



Australian preschoolers not active enough

Recent Australian research has found that preschool children are spending too much time in front of screens and not enough time being physically active. Participants were 1004 Melbourne preschool children aged between 3 and 5 and their families.

The children were found to be spending only 16% (approx. 127 mins/day) of their time being physically active. Boys and younger children were more active than were girls and older children, respectively. Children spent an average of 113 minutes per day in screen-based entertainment.

The results were compared with recently released Australian recommendations for physical activity (3 hours or more per day) and screen entertainment (1 hour or less per day) and the US recommendations from NASPE (National Association for Sport and Physical Activity) for physical activity (≥ 2 h/d) and AAP screen entertainment recommendations (≥ 2 h/d). They found that almost no children (less than 1%) met both Australian recommendations and 32% met both the NASPE and AAP recommendations.

The researchers concluded that:

"It is likely that physical activity may decline and screen-based entertainment increase with age. Compliance with recommendations may be further reduced. Strategies to promote physical activity and reduce screen-based entertainment in young children are required."

Hinkley, Trina; Salmon, Jo; Okely, Anthony D.; Crawford, David; Hesketh, Kylie (2011) **Preschoolers' Physical Activity, Screen Time and Compliance with Recommendations**. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*: POST ACCEPTANCE, 3 September 2011 doi: 10.1249/MSS.0b013e318233763b

Channel Seven breaches Children's Television Standards

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has issued a remedial direction to Seven Network's licensees broadcasting in the five mainland capital cities for breaching advertising restrictions during children's programming periods.

The breaches occurred when a Seven Network 'station identifier' was broadcast during protected children's programming periods in October and November 2010. The majority of this identifier was footage taken in an 'adult sized' McDonald's playground which included prominent representations of McDonald's proprietary characters and McDonald's brand identifier, 'the Golden Arches.'

On the basis of its content, the ACMA determined that the station identifier was also an advertisement for McDonald's.

The Children's Television Standards 2009 (CTS) ban any advertising during preschool (P) viewing periods and restricts the kinds of advertising that can be run during children's (C) viewing periods.

The ACMA's remedial direction requires the five Seven Network licensees to implement a process for reviewing all non-program material that will be broadcast during P programming periods and to conduct specific CTS training for appropriate employees.

The investigation report is available on the ACMA website:

www.acma.gov.au

News from the ALRC Classification Review

Over the course of three weeks, the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) hosted an online discussion forum encouraging comment on a set of eight draft principles that are being proposed as the foundations of a new National Classification Scheme. The forum attracted 98 comments, from 29 participants. The discussion is now closed but is still online for viewing: www.alrc.gov.au/public-forum/classification

The ALRC have also placed advertisements in 19 different newspapers around Australia calling for volunteers to participate in focus groups. The focus groups (2 groups of 15 people) are intended to test the kind of content that may be permissible in higher level classification categories (MA15+ and above, including the Refused Classification category). This is a pilot project that will

test a methodology for possible further assessment panels that might be held to determine community standards with regards to classification categories in the future.

<http://www.alrc.gov.au/focusgroups>

A Discussion Paper will be released on 30 September, calling for submissions in response to a range of proposals and questions. The deadline for submissions will be 14 November 2011

Concern over supermarket promotion in schools

Parents and child advocacy groups have expressed concern about the methods used by supermarkets promoting the "Sports for Schools" program. Simon Canning in *The Australian* reported that young students have been offered prizes for singing the Coles "prices are down" jingle in a primary school presentation by store managers promoting the scheme.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/media/teaching-kids-to-sing-an-advertising-jingle-makes-me-see-red/story-e6frg996-1226129294935>

For more discussion of this issue see the Editorial on page 2.

Take Action

Don't just wish that someone would do something. Do it yourself! You can play an active part in shaping our media services.

Our new *Take Action* pages, accessible from the home page of the ACCM website, are designed to help you make your views known where they count.

Information includes general guidelines on taking action, details of current campaigns and details of how to make a complaint

www.childrenandmedia.org.au



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EDITORIAL

Selling kids in schools?

Simon Canning writing in *The Australian* (see p1) has put the spotlight on the increasing role that big supermarket chains are playing in the funding of schools.

So what's happening that has allowed that to come about?

We asked ourselves, "Don't state education departments have policies about school sponsorship in place that prevent companies canvassing their wares directly to students within schools?" The answer seems, in many instances, to be, "No"!

The widespread movement to de-centralise control of school budgets and to make schools into business centres, along with a general tightening of education budgets across the nation, has resulted in many, especially small, schools being really squeezed for funds. Small wonder that they'd gratefully accept free sporting equipment and perhaps rationalise allowing local store managers to come into their schools to talk to the students and put up banners.

Prof Sharon Beder, author of *This little kiddy went to market: the corporate capture of childhood* (see especially her chapter "Turning schools into businesses"), has this to say on her web site

"Schools are an attractive environment for advertisers because they are relatively 'uncluttered' – there are not thousands of other advertisements so the few advertisements stand out more and will attract more attention. What is more, because children have to attend school and pay attention when they are there, they are a 'captive' audience – they can't change channels or stations and are not distracted by other things going on. Parents are not present to act as gatekeepers. Advertisers also gain from the positive association with education and the implied endorsement and tacit approval of educational authorities and teachers for their messages."

APSA Academy Opens First Round of Development Funding for Asia-Pacific Films for Children

Submissions are open for the Asia Pacific Screen Awards' (APSA) Children's Film Fund. AUD\$40,000 of development funding is available to support new films that carry positive, life-affirming messages specifically for and about children in the Asia-Pacific region.

Two AUD\$20,000 grants will be given for the script development of new projects, exclusively available to members of the APSA Academy, a group of the region's leading filmmakers comprised of past nominees, winners, council members and International Jury of APSA.

Beder quotes the late George Gerbner (Annenberg School of Communication)

"with advertising and commercialism infiltrating every aspect of life, education has been – until now – 'the only large-scale institutional corrective capable of reordering priorities and cultivating within students some sense of detached, analytical skill'. But this is being undermined by the increasing infiltration of schools by corporations. True education stimulates 'a skeptical and critical view' whereas corporations promote their products rather than illuminate."

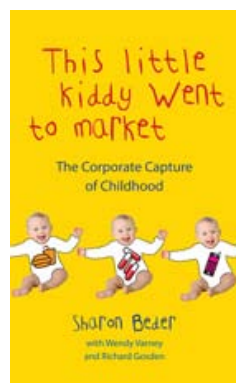
Barbara Biggins
OAM
Hon CEO

<http://www.herinst.org/BusinessManagedDemocracy/education/commercialism/index.html>

The widespread concerns about our schools becoming centres for promoting corporation-led consumption are well justified.

In her book, Beder takes the issues further. She says there are concerns that many schools are becoming more like business centres which support economic efficiency in education, more concerned to produce productive citizens, than fostering the potential of children to be the best they can be, free from commercial pressures.

I'd commend Beder's analysis of the corporate takeover of education to all interested in these issues.



***This little kiddy
went to market:
The commercial
capture of childhood***

Sharon Beder

2009

UNSW Press

The deadline is 21 October 2011, when projects will be assessed by an independent panel ahead of the fifth annual Asia Pacific Screen Awards and announced at the Awards Ceremony on November 24, 2011 on the Gold Coast.

The introduction of the Children's Film Fund builds on the success of APSA's existing funding platform through its partnership with the Asia-Pacific arm of the Motion Picture Association (MPA) launched in 2010.

Web Address:

www.screenqueensland.com.au/news/511-new-apsa-academy-opens-first-round-of-development-funding-for-asia-pacific-films-for-children-due-21-october-2011.html

Clips 'n' Cuts

small screen no. 278 August 2011

Norm to spur kids to get off the couch

CHUPE GRAND

NORM, the tinny-swallowing, couch-sitting star of the Life Be In It health campaigns, will this week start an unlikely second career as a teacher's aide.

More than 20 years after Norm and his beer belly disappeared from Australian TV screens, the Life Be In It founders have modelled a new campaign aimed at helping school teachers to plan more physical activity for students.

As part of a national promotion to be launched tomorrow, 20 electronic books and other supporting material featuring Norm will be made available to primary and secondary teachers with the aim of keeping



children active for at least an hour a day.

It is not the first comeback Norm has attempted since his halcyon days in the 1970s. In November 2000, the federal government briefly revived a television advertisement. Like Norm, it failed to get off the couch.

The Northern Territory government is currently re-running old Life Be In It ads.

Life Be In It founder Colin Benjamin said one knock on Norm was that he had gone from anti-hero to hero among his target audience — overweight blokes who need more exercise.

"People were going to parties dressed up as Norm," Dr Benjamin said yesterday. "They were identifying with him rather than hearing the message."

The new campaign will target children instead of adults, with the hope that peer-power will encourage parents to lead a more active family lifestyle.

... but kids are couch potatoes

SHERADYN HOLDERHEAD
EDUCATION REPORTER

PRESSING the button on the television remote is the most exercise many children get when they come home from school, while eating and talking are the preferred activities at lunch, a study shows.

Published in the *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, the study surveyed almost 800 children aged 10 to 14 to find out what activities they do in the 45-minute lunchtime break and

90-minute after-school period. Study author Rebecca Stanley, a PhD candidate from UniSA's School of Health Sciences, said she was surprised to find the top four most common after-school activities were all sitting down.

Watching television was the most popular after-school activity, followed by being a passenger in a car or bus, playing computer games and doing homework.

"I would have thought after school was a time when children would engage in organised activi-

ties such as sport," Ms Stanley said. "I think it may have something to do with parents being under work pressures and financial pressures so they are not as likely to be at home supervising their children. Parents do have a lot of concerns about safety so if they keep them (children) inside they think it's safe but it's actually having a negative impact..."

The study ranked the most popular lunch-time activities, with eating and talking topping the list, followed by walking and playing chasey.

The Advertiser, 30 July 2011

Fat kids should be helped to lose weight, but it must be done carefully

Obesity needs light touch

SHOULD obese kids be encouraged to lose weight? Yes. So what's so wrong with a book about a 14-year-old who wants to lose weight?

Maggie Goes on a Diet, by American author Paul Kramer, has caused international outrage because it portrays a teenage girl who is fat, lonely and unhappy.

And when she goes on a diet and becomes thin, she is suddenly popular and the school's soccer star.

Kramer said Maggie wants to "try to make herself healthy by exercising". "She does want to look better. She does want to feel better and she does not want to be teased," he said.

So what is wrong with that? This is the reality of life for overweight teens today. Few young people lose weight and feel worse about themselves. If they do it the right way, most kids who lose weight feel much, much better.

Given that one in four Australian children is overweight or obese, it's clear that we need to talk to them plainly about their bodies. We are not doing them any good by dodging the issue, or pretending that it doesn't matter that they're fat.

Fat children go on to be fat adults, and many will have a lifetime of health complications and problems - not to mention self-esteem and self-confidence issues.

However, there appear to be some major problems with Kramer's book, which will be available online from mid



October. For a start, pediatric obesity experts agree that children shouldn't diet in order to change their shape. They say diets are dangerous for growing kids and extreme dieting may stunt their growth.

In one recent study of obese women, American researchers found some of the heaviest had started dieting before they were in

At the same time, though, we shouldn't shirk the issue of obesity. We do have to face the cold, hard fact that one in four girls should lose weight. But the emphasis must be on improving their health and fitness, not thinness per se.

Just look at the modelling industry - there are lots of girls who are thin, unhappy and unhealthy.

We also need to make sure the link between thin and popular, and fat and unpopular, does not become further entrenched. Sure, for some kids this is the reality, but we don't need to give such ugly stereotypes further credence.

Children who need to lose weight should be encouraged to do so by their doctors and their parents because they will be healthier. But it doesn't automatically mean they'll be more popular.

Steve Biddulph, well-known parenting author, will be in Adelaide next month to present a seminar on raising girls, organised by the Australian Council on Children and the Media.

Biddulph believes something is happening to girls' mental health, a "marked deterioration evident to even the casual observer".

"All over the world, sexualisation, obsession with looks, and anxiety and unhappiness are making girls' lives harder," he says. "It starts young, even in early primary school girls now worry about fashion, weight, and keeping up."

He's right. My daughter told me that she thinks she looks better with make-up on because her skin is too pale and her face isn't pretty. She's already learnt that her natural body is not good enough any more - and she's just five!

This is why we must look after girls, and do everything we can to make sure they're encouraged to feel good about themselves.

The Advertiser, 27 August 2011

Experts say diets are dangerous for growing kids

their teens, setting up a lifetime of unhealthy binge eating and yo-yo dieting.

Instead of dieting, what's usually needed for overweight teens is a healthy eating and exercise regime followed by the whole family.

Barbara Biggins, chief executive of the Australian Council on Children and the Media, thinks girls are already under enough pressure to be "thin, hot and sexy, even if they are only six".

"Children need books that point them to ways of being the best they can be as a whole person, and that self-esteem comes from more than having a shapely body," she said.

She's right that the sexualisation and self-esteem of young girls is a huge issue in our society.

Health alert: TV kills you

ADAM CRESSWELL
HEALTH EDITOR

YOUR grandmother warned you TV rots the brain, but it seems the truth is even worse.

Australian researchers have found sitting in front of the box for hours will send you to an early grave — with every hour spent watching TV after age 25 reducing life expectancy by about 22 minutes.

Watching television for six hours a day could slice almost five years off someone's lifespan — unmasking the innocent-looking telly as posing the same level of threat to your health as cigarettes and lack of exercise.

The paper, by researchers from the University of Queensland and Melbourne's Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, extends the understanding that sedentary behaviour is a key risk factor for poor health — with individuals who take the recommended 30 to 60 minutes of exercise a day still at risk if they spend too much of the rest of the time sitting or lying down.

"If these figures are confirmed and shown to reflect a causal association, TV viewing is a public health problem comparable in size to established behavioural risk factors," the researchers write in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.

The findings complement US-Taiwanese research, published in *The Lancet* yesterday, that found 15 minutes of physical activity a day could reduce a person's risk of death by 14 per cent and increase life expectancy by three years.

For the TV study, the Australian researchers analysed data from 11,000 adults enrolled in the Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle study, along with national population and death rate statistics for 2008.

Using these figures, they estimate Australians aged 25 and over watched 9.8 billion hours of television.

The Australian, 17 August 2011

French spurn childish Smurfs

THEY are Francophone figureheads who crossed the Atlantic to use the US as a bridgehead for global conquest. But when Brainy, Lazy, Handy and their companions returned for what should have been a triumphant homecoming yesterday, the welcome was mixed.

As *The Smurfs*, a 3-D Hollywood film, opened across Europe, the French were torn between horror and pride. Reviewers were appalled that the little blue creatures had become distinctly American in Raja Gosnell's film, yet they were proud it was already a box office hit in the US.

Critics said Gosnell had robbed the Smurfs of their European sophistication and made them look "childish", an adjective never applied to the original Belgian comics. "One hundred per cent Yankee" was how *Le Parisien* described Papa Smurf and followers in one of the more charitable reviews of the film, which has opened in the US.

"This is for very young children," said *Le Journal du Dimanche*, the French weekly. "It doesn't Smurf at all," said 24 *Heures*, the Swiss daily.

The issue is all the more sensitive because Hollywood has its hands on another European icon, with Steven Spielberg set to release his version of *Tintin*.

The Smurfs were created by Pierre Culliford, a Belgian author better known as Peyo, in a comic strip in 1958. Les Schtroumpfs, as



Papa Smurf with Katy Perry

they are known in the original, were translated by the Dutch into Smurfs. Their 29 albums have sold 30 million copies and over the past 15 years the franchise has generated \$US8 billion in revenue.

The film features Katy Perry as the voice of Smurfette, Jonathan Winters is Papa Smurf and the evil Gargamel is played by Hank Azaria. "The potential for growth is immense," said William Auriol, the managing director of IMPS, the company founded by Veronique Culliford, Peyo's daughter, who sold the film rights to Columbia Pictures.

In France, however, Smurf-mania has been hit by controversy with the publication of a book that denounces the creatures as racist, and their society as totalitarian.

THE TIMES

The Australian, 5 August 2011

Parents, be warned

LONG gone are the simple and addictive experiences I had with my first 1983 Nintendo Game & Watch or Atari Asteroid home console. Nowadays, seemingly innocent games are very different, not just in graphic intensity, but in realism.

Does Mark Dapin ("Young guns", *Good Weekend*, 20/8) allow his sons to (illegally) attend R-rated movies showing graphic violence and sex? I assume not. Why not? Because if his sons are playing some of the more popular games out at present, then he's allowing them to beat someone's head against a wall and threaten them with a gun for financial advantage. He's also allowing them to play the role of pimp, delivering prostitutes in his muscle car only to run over any of them should he not be pleased with their performance. The list goes on.

By allowing such games into the home, you're allowing your children to hone their skills in lying, cheating and conning in order to achieve success. Readers, what are your kids playing now? Do you care?

Matthew Francis, Ashburton

The Age, 25 August 2011

Saucy pose ignites a storm of debate

SADIE WHITELOCKS
LONDON

SHE reclines among leopard print pillows, her rouged lips pouting at the camera. But shockingly the model in the highly sexualised pictures is only 10 years old.

The provocative images of Thylane Lena-Rose Blondeau, who is tipped as the next big thing on the fashion scene, are causing a storm of controversy.

Campaigners are furious that a child so young should be displaying the sexual allure of someone twice her age.

The latest images of Thylane, who has been compared to Sixties siren Brigitte Bardot, have appeared in the French magazine *Cadeaux*.

They have raised "grave concerns" about Thylane's modelling agency.

One opponent said of the images: "She is a beautiful little girl, as are all 10-year-old girls."

"While I am sure she will make a terrific model some day, I find these pictures beyond disturbing — she is styled way too maturely."

"Prematurely exposing a child to the adult world is preventing development into a person who can survive in it."

The Advertiser, 6 August 2011

Fun — en Français

MINUSCULE is just a lot of fun. Sure, the Gallic humour may be beyond some but it is nevertheless clever and not nonsense. I just love it.

Paula Heyma, East Hawthorn

Important *Minuscule* detail

THE key to appreciating *Minuscule* is to catch the title of each episode. Only then will you be able to fully understand and enjoy an entertaining five minutes.

Anne Richards, Surrey Hills

The Age Green Guide, 18 August 2011

When fresh is best and more is less

The need to fill added timeslots pits quality against quantity at the ABC, writes **Bridget McManus**.

The Age Green Guide, 11 August 2011

GENERATION Alpha, the kids that Gen Y will one day complain have it too easy, appear to be a spoilt bunch of little couch potatoes. Since the ABC launched its digital children's channel in December 2009, kids have been able to switch on free-to-air television for up to 15 hours a day and watch a commercial-free program designed with them in mind.

For preschoolers, a smorgasbord of foreign animation screens on ABC2, alongside the immortal *Sesame Street* and local stalwart *Play School*. On ABC3, older children are served what seems to be a healthy mix of documentaries, sci-fi cartoons, panel-style shows and local dramas, such as *Dance Academy* and *My Place*.

And yet, while the ABC claims reasonable ratings in key timeslots and demographics, there's no denying that for much of the time, the key demographic is at school.

More worrying are questions over the quality of programs that are made with less money but are required to fill more air time and provide online content.

The founder of the Australian Children's Television Foundation, Patricia Edgar, a vocal critic of the ABC's handling of the digital uptake, fears politics have taken precedence over research and development. She says the demand for volume, coupled with an attempt to base pre-teen and adolescent entertainment on adult formats such

as *Spicks and Specks*, has denied young viewers fresh concepts.

"The whole landscape of children's programming has changed but I don't think it has changed for the better," she says. "It's absolute nonsense to think that you can create quality programming to feed this voracious [digital] machine. Emulating adult formats is not an appropriate starting point for producers of children's programs."

The ABC's head of children's programming, Tim Brooke-Hunt, defends what he considers to be among ABC3's most successful productions — video-review show *Good Game SP* and practical-joke show *Prank Patrol*.

"Our school-age audience love seeing their peers on air," says Brooke-Hunt. "They love a good comedy situation and *Prank Patrol* has been a huge success for us. *Good Game SP* has got a very strong, devoted audience. Kids like these different genres and we will continue to offer them."

He acknowledges the "budget juggle" required to create new content, which he says now amounts to about 50 per cent of the programming on ABC3. And with children watching "catch-up" episodes and playing related games online, not everything screening during school hours is missed, he says.

According to Edgar, the ABC's online content lacks sophistication. "The problem

is, what is being created for [the website] is being created by television producers who have very little experience of the online world," she says. "So what you've got is typical broadcast programs with a bit of interactivity added on the side but there is no thought to the integration of a service that is relevant to kids today, who are engaged with complex websites."

Without proper investment in development, says Edgar, the ABC risks going down the path of the BBC, which, according to an article she cites in *The Guardian*, has replaced quality content with cheaper, reality-style shows.

"The BBC did a similar kind of thing by modelling ideas for children's shows on successful adult shows but all fairly vacuous," she says. "By contrast, look at the origins of *Sesame Street* — massive investment, incredible talent and creativity

Bananas in Pyjamas has been criticised for not meeting the production standards of classic shows such as *Sesame Street*.

with puppets that were years in development. *Play School* and *Bananas in Pyjamas* don't match up to that standard, even though they're staples and people are impressed that they've been around for so long. But would it satisfy any adult to have the same program that is 45 years old? *Play School* has not really been adapted to what we've learnt in 45 years."

While Brooke-Hunt promises a refreshed opening sequence for *Play School*, he is reluctant to mess with the winning formula. As for the rest of the ABC's output, he says the mix is just right.

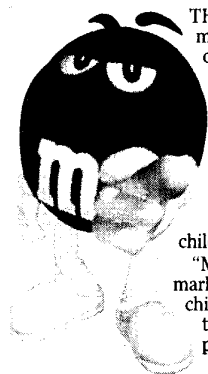
"We have a daily one-hour educational block on ABC1," he says. "We view ABC3 and ABC4KIDS [on ABC2] as being primarily entertainment. We're out to entertain the kids not educate them."

But change and a stronger focus on education, says Edgar, is what is needed if the ABC is to once again make shows with the shelf life of *Play School*.

"These programs are getting kids at a stage in their lives when they're never going to be able to learn as effectively," she says. "They need literature, arts, ideas, natural history and science programs, which can be done not in a didactic way but in an entertaining way, with talented people. But you're not going to get that when the call for programming is high volume."



Choc bully just eye candy



THE Advertising Standards Bureau spent two months investigating the social interactions on talking M&Ms in commercials after viewers complained the ads could lead to an increase in childhood bullying.

An ABS spokeswoman said the bureau spent just under 60 days investigating the TV commercial, which featured a red M&M chocolate taunting his candy cohorts.

One complainant said the ads gave children the impression that bullying was OK. "M&Ms is the most influential product on the market and needs to ensure the message that children receive is positive and assisting in their growth and development," the complainant said.

"When marketing a product, the message

should be about development of our children, not showing them that the red M&M can dominate the rest of the group. Children will see this as a normal way of life as the M&Ms portray to them those they mix with at school."

After deliberating for two months, the ABS determined the ad was "humorous rather than bullying".

The ABS spokeswoman said the complaint was among 3500 the bureau received each year, most of which were investigated for an average of 28-35 days before a judgment was made. Complaints often relate to sexual content, nudity, discrimination and vilification. While most were "obscure" and "unrealistic", the process to determine if they breached the Advertisers' Code of Ethics was still a lengthy one.

Briana Domjen

Sunday Times, Perth, 7 August 2011

CHALET GIRL (PG)

Snow laughing matter. UK, 97 mins

I would have been disposed to give this British teen comedy a mild endorsement if it had hit the Australian market with a wholly appropriate M rating from our censors. But as a PG offering, it's strictly no dice. Parents who happily let their kids see anything with a PG tag stuck on it will be making a big mistake if they assume this is fitting fare for anyone younger than about 14 or 15. Sure, this tale of a young woman working a ski-season job in Austria is a fluffy enough entry-level rom-com for the most part. But when the girly talk turns to who sleeps about, who wants a nude frolic in the hot tub, and the relative sizes of nearby male appendages, well, that's stuff that should be running with the M crowd.

Leigh Paatsch

The Advertiser, 3 September 2011

Silly calm before storm

MINUSCULE may well be nonsense, but brilliant nonsense, and perfectly timed before the gloom of the 7pm news.

Geoff Willis, Glen Waverley

A fan to a foe

HEY, Barry Peake (*Letters*, 11/8), I think *Minuscule* is one of the best programs on the ABC. Where's your sense of fun?

Richard Francis, Ballarat

The Age Green Guide, 18 August 2011

PARENTS CAN MONITOR THEIR KIDS FROM OUTSIDE FACEBOOK

SocialGuard is your friend

The screenshot shows a Facebook interface. At the top is the Facebook navigation bar with links for Home, Profile, Friends, and Account. Below this is a banner for 'MORE FUN GAMES' featuring 'Slotomania'. A 'Buy Coins' pop-up window is prominently displayed in the center. It has a title 'Buy Coins' and a subtitle 'Need more coins? Buy some now!'. The pop-up lists several coin packages for purchase, each with a radio button for selection. The packages are:

Coins	Discount	Total Coins	Price (USD)
800,000	+ 20%	960,000	\$200 USD
300,000	+ 10%	330,000	\$100 USD
120,000	+ 5%	126,000	\$50 USD
30,000	+ -	30,000	\$20 USD
12,000	+ -	12,000	\$10 USD
5,000	+ -	5,000	\$5 USD

At the bottom of the pop-up is a button that says 'Buy with Facebook Credits'. To the right of the pop-up, a sidebar shows a list of friends and a section for 'Sponsored' content, including an advertisement for 'Slotomania'.

A Facebook app enticing teenagers to gamble with real money is an example of an activity parents might want to monitor

WALTER MOSSBERG

PARENTS fret all the time about protecting their kids on Facebook, but many of the products and services I've seen that aim to help are intrusive and inject the parents into the child's normal, healthy online social life in a way that's awkward for both.

A new product from Check Point called SocialGuard allows parents to monitor a child's Facebook account without invading their privacy.

You can co-manage your child's account or "friend" them on the service, which technically has a minimum age of 13. But those are time-consuming and embarrassing practices, especially when the offspring are teenagers who generally crave some degree of privacy, even if they don't yet merit full treatment as adults.

So I've been testing a service called ZoneAlarm SocialGuard that I think strikes a good balance between safety and privacy, between a parent's peace of mind and a teen's sense of freedom.

Every five minutes it monitors kids' Facebook accounts for approaches by strangers and potential predators, cyber-bullying, age fraud, account hacking and links to inappropriate or malicious websites. It uses algorithms that look for certain types of language, profile data and other signs of unwanted activity.

SocialGuard does this in a way

that is invisible to the kids' friends, and doesn't require the parent to be on guard all the time, or even to be on Facebook at all. If the service finds a possible problem it emails the parent, the child or both. This happens outside Facebook.

The service doesn't give the parent the ability to directly read or leave comments on the child's Facebook wall.

ZoneAlarm SocialGuard comes from a veteran security firm, Check Point Software Technologies. It costs \$2 a month or \$20 a year, though there's a free seven-day trial (the company is also randomly testing a free 30-day trial).

It takes the form of a stand-alone computer program connected to a back-end monitoring service, and can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/hgo0C5>.

A new version out this month will add several features, including a toolbar that can deliver SocialGuard warnings when you use Internet Explorer or Firefox.

Before I get into describing how it works, let me note some caveats about SocialGuard. First, the program only works on Windows PCs. There's no version for Mac, phones or tablets. However, it can monitor Facebook accounts that are accessed by your kids via Macs and mobile devices, or via different Windows PCs: the software you use for monitoring needn't be on the same device the child uses for accessing Facebook.

Second, there are some holes in

its coverage. While it monitors messages, profiles and wall posts on a Facebook account, it doesn't pick up chats, places, events or photos, though it does check on text accompanying photos and the people who tag the pictures. So if your daughter is posting pictures you consider inappropriate, SocialGuard can't warn you.

Also, SocialGuard can't protect your child if he or she sets up a secret Facebook account that you and the service don't know about.

Finally, it isn't a silver bullet, even in the areas it does cover.

The child is likely to be aware that SocialGuard is monitoring his or her account, because, to set it up, you must use their Facebook sign-in credentials. In fact, the company stresses this point, noting that if you do get an email about, say, language in a post that indicates cyber-bullying, you should discuss it with your child.

Still, in my tests, SocialGuard did what it promised, and I believe that it could be a real benefit to parents and children alike so that they are warned about potential problems early.

It can cover up to five Facebook accounts simultaneously, and each account can have its own settings as to what is monitored, and whether only the parent, or both the parent and child, should get emails when suspicious events occur. For instance, for an older teen, you might not worry about content classified by the program as "sex education", but for a younger

one you might. For my tests, I entered my own, real, Facebook account; a fake account I created and several test accounts for imaginary children of different ages that the company had created, complete with some events that triggered emails to me.

When I tried using my fake account to friend one of the test children, I was flagged as a "potential stranger" because I wasn't connected to the child or any of her friends, according to the company's algorithms.

Another example: I was warned that one of the test kids' friends had a declared age of 14, but also had stated on Facebook that he graduated from high school in 1972.

When one child sent another a link to a lock-picking site, I was warned. When an imaginary friend posted on one of my imaginary kids' walls a message with curse words commonly used by bullies, it was flagged as possible cyber-bullying.

Obviously, not all of these cases may be causes for concern. True friends sometimes use bad language in situations that aren't bullying. Sometimes websites are passe along that SocialGuard knows are malicious or inappropriate but the sender doesn't. An older aunt, outside a child's social circle, may wish to friend him or her. And different families have different levels of tolerance. That's why discussions matter. SocialGuard only warns, but it

doesn't stop children's activities.

I am not so sanguine about the forthcoming toolbar, which I also tested. Managed in part by a separate company, it has various features, such as a search box for the Bing search engine and a link to an app store selling web-based games and other services, which are unrelated to the core mission of SocialGuard, and which I found both annoying and distracting from the purpose of the service.

But, overall, if you're a parent with limited time who worries about your child's safety on Facebook, SocialGuard is worth trying.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The Australian,

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Children's understanding of advertisers' persuasive tactics.
International Journal of Advertising, Vol. 30, No. 2, Pp329-350

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Advertising of fast food to children on Australian television: the impact of industry self-regulation.
Medical Journal of Australia, Vol. 195, No. 1, Pp20-24

CLASSIFICATION

Gentile, DA; et al (2011)
Parents' evaluation of media ratings a decade after the television ratings were introduced.
Pediatrics, Vol. 128, No. 1, Pp36-44

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The mediating role of Internet connection, virtual friends, and mood in predicting loneliness among students with and without learning disabilities in different educational environments.
Journal of Learning Disabilities, Vol. 44, No. 3, Pp215-227

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www.joanganzcooneycenter.org

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Risk-taking and the media.
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CONFERENCES

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WORLD NEWS

Kids see more sex on TV

Parents can put some of their fears to rest about the scary stuff they hear about kids and the Internet according to Michele Ybarra, president and research director of the US based nonprofit research organization called Internet Solutions for Kids. However, there are still concerns about older forms of media.

Speaking at the American Psychological Association's annual meeting Ybarra said that one of the myths she says she's discovered about kids growing up with technology is that kids are exposed to a lot of sexual content online. She says the truth is that young people are much more likely to be exposed to sexual material through television and music than they are through websites and video games.

Ybarra's research found that exposure to sexual material is highest with TV, at 75%, followed by music, at 69%. The Internet is the least common way children are exposed to sexual material, at 16% to 25%.

Ybarra presented data from a yet unpublished study, which will appear in the journal *Pediatrics*. It is based on two surveys: her national, longitudinal Growing up with Media survey of 1588 children that began in 2006 and an online survey, Positive Youth Development, which was completed earlier this year and includes more than 5,000 teens ages 13-18.

Ybarra's research has also shown that despite the attention sexting has received, very few kids say they have done it — about 5% say they sexted in the past year.

<http://yourlife.usatoday.com/parenting-family/story/2011/08/Kids-see-more-sex-on-TV-than-online-research-suggests/49843626/1>

Harm from fast-paced cartoons

A US study suggests that watching just nine minutes of the fast moving children's cartoon, *SpongeBob Squarepants*, can cause short-term attention and learning problems in 4-year-olds.

The problems were seen in a study of 60 children randomly assigned to either watch "SpongeBob," or the slower-paced PBS cartoon "Caillou" or assigned to draw pictures. Immediately after these nine-minute assignments, the kids took mental function tests; those who had watched "SpongeBob" did measurably worse than the others.

Previous research has linked TV-watching with long-term attention problems in children, but the new study suggests more immediate problems can occur after very little exposure — results that parents of young kids should be alert to, the study authors said.

Nickelodeon spokesman David Bittler disputed the findings and said "SpongeBob SquarePants" is aimed at kids aged 6-11, not 4-year-olds. However, US based organisation *Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood* points out that the *SpongeBob* character is featured on countless products designed for toddlers and preschoolers, implying that the program is aimed at this age group. They say that Nickelodeon's marketing of *SpongeBob* sends a confusing message to parents and increases the chances that young children will watch a show that is intended for older children

<http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/actions/spongebobpreschoolers.html>

Christakis, D (2011) The Effects of fast-paced cartoons. *Pediatrics*, online September 1, 2011; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2011-2071

KIDS' TV

A selection of children's programs screened on TV during the period

ABC 1 (afternoon programs only)

Play School; Clang Invasion; Jinx; Girls in Love; Mr Men Show; Chop Socky Chooks; BTN Daily.

ABC 2

Mister Maker; Little Charley Bear; Nelly and Caesar; Chuggington; Fireman Sam; Tinga Tinga Tales; The Wot Wots; Octonauts; Zoo Lane; Blanche; LazyTown; Roary the Racing Car; Shaun the Sheep.

ABC 3

The Dukes of Broxtonia; Backyard Science; Pingu; Escape from Scorpion Island; Letterbox; Total Drama Action; Rated A for Awesome; BTN Extra; Sally Bollywood; Five Minutes More.

SEVEN

All for Kids; Spit it Out; Handy Manny; Stitch!; Sally Bollywood; Legend of Enyo.

NINE

Pixel Pinkie; Dora the Explorer; A Gurls World; Ben 10; Wakkaville; The Saddle Club; Kids WB; Magical Tales; Pyramid.

TEN

Totally Wild; Wurraywhy; Scope; The Elephant Princess; Me and my Monsters.

NICKELODEON

The Mighty B!; Hi-5; Fanboy and Chum Chum; The Fairly Odd Parents; Go Diego Go!; Neds Declassified; Victorious; True Jackson VP; Me & My Monsters; Big Time Rush; Life with Derek; The Troop; iCarly; SpongeBob SquarePants; Team Umizoomi; Shaun the Sheep; .

DISNEY CHANNEL

Sonny with a Chance; Wizards of Waverly Place; As the Bell Rings; Hareport; Zeke and Luther; Phineas and Ferb; The Incredibles; Good Luck Charlie; Family Biz.