

## **Media and digital literacy**

Digital devices are now surrounding our children from the day they are born, whether this be via Tv's, Ipads, games consoles or phones, but do parents and professional practitioners really understand the effectiveness of digital devices being used by children. Solon, O. (2016) reported that during a study in France in 2015 they discovered that 58% of children aged two and under had used a tablet or mobile phone. The amount of time a child should spend on digital devices and the age limits for social media apps have recently become an up to date topic in the news that has lots of people talking and sharing their opinions. A recent study by Ofcom (2019) who are the regulators for the communication services that we use daily such as TV and internet, found that in the UK children aged 5-15 years old now spend around 20 minutes more a day online than they do in front of a TV set. This means that these children are spending on average just over 2 hours a day online and just under two hours watching TV. Tablets and televisions are just two of the most widely used digital devices by children and babies, a group of researchers at Iowa university studied more than 200 videos of babies using tablets on YouTube and reported that 50% of the 12- 17-month-old babies they observed had a moderate ability when using the devices and by two years old over 90% of them had a moderate ability. Ipads are commonly used by babies and young children because of their easy to use touch screen interface, when a child accidentally goes to grab the phone off their parents, they will realise that their touch caused a reaction on the screen, and because of this tablets and smart phones are easily used by them. Coccozza (2014) believes that for very young children, there may be benefits in being able to handle tablets before they have the motor skills to handle other items in their surrounding environment. This statement has been supported by the Sticky mittens study 2002. This study involved very young children who were too young to actually grab and handle items. Velcro gloves were put on the children so that they could then snag Velcro fitted toys by swiping at them. The findings that were published by the Duke University (2002: 1) suggested that 'even before infants acquire motor skills for manipulating objects, they are developmentally ready for such

interactions such as handling tablets. By having the items attached to their hand they were able to easily interact and explore the items without dropping it or losing grip etc. This evidence shows why tablets can be so easily used by young babies because if they are put on their laps or in front of them whilst they are laying down the baby will be able to interact and navigate their way around the device without getting fed up of it moving away from them. Whilst the baby or young child is on the floor with the tablet, they will be developing their fine motor skills as well as their hand eye coordination. The idea of children exploring and experimenting with Ipads for themselves without being taught can be associated with Piaget theory on little scientists. After looking at Piaget's theories, Papert (1991) looked at working with children and how they use digital tools. This led to him then developing his own pedagogical theory of constructionism which stated that children actively construct knowledge through experience, known now in schools as learning by doing. (Papert 1991 cited in Caldwell and Bird, 2015:121).

More and more parents are being seen out in public restaurants etc. with their child using a tablet. This is mainly because of the fact that they are small enough to fit in a changing bag and therefore parents do not need to be taking an extra bag of toys out with them to occupy their child or pacify them should they become distressed. The endless room for different apps means there will be at least one game on their tablet that they will enjoy. Ipads can be described as not being a toy themselves but a toy box full of toys. As well as being used for apps and games a lot of tablets will now have apps for different television providers meaning that their child can watch endless hours of back to back episodes of their favorite shows. Even in houses children can be observed using tablets as another television within the home, so that the adults can still access their shows on the main TV.

When children are using tablets to play interactive games, they can be incredibly beneficial as they offer the child to not only develop their hand and eye coordination but research by the Joan Ganz Cooney center found that certain apps can greatly improve a child's vocabulary and math skills. There is also evidence that children with cognitive delays can boost their language and social interactions through the use of tablets. Non-verbal children and children with additional learning

needs are given tablets in school as a way of communicating with staff and pupils. Their tablets can then be locked with a password to that specific app meaning that they couldn't click off and start playing games. These apps such as Grid player can be personalised to each child with words and phrases that they would need to use to communicate. In the same way a child would use a picture exchange communication systems (PECS) book they then select the relevant words and either present this to the teacher or they can use the speak button and the tablet will read aloud what they have selected. By having this facility children don't need to carry large book of symbols around their necks as previously used they can now just carry their Ipad. This not only promotes their independence but also their sense of wellbeing. Grid player can also be used in different languages meaning that pupils with English as additional language (EAL) can quickly communicate with staff and pupils allowing them to develop their knowledge of English words and make friends with peers.

Within school settings, I pads and computers are being used more and more because of the implementation of the digital competence framework (DCF). This frame work is very similarly set up the Literacy and Numeracy framework (LNF) however the DCF focuses in on skills that will help learners thrive in an increasingly digital world. Welsh government (2018). The DCF is now as important in schools as the LNF and needs to be embedded holistically across the whole school. Information communication technology (ICT) with in schools now needs to be used throughout all areas of learning (AoLE) examples of this are, using hand writing apps like hairy letters to practice hand writing skills, or playing colour matching games in Maths, or creating collages on the computer during Art and design. Some of these interactive activities appeal to children because of their repetitive nature. Maria Montessori believes that a child must first learn the fundamental skills before they can develop their speed, increased confidence and mastery. It is only through repetition that this becomes possible. Repetition doesn't necessarily mean doing the same activity over and over again but just practicing the same skill. So a child could practice their letter formation on paper with a pen, in sand with a paint brush and then also on the Ipad with their finger or stylus. The interactive element of the tablet means that if children make a

mistake the game will instantly make a noise, or a character may pop up on the screen telling them to try again. This then makes the activity game like and the children will want to improve to get the desired outcome from the game.

With most games on tablets whether that be educational or free times they offer themselves to be interactive. A child will have to choose the correct icon or follow verbal instructions to correctly complete the game, however this isn't the case with tv programs for children. In programs such as Micky mouse club house or even more educational tv programs like Something special, children are encouraged to participate by pointing at the screen once they identify the correct answer or copying the movements on screen. However even if children get these questions wrong, so they find the square instead of the circle the tv character will always wait a few seconds for a response and then praise the child for doing it correctly. This may not be the correct answer so if they consistently choose the wrong answer, they will be programming their brain to believe that a square is actually a circle etc. When children are watching these programs parents and carers might not be around to be the more knowledgeable other provide the correct answer and explain to the child. This lends itself to believe that in an Ipad VS TV situation for the use of educational games and teaching I pads, would prove more successful because they can be considered the more knowledgeable other because they will inform your child that they got it wrong and will require a correct response before being able to progress. The use of a digital device being used as the more knowledgeable other can be associated with Vygotsky's theory on children learning through more knowledgeable others. (Vygotsky 1978 cited in Kozulin et al, 2003:291) stated that students should peruse understanding independently and at times acting and at other times learning from more knowledgeable peers. Today this theory can be adapted to fit the digital world we live in and the devices that children and adults are using daily can be seen as the more knowledgeable other. If we wanted to know the answer to something, we don't know both adults and children can use digital devices to do this. Not only are children learning different skills from games and programs, but they too can find the answer to things via the internet even if they are not able to type the words. Internet search bars and in-house devices

such as Alexa or a google chrome pod can now all be activated and used via voice control, meaning children don't need to be able to type or spell if they want to know something.

Televisions are now an inescapable part of family life in nearly all households and with like everything in life, we are not encouraged to over indulge in TV watching especially smaller children. There is often a generally negative approach to allowing children to watch TV because people feel that it can decrease the amount of exercise they are receiving. However Gunter and McAleer (2005) believe that TV's can have a positive impact on viewers but these aspects are generally not broadcast in news and media as they do not make as good stories as the negative impacts. For example through programs viewers can be educated on topics and facts that they may not have been able to learn via another source and children are able to develop their intellectual skills. Televisions do influence children but it's how we allow them to be influenced that makes the difference, there are many different types of children's programs available to them now via digital TV such as Sky or Virgin but children are now able to access hidden features within smart TV's so that they can watch Netflix or even YouTube. Therefore if a specific programme the child wants to watch isn't on live TV they are always likely to find an episode somewhere because of the use of smart TV's. There are many positive and negative aspects of all types of digital devices especially TV's and tablets but as long as they are used in moderation and where possible with the use of a supervising adult, the child will be able to enjoy whilst developing new skills and knowledge.

## **Section 2**

The last 2 weeks of this term we have been learning about all things Welsh, ready to celebrate St David's day with our school Eisteddfod celebrations when we return to school after half term. As part of the Eisteddfod a list of different categories have been given out to staff that children can enter, either by completing activities in school or at home. As a class we choose to create a Welsh collage. To try and incorporate as many different elements in to our entry as possible I tried to come up with an activity that was suitable for everyone and didn't require too much adaptation for our pupils with special educational needs with in the class, but also whilst trying to keep it play based and child lead to incorporate the foundation phase as we are a reception class. The activity chosen required the children to create a poster or collage on their Ipads using only things around the school that they considered to be Welsh or to remind them of Wales.

The activity is going to be for pupils to create a collage on the Ipad using the Pic collage app, the best 3 collages will be entered in to the school Eisteddfod. As there are 25 pupils in the class aged between 5-6 years old, 1 teaching assistant and our current college student who is on placement with us, will take 5 groups of 5 children out at different times of the day, over 2 days to ensure they all have a turn. The pupils will have access to the whole school building and both yards and outdoor areas to offer them a wide range of items they could photograph. The activity will take no longer than 5- 10 minutes to prepare, just enough time to allow pupils to find their own Ipad and put their coats on if needed. I have allocated 45 minutes to 1 hour for this activity to take place whilst the other pupils are in class completing a separate activity. However this timing is flexible and when pupils have finished, they can return to class, as and when they are ready. The only resources required for this activity will be their Ipads but pupils will have to charge their own Ipads the day before when instructed to do so by staff to ensure they are fully charged for the activity. The main aim of this activity is to incorporate ICT in to an Art session through the use of play. The children will be in control of their Ipads and can take

photos of anything around the school that they feel reminds them of Wales. The role of the adults will be to offer verbal prompting by using phrases like, 'look, a Welsh daffodil' but they cannot make the children take a photo. It is ok if the children have a poster with no Welsh items at all, as it is a child lead and play based activity. (Vygotsky cited in Briggs and Hansen, 2012: 6) believes that play provides an important context for learning and development which is why within the foundation learning through play is considered an essential way of learning. Briggs and Hansen. (2012) support Vygotsky's beliefs and have stated that the most important thing about play based learning activity is the dialogue through which the children can communicate their developing ideas and for the adults to interact and navigate them through the minefield of potential misunderstandings and social interactions.

The activity will have direct links to the Digital competency framework (DCF) as it will link in to several strands. From the citizenship strand, it will relate straight to section 1.1 and 1.1 A which are the C step, and this says that children will be able to access the Ipad by either swiping across on the home screen or being able to enter the 4-digit code. The majority of the children will be achieving 1.1A for using the 4-digit code however some pupils still require help to do so, therefore this also allows us to determine which pupils need to practice this and we can then use it as their ICT target in the Summer term individual education plans (IEP's). Under the producing strand pupils will need to be able to show that they can handle and use a device with care to comply with section 1.2. This will be easily demonstrated if a pupil is able to maneuver around the school, whilst taking pictures and not dropping the Ipad. Pupils will be allowed to practice section 3.1 which is to show an awareness of what is needed to complete a digital task. By giving the pupils verbal instructions telling them that they will be going out to take photos, it will be up to them what devices they will be required to get. This activity lends itself nicely to the Education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC) as it allows pupils to go outside and explore their surroundings, which links in with the area of the natural environment. The ESDGC network 2009 has stated that when children are working in line with this topic, they should be developing respect for all living things and acknowledge the relationship between people and the environment. To support this pupils will be encouraged

not to pick any Daffodils or any other flowers etc. they see in the outdoor garden, only to look, take photos and smell them. As pupils are doing this activity to find out about Welsh items around us every day and to then have their posters used in the Eisteddfod they are learning about the identity and culture aspect of the ESDGC. Estyn 2013 has stated that The Welsh Government is now challenging schools through the ESDGC to provide opportunities for the pupils to consider global issues, and to make the link between what is personal, local, national and global and to then be able to engage in culturally diverse experiences. The Wales online, 2011 has said that the aim of an Eisteddfod is to show off Welsh culture. It also gives us a nice warm feeling that we belong to a country that has its own language, culture and identity. A report by Estyn in 2011 which looked at the evaluation of learning in the outdoors for children under 5 in the foundation phase highlighted that pupil's wellbeing, behaviours and physical development have all improved as a result of outdoor learning. However they did highlight that they felt that the outdoors were not being used enough in Wales to develop skills in areas such as mathematics and ICT. This activity allows pupils to not only to hunt and explore around the schools but also uses a wide range of outdoors setting, they can go around the yard, fields, outdoor class room or sensory garden. Rowe and Humphries (2012) highlighted that through ICT in schools' children are able to bring the outdoors in to the school. This extends our appreciation of experiences both in and out of school. Linking in ICT with the outdoors but also holistically embedding in it to other areas of learning (AOLe) is something that is currently being encouraged by Donaldson's plan for successful futures. In Professor Graham Donaldson's recommendations on the 2014 report in to Successful futures he suggested that there should be a significantly better and more creative use of technology in the teaching and learning of Welsh. He also suggests that the argument for treating digital competency in the same way as literacy and numeracy is becoming more compelling. This is because of the fact that our children are already living in a digital world, and their personal, social and educational lives are increasingly intertwined with technology various different forms. Donaldson then went on to say that he feels that full participation in modern society and the work place already demands increasingly high

levels of digital competence. Therefore the review carried out takes the view that the DCF should be developed in schools to create the progression in children and young people's learning.

As I have a child in my class who has additional learning needs, they will be accompanied around by their 1:1 when their group goes out to take photos. To ensure that all children are catered for in this activity another of my pupils who is partially sighted will have use of their Prologi. Human ware (no date) describes their device as being the first personal vision assistant that is both a desk top and hand help magnifier as well as being a tablet with many other uses. The device holds a specific tablet that can have apps down loaded on to as normal so that the child will be accessing the same facilities as the others but the Prologi allows them to magnify in on work and items that they may not ordinarily be able to see, through the use of the larger screen. As this device is portable it allows them the freedom and independence to be able to move around the school and from class to class with out being limited by where they can sit or what they can see.

To ensure this activity lies with in the rules of health and safety the correct ratio of staff and pupils will be sent out in groups as well as the school having a indoor and outdoor based risk assessment in place that allows any activity to be carried out with in the school groups, but staff will encouraged to complete a visual risk assessment when out and about and to look for any potential hazards that wouldn't have been accounted for in the risk assessment. Once pupils have completed their walk around the school and are happy, they have collected enough photos they will be taken back to the library where they will open the Pic collage app on their tablet, they will then be able to choose a background colour and change the size of their photos whilst developing their fine motor skills. The pupils will then have the option to add text and clip art images to their collage posters to make them as exciting or plain as they want. The fine touch required to manipulate the sizing of the photos will be developed by the use of the fine motor skills. The pupils gross motor skills will also be developed as they will be required to develop a sense of coordination and balance as they may have to stand in unusual positions to take the photos or bend down on to the floor.

The pupils finished posters will be saved to their online J2E, Hwb Cymru accounts. The pupils will be shown how to do this step by step by following the teaching assistant who will be modeling what to do and ensuring all pupils have completed the step before progressing on to the next step. Having staff model the correct way of completing the task can be loosely associated with the Bandura's experiment with the bobo dolls which he used to prove that children learn through imitation and copying rather than genetic factors. This ability to imitate and copy the adult was called modeling. Ryalls et al (2000). By the pupil's digital work being stored online and accessed via a unique user name and password for each child we are creating the equivalent of their work files and books but online. As we are not constantly printing our digitally created work, we are allowing ourselves to become more environmentally aware it allows itself to a more sustainable way of saving the pupils work and saving paper and ink.

There are many positive and negative aspects of using ICT with young children but with the current implementation of successful futures and the way ICT can be used to enhance areas of learning within schools it appears to be the way forward.

# Keeping your children safe online!



Information and support  
for parents and carers.

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## Setting boundaries

When your children are online it is essential that you discuss boundaries with them. These boundaries need to include, what sites they are allowed to access, how long they can spend on a device. You should also consider what rooms your child is allowed unsupervised access to devices so you can monitor their online safety.



'Parenting in this digital age is hard  
but it does not mean it's impossible'  
(Hancock 2018).

## Parental consent

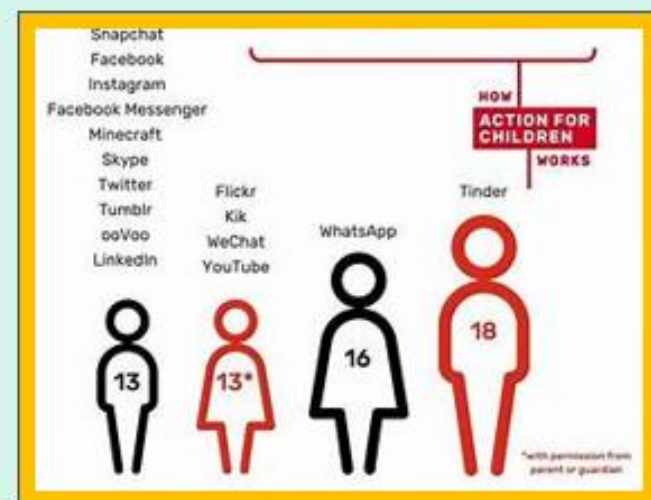
Gaming devices such as play stations and Xboxes provide children with a variety of interesting activities and ways for young people to engage with their friends and family. When setting up these devices you will be given the opportunity to set up parental controls so you can manage your child's usage, however this is not essential for the device to be set up and made operational.

## Age limits

All social media sites and apps will have an age limit required of the user. A survey by BBC's Newround (2016) reported that the majority of 10-12 years old interviewed admitted that they have 1 or more accounts with different platforms despite being below the legal age limit. The image below from Action for children clearly outlines the age limits for different sites.

As well as setting up parental controls, parents and carers should always check the PEGI age on the games they are purchasing for their children. The Pan European Games Information (PEGI) age rating system for interactive games is there to help you determine whether a certain game is appropriate for your child. (Xbox 2019).

These games have age rating because of the content included in the game they could be playing, such as bad language, reference to drug taking, gun use and or disturbing scenes.



NSPCC and O2 have co-created a website called **Net aware**, which includes reviews and information for different social media platforms.

Some Apps for children are free but parents and carers need to be observant that their card details are not stored on their devices as the apps often have in app purchases where children buy extra lives or kit for their character etc.

Visit- [safetinternet.org.uk](https://www.safetinternet.org.uk) for more in-depth information about protecting your child on their gaming device.

### Cyber bullying

The NSPCC describes cyber bullying as being a form of bullying that takes place online, but unlike bullying, cyber bullying can follow your child where ever they go.

There are many different types of cyber bullying that children can experience. Some of the most common are-

- Abusive texts
- Sharing embarrassing videos/ photos online.
- Setting up a hate group against someone.
- Encouraging self-harm.

You may not know if your child is victim to online bullying, so it is imperative you talk to your child and keep an eye out for anything with their behaviours that doesn't seem normal.

South Wales police recommend if possible that you save as many of the posts/ messages so they can be used as proof. Also if possible, try to encourage your child not to respond, by doing so they can sometimes escalate the problem.

### Child exploitation

The NSPCC describes Child sexual exploitation as being a form of sexual abuse. It usually starts by being groomed online. The exploitation It is when children are put in to exploitative relationships and receive gifts, money and affection as a result of performing sexual activities or performing sexual activities on the groomers.

This initial online grooming usually takes place via social media or online interactive games. This is because fake profiles can be easily made using photos of children the same as those they are grooming, so they strike up a conversation and be-friend them.

Talk to your children about the importance of only accepting friend requests from people they actually know or that you, their parents/ carer has approved.

**2,400 children were victims of child sexual exploitation between Aug 2010- October 2011** (Great Britain, Children's commissioner 2012).

If you suspect that your child is being abused online or you don't like the way someone is communicating with your child, contact child exploitation operation protection command (CEOP) [www.ceop.police.uk](https://www.ceop.police.uk) and make an official report online with them or if your child is in immediate danger call 999.

*You can also contact CEOP if someone is*

- Making your child do inappropriate things via camera.
- Suggesting they meet face to face
- Sending nude images to your child.

### Trolling

There is no official definition on the term trolling, but urban dictionary describes it as being the deliberate act of making random controversial or hurtful comments to people on the internet with the intent of causing and online fight/ argument and attracting other users to engage.

### How long should my child be online?

In 2013 Dr Strasburger released a policy for the American academy of pediatrics. In this policy he suggests that a child should spend no more 2 hours online each day although this does have an exception for online homework or research. This policy caused a lot of criticism from parents of teenagers who said it was impossible to limit their child's usage due to the back lash they were receiving.

Since then things have started to change, on 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2019 the UK's first ever screen time guidance was released by the Royal college of pediatrics and child health (RCPCH). In this they stated that it was impossible to recommend appropriate screen time limits for children as there is not enough evidence to confirm that it is actually harmful.

In the report they suggest that the amount of time parents allow children to spend on electronic devices or online should depend on factors such as a child's developmental age, the individuals needs and value the family put on positive activities such as family time, exercise and sleep. They also suggest that only when screen time replaces these activities could there be a risk to a child's wellbeing. However other than this there is nothing to suggest that the internet and the use of electronic devices is actually harmful in itself.

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