

- Q Alex Hetherington (researcher)
- A Woman with daughter aged 7, also a boy aged 4 and another child aged 10 months
- Q Okey dokey. First, a little bit of background. How many children do you have?
- A I've got three.
- Q Three. And how old are they?
- A They are seven, four, and the youngest girl is ten months.
- Q Seven, four, and ten months. Okay. So, for the questions that I'm going to ask you, I'd like to ask you if possible to try and keep one child in mind. Instead of them all if that's possible. Is that all right?
- A Yes, sure, any particular one that's useful, or?
- Q The remit of the study is children aged three to eleven. And a lot of the questions are focused on technology use. So, [overtalking].
- A Okay. I'll probably go the seven-year old baby, yes. Yes, yes. Okay.
- Q So, a lot of the questions will involve technology, and I think everyone has an idea in mind of what technology is and things, but I'd just like to make it clear before we start that that can include things like physical devices. Like mobile phones, tablets, cameras, things like that. But also, different kinds of media, like apps, websites, digital games, things like that.
- We're also interested in any making that they do. So, maybe things with robotics, and creative coding that they might do at school. Things like Scratch, if you've heard of that. And also, anything to do with new making technologies. Things like 3D printing, or maybe anything to do with augmented reality or virtual reality.
- A Okay.
- Q I've got three, five sets of questions to go through. The first one is about the child's play and technology. So, the first question is, what particular devices or apps are in your child's life? What do they like to play with?
- A The devices that she uses, she has an Amazon Fire Kindle, and she also uses our iPad for games. Probably the main apps, she uses YouTube Kids. She uses Sumdog and... I'm trying to think what else. ABCya. I can't think of any others at the moment. But she doesn't really use games a huge amount, it's probably more for watching things that she would use them for.
- Q Yes, which device [overtalking] uses the most?
- A Probably the iPad. She also uses the desktop. For things like Sumdog she uses desktop computer. But probably iPad most I would say.
- Q Is there any particular time of day that she uses the iPad?

- A Probably coming home from school. So, from about half past three say till about half past five would be the kind of time she would probably use it more often than not. Or when her brothers are going to bed. So, maybe about seven o'clock for an hour or so after that. See, that kind of time. See either about four o'clock or about seven o'clock.
- Q Is there any particular space that she likes to use the iPad?
- A Yes, probably in the living room will be the main space, or in her bedroom.
- Q She use it supervised, or does she sometimes use it alone?
- A Bit of a mixture, probably. Sometimes she will be, sometimes she's on her own. But, yes, usually she's in her room with somebody else, or myself and my husband will be in the room. But we're probably not necessarily directly supervising her. But we're there.
- Q How about other kinds of technology? You mentioned desktop use. Is that in a particular room?
- A Yes, that's in a kind of office. I work from home, so it's in a wee office room.
- Q Yes, okay. How often would you say she's using the desktop?
- A Probably maybe three or four times a week, she would use it.
- Q And you said she uses this mostly for the Sumdogs?
- A Yes, Sumdog and ABCya are the main ones she uses. But she uses it for school. So, she uses them at home as well.
- Q Okay. Does she play at all while watching television?
- A Probably not at the same time. She's probably doing one or the other. Because she does watch TV, but it's probably... Yes, she wouldn't be doing the games at the same time.
- Q How much does she use media apps like YouTube, Netflix? Anything like... She see anything like that?
- A Yes, she watches CBBC, and she watches YouTube Kids. Probably... Yes, maybe about four or five days a week she'll watch one of those things. Yes.
- Q Do you think this kind of media watching influences her play at all?
- A Does it... Sometimes, yes. I suppose I imagine it... But she watches... She watches Newsround on CBBC, and she pretends being a news reader sometimes. So, yes, sometimes she'll probably replicate things that she sees, and stuff like the kind of toy adverts she sees, she'll probably talk about those. She plays shop, and teacher, and things like that. I think they're probably ideas from what she watches come into that, yes.
- Q Does she have a favourite kind of content on YouTube Kids, or anything she gravitates towards?
- A She, yes, she probably used to watch more... At the moment it's all nativity stuff

because she's doing a nativity play. But she used to watch things like Ryan's ToysReview quite a lot. But [unclear], like, so she's kind of gravitated away from that at the moment. But things like, yes, kids looking at toys, and stuff. She liked that. But she'll watch other things. She likes looking at songs that she knows, like song lyrics. And she likes Jess Glynne, so she likes watching music videos as well. Yes.

Q Does she play any video games at all on any devices?

A No, she doesn't do that.

Q Nothing. No apps her iPad or anything like that? Nothing at all?

A No, nothing at all. Video game, no.

Q Okay. Does she have any physical toys that kind of relate to her digital interests?

A That relate to her digital interests. She has lots of [unclear], I don't think any of them relate to... I don't think anything directly related. She likes looking at her art and craft stuff, and that probably... No, I wouldn't say anything hugely linked. She plays with it probably... Influenced by what she sees, but I wouldn't say any of the toys are related, no.

Q Can you think of any specific examples of how her digital play might influence her physical play?

A I mean things like playing shop, I think she sometimes watch things like that on YouTube. Things like deli, pretending to be a news reader, so that's from what she watches. So, just impersonating things that she sees. On the things, are probably two main things I can think of. So, just pretending to be a café or something. She'll watch... I can't think of specific examples of things that she's watching. I know that the news reading thing comes from Newsround, because I know she watches that. I can't think of other specific examples of things that she watches. But I know that some of the things she does do come from that. Yes. So, that's probably not that specific.

Q Okay. Does she have any kind of digital or technological toys? Things like maybe a Leap Pad tablet, anything educational?

A No, I don't think so. No, she just... She's got the Amazon Fire tablet, but she doesn't really use that that much anymore, because she probably more uses the iPad and the desktop. And that's really all that she'll use, yes.

Q Does she have any internet enabled toys? You've told me about a few. Is there anymore that you can think of?

A The only thing she has that's not internet enabled, but she's got a wee camera, KidiZoom camera which has got games on it, she uses that. But that's not linked to the internet. Does she have any other internet enabled things? No, I don't think anything else she has is internet enabled, no.

Q Okay. Does she ever get a chance to play with anything that involves augmented reality, or virtual reality?

A No, she doesn't use anything like that.

- Q No, no worries. Does she ever play with any kind of artificial intelligence assistance? Like Alexa, or Siri, or Google Home?
- A Yes, we do have Alexa. So, she uses it. She doesn't really play, she plays music on it, rather than playing games. Yes, so she... I don't think she plays with it, but she does know how to work it. Music, yes.
- Q Does she ask it questions?
- A Yes, she does. And she asks it for things, like the TV's linked up to it. She asks that. She asks about the weather. [Unclear] because she hears us do that. So, she asks things like that. She doesn't ask hugely [unclear] questions, but yes, she does, she does do that.
- Q Does she play outside very much?
- A Yes, she plays outside quite a lot. Mostly in the summer. But yes, after school, if it's still light, then she'll play in the garden, yes.
- Q When she's playing outside, do you ever notice the influence of digital play on that space, if that makes any kind of sense?
- A Not really, I don't think. It's mostly just racing about with the neighbour's kids. So, they'll just be on trampoline and things. So, I wouldn't see if there's anything digital related that she does outside.
- Q Okay. Do you ever notice her adopting any kinds of language that she's in digital media?
- A Some things [unclear], when she was watching Ryan's ToyReview, she would occasionally go with the slightly odd American accent. She would kind of do that. So, yes, occasionally. But then she hasn't been watching that too recently. So, nothing recently but yes, sometimes I'll see that. And she used to watch a thing called Tiana, and occasionally... Which I actually stopped her doing because sometimes I thought she was kind of asking for stuff like this girl asks her toys on the YouTube thing. So, yes, so sometimes you'll see it, and you think well that's like something she's been watching.
- Q Okay. Does she have any LEGO?
- A Yes. But it's more her brother who uses it. She probably doesn't really use it. [Unclear] go in the house, play with hers.
- Q Okay. How about any other kind of LEGO themed products? Things like accessories. Is she interested in any of the LEGO films, things like that?
- A She's seen the LEGO films at the cinema. She enjoyed, but she doesn't really have any stuff at home. Again, there is stuff in the house, but it's more her brother's stuff rather than hers.
- Q Yes. You ever been to Legoland?
- A No, we haven't. No.
- Q Okay, no worries. That's the end of the first section of questions. This next section is about your views on children's play and technology.

- A Okay.
- Q Who decides who gets to use devices, digital toys, games, and apps?
- A Myself and my husband, probably jointly.
- Q What guides those choices?
- A I like to try and go with things that I think are a bit educational. But sometimes things that are recommended by the school, because they give us a list of websites and apps that the kids use at school. So, I tend to be guided probably by that. My husband's a teacher, so again, things from... That schools recommend would be the things that we would probably go for. Sometimes she'll come across things independently of that. And so, it's having a look at it and thinking do we think it's appropriate. And make the decision ourselves. So, a mixture of influences.
- Q Okay, can you think of any specific places where she might have found things that she's come to you and asked to use? Is there anything that stands out to you?
- A I think... Mostly it tends be for... Well, from kids she talks to in the playground, her friends at school. I think from talking to them. Probably from seeing adverts on the TV sometimes. I'm sure some of the toy review stuff. Maybe I think she, now that she can type things, and she would maybe use a search term, and put that in. So, sometimes that. But I think quite a lot she'll come home from school and say so and so has been talking about this. So, she wants to see it. So, that's probably the main thing, yes.
- Q In your view, what types of devices, digital toys, games, and apps can promote play?
- A I mean I think things that they can watch together, the kids can watch together. So, something that... As for some type of things that she uses something like Sumdog, ABCya, or sometimes she does do with a friend from school, and they can sit together and do it. So, I suppose that's kind of play. I mean a lot of the stuff she does is quite independent. [unclear] as for things that encourage her imagination. So, things, the kind of roleplay stuff that she can watch and then can replicate that would encourage her to play outside of the watching, yes.
- Q Yes. Do you think on the other hand that any kind of digital devices, digital toys, or apps can limit play?
- A Yes, sometimes. I think sometimes she can be sitting with it a bit long, and not be playing. But I think she is [unclear] plays quite a lot. So, sometimes I deliberately use it as a bit of down time for her, because I feel like she's moving about an awful lot and doing an awful lot. She does a lot of after school activities. So, sometimes it's a deliberate thing to get her to chill out a bit. But I mean, yes, I guess sometimes if it's a [unclear] at the weekend, then it can be something that possibly inhibits play a wee bit.
- Q Do you think digital devices, digital toys, or apps can promote creativity?
- A Yes, I think so. I think, yes, things that kind of roleplay scenarios, and in fact even the nativity stuff she's looking at, at the moment she does a lot of random making up of plays, and things like that. So, yes, I think so. Something that can

encourage them to use their imagination.

Q Okay. And on the other hand, again, do you think digital devices, digital toys, and apps can limit creativity?

A Yes, probably. That's depending on what they're actually watching. Yes, I think it can stop them doing something. If it stops them doing something like reading or drawing on a regular basis, then probably, yes.

Q This is a little bit of a LEGO specific one. What kind of new toys and products do you think LEGO should be developing for children in the digital age?

A Oh. Maybe things that they can control using other than your hands. Though I quite like that LEGO involves using your hands. So, yes, I don't know. Maybe different designs of things to... The kind of things that they build incorporating technology items, I don't know. Like, I don't know, space things, or things that incorporate computers, and tablets, and stuff into what they're building, maybe.

I probably don't have anything too strong to say about that. Because I quite like the actual basic concept of building the LEGO rather than using it to build on that too much.

Q No worries. Thank you.

A Okay.

Q When your child's playing with technology, how far is she actively engaged? Is she very interested and focused on what she's doing?

A Yes. She will be quite... Yes, she'll be quite engrossed in it when she's doing it, yes.

Q Okay. Do you find that kind of the same thing regardless of what kind of technology she's using, or is there some things in particular that definitely hook her attention?

A She's probably more into... If she's doing something on the desktop, she'll probably be more involved in it, because I think it's separate and it's in the office. She'll kind of be separate from the rest of the house when she's using that. So, she'll be concentrating on that more whereas if she's on the iPad and there's other people around, she sometimes gets distracted, and starts doing something else.

Q Do you think that she finds her play with technology to be meaningful? Do you think it [unclear] to her everyday interests?

A Yes, I think so. She'll quite often talk about what she's seen and what she wants to see. So, I think, yes, I think so.

Q When she's playing with technology, does she try anything, does she try and make improvements to what she's doing?

A Improvements to what she's doing on the technology?

Q Yes. Does she try to find better ways to do things?

- A She can do things I can't do. Like she'll be using [unclear] touchscreen. Actually, things like she was doing PowerPoint at school, so she came home and was doing that, and was trying to find different ways of fading stuff in and putting in photos and things like that. So, she likes to practise things that she's learned. Yes.
- Q Okay, that's the end of the second set of questions. We're onto the third set now. And this is about technology and children's emotions and wellbeing.
- A Okay.
- Q So, the first question is do you think that play with technology has an effect on children's emotions and wellbeing?
- A Yes, it can do. I think sometimes it can, and we get engrossed in it. Sometimes that can mean that they can kind of get a bit obsessive about it sometimes. And I think things like the Ryan's ToyReview thing can be quite addictive, and kind of make them a bit annoyed if you try and take it away. So, yes.
- Q When your daughter's playing with technology, how do you think she's normally feeling?
- A Yes, happy and relaxed usually, I would say when she's using it.
- Q Do you see any other range of emotions, anything else?
- A Gets quite engrossed in it, and quite interested in what she's doing usually. If it's something like Sumdog or something like that, she's quite interested in improving, and getting to the next level. So, yes, she's concentrating, I suppose. Yes.
- Q Does she ever feel frustrated, do you think?
- A Very occasionally, if she's doing something and she can't get to the next level or something, or something like that. But I mean she's not actually too bad with that. She'll quite often... She'll either get to the next level, or she'll just put down and start doing something else. So, she doesn't... Yes, occasionally. But more when she's tired or something, yes.
- Q Does she ever get bored with playing with technology?
- A Yes, I think after she's been using it for a while. She'll kind of stop and go on to do something else, yes.
- Q Are there any particular technologies that she's more likely to get bored of than others, do you think?
- A Not in so much types, it's more of if she's watched a particular thing for a period of a few weeks or something. Like she doesn't Ryan's ToyReview anymore. She liked it for quite a while, and I think maybe overdid it. And now doesn't watch it. So, yes, I think the actual type of technology, she hasn't... I haven't seen her get bored of that.
- Q Right. The ways that she does get bored of playing with technology is the same way that she might get bored of playing with something physical, or do you think it's different?



A Similar in that something physical as well, if she finishes up doing it she'll then do something else instead. And maybe she'll do something physical. She'll switch to something with technology, and vice versa. So, probably a similar kind of thing of doing something and then changing what she's doing. Yes.

Q When playing with technology that allows for social interaction, would you say that your child plays well with others?

A Yes, I would say so. She's got a lot of friends. And she plays with a lot of people. Yes.

Q Do you think there's any kinds of particular technology that supports social play?

A I mean she talks about things that she's seen. So, I suppose things like her YouTube and her CBBC and things that she watches, they're subjects of conversation in the playground. And they can provide basis of roleplay scenarios that they do in the playground, I suppose. So, yes, of course to an extent, yes.

Q Okay. Thank you. That's the end of the third set of questions. We've got two more to do. The next one's about your role as a parent in technology mediated play.

A Okay.

Q So, when your child's playing with technology, do you ever play with her?

A Yes. I mean sometimes I'll go and see... I probably won't necessarily join in with the app. But I'll go and see what she's doing, and I'll ask her questions about it, and see what's happening. Sometimes she asks me to have a go at something, like a Sumdog thing, or something. And she says, you have a go, and I'll go and have a go. She likes me to do that at least. So, I'm not as good as her. Yes, so occasionally, yes.

Q Yes. What about her dad?

A He's probably similar as well. He's probably not around straight after school as much. Which is when she'll be using it. But more so later in the evening before bedtime, he would be pottering about. And again, similarly he'll sometimes ask her what she's doing or what she's watching. And yes, again, because he's a teacher, he'll sometimes suggest something for her, and they'll watch it together.

Q Is it usually just when she's watching something, kind of like a media on her iPad, is that the kind of device where this usually occurs?

A Yes.

Q Yes, okay. Are there any other kinds of devices where you and your husband might play with your child?

A Of course she uses our phone sometimes as well. She'll sometimes do stuff like Sumdog or things on our phones. And, or she'll maybe watch a YouTube Kids thing or something on our phones, yes.

Q Yes. If you or your husband are ever on your devices, does your daughter ever ask to play on them with you?



A Sometimes, yes. So, if I'm working on my desktop, she'll sometimes come and say, can we do this, can we do a PowerPoint together, or something? So, she will sometimes ask that, yes. Or can she use the phone. Yes. Probably more can she have it rather than [unclear] with us. But yes.

Q Okay. Do you think that there are some kinds of technology, certain kinds of apps that are better for playing with your daughter?

A I mean the desktop's good because it's, again, a big screen, and we can both see it, or the iPad, both look at it. I don't think the phone's ideal, because it's quite small. So, I think a sizeable screen that you can both see and touch is better. Yes.

Q Do you or your husband ever use technology to initiate play with your daughter?

A No. I would say we'd normally do other things like hide and seek or things like that, if we were initiating it. So, no, I would say we normally suggest technology, unless it was [unclear] film or something. Yes.

Q Okay, no worries. That's the fourth set. Onto the last set of questions now. And this is more about your general perceptions of technologies.

A Okay.

Q So, do you think certain technologies offer more positive or negative experiences for your child?

A Certain types of [unclear], I think it probably depends what we're using on the technology. I would think... I think I probably prefer... I think the iPad and the desktop more positive because it's easier to step away from. Not that she's got her own phone yet or anything.

But I think that the concept of I think probably... We probably use our phones too much. And so, I don't like the idea so much that she would become addicted to a phone. Whereas I think a tablet and computer you can step away from and do something else more easily. So, probably have more positive associations with those.

Q Okay. Do you have any other concerns about your child's experience with technologies?

A No, I suppose I always worry that she'll come across something she shouldn't. We got parental controls on. But I always worry that, I think, a few times that she is sometimes using it without us watching, and I worry that she'll find something she shouldn't on it. And sort of security on. She never has, but just that security for what she's looking at. But she's not on social media or anything. But ultimately, when she is on social media, I suppose that kind of thing will be something we'll have to watch out for.

Q Have you thought about any of the other safety aspects of internet enabled devices and phones?

A In... Probably not anything other than what I've already. [Unclear] think, just the... In case she stumbles on something, or she ends up searches for something, and inadvertently comes up. But she should not with the protected devices, that

shouldn't happen. But I... Yes, you just worry or somebody... You hear about people messaging kids and things. Although she doesn't have any accounts, she doesn't have any [unclear] or anything yet for that to happen. But in future, I think, that'll be a concern.

Q Do you have any concerns about data privacy in regard to your child? Like, I understand the idea is [overtalking].

A I don't think she really does anything that involves in putting her name or personal details into. So, probably not at the moment. I suppose that's, again, that possibly will come in later on as she starts to get her own accounts and do things. But I think at the moment, she doesn't do anything that would probably give away her details with things like webcams, and things you're... Or that picks up. But I wouldn't say it occupies my brain too much at the moment anyway.

Q Okay. No worries. Would you say that your daughter's use of technology improves family life in a positive way?

A Yes, I think so. Most of the time I think, yes, she'll talk about what she's seen and what she's doing, and kind of topic of conversation when we're having dinner and she's uses [unclear] going to play with her middle brother. So, yes. I would say on the whole, yes. A [unclear] can make her grumpy but most of the time, it's positive. Yes.

Q Okay. On the other side of things, do you think her use of technology ever affects family life in a negative way?

A I suppose only if she's using something, and you want her to come and have dinner, or something like that. She'll then have a tantrum, because she doesn't want to put it down, which occasionally happens. So, yes, I suppose there are elements that can be negative, yes. Yes. Or she's watching something that we're not keen on her watching, and we say don't watch it. Then she kicks off because of that. So, yes, there can be times when it can cause arguments. But I'd say more often than not, kind of conversations rather than arguments.

Q Yes. Okay. The last question.

A Okay.

Q What advice or guidance would you offer to new parents on issues relating to technology and play with your child?

A I think just always keep communication open with them about it. And make sure you're talking to them about what they're watching, and how they look at what they're watching, and what they're doing, and having a dialogue with them about it. So, that it's not a surprise what they're doing or watching. I think that'd be the main thing for me, yes.

Q Okay. That's all the questions. Thank you very, very much for taking the time to speak to me.

A Okay, no problem at all.