

- Q Alex Hetherington (researcher)
A Woman with daughter aged 4 and baby aged 9 months
- Q Excellent. If we're okay to proceed, I'll get straight into it. Is that all right?
A Yes, sure. That's fine.
- Q A little bit of background first. How many children do you have?
A I've got two children.
- Q And how old are they?
A The older one is four and the little one is nine months old.
- Q The range of the study is children aged three to eleven.
A Yes, so that will be my older daughter.
- Q Yes, when answering the questions, we'd like you to keep one of your children in mind, if that's at all possible?
A Yes.
- Q In your case, it might not be too difficult. The focus of the study is technology. I can't imagine a nine-month-old has much technology in their life. Is that correct?
A Yes, she's just getting interested in it because she is four. She's going to play certain things.
- Q Technology is mentioned a lot throughout the questions and that means stuff like devices. Things like mobile phones, tablets, cameras, computers but also different kinds of media, like apps, websites, digital games.
A Yes.
- Q Are there any questions you have before we begin?
A Not really. I'll keep my older daughter in mind and I'll try not to [unclear].
- Q Okay, no worries. We'll get straight into it then. The first group of questions is about your child's play in technology. How does technology feature in your child's life?
A It's started featuring in her life. She makes Skype calls when she calls her relatives, when she wants to speak to them. Also, she does use certain learning apps. For example, YouTube Kids. Recently she started getting into that. It didn't use to be the case when she was little but now she's getting into the whole idea of learning. Even socialising, when she calls someone who she can't actually speak face-to-face with. So, yes, it is present in her life at the moment.
- Q Okay. What kind of devices does she use to access YouTube Kids and the learning apps?

- A She uses the tab that we've got. The cell phone tab. It's not her personal one, obviously. It's mine and my husband's but basically, she has access to it whenever we let her.
- Q Are there any other devices that she uses at all? I mean mobile phones or anything like that?
- A If for example, I'm Skyping someone and she wants to join in, she uses the phone. Also, we've got an option to cast the YouTube Kids channel onto the TV, so she does use TV as well, as part of the way she uses YouTube.
- Q Yes, okay. Are there any other significant apps that she has access to and uses?
- A She uses Curious World, it's like a learning app. It's basic, A, B, C, that kind of idea and basic numbers and the other one is called, A, B, C, PreSchool. Yes, it's the one she started using in the last two or three months, since she started school.
- Q Is there any particular content that she gravitates towards on YouTube Kids?
- A I would say cartoons at the moment, to be honest and if we talk about learning. She does like songs, like a Baby Shark, kind of idea. I'm trying to encourage her towards something that teaches her letters and numbers, certain words that she didn't know before. It's needs to be in a playful, kind of way. She gets too bored if it's something proper. She needs some sort of cartoon idea or something going on.
- Q Would you say that most of her used of a tablet is educational programmes and apps?
- A As well as entertainment, such as cartoons. I would say both.
- Q And you think it's a mobile app there as well, like you've mentioned?
- A Yes, definitely.
- Q Okay, no worries. How much tablet use would you say there is in any given week?
- A Sorry, how much?
- Q Tablet use there is. How much time does she spend on a tablet?
- A I would say during the week, maybe two, two and a half hours, not more than that. She would love to spend more but we're trying to limit her time on it.
- Q Okay. Does this happen in any particular place in the house? In the living room or anything like that?
- A In her bedroom or just in the lounge, downstairs.
- Q And is she usually supervised during that time?
- A Yes, yes, definitely. It's either myself or my husband, so we try and keep an eye on the time and what she's actually doing. What she's watching.
- Q Does she play at all, while watching television? This doesn't have to be

technological play. It can be play with anything.

A Yes, when she's watching something, she could have something in her hands and she would automatically play with it but without paying too much attention to it, to be honest. I would say she's more attracted to what's going on TV, for example, rather than playing.

Q Do you think that her engagement with YouTube Kids and other educational apps, impacts her play outside of those apps? If that makes sense?

A Yes, it makes sense. I think it does and I'm trying to encourage her to play certain things, such as LEGO or toys, rather than watch TV. Because if she had a choice, I think she would stick with technology or watching something. But we're trying to encourage her to do other things because, first of all, it's bad for her eyes if she watches too much TV or she uses the tab too much. I would say, it's a fact. If she had a choice, she would be gravitating more towards easy cartoons rather than playing other things.

Q Okay. Does she play any kinds of video games at all, on the tablet?

A No, not really. Not yet.

Q Okay, no worries. Does she have any physical toys that relate to a digital interest?

A She's got a talking dog. It's A, B, C, a [inaudible] dog that talks. I don't remember what it's called. It's by Fisher Price, it might be just talking dog or something? It's an educational one but it's actually a soft toy which talks. You could maybe call it technology as well, in a way.

Q I think the next question, that might be relevant to you as well. Does she have any other digital toys, anything like a LeapPad tablet, any kind of robots? But it does come under that.

A She's got the LeapPad. It's like a toy book which she uses. That's because it's interactive as well. You've got a pencil attached to it and she points at the picture, and it starts talking and gives her directions what to do. It's part of her learning devices that she uses. It's called LeapStart and I think that's about it, in terms of digital ones.

Q Other than the tablet which we've mentioned, are any of her toys internet enabled?

A Not really no. It would be just the tablet and the TV, which sometimes streams something, and that's about it. Yes, they're the only ones.

Q Does the tablet have internet access while she's using it? I'm assuming, yes?

A Yes, again, we try to supervise her, so she doesn't watch something she shouldn't watch.

Q Okay, no worries.

A Has she ever had the chance to play with any kind of augmented or virtual reality toys?

- A No, not just yet but I think she saw it in one of the shops. I think it was the Smith's or something like that? She saw it and she was curious about it. I've got a feeling it's going to be coming soon but not just yet.
- Q How about any kind of artificial intelligence assistants, like Alexa or Suri?
- A She does know, okay Google, that's the phrase but then it's only going to be connected with the phone. We haven't got Alexa, in terms of an actual device at home. She knows that if she could use, okay Google, she knows that she could get away with saying something and it would bring up the answer, whatever she's asking.
- Q Does she do that very often? What kind of things does she ask?
- A At the moment she does it more for fun, rather than to get something. Okay Google, what shall I do now? That kind of idea. I don't think she actually understands that there's something she could ask that she's curious about. Or sometimes she could ask for a certain song to play, like okay Google, play a piece of that song. She knows that's the kind of idea but it's more like fun to play with rather than knowledge or learning.
- Q That's really interesting.
- A If we had one, I think she would be playing with it.
- Q Yes, okay. Does she play outdoors very much?
- A Not so much at the moment because she's at school most of the day and it gets dark quite early but during the summer months, spring months, yes, she does. At the moment, over the weekend, she spends, I would say, a couple of hours outside, on Saturdays and Sundays.
- Q When she's not playing with technology, do you ever notice the influence of technology during that play?
- A She mentions certain characters that she's picked up, during a certain game on the tab or watching a cartoon. She recognises certain characters and that would be coming from technology because that's how she learns about them. I think that's the only thing she knows definitely for now.
- Q This next little bit is specifically about LEGO. Is there much LEGO in your household at all?
- A Yes, we've got quite a few. We've got Duplo ones. I've got her for the first time, the Frozen ones because she's obsessed with the Frozen cartoon. Otherwise, the Duplo, we started buying it when she was just under two. We can try and keep an eye on the age advice, one and half plus or two plus. I didn't buy the little ones with little details before because we've got a little child, the younger one. So we're trying to stick with the big ones, the ones that the younger one can with play as well. Yes, it's mostly LEGO Duplo. We've got quite a few of them.
- Q Okay. Is there any other kind of LEGO product that you've got in your household? Things like [inaudible]?

- A With LEGO, I think she's got a book with some characters and I'm sure she's got a pyjama set or something like a home outfit. To wear at home. Yes, she does know the characters and especially now she's obsessed with Frozen at the moment. She saw the LEGO set with Frozen and she's going to get that for Christmas.
- Q Has she seen the LEGO films at all?
- A No, not yet but she saw the ad for the Ninjago. She was interested in that. I said, yes, we'll watch it one day. She knows about but she hasn't watched it yet.
- Q Have you been to Legoland at all?
- A She knows about. We mentioned it to her but she hasn't been just yet, again. Definitely will in the near future.
- Q Yes, on the to-do list. Okay. This next question's a little bit more hypothetical. It's what kind of new toys or products do you think that LEGO should be developing for the digital age?
- A Probably some learning apps or games that could encourage learning for pre-school kids or even Year 1, 2 kids. Something that could help with basic numbers, basic letters. Maybe letters made of LEGO bricks. That kind of idea because I think that will keep kids busy. I would say for kids of her age and a bit older, anything learning would be critical because they already play quite a lot with LEGO. They know the characters and they know the idea, so something educational.
- Q Yes, okay. We're going to move on to the second set of questions now. This is more about your views on child's play with technology. When your daughter's playing with technology, when she's on the tab. Who is it that decides what kind of content that she looks at and watches?
- A When we talk about, for example, entertainment such as cartoons. She normally knows what she wants. Can I watch Peppa Pig or can I watch Paw Patrol? If it comes to learning, I would say we try and mix it around. So I will say, would you like to do numbers or letters today and she'll say letters. It's a combination of both but with entertainment, it's more of her choice and I think with learning, it's our encouragement and her choice, side-by-side.
- Q Has she ever come to you with a request to watch something or play something and you've declined?
- A Yes. She wants to watch too many cartoons, so I'd say, no, that's enough for today, that's fine. She'll get quite upset about it. I'd say, no, go and play something else. You've got so many toys. Play, for example, LEGO or play the LeapStart book. She gets upset but she's normally allowed up to half an hour a day, at the most, on TV or on her tab.
- Q Have you ever declined to let her watch any kind of specific content or is it more about the time and not the content? If that makes any kind of sense?
- A I would say it's more about the time because at the moment, she only wants

certain kinds of cartoons. So she'll want Peppa Pig or she knows certain characters that she likes. It's more about the time. I've never heard her say, can I watch this and that's not something I would like to her watch. It's more about the time at the moment.

Q Okay, no worries. What would you say guides your choices about whether or not she can or can't do any kind of specific thing? Do you think there's an underlying philosophy behind that or is it all about practicality?

A There's nothing that I would say for now at the age of four. There's nothing that I can see that she shouldn't do. She only wants certain things that are perfectly fine for her age and she's going to grow up, obviously. If I don't see the point, for example, of her watching a certain thing, I'll advise her. Still it's to come. We'll know as she grows up a bit.

Q In your view, do you think there that certain kinds of devices, digital toys or apps can promote play?

A Yes, I'd say so. Maybe some sort of interactive toys such as the Fur Real toys. Like the talking ones. To be honest, they only make sounds but it's a good idea because whenever they hear her say something, they copy her. It would be great if it was something educational, even for younger kids, like new colours or shapes. That kind of idea. I would say more digital toys with a bit of education but not too much because kids get too bored. I think it's a good idea for the future.

Q Do you think any of the kind of things on certain devices or technology can limit play?

A Not really, not that I can think of.

Q Do you think that certain kinds of devices or toys, or apps can promote creativity?

A Yes, definitely. So even for example, if she watches a certain cartoon or an educational programme on YouTube. She will mention it to me and let's start writing letters, s, like a snake. It encourages her to learn letters and to write them in a different way. It's more in her imagination and how she memorises it. In that way, it does help.

Q Do you think on the other side of things that certain kinds of devices, digital toys or apps can limit creativity?

A I think it could happen if she watches too much of cartoons. Her mind is completely stuck with a certain character. There's more to play than watching cartoons. I think they need to play more at the moment, all the kids, not just mine. To play more with physical toys. It's not an easy thing to make them do but I think that's the way forward.

Q Yes, okay. When she's on the tab, is she very actively engaged in what she's doing? Is she very focused?

A Yes, I'd say so. At least all the time that she's allowed. Ten, fifteen minutes and then she starts getting a bit bored, so that's when we turn it off and let her do something else.

- Q Do you think that she finds that kind of interaction to be meaningful? Is her time spent, relevant to everyday interest?
- A Yes, I'd say so because she knows that she is learning something or she's getting information. Yes, it keeps her interested.
- Q Whenever she's using technology, whether it's on an educational app or whether or not it's for entertainment. Does she ever try new things? Does she try and make improvements to what she's doing?
- A Yes, she's better at writing the letters at the moment and also the numbers. I can see that that education part of the app, it is working. She shows progress.
- Q Okay. Does she set herself challenges at all?
- A Not really, not just yet probably.
- Q So we're going to move on to the third set of questions now and this is more about technology and children's emotions, and well-being. The first question's pretty simple. Do you think that technology can have an impact on children's emotion and well-being?
- A Yes, definitely. It's all the emotions that they get, mostly positive. If they see something nice and stuff that they enjoy, she gets all excited and she wants to share. Yes, I would say so, definitely.
- Q What's the most common emotion that you see in your daughter when she's playing with technology?
- A I would say, excitement.
- Q Does she ever get frustrated at all?
- A When she's asked a question or something, for example, how do you spell cat and if she can't do it straight away, like there's a message, try again, you're wrong. If she's tries too many times and if she can't do it, she gets a bit, oh, what should I do and we end up helping her sometimes. It can happen, yes.
- Q Does she get bored at all, playing with technology?
- A Not in the amount of time that we let her play, so I think if she played for longer. I think she could but just in 20 minutes, she normally gets all involved in it.
- Q When playing with technology that allows for social interaction, if there is any, there might not be. Do you think that your daughter engages well with others?
- A Not really. When she is using the app, she will be using it on her own. So she doesn't engage with other people using the apps.
- Q Okay, no worries. Do you think that certain kinds of technology could better support social play?
- A Possibly, especially if there are a few kids a very similar age in the family. I think that's going to encourage them to play together or to do something together. If there's not a big gap in age between them.

- Q Yes, okay. Thank you. I'm going to move on to the fourth set of questions now and there may be some repetition in here because you have kind of touched on a few of these topics before. So I'm sorry if you have to repeat yourself at all.
- A Yes, that's okay.
- Q So the first question is, when you child's play involves technology, do you ever play with her?
- A Yes, we try and play with her or we try and supervise.
- Q Do you take a particular interest in the kind of content that she's watching? You mentioned that she watches cartoons quite a lot. Do you know the characters? What shows they are? Things like that?
- A Yes, so she likes Frozen, at the moment. She likes Lion King, quite a bit, Peppa Pig. There is a set of characters that she really enjoys. She knows about it and she always asks for us to play these certain cartoons about these characters.
- Q Yes, okay. Do you think that certain kinds of devices are better than others for playing with your daughter?
- A I would say, for example, if we're streaming a cartoon. I would use the TV because it's got a bigger screen and I think it's better for her eyes. If we have to use the app, it will probably have to be the tab because you can't really access that app on the TV. It depends on what she's doing.
- Q Do you think that certain kinds of apps are better for playing with her?
- A I'd say so, yes. I'm more into educational ones at the moment. Not just entertainment because she's growing up and I can see that she needs that kind of learning idea about using apps.
- Q When you're using your devices, again, you've kind of already mentioned this one at least once. Does she ever ask to play with you on those devices?
- A Yes, especially if she can see that I'm doing something on my phone or if I'm talking to someone. She'll be like, can I join in? Can I say hello? Yes, she does try sometimes to get involved.
- Q Are there any devices or apps that she can only access with other members of the family?
- A It would probably be the same ones. The YouTube Kids, that she uses with Curious World and ABC PreSchool. They're the ones that she's into and can access with us because she can't use it at the moment herself. We are trying to supervise her as best we can.
- Q Are there any kinds of unique technology that are only at extended family's homes, grandparents, anything like that?
- A We try and take the tab with us whenever we go and we know there's no technology at that place, so we try to bring the tab with us or the phone, worst case.

- Q Okay, no worries. Do you ever use technology to initiate play with your daughter?
- A Yes and no. Sometimes she actually asks about it herself. Can I use the tab? Yes, sometimes I suggest, if I know that she has done her homework for after school. We can encourage her to use it.
- Q Okay, great. That's the end of the fourth set of questions. We're onto the last set now and this is more about your general perceptions of technologies. Do you think that technologies offer generally more positive or negative experiences for your daughter?
- A I would say it's more positive but there's quite a bit of negativity in it going on as well because if she gets too involved in technology, she forgets about real life toys. As for the positive side, definitely education. Entertainment linked with education, so that's something to keep in mind as well. I think it's about the limits as to how much they can use in terms of the time.
- Q Do you think certain kinds of technologies might be better or worse for your daughter?
- A Yes, I'd say so because if she just watches cartoons all the time, it doesn't really give her any kind of benefits, in terms of her education or her development. It gives her positive emotions but that's about it. We're trying to mix them both, so she gets positive emotions as well as something positive from the learning experience as well.
- Q Yes, okay. Do you have any concerns about your daughter's use of technologies, other than what you've already mentioned?
- A Not, really. Not at the moment. As long as we can limit it. If she could, she would use it much longer but for now, she's at the age where we can say, that's enough for today. I can see it coming later on, as she grows up as well.
- Q Are you or do you think that will be concerned about the safety aspects of internet enabled toys?
- A Yes, definitely. Definitely in the future.
- Q Is that something you're not too concerned about now because YouTube Kids is specifically filtered?
- A Yes, I'd say so because we try and supervise all the time, so we can see what she's watching.
- Q Are you concerned about data privacy at all, in relation to your child?
- A Yes, later on as well because there's all those cookies and that idea. Not too much but I would say, yes, there is some sort of a concern going on.
- Q Do you think that your daughter's use of technologies influences family life in a positive way?
- A In a positive way, yes. After she watches something that she wants to, she'll be

very happy. She'll be excited, so yes. She knows it's like a special treat for her at the end of the day. I think it keeps her active. It keeps her busy for a certain time and I get a chance to do something around the house while she's watching the cartoon in the lounge.

Q On the other hand, do you think that her use of technologies has a negative impact on family life?

A Not necessarily but sometimes when we stop the cartoon half way through or we stop the usage of the app for her, she might be a bit upset. She wants to play more, so that could lead to, I wouldn't say tears but she gets quite upset. So again, we're trying to speak to her and say, listen you want to play again tomorrow, you'll have the chance to watch it again. It depends on her mood but I've seen that happen as well before.

Q Right. Last question then. What advice or guidance would you offer to new parents, on issues relating to technology and safety?

A I would say, try and supervise them at all times, whenever they're watching YouTube or even playing the apps. And I would say, try and mix the technology with real life toys. Reading books for them because it's a whole different experience. I know that some people let them watch as much as they want. They're literally watching TV all day long or playing the apps. I think it needs to be mixed with other things which are also great fun.

Q Okay, thank you. Do you have anything else to say about anything we've talked about?

A I think I've pretty much mentioned most of the stuff she's involved in, in terms of technology at this stage anyway.

Q Yes, okay. All the other questions might not be quite as relevant to children at the upper and lower end of the age rating but it's still largely important data for us, to have that kind of perspective.