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The Parent App: Understanding Families In The Digital Age

Synopsis

Ninety-five percent of American kids have Internet access by age 11; the average number of texts a teenager sends each month is well over 3,000. More families report that technology makes life with children more challenging, not less, as parents today struggle with questions previous generations never faced: Is my thirteen-year-old responsible enough for a Facebook page? What will happen if I give my nine year-old a cell phone? In The Parent App, Lynn Schofield Clark provides what families have been sorely lacking: smart, sensitive, and effective strategies for coping with the dilemmas of digital and mobile media in modern life. Clark set about interviewing scores of mothers and fathers, identifying not only their various approaches, but how they differ according to family income. Parents in upper-income families encourage their children to use media to enhance their education and self-development and to avoid use that might distract them from goals of high achievement. Lower income families, in contrast, encourage the use of digital and mobile media in ways that are respectful, compliant toward parents, and family-focused. Each approach has its own benefits and drawbacks, and whatever the parenting style or economic bracket, parents experience anxiety about how to manage new technology. With the understanding of a parent of teens and the rigor of a social scientist, Clark tackles a host of issues, such as family communication, online predators, cyber bullying, sexting, gamer drop-outs, helicopter parenting, technological monitoring, the effectiveness of strict controls, and much more.The Parent App is more than an advice manual. As Clark admits, technology changes too rapidly for that. Rather, she puts parenting in context, exploring the meaning of media challenges and the consequences of our responses-for our lives as family members and as members of society.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Media scholar Clark examines how various media are consumed by American children and teens today and how families make decisions about the role of media in their lives. Clark and her team interviewed dozens of families from all socioeconomic backgrounds, uncovering both major and subtle differences in kidsÃ¢â¬â„¢ media use and their parentsÃ¢â¬â„¢ attitudes about time spent online, texting, or playing games. At the core is ClarkÃ¢â¬â„¢s thesis that digital interaction is simply a new peer culture space in which many of the same old parenting questionsÃ¢â¬â•setting guidelines, teaching awareness, determining when to interveneÃ¢â¬â•apply. Parents today will agree that one extraordinary new stress, however, is the emotional work spent keeping up with new media and their effects. Clark doesnÃ¢â¬â„¢t comment on policy and regulation until awfully late in the book, and one wonders how quickly any book on ever-changing media will date. However, the stories are engaging, and ClarkÃ¢â¬â„¢s analyses are very accessible, particularly in her concluding pages, when she summarizes different best practices for parents seeking guidance in making such important decisions. --Annie Tully

"Clark provides a detailed, savvy, and scholarly view of how families are handling both the risks and benefits of the digital age." --Publishers Weekly "For any parent out there who is anxious about your child's use of social media: this book is for you. The Parent App provides important insight into the role of technology in contemporary middle class family life, combining the perspectives of parents and youth in order to highlight where there are tensions and confusion. Using a delightful mix of narrative and analysis, Clark invites parents to understand what is unfolding so that they don't feel so trapped." --Danah Boyd, Senior Researcher at Microsoft Research "Drawing from rich and evocative stories of the everyday lives of diverse families, Lynn Schofield Clark provides crucial analysis and insights into how media can be tied to productive connection as well as destructive tension. Anyone with an interest in how families negotiate media use will find this book highly engaging and informative, and parents will find perspectives they can apply right away in their own struggles over media in their homes." --Mimi Ito, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Chair in Digital Media and Learning, University of California, Irvine "The Parent App is exactly what the best of 'apps' should be: leading us skillfully and swiftly to a field of interest that will help us navigate our lives more fluidly. Insightful about the dilemmas of everyday life that every American

family faces in the digital age, Lynn Schofield Clark pays close attention to how people's communication habits take shape in distinct social milieux and across generations. Thoughtful, smart, and original, The Parent App is one of those rare books that genuinely speaks to the academy as well as broader audiences who will be relieved to put down their smartphones and pick up this terrific volume." --Faye Ginsburg, David B. Kriser Professor of Anthropology, New York University "In this strongly argued book, Lynn Schofield Clark's thoughtful empirical investigations illuminate the often confused and contradictory responses of society, parents, and scholars towards the fast-changing digital environment in which our children are growing up." --Sonia Livingstone, author of Children and the Internet "Clark's research and richly textured interviews yield tips that can help parents use social media to cope with work-family stresses in ways compatible with their particular values and needs. This thoughtful book challenges doomsday predictions about the impact of digital technology on individuals but offers disturbing evidence that the current organization and context of social media may exacerbate rather than reduce social differences." --Stephanie Coontz, author, The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap "Clark's treatment reflects her dual role as researcher and mother and will be of interest to both scholars and parents." --Library Journal "Clark offers an impressive treatise on mobile technologies and the changing dynamics of family communication in the digital age... Writing in an inviting prose style, Clark effectively manages to seamlessly engage readers from her dual perspective as a parent and scholar, and she convincingly outlines the myriad ways in which digital technologies are redefining how families communicate in their daily lives. Her data are fresh, the presentation is accessible, and the argumentation is sound." --CHOICE "In highly accessible prose, Clark tells a series of engaging stories that illustrate the complex issue of how family members interact with each other as they make their way in a brave new world of mobile and digital media. ...the book contains numerous sections which could easily be excerpted for discussions of both the perceived aptness of the characterization of social class differences and the perceived appropriateness of particular teenage behavior and parental responses." --Contemporary Sociology

Incredible insight and recommendations.

As a media researcher with an interest in children and the media, this is an excellent account, elegantly delivering on years of academic research in contemporary terms. Highly recommended.

Hihetetlen, de igaz, a digitÃƒÂ¡lis korban alig van kÃƒÂ¶nyv, ami a csalÃƒÂ¡dok egÃƒÂ©szÃƒÂ©t

vizsgÃƒÂ¡lja a digitÃƒÂ¡lis korban. Az elÃƒâ |Ã â ˆkÃƒÂ©pe csupÃƒÂ¡n csak 1. Ez pedig Don Tapscott Growing up Digital cÃƒÂ- mÃƒâ |Ã Â mÃƒâ |Ã Â ve, amit 2001-ben adott ki az Inforum magyar nyelven.

Digital media are affecting every family. This book selects a small sample of families for study and draws conclusions. This is absolutely a crucial subject affecting the development of children and their interaction with peers and family. I think it is worthwhile for anyone raising a child. Digital media is extremely attractive to children starting very early---certainly by 6 or 7 in my experience (4 grandchildren). The conclusions are valuable and the appendices B and C excellent (other resources and a nice Digital and Mobile media Agreement suggested for use between parents and children). I found the text slow going with lots of new words and terms but you get it after a while. I was troubled that the sample of people did not seem representative of the majority of families and that much was made of disadvantages within families with only one parent or without enough money to keep up with richer families. Everyone is figuring out how to access digital hardware (phones, computers, flat screen TV) How it's being used is what matters and every family must figure that out on their own. This book can help, but it does take time and effort to slog through to the good stuff.

This is an important book. The author's interviews with families are insightful. I recommend The Parent App to any parent who wants to understand the positive and negative aspects of the internet, computers, smart phones, etc. for children.

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