

Q = Main interviewer (Cath)

Q2 = Second interviewer (Beth)

A = Mum (Diane)

B = Dad (Julian)

C = Child 1 (Simon, boy, 8)

D = Child 2 (Harvey, boy, 6)

Q I'll start recording. I just would like to ask you some questions about the connection between playing with technology and children's emotions and their sort of well-being, and I just wondered what you kind of, if you have any thoughts about how technology my affect children's emotions.

A I think that's why I'm really reluctant because it makes them angry. If I ask them to stop it or turn the telly off when they don't want to they get very cross about it at times. Simon gets a red cheek. He's always got it. When he was little he used to get it, but he gets it now if he's been doing something quite intense for a while, it's quite weird.

Q Yeah.

A And so...but they do, there's a lot of negotiation to get them to turn things off, I think we have to use timers and things really.

Q Yeah. So is that kind of the predominant sort of emotion that comes out when they're playing with tech?

A Yeah. I mean obviously they have fun while they're doing it and you can hear them laughing and giggling while they're doing it, but yeah when it's time to turn it off it's definitely...the anger inside comes out at I think.

Q Why do you think that is?

A I'm ruining their fun! I don't know, I mean they get so absorbed in it don't they, to the exclusion that if you ask them something sometimes they don't even answer.

Q What sort of circumstances are they asked to turn it off?

A For tea, or bedtime, if we're going out. I mean as I said before, they don't have free reign anyway so....

Q Yeah. Do you notice that then there's a difference between that and other toys, if they're playing with something else?

A Yeah definitely. Like playing Bingo and cards and things like that and board games. I mean I think it depends if they're tired as well. But yeah they don't get as cross. They might get cross if they lose but they don't get cross about having to put it away as much.

Q So is their crossness sort of directed towards whoever is making them turn it off?

A Yeah definitely.

Q So do you think there's a more general connection in that sense between children's well-being. What do you think about technology in their sort of general well-being, I suppose how they just generally feel?

A Well I don't know, I mean I think that's why I'm encouraging sport because I'm hoping that....I don't mind if they have an interest in it. I mean Simon particularly is very good with computers, he helps kids out in his class, and it isn't because we let him have free reign, he's just naturally....aptitude.

Q He's got a natural sort of aptitude for it.

A Yeah and understands it. I mean he put another profile on my Kindle, I don't know how he did it. I suddenly didn't have any data storage and I couldn't work out why, and he'd added a profile, sneaking it, so he could do stuff on it. But yeah.

Q So he's got like a natural gift for it.

A Yeah definitely.

Q How do you feel about sort of....do you get a sense that you sort of want to build on that?

A So at the moment we sort of compromise. So a few evenings a week, once we've put them both to bed and then Simon will come back down once Harvey's asleep, because at the moment I don't want to have the argument with Harvey about 'he's two years older than you'. They see themselves as the same age don't they really. So he's happy – like this week he's been researching his homework and then he's on it, and he does maths on it, but because it's computer he's happy to do it. If I asked him to write it down he wouldn't want to do it.

Q OK. So he has sort of extra time when Harvey's asleep to be on the computer?

A Yeah. I mean they don't get it in the week generally, but I'll let him do his homework on it. Or he's got a scratch game he can play, so they've been learning how to code at school, which Simon's done a little programme for. So I don't mind him doing stuff like that that's slightly educational, ???

Q And how does Simon seem when he's sort of involved in using technology sort of from an emotional point of view?

A So in an evening I'll ask him to turn it off and he's happy to because he knows he's had that extra time.

Q Oh OK.

A Because he's a bit older I think he's getting better about turning it off. I think it's when they're younger. But if I leave my phone on the side they'll go and get it me, and I'm like 'boys, I don't need it, it's just there'.

Q Ah OK.

A So they want to fiddle with...they know my PIN, there's nothing on it, but they'll fiddle with it and things.

Q Yeah, so it's although sort of automatically you're reaching for it.

A Yeah.

Q Thinking about emotions, what kind of types of tech play or play involving technology do they seem to really enjoy, what sort of seems to really get them sort of uplifted and showing sort of, being really sort of like joyful play?

Time 5:00

A We've got like a silly game that we haven't played it for a while that you do different things, like cut someone's hair, and shave them, it's like an interactive one. So a bit like a Wii but it isn't. And that one's always quite good fun. Like swatting flies, making a pizza. And then you can play and it scores it obviously. They beat me hands down. We haven't played that for a while. And they like a lot of stuff where they can play against each other. So we've got stuff where they can play against each other, and on the DS's they do a lot of that, or texting each other, but it's not online. But then they've got into watching Stampy, which is the Minecraft boy isn't it?

Q Yeah.

A They love that. I don't really understand why they love it but they do.

Q It's watching videos of people playing the game isn't it?

A Yeah. But Simon went to a friend's....so if they go to friends' houses they obviously play a lot more computers because it's a treat. So he went to a friend's house the other night who's got a computer in his bedroom, and I was like 'oh well that's nice for him isn't it'. But Simon had got him into this world, he'd jumped into it, and he didn't know how to do it, but Simon had worked it out. Maybe he'd watched it on telly, I don't know. But yeah so that, they do that, but I think it is social for them playing that sort of thing.

Q Yeah I was going to ask, because it's like when they play.... the pizza game sounds really good, is that on a games console?

A Yeah. So they've got like a, not a wand, like a thin....so you're aiming it at the TV, and we've got a little camera, so it's at the TV.

Q That sounds really good. What, and you have to give the character a haircut or....?

A Yeah. So there's....I don't know if it is pizza but you do something with food, chop food I think it is. But you cut, like on the head, it will have a red bit and a purple bit and you have to shave the red bit. So you keep doing it and you have to get it all off, you can swat some flies.

Q Do they ever get sort of a bit silly with it or try and....

A Yeah.

Q They do?

A Yeah.

Q Do they sort of follow the rules, or do they see what they can do with it or...

A It depends what mood they're in.

Q Right.

A But then the minute they start being silly, that's the end of it. I mean not stopping it but then all the games are silly and they just mess around, and I don't see the point.

Q Yeah. So what do you think they're learning by doing those sort of games? Do you feel like they're learning anything, or do you feel it's just sort of entertainment?

A I think it's just entertainment, those. I don't know, is it their skills, motor skills, but probably not, probably not with that. Some of them are quite hard, there are like drawing ones where you have to draw shapes and things.

Q So do they appear to be concentrating when they're doing that or....

A Going as fast as they can because you've got a time you see.

Q Ah it's timed is it, OK.

A Yeah. But they definitely concentrate on like these. We've got an old N64 and it's got a James Bond film but you don't actually see them shooting people, but they do kill people in it, which I'm not sure about but they played it with my husband.

Q Is it like a first player shooter type thing?

A What's that?

Q First player shooter is where like you look like you're behind the weapon.

A Yeah, it is. Which I'm....I don't know, I'm not sure about anything like that. But there's nothing, you don't see any blood, it's just they're dead. Because it's so old, it's like 20 years old. So they quite like that and I think some of it is quite tactical.

Q How do they seem when they're playing that game sort of emotionally or....

A I think a bit of arguing but generally they just chat.

Q Yeah, so they chat when they're playing it?

A I mean the grumpiness and the anger is turning it off, it's not when you're actually playing.

Q Mmm. So is it like a social game?

A Yeah because you can have like 3 or 4 people playing it at once.

Q So it's a game they can sort of play and they talk to each....do they talk about tactics and things like that when they're playing?

A Yes I think so, maybe not necessarily that, but definitely when they're playing like Mario Kart. And they've got this other game on their DS's, I don't know what it is, and they can add to the worlds. They can build things. (whispers) I washed it yesterday and it still stinks, it's this weather. And they definitely discuss that. And they'll help each other out, Simon will help Harvey getting through hard bits. So they do discuss. It can be awful, I just sort of ignore it but then deal with it when....and then obviously ask them to turn it off. And that's when....

Q I think you were saying last visit though that it's not something that you do yourself, sort of play computer games and things like that.

A No, whereas my husband will play with them. I will occasionally play with them but it's not very often. Because I'm not interested in it that much I do kind of ignore it. I mean I don't know if I'll ever let them have computers in their bedroom, but they take the DS's upstairs but I know what those games are like.

Time 10:12

Q What sort of games are there on the DS? Is that the DS?

C Has daddy gone?

A Yes. What's the game Simon that you add to your worlds, that you build more things on the DS?

C Wait, so like you design a racing track on ??? Track Mania.

A Track Mania, OK. And there's like Lego Indiana Jones cars, Mario Kart, Super Mario, Lego Star Wars, Tetris. So nothing, they're all quite intensive. So yeah if friends come round they sometimes take these upstairs. And we've got four. They're secondhand, they got them for Christmas but they're secondhand, like they were £20, they're old ones, they can't get on the internet with them. They can text each other but there's nothing they can really do.

Q Does them getting on the internet concern you at all, is it something you worry about, sort of data privacy or anything like that?

A Yeah definitely, we've got PINs on, even TV for Netflix we've got PINs on it. I mean we have let them watch 12's, you know things that were probably PGs when we were younger, Goons and things like that.

Q Yeah.

A And they're not scared. And obviously the Marvel films, a lot of those are 12s. And actually I think some of the cartoons that are on CBeebies, the Marvel cartoons, are as violent as the films, it's just that it's a cartoon not a film, actually watching them. So yeah we do let them watch stuff. But yeah the internet does bother me. But I think they get taught at school about being....I don't know how you word it, but being sensible on the internet, don't they?

Q Yeah I think so.

A But we'll see when Simon gets a phone and he goes to secondary school.

Q I think it's hard isn't it sort of knowing where the boundary is or.... is that what you mean?

A Yeah I think....but also like that they have got access to this. And because he is computer savvy and will be much better...well he's much better than me already, and in another five years they could literally look at anything couldn't they? They'll be able to work probably a way around the PIN wouldn't they? It's just us, I hope we teach them well enough to respect it.

Q Yeah. So we talked about the kind of technology that they are quite enthusiastic about, what are they most likely to get bored with, what kind of like types of technology do they lose interest in quite quickly? Is there anything you've got, any devices or anything they've played with that they're just not that keen on?

A No. I think they like all technology. We've got an Alexa, which was banned for a while because it drove me mad with the songs that they were putting on. But no any technology they like, anything they can fiddle with, mess with.

Q Why do you think that is?

A Because I don't let them. It's like forbidden fruit sort of thing. Or like they do have it, it isn't that I don't let them, but they're only allowed it at certain times.

Q Yeah. So if they're playing a game online or something they will just keep going until they have to come off, there's not something that they'll lose interest in very quickly?

A Yeah, and Harvey might pick some toys out but their default will be 'can we watch telly, can we play on the computer' and if I let them, if I didn't have any boundary, that is what they would choose to do, both of them, all the time. So I think that's probably why I'm a bit harsh. God you must think I'm awful.

Q What kind of skills and knowledge do you feel that both Simon and Harvey might have developed through playing with technology, not just sort of the consoles and things like that but the robot that they've been playing with today and things like that?

A ??? I suppose it is mini programming isn't it, it's learning how to give someone....he's giving it an instruction.

Q So did they have to programme the robot?

A The one that Simon had built, he programmed that to turn and things like that. The little one, we've got an app on my phone, and he can teach it to do....it does things that you can set it off doing. But they do make assault courses and things like that for things.

Q Oh do they? For the robots?

A Yeah, they might drive it round something or....

Q Where do they make the assault courses?

A Anywhere. Probably in the front room actually, that's where all toys end up.

Q Yeah. So they would put obstacles up and...

Time 15:00

A Yeah, yeah. But actually, if they don't have technology it's interesting what they get out to play with as well. The other day they set up domino...we've got wooden blocks and they set it off with a marble. You know where you stand them up and you flick one?

Q Oh yeah.

A And they did that on a table. So I think they have got good imagination, both of them. I mean maybe does technology help with their imagination? I don't know.

Q Do they ever sort of play to do with technology, or to do with the films that they've seen or games that they played when they're sort of outside or outside the home, do you ever see them sort of playing superheroes or playing any of the...

A Oh yeah. Harvey's favourite game used to be Predators and Prey because of all the wildlife stuff he's watched.

Q Ah right, so the David Attenborough shows and things like that?

A Yeah, yeah.

Q And so how would he play that?

A So maybe Simon would be the prey and he'd be the predator and they shoot? each other. How did you play Predators and Prey when you used to play it, when Harvey used to play it with you?

C On your bed?

A No you used to play it outside.

C Oh Predators and Prey. So we used to play it on the sofa as well. So ??? imagine that we're in bed, like on mummy's bed there would be a seal and a polar bear. I was always the fat seal lying on the bed, and then he'd....yeah he'd be swimming in the water and suddenly jump out, the polar bear.

Q Was the water around the bed?

C Yeah. But because polar bears can't swim fast I'm like this, I'm going to struggle to get away. I have to get off the bed, like that, and get into the water and swim away.

A And when they were little they used to play Octonauts like in the park.

C And I was always Kwazii, daddy was always the Drunk Squid, Harvey was Captain Barnacles.

Q Harvey was Captain Barnacles?

C Or as he said it Captain Barcacles.

Q It's a difficult word isn't it, yeah.

C Captain Barnacles.

A But you do play superhero stuff as well don't you?

C Mmm.

A And they've got Nerf guns and laser guns. The laser guns, that's technology isn't it, you like those. And actually I prefer those because they don't need bullets. So I don't know how they work because I've never played them.

Q Do you play with them outside?

A I open the gates and they run round the house.

Q On the outside?

A Yes.

C And there's also an indoor where you can switch it to.

A But I don't let you do it indoor really do I?

Q When you're playing with the guns are you sort of....what kind of things are you thinking about, or what kind of things do you put in your play? Do you imagine that you're characters or....

C Basically when I'm doing it I'm always like ??? like the entry doorway....

A But it's stuff that you've watched isn't in, on computers and things. Or is it?

C James Bond.

Q James Bond?

A Yeah. Are you not playing any more?

D Yeah we are. I've watched Golden Eye with my dad. One day Simon went around telling people about The Shining.

A Harvey shhh. He hasn't seen it.

C I've seen bits of it.

A No you have not.

C In a film. In Ready Player One they showed bits of it.

A Simon we've told you, you can't talk about it.

C I know that.

D And we've seen a DS before.

A Right go on, go and play. You're supposed to be using your....

D Come on Simon. Simon come on.

Q I'll tell you what, shall we go and look at the GoPro?