Excessive screen time seen as biggest problem for Australian children's health

In a survey conducted in October 2015, by the Online Research Unit for The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, Australian adults were asked to rate how much of a problem they considered 29 child and adolescent health issues to be for Australian children. The survey was administered from October 2 to November 1, 2015, to a randomly selected group of 1993 adults aged 18 and older. Over half of the sample were parents of children aged less than 18 years.

The list of health issues reflected current child health concerns and was formulated using existing child health research, along with input from the Australian public via a test survey. The participants rated issues as ‘not a problem’, ‘somewhat of a problem’ or a ‘big problem’. In addition, parents of children aged 17 years or younger were asked to rate the same 29 health issues for their own children.

Excessive screen time was the most frequently identified big problem (58%), followed by obesity (55%), not enough physical activity (54%) and unhealthy diet (54%). Other issues ranking in the top ten included mental health concerns: bullying (53%) and suicide (41%); and issues relating to child safety – family violence (49%), internet safety (45%), child abuse (45%), and illegal drug use (50%).

Other issues commonly identified as a big problem for Australian children included alcohol abuse (40%), smoking (38%), depression (38%) and stress and/or anxiety (34%).

Dr Anthea Rhodes, Director of the Australian Child Health Poll, said the results show that excessive screen time was perceived as a big health problem across all sections of the community and one in five rated it as a big problem in their own home.

“It’s identified as a big problem by parents of very young children and the number of parents who see it as a big problem increases as their children grow up,” Dr Rhodes said. “The challenge in this data for us as healthcare providers is: Excessive screen time is not a traditional health problem, as such, so how do we provide care to children and their families struggling with what they have told us is a significant issue?”

In other key findings, the poll has revealed major differences between what parents perceive as big problems for their own children, compared to all children.

While 48% of parents rated obesity as a big problem for all children, only 8% rated it as a big problem for their own children. “The implications of this are significant when one in four Australian children are overweight.”


Important inquiries
The beginning of 2016 is proving a busy time for submission writing. A number of current parliamentary inquiries have important implications for Australian children. ACCM will be making submissions to all of them. In order of due dates for submission these are:

- February 1 - Senate Economics References Committee Personal choice and community impacts: classification of publications, films and computer games
  www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Economics/Personal_choice
- February 5 - NSW Parliament. Joint Committee on Children and Young People Inquiry into the sexualisation of children and young people.
  www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/D3442CD35DB8E0ECA257EE5007E0FBF?open&refnavid=CO3_1
- February 5 - House of Representatives Communications and the Arts Committee Inquiry into broadcasting, online content and live production to rural and regional Australia
  www.aph.gov.au/communications
- March 10 - Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications Inquiry into harm being done to Australian children through access to porn on the internet.
  www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/Online_access_to_porn
- March 31 - Senate Standing Committee on Finance and public administration Inquiry into Domestic violence and gender inequality: includes an examination of the messages conveyed to children and young people in the marketing of toys and other products; education, and entertainment
  www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/DV_and_Gender_Inequality

Keep this conference date
Monday 18 July 2016

Violence in the media: The stories and the science
Parliament of NSW Theatrette
Speakers include eminent overseas and Australian scholars. They will address topics such as:

- What does science tell us about the impacts of media violence?
- How is that science reported in the media?
- How does media coverage of real life violence (including domestic violence) impact on society?
- Can we improve our storytelling?

For more information contact ACCM

AUSTRALIANS SEE EXCESSIVE SCREENTIME AS PROBLEM

EDITORIAL: THE SILENCE OF THE STAR WARS

VALE MARION SULLIVAN

CONFERENCE: VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA
The Silence of the Star Wars

The release of *Star Wars VII: the force awakens* was characterised by enforced silence about the content. An officially sanctioned trailer was released, but no one was allowed to reveal the plot and no advance previews were provided.

When screening started, people were paranoid about spoilers. Revealing anything about the plot to somebody who hadn’t seen it was treated as practically sacrilege.

No doubt this was all good fun for some, and a great many filmgoers have really enjoyed the movie.

But what about all the hype and merchandising associated with the movie, that meant many young children were encouraged to want to see the M rated movie, and did so in its first days of release?

Everything from Lego, action figures, and costumes, to fluffy toys, Play-Doh, sticker books, rain boots, slippers, drinking cups, water bottles, swimming trunks, beach towels, beanies, or scooters, flash drives, and PG-rated videogames has been linked to the movie, and marketed to children for months in advance. The spoils from product sales have been enormous (est $5bn over 12 months), and will continue.

This very marketing campaign that teased and tormented adults with its silence about plots and characters resulted in a lack of useful knowledge about content for parents. Where were parents who wanted that information before responding to the urging of their children to get it from?

With no previews, reliable review sources such as *Know Before You Go* (Australia) or the US Commonsense Media could not provide them until a day or so after release. With no spoilers or word of mouth, even the local grapevine was no use.

The classification system offered some guidance with its M classification and consumer advice lines of “Moderate science fiction themes and violence”. But this was only available less than a week in advance, and long after most children would have decided they wanted to see it.

*Star Wars VII* surprised and delighted many. But parents don’t need silence and surprises about content, and what you might call a spoiler, a parent might call helpful information. The spoils from *Star Wars VII* will be monumental. But parents need more support and less undermining by a marketing force too big to be resisted.

The ACCM review of the latest Star Wars film can be found on our website at:


Vale Marion Sullivan

It is with great sorrow that we mark the death of ACCM pioneer, ongoing worker, and great woman, Marion Sullivan, on 7th January.

For many years, Marion fought valiantly against chronic lymphocytic leukemia, but became increasingly unwell in the recent past. She died peacefully in the Daw Park (SA) Hospice.

Marion was an amazing person who maintained her passion to work for the cause of better film and TV for children for over 40 years. She joined the SA Council for Children’s Film and Television (a forerunner of the Australian Council on Children and the Media) back in 1973, as a representative of her local school, and has served the organisation in a range of administrative capacities since that time.

Marion ran the film and video lending service for many years, helped run numerous children’s weekend film screenings, co-organised many biennial international children’s film festivals film festivals, and monitored the Council’s finances. What’s more, if there was something that needed doing that wasn’t being done, she’d do it.

Marion was awarded a National Volunteer Award in 2012.

When she first knew of her illness, Marion just braced herself, and got on with life. She did that for around 20 years. She never complained despite increasing visits to hospital for intravenous infusions, and the growing menace of infection. She was a true stoic, but with an enormous sense of humour.

So many good memories, such a sad time.

Marion is survived by her husband Ron, daughter Kerry and grandchildren Amy and Joshua.
Disney feels the force with Star Wars mania

Blockbuster
Star Wars franchise US box office, inflation adjusted (2015 dollars)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>$USm</th>
<th>Star Wars (77)</th>
<th>The Empire Strikes Back (78)</th>
<th>Return of the Jedi (83)</th>
<th>The Phantom Menace (99)</th>
<th>Attack of the Clones (02)</th>
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International to US box office

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Clips ‘n’ Cuts
small screen no. 326 Dec 2015/Jan 2016

Not even Hoyts Group boss Damian Keogh was exempt from having his mobile phone confiscated at the glittering Australian premiere of the new Star Wars film.

The chief executive of the cinema chain was ordered to leave his phone in a clear plastic bag outside the theatre at Sydney’s Fox Studios.

As celebrities and the parents aged in their 30s to 40s who grew up watching the original George Lucas trilogy got giddy reliving their childhoods, security staff in night-vision goggles patrolled the theatre to stop people recording the film on their phones.

Walt Disney Studios is even using encrypted files and digital keys to stop Star Wars: The Force Awakens falling prey to online piracy.

The first Star Wars movie in a decade and the first in 32 years to feature original characters such as Han Solo, Lando Calrissian, Princess Leia and Chewbacca is so highly anticipated by analysts that Goldman Sachs this week

sharply increased its global box office estimate.

The broker has forecast Star Wars: The Force Awakens to gross $US1.95 billion ($2.27bn). Of this, it expects $US790 million in US ticket sales and $US1.16bn internationally.

This would make Star Wars: The Force Awakens the third-highest grossing film of all time, behind only 20th Century Fox’s Titanic and Avatar.

Goldman Sachs analyst Drew Borst said a rival run at the box office will see Star Wars: The Force Awakens break the record for largest domestic opening weekend of $US210m, a record set by Universal Studios’ Jurassic World six months ago.

Star Wars will benefit from comparatively less competition in the last two weeks of the year. Several studios moved the release dates for key films to avoid competition with Star Wars,” said Mr Borst.

Paramount’s Mission Impossible 5 was pushed forward while DreamWorks Animation’s Kung Fu Panda 3 was pushed out, and Universal’s Warcraft was bumped into next year.

Competition at the box office comes largely in the shape of niche films unlikely to appeal to broad audiences like director Quentin Tarantino’s The Hateful Eight and Leonardo DiCaprio vehicle The Revenant.

With Star Wars: The Force Awakens on course to smash box office records it’s little wonder Disney is going to such extraordinary lengths with its security measures.

For Mr Keogh and Hoyts, franchises like Star Wars are delivering a more reliable revenue stream despite increased competition from new forms of viewing in a world of smartphones, connected devices and online streaming giant Netflix.

“The big blockbuster has been a big driver of cinema admissions this year. At present cinema admissions are up 13 per cent year-on-year, which should set a new record at the Australian box office after two years of decline,” Mr Keogh told The Weekend Australian.

Yet analysts questioned whether Disney chief executive Bob Iger had overpaid for Lucas’s Lucasfilm when he forked out $US4bn in cash and stock in 2012. The deal, which now looks cheap, came after Mr Iger spent $US2.4bn in stock and cash to buy the comic book and action film maker Marvel in 2010.

“I’m not looking over my shoulder with any of those acquisitions,” said Mr Iger. “In football, there’s a term for when a receiver catches the ball and gets hit. It’s called ‘hearing footsteps’.

Speaking about the Lucasfilm acquisition, Mr Iger added: ’I’m not hearing any footsteps.

It is the latest example of Disney’s transformation under Mr Iger into a company that is transforming each big release into a standalone successful business. The build-up around the Star Wars franchise has also translated into a boom for investors, with Disney’s Wall Street listed shares up nearly 20 per cent this year.

Mr Iger has recast Lucasfilm around what the company calls “franchises” that continue to live on after their cinema release as theme-park rides, toys, video games, TV shows and merchandise.

Goldman Sachs estimates Star Wars: The Force Awakens will generate an incremental $US3bn in global retail sales, equating to $US300m in licensing revenue to Disney. Previously, Disney had charmed out a larger number of movies with no link to any of its entertainment properties. In 2006, Disney Studios released 19 movies nationwide, whereas now it produces about 10 a year.

Mr Keogh said its annual line-up was dominated by box office friendly franchises. “Disney is basically four studios in one Marvel, Pixar Animation, Lucasfilm and Walt Disney Pictures. Their blockbuster strategy has family appeal, and the best way to experience the movie is on the big screen.”

While the release of Warner Brothers’ Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice is expected to keep the momentum going in March, was 2015 a one-off.

Mr Keogh and Hoyts owner Dalian Wanda Group are betting it’s the start of a resurgence at the cinema. The Chinese estate developer and entertainment company recently agreed to hand Mr Keogh hundreds of millions of dollars to fund a luxury makeover of Australian cinemas.

The Weekend Australian 19-20/12/2015
Fears for teens on screens

GRANT McARTHUR

HOURS seated in front of the TV, iPads and computers is the biggest health concern facing Australian teenagers, according to a groundbreaking report.

An Australian-first poll found the biggest health concern adults had for their teenage children is screen time.

This ranked ahead of their fears of drugs, bullying, child abuse and suicide.

Their fears over an increasingly sedentary and unhealthy lifestyle are reinforced by the other major concerns raised in the report, with obesity, a lack of physical activity and an unhealthy diet outranking the top four.

Director of the Australian Child Health Poll Dr Andrea Rhodes said that while modern lifestyle issues were expected to be on the list, it was surprising to see they dominated the thoughts of almost 69 per cent of Australian households.

"It tells us there is still a broader issue," she said.

"We have seen so much research devoted to the problems but there is still an unmet need."

"It is one of those problems where it can sometimes be easier to ignore than it is to address, because although it sounds like a simple problem it can be complex to address."

"Some of the less exciting ideas like eating better and moving more rate highly and we need to ensure we don’t become complacent."

The findings are being released as the first data collected under the Australian Child Health Poll, being undertaken by Melbourne’s Royal Children’s Hospital as the first extensive national research of its kind.

Every three months the poll will canvas 2000 Australian households representative of the population to gain the public’s perception of various issues, using the data to inform policy and research.

Asked about 16 health priorities, the first survey has revealed different concerns among wealthy and poor.

While households earning less than $3000 a week are most concerned with illegal drug use, the issue ranks seventh in homes on a larger income.

While households across the board were keen to name obesity as a major concern, when asked about their own children they did not see it relating to their families.

TOP 10 CHILD HEALTH PROBLEMS (as rated by percentage of poll respondents)

- 1. Excessive screen time 59%
- 2. Obesity 55%
- 3. Not enough physical activity 58%
- 4. Unhealthy diet 56%
- 5. Bullying 57%
- 6. Drug and alcohol use 50%
- 7. Family and domestic violence 49%
- 8. Internet safety 45%
- 9. Child abuse and neglect 45%
- 10. landfill and recycling 44%

* Source: Australian Child Health Poll

The Advertiser 9/12/2015

Son’s gaming passion is taking over

LIKE most teens, my son has been into video games – or “gaming” as it is referred to now – for many years. He is 15 going on 16 and we have less influence on him now. I am very concerned about the time he spends on gaming. He will spend hours a day on it and weekends. If we try to reduce or stop his screen time he unloads a huge tirade. He has started to miss school to get more gaming time in. He is even doing games for other friends, for money, so they can progress in the game. I’m concerned that this is becoming an addiction or at least out of his control.

What should I do?

ANSWER: Although not officially recognized as a clinical diagnosis, the phenomenon of "video game addiction" is becoming increasingly prevalent among both adults and young people.

Video game addiction is considered to be an excessive or compulsive use of computer games that interferes with everyday life. It may present itself as voluntary social isolation, a reactive mood swings, diminished physical activity and focus on in-game achievements to the exclusion of other events in life. Basic activities such as eating and sleeping can be affected.

Although your son may deny his addiction, his "tarders" are sufficient proof that it is indeed a problem.

Part of this problem, especially for younger people, is the sense of achievement and success that can be gained from excelling at a particular game. They often describe themselves as gamers as a way of self-identifying with a particular lifestyle.

As with many addictive conditions, prevention is better than cure so intervening early with younger children is highly desirable. This does not appear to be an option for your son. Treatment cannot usually commence until a person recognises they have a problem.

This will limit your options. As a parent you still have the right to demand appropriate behaviour from your son. This includes participating in family life and if necessary placing controls on internet access, for which reasonably you are paying the bills. In extreme cases parents have been known to force the use of the internet themselves and cancelled their service.

This would create some short-term anger and distress but may have a positive effect in the longer term.

However, it is important to ensure all are kept safe.

Try focusing on the solution instead of the problem such as encouraging him to maintain involvement in regular activities, giving less time for gaming. It is important to get some professional support for yourself and if possible, your son, as experience with other forms of addiction demonstrates the difficulty in overcoming them. Try the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, a free community-based mental health service provided through SA Health’s Women’s and Children’s Health Network (wch.sa.gov.au/cambh).

WRITE TO US: Send questions to Family Forum, The Advertiser, 31 Whymark St, Adelaide 5000 or email family@theadvertiser.com.au

COUNSELLING AGENCIES: Professional counselling is available from Relationships Australia (SA) (08) 8371 4304, Centrelink (1800) 099 601, Emergency Services Mental Health Line (1800) 659 467, Lifeline (13 11 14),定量 (08) 8490 2222, Anglicare (1800 525 365) and Beyond Help (08) 8262 7190. Community Health centres listed in the Yellow Pages. The Anglicare Leap and Gold Centre (08) 8354 9490. Alternatively, non-confidential counselling can also be obtained with a referral from a GP to a psychologist or mental health social worker.

Another helpful organisation is headspace (headspace.org.au), an initiative of the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. Referrals can be made by calling 1800 063 257 from 8am to 3pm Monday to Friday.

You may wish to start by talking to your GP, who may suggest a referral to another mental health practitioner.

The Advertiser 30/1/2016
Shark in $13m putt for kids' tablets

STEPHANIE GLEASON

A hedge fund founded by Greg Norman, the Australian golf legend known as “The Great White Shark”, is bidding $US10 million ($A13.7m) for the bankrupt manufacturer of the Nabi children’s tablets.

Great White Shark Opportunity Fund, a hedge fund founded in 2013, made an 11th-hour offer yesterday for Fuhu, topping an initial offer from children’s retail giant Mattel.

The tablet maker selected the fund, an investment arm of Mr Norman’s sprawling Great White Shark Enterprises, lead bidder for its business at a hearing in US Bankruptcy Court in Wilmington, Delaware. The fund has also agreed to finance Fuhu’s bankruptcy case with a bankruptcy financing package.

The entry of Mr Norman’s fund sets the stage for a bidding war over Fuhu, whose lawyers spent most of yesterday in court fighting for the right to conduct an auction at all.

One of the tablet maker’s lenders had argued that the company would bring in more money to lenders if it was sold off in pieces rather than put on the auction block as a going concern.

Peace broke out, however, when Fuhu’s lenders and Mattel agreed to name Mr Norman’s hedge fund as stalking horse, or lead bidder.

As part of its offer, the Great White fund agreed to allow Fuhu to spend $US700,000 in cash it has on hand to pay down lenders, satisfying that group’s objections. The Great White offer also doesn’t include a break-up fee and assumes customer warranties on Fuhu’s Nabi tablets designed to usher children safely into the online world.

The Australian 11/1/2016

Give kids freedom with toys

TOY trends are going back to basics this Christmas as children’s lives become more busy and they spend more time on computers.

The director of the Australian Toy Association, David Hendy, said one of the year’s most popular toys is the good old-fashioned water balloon, allowing unstructured play.

“So much of children’s lives are structured now that their play time is the opposite. They’re craving that freedom,” Mr Hendy said.

With more research emerging about the value of play as a way to encourage imagination, interaction and bonding with parents, toys are less complex this year.

There is the Elsa doll from Frozen, whose main appeal is that girls love to sing along with her. Lego is as popular as ever, as are relatively simple toys, and Star Wars is the popular theme this year.

The Advertiser 12/12/2015
Young being left out of digital revolution loop

DAVID SWAN
INNOVATION

Young Australians are the least prepared for the digital revolution, ranking last out of nine countries, according to a release today by the World Economic Forum at Davos.

The research, conducted by global IT firm Infosys, polled 1000 young people per country, aged between 16 and 25, in Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, South Africa, Britain and the US. It found Australians aged between 16 and 25 are neither confident in their current job skills nor do they feel optimistic about their future job prospects. Only 16 per cent of the respondents displayed a strong interest in developing data science and analytics skills, while 19 per cent professed a strong interest in learning how to code, among the lowest of countries surveyed.

The news comes after the Turnbull government last month released its Innovation Statement, including a $48 million investment over five years to “inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs”. The package included $13m to expand STEM opportunities for women and a $5m digital literacy package.

Minister for Innovation Christopher Pyne said preparing young Australians for the “ideas boom” was a priority.

These measures will help to address the findings in this report, positioning Australia and young Australians to take advantage of digital disruptions as innovation pacemakers,” he said.

“However, the government can only do so much. If we are to lift the ambition of young Australians there needs to be a cultural shift, an embracing of ‘taking a chance’ on creative ideas and raising the profile of STEM in the community.”

Infosys Australia chief Andrew Croth said young Australians were highly aware of the role technology would play in their lives but were still falling behind. “Our educators, business leaders and governments need to come together to action a modernised approach,” he said.

“The government’s Innovation Statement did not come a moment too soon — Australia’s STEM skills gap is too large and we need to start closing it.”

Business Council of Australia chief of staff Matt Garbutt said the report showed the need for young people to be equipped with a broad base of skills — both technical skills and cognitive skills such as communication and the ability to work in a team — to enable them to be flexible and resilient.

“The research shows that young people recognise a ‘job for life’ is a thing of the past and so they can expect to retrain and re-skill a number of times during their working life,” he said.

Netflix triplets reach to expand to 190 nations

Netflix says it has tripled its reach globally by expanding into an additional 130 countries with the videostreaming service taking its most aggressive step yet in its plans for international growth.

The announcement, made by Netflix chief executive Reed Hastings on Wednesday at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, boosted the company’s stock price. Shares, up 144 per cent over the past year, rose 9 per cent to $US117.68.

With the expansion into new markets like Russia, India, Singapore and Poland, Netflix is now available in more than 190 countries. The company also added service in Arabic, Korean and Chinese dialects to the 17 languages already supported.

Netflix said its original programming, including Daredevil, Jessica Jones, Narcos and Marco Polo, would be available to consumers in all markets.

That won’t be the case, at least initially, with many popular shows produced and distributed by major Hollywood studios.

Netflix has global rights to some shows like Fox’s Gotham, AMC’s Breaking Bad and ABC’s How to Get Away with Murder, but is still working to secure such rights for many shows.

Mr Hastings said the originals would nonetheless be the foundation of a compelling content offering.

“As we looked at our new markets like Spain and Italy, the viewing of our originals is just huge,” Mr Hastings said. “We gained confidence that we could launch with our core content offering being original.”

Eventually, Netflix’s goal is for all of its services globally to have similar content offerings, including all of the major shows consumers are accustomed to, finding on the US version of the service. “It will take a while to bring the catalogues together,” he said.

There is resistance from foreign media companies seeking the same rights in their home markets and studio executives who are wary of Netflix’s growing power.

Netflix was not yet available in China but said it continued to explore options for providing the service. “Right now we’re in the relationship building phase,” Mr Hastings said. “Getting to know partners and government.”

At the start of 2015, Netflix released a letter to shareholders unveiling plans to branch into 200 countries. The company has signalled it plans to complete the global rollout by the end of this year.

EZEQUIEL MINAYA AMOLSHARMA

Lego’s first disabled toy

TOY giant Lego has unveiled its first disabled mini figure — after a huge online campaign.

Pictures of the firm’s plastic figure of a young man in a wheelchair, above, were spotted at a toy fair in Germany. It will be in a set on sale from June.

Partially sighted and partially deaf Rebecca Alkinson started a campaign, posting pictures online of Lego figures she’d adapted with disabilities to acknowledge 770,000 disabled children in the UK and 150 million worldwide.

The Australian 19/1/2016

The Australian 8/1/2016

The Advertiser 30/1/2016
**NEW PUBLICATIONS**

**COMPUTERS AND INTERNET**

**EDUCATION**

**HEALTH**

**MEDIA RESEARCH**


**SOCIAL**


Ahearn et al. (2015) Touch-screen technology usage in toddlers *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 101, 181-183


**VIDEO GAMES**


**VIOLENCE**


**CONFERENCES**

**Symposium: Pornography and harms to children and young people**
Tuesday February 9, 2016 8.30am – 5.00pm University of NSW, Sydney pornharmskids.org.au/ ..................

**4th National No 2 Bullying Conference**
18 – 19 April 2016 Mantra on View Hotel Gold Coast, Queensland no2bullying.org.au ..........................

**Prix Jeunesse International 2016**
What it means to be me: Identity in children’s TV 20 – 25 May Munich, Germany prixjeunesse.de ..........................

**Screen Futures Summit and Youth Media Festival**
1-3 July 2016 Melbourne screenfutures.com ..........................

**22nd World Meeting of the International Society for Research on Aggression (ISRA)**
from the University of Liverpool carried to TV commercials for junk food. A team children will eat more if they are exposed British academics have confirmed that children are more likely to be praised for their skills or achievements than for their looks. Male characters are more likely to be complimented on their skills or possessions, while female characters are more likely to be complimented on their appearance. This has not necessarily improved in the most recent Disney films. For example, in Aladdin, male characters speak eight times as much as female characters. This is not necessarily improved in the most recent Disney films. For example, while in the 1959 film Sleeping Beauty, female characters spoke 71% of the lines, in the recent hit film Frozen, the percentage was only 41%.

In addition, the researchers used discourse analysis to look at how male and female characters talked and how they are talked about, focusing particularly on compliments. They found that, in general, while male characters are more likely to be complimented on their skills or possessions, female characters are more likely to be complimented on their appearance. However there have been some positive changes in this area. In the latest films, The Princess and the Frog, Tangled, Brave, and Frozen women are more likely to be praised for their skills or achievements than for their looks.


**Junk food ads do influence children**

British academics have confirmed that children will eat more if they are exposed to TV commercials for junk food. A team from the University of Liverpool carried out a review of 22 studies around the world which exposed children and/or adults to unhealthy food advertising on television or the Internet.

They found that children’s behaviour and eating habits changed after being exposed to advertisements on TV and through the internet, and concluded that:

_Evidence to date shows that acute exposure to food advertising increases food intake in children but not in adults._

The findings are likely to add weight to demands in the UK for a ban on advertising all food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt before the 9pm.

http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/early/2016/01/20/ajcn.115.120022.abstract

**Music videos, alcohol and smoking**

University of Nottingham research has shown that online music videos are heavily exposing teenagers to positive depictions of smoking and drinking alcohol.

YouTube videos of songs in the top 40 singles chart were examined and researchers asked 2,068 11- to 18-year-olds and 2,232 over-19s whether they had seen the videos.

Adolescents were found to be exposed much more than adults and girls between the ages of 13 and 15 were the most exposed to cigarettes and alcohol in videos. The researchers say that music videos are a major global medium of exposure to such content.

http://jech.bmj.com/content/early/2016/01/04/jech-2015-206402

**New book**

_Never send a human to do a machine’s job: Correcting the top 5 edtech mistakes_

The US authors of this book ask why technology has not met our expectations for transforming education. They say:

_Cyclic amnesia best characterizes the history of technology in education... we have gone through many cycles of hope and disappointment: from film to radio, from radio to TV, from TV to computers, and from computers to the Internet. Every cycle started with amazing euphoria and ended with disappointing outcomes. Somehow, we managed to forget the failures. We did not even stop to reflect what went wrong because new technology emerged, with more power and thus more hope......Despite the powerful potential of technology for educational purposes, the impact on education has been extremely limited._

http://www.amazon.com/Never-Send-Human-Machines-Job/dp/1452282579