

Social Media and Gaming

Smart Book

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Social Media
& Gaming

Introduction

“So children are being raised by viral videos, trending topics, and social media stars – instead of parents; and it’s setting up society for a disaster of unimaginable proportions.” - Mark Dice, media analyst

The battle for children’s minds and hearts is increasingly being waged in cyberspace, across technological terrain like social media and gaming platforms that disadvantage parents from holding the higher ground in their children’s daily lives.

Social media, gaming, and other “digital distractions” are designed to be addictive.¹ As they grow, a child’s brain is constantly developing, impacted by the influences around them. Through a host of complex cognitive activities, children create neural pathways, develop concepts, form habits, and interact with their environments. They simply don’t stand a chance when faced with sophisticated algorithms engineered specifically to maximize engagement with social media and gaming platforms.² A quick scroll through Google’s Play Store reveals an endless selection of sensory-enticing games and apps designed to addict children ages 0 to 17.

Parents in the digital age face more challenges than ever before. Now, the true dangers aren’t outside, they are online. It is not only possible to combat these digital addictions – it is essential for our children’s health, happiness, and future relationships to be grounded in an offline virtuous, not virtual, reality.

This smartbook is designed to empower families with practical information and helpful analysis so they can safeguard their children’s well-being, nurture their innocence, and encourage healthy independence, even in the face of unprecedented online threats. By equipping yourself with knowledge, you can take informed action to protect and support your children amid the evolving digital landscape.



The Evolution of Social Media and Gaming

At its core, a longing for connection draws many to social media and gaming platforms. Although diluted, social media offers a connection to friends or strangers anywhere in the world, day or night, 365 days a year. It's a world with almost no walls. In gaming, kids and adults alike are pulled into endless digital worlds, chasing after points, badges, and fleeting moments of recognition from people they may never truly know. Behind all the screens and achievements, though, there's a quiet sadness: so many are searching for belonging, but often all they find is a never-ending loop of virtual rewards and half-baked connections that can't replace genuine, face-to-face relationships.



ACHIEVMENT UNLOCKED!



YOU'VE LEVELED UP!

Today's Internet is Not the Same Internet We Had

Before the internet as we know it came the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, or ARPANET. Developed in the 1960s, ARPANET was an early network created to connect government computers so that researchers could more easily share computing resources and information. Local Bulletin Board Systems (BBSes) also allowed individuals with modem connections to dial into text-based (and later, graphical) interfaces that allowed file sharing, chatting, and even gaming. Modern social media and gaming platforms are a far cry from these early forebearers.

America Online (AOL), MySpace, and Facebook were among the earliest platforms to provide public forums that allowed people to create personal pages to connect to friends and family online. These early social media sites were soon followed by YouTube, Twitter (now X), Reddit, Instagram, Discord, Snapchat, and TikTok, all of which target younger audiences with short-format videos, interest-based sub-forums, and monetization opportunities for high-demand content. These major players in social media have also become notorious for algorithm-driven access to material that's sexually explicit or leads to self-harm, much of which can be monetized by content creators.

Though not technically considered social media forums, AI generative chatbots like ChatGPT and Grok have created a new way for users to interact with online avatars and interfaces that mimic human interactions, including erotic images and conversation.³

Video Games

Who knew that early mainframe projects like 1952's OXO (tic-tac-toe) and 1962's Spacewar would eventually lead to the creation of a multibillion-dollar digital entertainment industry? Arcade, console, personal computer (PC), Massively Multiplayer Online (MMO), portable, mobile, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) gaming have paved the way for connecting players to immersive environments and a virtually unlimited pool of human and computer allies and opponents.

Better graphics, faster processing, and improved networks have turned video gaming into a worldwide phenomenon.⁴ Companies like Atari, Nintendo, Sony, and Microsoft created highly popular games that soon became household names: Pong, Super Mario, Sonic, Tomb Raider, Zelda, Grand Theft Auto, World of Warcraft, Minecraft, Call of Duty, and Fortnite. The portability of smartphones and tablets made it even easier to play games on the go, with seemingly innocent games like Bejeweled and Candy Crush, and even adding augmented-reality to keep kids playing like in Pokémon Go.

Today's video games have exponentially better graphics, sounds, and features than early games like Pong and even Mario. They are also exponentially more addictive – which is intentional. On the gaming blog site Driffle, author Sharon Nathaniel unpacks some of the psychological elements of persuasive design used by many video game developers⁵:

- **Dopamine hits** triggered by periodic reward systems make gamers feel euphoric and energized.
- **Progression and goal-setting** that allow the users virtually unlimited opportunities to accomplish milestones with no real-world risk of failure.
- **Powerful social relationships** formed by players bonding through simultaneous experiences and intense interactions that foster a sense of community and closeness.
- **A break from reality** through escapism, allowing players to inhabit virtual universes and take part in imaginative scenarios that provide a distraction from real-world stressors and problems.



Even the World Health Organization recognized the potential dangers of gaming addiction with the addition of gaming disorder to the ICD-11 in 2024.⁶ With such intentional design and addictive programming, expecting kids to self-regulate against such intentionally addictive design is like asking an alcoholic to be a bartender but not drink – not impossible, but nearly so.

Dangers, Hidden Costs, and Negative Impacts



The physical, social, and psychological repercussions of excessive screen time on children have been comprehensively documented in medical journals, analyzed by authors, and witnessed by parents. The dangers, hidden costs, and impacts of youth being tethered to tech are both substantial and alarming, and have been largely tied to the medium's dopamine-driven design. According to author Natasha Schüll, this design compares to the same methods that casinos employ, drawing users “into ‘ludic loops’ or repeated cycles of uncertainty, anticipation and feedback — and the rewards are just enough to keep you going.”⁷

“If you disengage, you get peppered with little messages or bonus offers to get your attention and pull you back in,” says Schüll.⁸

Parents should be aware of the following risks associated with screen time:

- **Habit-forming use:** 64% of girls and 65% of boys spend more than 2 hours daily on screens.⁹ The CDC reports the average daily hours of tech use for ages 8-to-10 year-olds at six, for 11-to-14 year-olds at nine, and for 15-to-18 year-olds at seven and a half.¹⁰ Negative habits formed include:
 - **Doomscrolling**¹¹: compulsive consumption of negative content leading to anger and anxiety.
 - **Phubbing**¹²: snubbing or ignoring people in close proximity to pay attention to one's phone.
 - **Binge-watching**¹³: watching anywhere between two and six episodes of a video series or TV show.
- **Harmful behavior learned and imitated:** Studies indicate that bullying, toxic culture, harassment, trolling, and disturbing images lead to more aggressive behavior in children toward others.¹⁴ Children have shown they are highly susceptible to mimicking and being injured by viral trends, such as eating Tide Pods, blackout challenges, and doing flips over moving cars.¹⁵

- **Sexual abuse** —Online platforms can expose children to predators, grooming, sextortion, sexting, and pornography, which may lead to confusion about sex, risky behaviors, blurred boundaries, and increased vulnerability to abuse.¹⁶
- **Poor financial decisions**— Online gaming often incentivizes players to engage in incremental, ongoing microtransactions (spending nominal amounts on virtual items to speed progress, improve status, or access extra options). Online marketplaces encourage impulse shopping through referral algorithms that push products to a user via ads based on your browsing and purchasing history.
- **Data privacy risks** —Online use leaves a digital “cookie” trail through browsing, forms, emails, purchases, and videos watched. This information is often collected, shared, and sold, and can include sensitive personal data, leading kids to face increased risks of identity theft, stalking, or worse.¹⁷
- **Tolls on physical and mental health** — Screen time and using addictive programs can disrupt sleep, reduce physical activity, and strain eyes, resulting in less focus and energy. It also contributes to anxiety, depression, loneliness, poor body image, fear of missing out, and unhealthy comparisons.
- **Learning loss** — Teachers have reported that students demonstrate reduced focus, multitasking, and distractibility thanks to digital device use, leading to poorer academic outcomes. One study in particular noted that 30% of students in sampled countries reported being distracted by digital devices, and that 25% of students were distracted by other student use of these devices.¹⁸

It is critical for parents to recognize the potential risks when kids access online social media and gaming platforms. The digital world holds the power to shape children’s habits, values, and wellbeing in ways that can be subtle but far-reaching. Without parental involvement, kids may internalize unhealthy patterns that impact their academic success, social relationships, and sense of self.

Schools Are Digital Ecosystems

The trend toward 1:1 devices has transformed schools into environments where digital access is ever-present—not only for learning but also for social media and gaming. With most children spending much of their day at school, technology has become inseparable from instruction and assessment, used for everything from online courses and Canva presentations to adaptive tests. Students increasingly interact digitally instead of directly, often through Instagram reels, games, or messaging apps. School programs and activities also use many of these apps, blurring the boundaries between productive and distracting online experiences.



Schools Are Digital Ecosystems *(continued)*

The shift toward schools as digital ecosystems carries profound implications. Many parents voice strong concerns about their children navigating a complex web of digital systems, especially when these systems provide backdoors to distracting or potentially harmful content. Advocates of tech-based learning often tout its convenience and ability to save time for both teachers and students.¹⁹ However, others argue that any time gained is outweighed by what children lose academically, psychologically, and socially.²⁰ As the Institute for Family Studies observes, the impact of these changes reaches far beyond the classroom, challenging the overall wellbeing and development of young people.

As early as 2018, Matt Miles and Joe Clement, authors of Screen Schooled: Two Veteran Teachers Expose How Technology Overuse is Making Our Kids Dumber wrote, “actual evidence presented by real social scientists overwhelmingly favors the conclusion that digital technologies are bad for kids in almost every conceivable way.” – Institute for Family Studies

Schools often claim security steps they take mitigate the negative effects of the digital technologies they require children to use, such as:

- Internet filters
- Locked-down Chromebooks²¹
- Technology-use contracts signed by students (which children cannot legally consent to)
- Network surveillance software like LAN School
- Content monitoring services like Bark

And while these steps can provide basic level of prevention, they're by no means perfect. And none of these efforts address the following problems:

- **Increased student time spent on tech.** According to EdWeek, 53% of teachers say their students spend anywhere between three to seven hours a day on EdTech.²²
- **Diminished student attention spans.** Inattentiveness, device engagement, frustration, delayed assignment completion, and superficial content comprehension are all on the rise as consequences of digital learning cited by a 2025 study on digital distractions in education.²³
- **Unacceptable levels of cyberbullying.** Statistics on StopBullying.gov paint the disturbing picture of 1 in 5 secondary students experiencing cyberbullying at school. “Among students ages 12-18 in grades 6-12 who reported being bullied at school during the school year, 21.6% were bullied online or by text.”²⁴ Children who are cyberbullied can struggle with negative self-image, anxiety, and other disruptions to positive mental health.

Understanding the challenges presented by classrooms designed to run on tech, it will be up to parents to carefully weigh the costs and benefits to their children's learning and development in these environments.

Legal and Policy Landscape

Many of the laws and policies governing social media and online gaming arose out of a desire to protect children from the various risks and harms associated with exposure to exploitative algorithms, inappropriate content, and violations of privacy through the collection of personal data. Myriad state legislative statutes have added to congressional law and proposals, with certain regulatory efforts standing out, and varying in terms of focus and efficacy.

COPPA

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (1998, updated 2025) prohibits online operators from using unfair or deceptive tactics to collect, use, or disclose personal information from and about children on the internet.²⁵ COPPA requires operators to obtain parental consent before collecting personally identifiable (PI) data about a child under the age of 13, specify the exact type of data collected and how it's used and shared, prohibits this data being retained indefinitely, and allows parents to review that data and revoke access to or request deletion of it.²⁶

Efficacy of COPPA

While companies have had to adjust how they've structured content aimed at children to avoid federal financial penalties for violating COPPA, with many of them making their terms of use more transparent,²⁷ user experience has shown that the age verification on which COPPA hinges is easily circumvented (e.g., birth dates are self-reported) through falsified submissions by either children or parent-appearing adults.²⁸ The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been tasked with newer, stricter requirements on biometric data, mixed-use websites, and parental consent effective June 2025.²⁹ Recently the FTC reached a \$10 million settlement with Disney, indicating the agency's willingness to confront major corporations in carrying out its regulatory duties.³⁰



CIPA

The Children's Internet Privacy Protection Act (2000, updated 2011) requires schools and libraries that receive favorable e-rate pricing for internet access to implement tools like filters and blockers and take efforts to educate and protect children regarding sexually explicit, obscene, or otherwise harmful content.³¹

Efficacy of CIPA

While many schools have indeed installed filters and site-blocking software on school devices while providing students with basic internet safety training, there's been abundant anecdotal evidence that these preventive measures fall short of the desired intent of the law. Parents have contacted local media³², filed lawsuits³³, and petitioned their local school boards³⁴ about their children having access to addictive pornographic content despite CIPA's requirements.

The FTC's purview includes CIPA enforcement, including failures to implement internet safety policies, inadequate technology protections or monitoring, failure to certify CIPA compliance, etc., but documentation of CIPA enforcement by state is not readily available to the public, making it difficult to see or verify reports of violations

State efforts expanding on COPPA and CIPA

Lawmakers from various states have responded to the challenges of children accessing inappropriate content on social media apps and sites by requiring these operators to go beyond self-reporting of birth date and assume direct responsibility for verifying a user's age.³⁵

Legal firm Mayer Brown highlights these and other state efforts relating to privacy requiring operators to shield the data of minors from unauthorized collection, use, and distribution, specifically noting that parents are pressuring companies to create more parental controls in apps and that children's access to and use of AI chatbots is likely the next target of potential litigation.³⁶

Efficacy of state efforts expanding on COPPA and CIPA

State laws to expand age-verification requirements have run into legal challenges stemming from Constitutional concerns. Public policy experts and legal observers contend these efforts conflict with and violate the free speech and privacy rights of adults protected by the 1st and 4th amendments, as online operators will be forced to require conclusive proof-of-age from users of all ages to prevent unauthorized access to children³⁷, raising digital ID concerns.³⁸

Litigation

Recent high-profile lawsuits and political action impacting social media and gaming companies include:

- A series of over 30 lawsuits against Roblox, accusing the highly-frequented children's gaming platform of facilitating child sexual abuse and grooming.³⁹
- The Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act (PAFACAA) which made TikTok's continued operation in the U.S. contingent on China divesting control of the app.⁴⁰
- A lawsuit against Character Technologies by parents claiming that their daughter was sexually abused and driven to commit suicide by its Character.AI chatbot.⁴¹
- A 33-state federal lawsuit against Meta, parent company of Facebook and Instagram, alleging that Meta violated privacy and consumer protection laws by designing its products to be addictive to children, endangering their mental health.⁴²

Despite a growing patchwork of federal and state laws aimed at protecting children online, enforcement gaps and legal challenges persist, leaving many risks unaddressed. While some laws do exist, parents should seriously consider what online access is beneficial or necessary for their children.

Take Action and Have Hope

“No man is an island, Entire of itself.”

- John Donne, poet

Real-world connection cannot be replaced with digital connections. Schools, corporations, and organizations that push for global and digital citizenship (see M4L Academy’s EdTech Smart Book) send children and parents the opposite message — that living life online is not just an expectation but a requirement for the 21st century. The more that parents can push back on that narrative, the stronger a position they’ll be in to provide the stability that can guide their children into becoming healthy, well-adjusted adults.

When families create a culture of living life offline, they provide for their children cherished memories that last forever. Although multiple studies have shown time and time again that childhood addiction to online games and social media platforms lead to poor health, academic, and interpersonal outcomes, it doesn’t take a study to prove what’s self-evident, common sense — **time spent on tech is time not spent on creating meaningful personal relationships.**

- **Connecting to people first means disconnecting from tech.** Children learn from their parents’ examples. If you find yourself constantly checking your phone during social situations or family time, or keeping the TV on at all hours, your children will be likely to mirror your habits. Parents can set the tone first for tech-free and tech-limited living by doing the following:
 - Set clear limits on television and screen time, restricting viewing to specific times or programs and avoiding binge-watching; delay introducing screens to young children and strictly limit daily use for ages 4 to 8.
 - Password protect computers, monitor all screen use in-person or with parental controls, and delete distracting or time-wasting apps, applying restrictions on app stores as needed.
 - Create tech-free zones and times—such as during meals, bedtime, conversations, church, in bedrooms, and vehicles—to encourage meaningful family interactions.
 - Choose feature-limited or “dumb” phones for children instead of smartphones, and regularly participate in “media fasts” where all technology is put aside.
 - Educate children about online risks, caution them against engaging with bots or AI avatars, and communicate your family’s technology boundaries with relatives, friends, and teachers.



- **Once you disconnect from tech, you're freer to connect to your children.** Don't just remove technology—replace it with engaging activities. Kids flourish with personal attention from parents, building self-worth and learning important life lessons.
 - Outdoor sports and recreation: hiking, bike rides, stargazing, neighborhood and nature walks, tossing a football, shooting hoops, lawn games, gardening, and road trips.
 - Religious and civic engagement: attending church, volunteering at retirement homes, participating in local government meetings, contributing to random acts of kindness for family, friends, and neighbors.
 - Home-based activities: cooking, reading aloud, collecting books, performing talent shows, learning and playing musical instruments, taking up crocheting or other needlework, organizing board game groups, staging art shows, hosting get-togethers, having daily discussions, and praying as a family.

When video games and social media take their proper place on the periphery of daily life, it opens a child's world to the people, places, and things providing tangible, enduring connection. Our suggestions can serve as a jumping-off point for your family as you explore the many simple ways and inexpensive ways to reinforce positive bonds and develop useful and positive skills with your children.



How to Respond to Common Arguments

Argument #1: Social media and video games are my kids’ social world – it’s how they connect with their friends and share experiences. If they don’t have social media accounts, they will be completely left out!

Response: It’s understandable to worry about your child feeling left out, but research shows that unrestricted social media use often does more harm than good. While these platforms can provide a type of connection, they also expose kids to cyberbullying, harmful content, and addictive design features that increase anxiety and depression.⁴³ In fact, the U.S. Surgeon General warns that teens who spend more than three hours daily on social media have double the risk of mental health problems, like anxiety and depression.⁴⁴ True belonging comes from healthy, real-world relationships – not algorithm-driven feeds. There are safe alternatives like moderated apps and in-person activities that foster friendships without sacrificing mental health.

You don’t have to do this alone! Check the Resources at the end of this book, and under the Engage section of the Social Media & Gaming Toolkit on [M4LAcademy.org](https://www.m4lacademy.org) to connect with organizations and parent groups that are also choosing to go tech-limited or tech-free!

Quick Response: “Connection shouldn’t come at the cost of your child’s physical and mental wellbeing. Help your child build roots, not just followers.”

Argument #2: Limiting my kids’ access to social media and video games just tells them that I don’t trust them and will make them resentful. This gives them a chance to self-regulate and not “go crazy” once they graduate high school. Plus, it’s everywhere in the real world. The sooner they learn how to use it, the better.

Response: It is good to want to show trust in your children and allowing them to have “free time” that is not adult-monitored, but not when it comes to social media and video games. Setting boundaries is not a sign of distrust, it’s an act of care, protection, and teaching healthy habits. These applications are intentionally designed to be addictive – especially to children. One powerful analogy made by ScreenStrong reminds parents that you wouldn’t let kids use “a little heroin” with the idea that it teaches them “healthy drug use”. Some things are simply not appropriate for growing kids and teens – and the behavioral engineering and AI algorithms behind social media and video games have made engagement with these applications a high-risk activity.

Sample Conversations

Argument #2 Response (continued): Teaching self-regulation is important, but children and teens need guidance, structure, and age-appropriate limits as their brains and decision-making skills develop. Real-world skills and healthy relationships are best learned through real-life experiences, not algorithm-driven feeds. Trust is best expressed through guidance and conversation, not by removing guardrails in a high-risk environment designed to keep them hooked. By setting clear boundaries, you're helping your child build a strong foundation for lifelong health and success, not setting them up for resentment.

Quick Response: "Protecting your child's well-being today prepares them for true independence tomorrow—limits aren't about distrust, they are love in action."

Argument #3: Video games are helping my kids develop strategic thinking and problem-solving skills. Even the military uses video games for recruiting and training – games help kids grow!

Response: You're absolutely right that some video games can encourage strategic thinking and problem-solving – those are valuable skills. The key is balance and context. Research shows that while well-designed games can support creativity and teamwork, excessive or unmoderated play is linked to attention problems, poorer sleep, and increased risk of anxiety and depression in kids. The U.S. Surgeon General emphasizes that heavy screen time can crowd out essential activities like exercise, family interaction, and academics. Even the military uses simulations, but those are structured, goal-driven environments – not endless entertainment loops designed to keep kids hooked. By setting healthy limits and choosing age-appropriate, purposeful games, you can preserve the benefits while protecting your child's overall well-being. This isn't about taking away growth – it's about guiding it.

Just remember that games have a different effect on everyone – you never know which child will become actually addicted to gaming. With so many other ways to develop strategic thinking and problem-solving skills, do the benefits really outweigh the risks?

Quick Response: "Let games be a tool, not the teacher."

Fight Back: Take Action

Federal Level

- **Advocate for Stronger Enforcement of COPPA & CIPA:** Urge Congress and the FTC to strengthen enforcement of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), including stricter age verification and penalties for violations.
- **Support Federal Legislation on Addictive Algorithms & AI:** Back bills like the Kids Online Safety Act and new AI safety regulations that require platforms to disclose and limit addictive design features targeting children.
- **Push for National Standards on Parental Controls:** Demand federal standards for robust parental controls and privacy settings on all platforms accessible to minors.

State Level

- **Promote State Laws Expanding Age Verification:** Support legislation requiring direct, verifiable age checks for social media and gaming platforms, not just self-reported birthdates.
- **Encourage State Oversight of School Tech Use:** Advocate for state education departments to audit and limit non-educational screen time in schools and require transparency on EdTech contracts.
- **Lobby for State AI Regulation:** Push for state-level rules restricting children's access to AI chatbots and requiring companies to create child-safe AI environments.

Local Level

- **Organize Parent Education Events:** Host workshops on digital safety, screen addiction, and healthy tech habits using resources from M4L Academy and partners.
- **Engage School Boards for Stronger Tech Policies:** Petition school boards to implement stricter device policies, block addictive apps, and require parental consent for all student accounts.
- **Build Community Coalitions:** Form alliances with local organizations to advocate for tech-free zones, media fasts, and support for families choosing limited or no social media/gaming.



Resources and Further Reading

There are many resources for parents to help themselves and their children break free from self-destructive addiction to social media or digital gaming and, thankfully, not all of them are online! We offer a few suggestions — this is not a comprehensive list, and as always, do your own research to assure recommendations provide a good match for your family and align with your values.

Key organizations, helplines, and advocacy groups

- [ScreenStrong \(ScreenStrong.org\)](https://www.screenstrong.org) ScreenStrong empowers families to prevent screen addiction and reclaim their kids from problematic screen use (social media, video games, and pornography). Our solutions are not screen-free; rather, they replace toxic screen use with healthy activities, life skill development, and family connections. The result? Strong kids. Strong families.
- [Internet and Technology Addicts Anonymous](https://www.itaa.org). “**ITAA is a Twelve-Step fellowship of individuals who support each other in recovering from internet and technology addiction.** This includes social media addiction, phone addiction, video addiction, television addiction, gaming addiction, news addiction, pornography addiction, dating apps, online research, online shopping, AI addiction, or any other digital activity that becomes compulsive and problematic.”
- [Media Addicts Anonymous](https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.com). “Media Addicts Anonymous (MAA) is a recovery program designed to address all forms of media and technology addiction. MAA provides support for individuals struggling with compulsive behaviors such as doom scrolling on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok; streaming addiction on services like YouTube and Netflix; and video game dependency, including games like Fortnite.”
- [Screen Time Action Network](https://www.screenactionnetwork.org). “The Screen Time Action Network at Fairplay is a collaborative community of practitioners, educators, advocates, and parents who work to reduce excessive technology use harming children, adolescents, and families.... We are a truly independent, nonprofit voice for children and do not accept funding from anyone who benefits financially from children's time with screens.”
- [Game Quitters](https://www.gamequitters.com). “Our bespoke 12-week [coaching programs](https://www.gamequitters.com) are designed to get gaming under control while thriving in life. We accept both individuals and families, including gamers currently in denial.”

Books, documentaries, and web resources & studies

- [Disconnected: How to Protect Your Kids from the Harmful Effects of Device Dependency](#) by Thomas Kersting
- [Digital Detox: The Two-Week Tech Reset for Kids](#) by Molly DeFrank
- [Glow Kids: How Screen Addiction Is Hijacking Our Kids - and How to Break the Trance](#) by Nicholas Kardaras
- [The Social Dilemma](#) (2020) docudrama
- [Addictive Design Tricks Keeping You Hooked on Social Media](#) (2025) YouTube.com
- [Lost Boys: Gaming Addiction Documentary](#) (2021) YouTube.com
- [Understanding Social Media Addiction: A Deep Dive](#) (2024) National Library of Medicine
- [The Epidemiology and Effects of Video Game Addiction: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis](#) (2023) Acta Psychologica

Guidelines and software to limit technology use

- [Net Nanny](#)
- [Google Family Link](#) (Android devices)
- [Apple Family Sharing and Screen time](#) (iPhone and iPad devices)

- ¹Lynch, E. (2025, August 20). Addictive Algorithms and the Digital Fairness Act: A New Chapter in EU Public Health Policy? - Petrie-Flom Center. Petrie-Flom Center - the Blog of the Petrie-Flom Center at Harvard Law School. <https://petrieflom.law.harvard.edu/2025/08/20/addictive-algorithms-and-the-digital-fairness-act-a-new-chapter-in-eu-public-health-policy/>
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- ⁶Gaming disorder. *World Health Organization*. <https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/frequently-asked-questions/gaming-disorder>
- ⁷Busby, M. (2018, May 8). Social media copies gambling methods "to create psychological cravings." *The Guardian; The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/may/08/social-media-copies-gambling-methods-to-create-psychological-cravings>
- ⁸(Busby, 2018)
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