

*Has technology has taken kids desire to read*

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Its funny when I think back to the 70's and 80's about how different things were to how they are now. I am sure anyone over the age of 40 can relate to this. Think about the differences in the behavior of kids then and the behavior of kids now, especially when it comes to reading. A favorite saying for people raised in that era is 'back in the day'. I know, I have said it numerous times myself. So 'back in the day' it was nothing to see kids sitting and reading as well as playing outside and as everyone knows video games, computers and the internet has seriously impacted both of these things. However the playing outside is a topic for another day.

Studies show that the decline in children reading printed books has a lot to due with age. This seems to stem from children over the age of eight going on the Internet more frequently. According to The Guardian website, "Only three activities increased in percentage terms between 2012 and 2013: playing "game apps" (the term used by Nielsen Book), visiting YouTube and text messaging. Reading? That was down nearly eight percentage points. This may seem like a small decline but keep in mind this is only one year. If this decline stays steady, the results could be devastating to the literacy of future generations.

There may still be hope for the literacy of our children. This is where the parents come in. For instance, the scholastic.com website states that when parents put forth effort to read with their children it not only helps them to become better readers but the kids enjoy it more and want to read more often. This spills over into other aspects of their

lives. Test scores go up, reading comprehension is improved and the capacity at which a child learns is increased.

There is another aspect that people may forget when it comes to getting kids to read books. What is the one thing that draws kids to video games and the Internet? It's fun! Many parents and teachers want to tell their children what to read. I cannot stress enough the importance of a parent's involvement in guiding their children but sometimes it is important, especially when it comes to reading, to let your child have fun! Imagine going to a movie and as you go to buy your ticket, a movie critic walks up and tells the person at the ticket window what movie you would like to watch. As you disagree, tell the critic you want to see another movie because it is more fun, the critic informs you that the other movie has better writers, has a better story line, and will enrich your life over all. You now have two choices. Do you go and watch the fun movie and leave with a great memory or do you sit through a movie you never wanted to see and leave asking yourself why you ever listened to anyone else tell you what would entertain you? What would your answer be?

The point to that story is people in general want to be entertained, especially children. It is important to make sure that children are picking the books they want to read. They should be age appropriate of course and parents should watch over what their children are reading. We do not live in a dictatorship and if you want your child to want to do something, such as reading, then let them choose what entertains them. Just because a parent does not think a book is entertaining does not mean their twelve-year-old child will not be entertained by it.

Yes we may be fighting the war of technology over the printed book and printed material may not win, we can still keep printed books an important part of our child's lives. Kids love to have fun, if you can make reading a book fun, there may still be hope for the printed text in a technological world.

