

# RAISING KIDS

in a Screen-Saturated World

Help for Parents

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# LIVES SHAPED BY SCREENS

Some dates are easy to remember. Holidays, special anniversaries, unique events, or birthdays are dates not easily forgotten. Adding a child to your family changes your life in ways you could never fully imagine. These dates clearly impact and change your lives forever. In contrast, other significant dates come and go; although they are life-transforming, the results are so inconspicuously integrated into everyday life that we forget their impact. Here are some “birthdates” that have likely shaped your life yet I wonder if you can remember what was born on these dates?

*May 24, 1985*

### **Happy Birthday Aol.**

The launch of AOL and their prolific distribution of free installation CDs, displayed at every checkout and delivered unsolicited to your mail, may be hard for some to remember but it is a day that had significant impact. This day opened the door of virtually every home to participate in instant messaging, chatrooms, and email. Connection for everyone.

*September 4, 1998*

### **Happy Birthday Google**

A company whose name became a verb, Google organized the world's information—true to their mission statement. The ability to search was now broadened. No longer limited to your home computer, information and connection became available in any language, in any country, on myriads of devices, at any time of the day. Information for everyone.

*February 4, 2004*

### **Happy Birthday Facebook**

Facebook revolutionized how we share our lives and led the way for future social media platforms. What was once personal is now presented to the watching world. Social media became a common term due to the inexhaustible use of Facebook. Every sixty seconds 510,000 comments are posted, 293,000 statuses are updated, and 136,000 photos are uploaded on Facebook.<sup>1</sup> Publicity for everyone.

How have these birthdates affected your family? No doubt they've changed the way we all live. Since these iconic moments in digital history our lives are increasingly infused with technology. Cellphones saturate the population and their dominance has caused the home phone to be an antiquated relic of yesteryear. According to iTunes Charts, social media apps reign as the most used free apps on people's phones and devices. *Business Insider* found that "a typical cellphone user touches

his or her phone 2,617 times every day. But that's just the average user: The study found that extreme cellphone users—meaning the top 10%—touch their phones more than 5,400 daily.”<sup>2</sup> If you are reading this book and are raising young children or teens, they are digital natives. They are the ones most destined to be found in that top 10%. Even children whose parents carefully monitor exposure to technology are growing up interacting with digital devices and navigating them like familiar territory.