

## Teenage Technology Brain

Are you between the ages of 11 and 17? Do you ever find yourself using technology for more than 2 hours a day? If so, you may want to read this. Recent research shows that you could be at an increased risk for brain damage. Recent research shows that preteen's and teen's brains aren't fully developed, therefore you should limit your screen time to an hour or less a day.

One reason you should limit your screen time is that it will boost your social awareness and ability to understand nonverbal cues. Deborah Netburn, an author from the L.A. Times, says that just five days away from screens improves preteen's ability to understand nonverbal cues. This proves that in just five days preteens are able to pick up nonverbal cues better. Yalda Uhls, who runs the L.A. office of the nonprofit Common Sense Media, states "I've been at parties where the kids are all hanging out but instead of looking at each other they are staring at their phones." Kids are never talking face to face with each other, they are just staring at their devices. This is proof that technology is affecting preteens' abilities to interact with each other in meaningful ways.

There is more support for the idea that technology is interfering with teens' social interactions. According to Aric Sigman, preteens and teens are spending seven to eight hours online instead of interacting face to face. This proves that places where there is form of technology preteens and teens are spending most of their day on a device of some sort. Sigman also stated "face to face interaction has dramatically decreased since it was introduced." Kids have increased the amount of time spent on the internet since it was first introduced. Sigman also thinks that time spent on the internet is negatively associated with time spent with family. This means that kids are spending less time with family and more time on the internet. Therefore, technology is not only hurting your developing brain, it is hurting the quality of your family.

Too much technology can also change the way we think and behave. Aric Sigman conducted a test to see if heavy media multitaskers would do better than those who didn't. Those that didn't performed far better on a series of tasks than those that did heavy media multitask. This proves that if you do heavy media multitask, you will perform far worse. This proves that technology can change the way we think and behave.

If you are reading this article on the computer, I suggest you print it out, relax on the couch, and discuss it with your family. Step away from the screen and tune into your brain.

Aric Sigman, "The ONLINE EDUCA Debate 2009 (Part 2 of 10)" (video), Dec. 2009, as found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRI4DPu6WGc>.