

# The Truth About Kids and Tech

A new study reveals some surprises about kids and technology

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It should come as no surprise that kids are spending a lot of time in front of screens. According to a new study, tweens from 8 to 12 years of age spend an average of four-and-a-half hours each day watching TV or using a digital device. For teens 13 to 18, the average is six-and-a-half hours. But those numbers hide a bigger, more [complex](#) picture.

Common Sense Media, a [non-profit](#) group focused on helping children, parents and teachers better understand media and technology, conducted the study. It looked at a wide range of media-related activities, from old methods like reading and listening to the radio, to new favourites like using social media and video chatting. More than 2,600 kids from around the country were surveyed. Here are some truths—and some myths—that the study revealed:

**Truth 1: Some teens spend too much time looking at screens.**



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Young people are still spending time watching television, especially [tweens](#).

One in five tweens uses more than six hours of screen media each day, and 18% of teens are looking at their screens for more than 10 hours a day. Often they're doubling up on screens, watching television on one while chatting with friends on another.

### **Myth 1: This is the end of reading.**

While the average time young people spend reading, either in print or on a screen, is only 30 minutes per day, kids who took the survey say reading is one of their favourite activities.

### **Truth 2: Boys prefer video games; girls prefer social media.**

Among tween boys, 71% enjoy playing video games, twice as many as tween girls. And while more than 25% of teen boys list playing video games as their favourite media activity, only 2% of teen girls do. Teen girls, meanwhile, spend about 40 minutes more each day on social media than boys do.

### **Myth 2: TV and music have been [muscled out](#).**

For tweens, TV is still the top media activity. They enjoy it the most and watch it every day. In fact, 47% of tweens have television sets in their bedrooms. For teens, while 57% have TV sets in their rooms, music is the [reigning](#) form of entertainment. However, only about a third listen to music on the radio. Most teens listen to it on their smartphones.

### **Truth 3: Gamers don't get out as much as kids who don't play video games.**

Kids report spending about an hour each day being active. For gamers, that average drops to 47 minutes, the lowest for any kind of media consumer. Social media users are the most active, spending one hour and 13 minutes per day doing some form of physical activity.

**Myth 3: The Digital Revolution is making young people more creative than ever.**

So far, kids are too busy consuming to be doing much producing. Tweens spend an average of five minutes and teens nine minutes per day making something with all their digital tools, whether it's art, music, or writing.

In a statement, Common Sense Media chief executive officer James P. Steyer said that study "provides parents, educators and the media industry with an excellent overview of what kids are doing today and how we can make the most of the media and technology in their lives."

**ACTIVITIES:**

**1. Vocabulary** – What is the meaning of the words in blue? If you do not know, look them up in a dictionary.

**2. Based on the article, decide if the statements below are true or false:**

- Kids nowadays don't enjoy reading as much.
- Television is more popular among tweens than music.
- Tweens who enjoy playing computer games are more physically active than tweens who regularly use social media.

**Thinking/discussion question:**

***Social media and computer games are a bad influence on young people. Do you agree or disagree?***

