I do think it can develop... It's skills that maybe I wasn't used to growing up. I think technology's like anything. It gets a bad press, but, if you use it in the right way, then there are massive positives that can be taken from it.

Q Yes. Okay. Do you think, on the other hand, any kinds of devices, or apps, or anything like that, do you think they can limit creativity?

A I think if you just let a kid sit there and stare at watching movies, and videos, and essentially TV on the iPad, then, yes, absolutely. Like anything, right? When you see a kid zone out in front of the TV, you can hardly...

You try and talk to them and they're just gone, completely, in their own world. Obviously, sitting them on an iPad, it's the same thing. It's weird. I think people seem to think sitting kids on an iPad isn't quite as bad, sometimes, as letting them sit in front of the TV. Maybe it's because the parents can carry on watching the TV. Whilst the kids are on the iPad, it's okay. But, yes, I would say so, absolutely.

Even interaction with their own parents, if that makes sense. Just talking and having conversations with the kids is the only way you actually get to [?] stimulate them. And one of the things the schools have told us is to get the kids reading as much as possible. So, yes, I think so. It's human interaction. These days, as we all know, people have almost forgotten how to talk to each other on a one-to-one basis, if it's not over a keyboard, sometimes.

Q Okay. That links a little bit to the next question I'm going to ask you. When your daughter's using technology, would you say that she's actively engaged? Is she very interested and focused on what she's doing?

A Yes, very much so. Yes. But, she's like that anyway. In anything she does, she's quite focused. If she's decided to do something, she is very concentrated on it. So, that goes from, I would say, across from non-technology into technology, with her.

Q Yes. Okay. When she's playing with technology, do you think that she finds her play to be meaningful? Is it relevant to her everyday interests?

A Sometimes, on the basis that her schoolwork is online and a lot of the stuff she enjoys doing online. I think it's brilliant these days, I have to say. Learning the times tables, for example. They have, at her school, there's a Times Tables Rock Stars app, which they use and it's like a game, essentially. Learning your times tables has become a game, these days.

And compared to the way I certainly had to learn that sort of stuff, it definitely engages kids who wouldn't otherwise be engaged in learning that sort of thing. So, that's where you can only see the benefits of technology in bringing certain kids into the education system who otherwise would've just been lost to it a little bit. So, yes, I think it's excellent for that.

Q Yes. Okay. You've mentioned that she's a big reader. Does she ever find anything new to read through technology? [Overtalking].

A Not really. No, I wouldn't say she does, I have to say. They do a good job at school of... They have a library and they let them go and pick their own books. I'm not so much a reader, I have to say, and my other half is. And we don't use Kindles or anything like that to read, so she's used to seeing books around the house. So, she's very much still enjoying that side of things and enjoys getting them for presents. So, no, I don't think that has really led her, digitally, into finding new things to read. I think she's been able, so far, to explore that and find that almost directly through contact through school and that sort of thing.

Q Yes. No worries. Okay. When she's playing with technology, do you think that she tries out new things? Does she try to make improvements to what she's doing?

A Not necessarily, so far, I wouldn't say. No, she seems quite happy to keep within the scope of whatever it is she is doing, the app, or the game, or whatever it is.

Q Yes. No worries. Okay. So, that's the second set of questions over. We've got three more to do. This next set is about children's emotions when it comes to playing with technology. So, the first question is do you think that play with technology has an impact on children's emotions and how did that take shape?

A We certainly noticed, when she was younger... It was one of those things. It's very hard to get technology off them once they're using it. So, no matter what you said at the start about how long they had on it, when it came to the point of taking it off them, it would become a very emotional issue. So, she's got a lot better at that as she's got older, I have to say, so that's just probably an age thing.

But, yes, it was one of those things where you'd almost give it to them and, no matter what you said at the start and they were very appreciative of it, the half an hour came to an end and you were in crisis territory, trying to remove it from them. So, yes, in that respect. I think, now, yes, she understands it a lot better, maybe at the age, that it is for a period of time and, when she's doing her schoolwork, it has a certain purpose to it, and that sort of stuff.

00:28:50

So, I think that's a lot better now. I think, like any kid with technology, whether that be traditional TV or the iPad now, they just immerse themselves completely. They've zone out in a world of their own when they're playing with it, so getting conversation out of them or trying to get anything out of them while they're doing it is quite difficult. But, I think that's a fairly natural thing for most kids at that age.

Q Yes. Okay. How would you say that your daughter normally is feeling while she's playing with technology and what kind of range of emotions do you see in her while she's using technology?

A Fairly placid, to be honest. She does get into the games where, obviously, she's trying to get a high score and that sort of stuff. She can get quite worked up, sometimes. She's very competitive naturally. It's something we're struggling with her [?] a little bit. We've been fortunate. She's relatively intelligent, so she's been able to do most things. She's not very good at dealing with things she can't do, at the moment.

So, obviously, when she doesn't achieve something or she gets frustrated she can't do something, that can lead to a bit of an emotional breakdown. But, again, I'm not sure that's necessarily specific to the technology doing that to her. I think that's more just her inbuilt frustrations when she can't do something. So, yes, I don't think that's specific to technology.

Q Okay. Does she ever get bored when she's playing with technology?

A I don't think so, on the basis that we don't let them play for hours on end. I know some people will just leave their kids with the iPad and then, naturally, the kids will put it down and walk off at some point in time. I think, because we tend to have a bit more time limiting factor on her, that the half an hour she has, or that sort of time period, that they will tend to be using that all the time. So, I think, if we let them just play on it, I guess, as I said, naturally, they would eventually become bored, and put it down, and go and find something else to do. But, I think the way we let them access it so far probably doesn't lend itself to that.

Q Okay. No worries. Okay. Next question is about social interaction. So, when your daughter's playing with technology, does she generally interact well with others?

A You mean the people in the same room, I assume you're talking about?

Q Yes, generally.

A Yes. Well, no, I think they zone out. I think she very much goes into her own world, but that's the same with TV, whatever it is. They just become focused on that completely, so no. It's like any kid at that age. You try to ask her a question and it takes about four goes until you get an answer, when they're immersed in something else. Again, maybe because we give them a set time, they're just very focused on, this is it, this is what I'm doing.

Q Yes. Got to get it done. Yes. Do you think that any kind of technology could support more social play?

A I don't know, to be honest. I'm not sure how any of the technology she uses at the

moment could. Most of the technology she uses at the moment, it's very individual technology, be that with iPads and phones. It's normally one person using it at a time, right? Maybe. I'm not sure. Not off the top of my head, I would say, based on what she does at the moment.

Q Okay. No worries. Right. I'm going to move on to the fourth set of questions, now. This is more about your role as a parent in technology mediated play. So, when her play involves technology, do you ever try and play with her?

A Yes. As I said earlier, at bedtimes and stuff, she enjoys these Wordscapes games and that sort of stuff, so we tend to do that together at bedtimes. Not so much when they're watching something they would watch on TV; we would just let them do that. But, when it's games-wise, we would tend to do that sort of thing together, not so much to necessarily control it, but they enjoy doing it together.

And to be honest, the Wordscapes game is a good example because it's an adult game, though, and she's good at that sort of thing and spelling, so she can do it. But, obviously, she gets stuck and, therefore, without the help, she wouldn't enjoy it either because she couldn't do 50% of it. She'd just get stuck all the time, so it needs that adult supervision to make sure that she feels like she's enjoying herself.

Q Yes. Okay. Are there any other particular times that stand out to you when you might play with her, with technology?

A Not especially, no.

Q Okay. No worries.

A No. They might come in in the morning, on a Saturday or Sunday, when we haven't got work or school to get ready for, and the phone will be on the side, and they might pick up the phone and we might mess around, doing a few things on there. She certainly did that when she was younger. That's when they'd normally test out the Siri-type stuff on the phone, where they'd just start talking to the phone in the morning. But, yes, no, not really.

Q Okay. No worries. That kind of leads me a little bit on to the next question. When you're on your technology, things like any phones, any tablets, anything you have like that, of course you mentioned the family iPad, does she ever approach you and ask to join you on the technology? Not to necessarily have it, but join with what you're doing?

A Yes.

Q Yes. How does that [overtalking]?

A Yes. Just normally, if we're sat on the phone, she'll come and ask us, what are you doing, and we'll pretend she... We'll just say we're doing this on the phone or... I don't tend to be on the phone a huge amount.

Like anyone with work, by the time I get home from work and their bedtime, there isn't a huge amount of time in between, anyway. The iPad tends to be something that I would normally only use in the evenings, when they're in bed, or at the weekends, when I've been turfed off the TV and I'm still trying to watch

something. So, the iPad's like my alternative TV at that point in time. I wouldn't tend to be sat on the iPad, playing or doing stuff on my own. I use it almost as an alternative TV.

But, the phone, not so much in the week, just in that limited time period between when I get in and bedtime, anyway. But, if I am, there'll be times when she'll come up, and we might interact, and explain what I'm doing. She's starting to learn how to use the internet as well, in terms of when she has homework, searching on the internet. So, obviously, that's something that she needs to get a bit of education on. So, we sometimes, now, search for things on the internet when she's got a question or that sort of stuff.

Q Yes. Okay. Do you ever initiate play using technology?

A Not so much. Occasionally, maybe, yes, at the bedtime principle, when we're doing various things, as I say, with the Wordscapes, we might get that. So, that tends to help my son a bit more, calming down, give him something to focus on. If he behaves well, he gets to do this. At her age, not so much. So, no, most of the time it's normally an ask from them, I would say.

Q Okay. How about any other members of the family, like extended family members, maybe grandparents? Is there ever any kind of technology you think that she would have access to or experience of when you're not there, if that makes sense?

A Yes. So, there are a couple of things, I'd say, there. One, my mum, their gran, lives locally to us and she looks after them on a Thursday after school, and they would get access to the iPad there, and the TV. So, they would use that. Again, not necessarily unsupervised. My mum would just let them use it, but she's there with them. Specifically, when we go to her other grandparent's house, and her aunt's and uncle's...

Actually, a good example I just thought of, they do have a PlayStation, so they started playing on that a little bit, round there. But, we only see them maybe once every couple of months at their house, so that's not a frequent thing. But, that's something that they might play a bit, round there.

I just think my sister got married last year, so we've got friends who came to that. And to keep her entertained, my friend I've been best mates with for years downloaded games on his phone and gave her the phone to play on, for example, to keep her occupied. So, yes, in general, not really given, necessarily, to just wander off and do nothing with, but, again, controlled environment.

Q Yes. Okay. No worries. That's the fourth set of questions. I've got one set left and this is more about your general perception of technology. Do you think that certain technologies offer more positive or negative experiences for your daughter?

A I genuinely think that everything has both angles to it, if treated properly. I do think, at that young age, it's entirely down to the parents to make sure that they're getting the positive out of anything that they use. So, I don't think any one bit of technology necessarily is good or bad. I think, in all of them, as we talked about earlier, even the hand-eye coordination thing, gaming can be a good thing for

that, but only in moderation, right? The problem is, when you let a kid play on it for four hours back to back, that's when you have a problem. But, yes, we don't have a specific problem with any sort of media, shall we say; it's just dealing with it in a controlled way.

Q Okay. Do you have any concerns about the safety aspects of internet-enabled toys or do you think that you might in the future, if you don't?

A Yes. Again, it's not really something we've really had that much of, so far. So, yes, the natural reaction is to be concerned about something that can connect to the internet that, if the kid's playing with, you have less control over. But, I think we're at that age with her where she's going to be exposed to that more and more naturally. And therefore, that's just something we've got to learn to help educate her on, so that she's able to deal with it.

Q Yes, absolutely. Do you have any concerns about data privacy?

A I can't say I have, specifically, at her age, at the moment. I guess there's only so much information about an eight-year-old that can be out there.

She doesn't have any social media profiles, so that will be the point, I think, when that kicks in. I'm not on social media myself; my other half is. So, that's something that I've never really engaged with properly. I'm thinking, now, I probably need to start doing it, so I'm there when she's there and need to be able to interact with her.

We're fairly lucky in so much as she's got an aunt and a cousin who are younger and trendier, shall we say. So, we feel like we've probably got a few spies in the social media world because she will want to be friends with them when she's on social media. Because they'll be the cool cousin and the cool aunt who she'll be able to look up to, and she'll want to be friends with them. She probably won't want to be friends with us as much. So, we feel like we've probably got a couple of spies there we can rely on in future. But, yes, I think, when social media kicks in, then that's a natural time where that control over information suddenly is lost to the parents.

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

A I wouldn't necessarily say positive or negative, to be honest, on family life. I think what they do with it, I think it's probably a normal part of a kid of that age growing up and learning to use technology. I don't think it impacts us massively, positively or negatively.

Q Okay. Do you have any other concerns about your daughter's technology use that you haven't already mentioned?

A No. No, I wouldn't say so, at the moment. As I say, it's not like they have their own devices that we can't control. And I think, at the moment, we feel, probably because we can control it, that, therefore, we're able to influence it in any which way we feel we need to.

Q Yes. No worries. Okay. Last question. What advice or guidance would you offer

new parents on issues relating to technology use?

A I would probably say just be open-minded, and just search out as much information as you can, and talk to schools, and friends, and that sort of thing. I think it's very easy to use your own view of the world and prejudices to decide what they should have access to. And realistically, as kids are growing up now, everything's very different to how I certainly grew up as a kid, and you can't shut them off from that because that creates its own problems for them socially, at school. While there has to be boundaries and every parent has different boundaries, completely shutting them away from it is never going to work and only causes them greater problems would be my view.

Q Yes. Okay. Thank you very much. That's all the questions.