

IS TEXT MESSAGING MAKING OUR KIDS ILLITERATE?

Kids take to new technology like flies to honey. Among many older folks, it's conventional wisdom that if you've been confused by your computer, DVD or any high tech **gadget**, the quickest and cheapest way to solve the problem is to ask a fourteen year old to fix it. Lots of kids today grow up with a keyboard in one hand and a joystick in the other.

There are plenty of benefits to introducing kids to tech devices early: playing video games helps to develop hand-eye coordination. They learn multi-tasking skills from **juggling** several computer programs at once. Surfing the Web can expose them to a vast amount of knowledge that wasn't available to those of us who grew up without the availability of commercial Internet services, even in some of our best libraries. And kids can have a rich social life and meet a much more diverse group of people to which they might never be exposed in their own hometowns. They can also stay in touch with family members and friends, both local and those who live at a distance, much more easily.

Unfortunately, there are potential harmful effects, in addition to the positive ones. Many parents worry that violent video games may **desensitize** children to violent behavior in real life, and that the Web will lead them to pornography or hate groups. The people your kids meet online can be good influences – or they could be paedophiles posing as other children to attract unsuspecting youngsters into their traps.

Some experts fear that even in innocuous communications with people they know, kids may be exposing themselves to hidden ill effects. For example, one type of communication that's very popular with teenagers is real-time chat. This includes Web-based chat, use of IRC (Internet Relay Chat) programs, IM (Instant Messaging) services such as those offered by MSN and Yahoo, as well as SMS messaging via **cell phones**.

In order to type their messages more quickly, kids often use a type of phonetic **shorthand** instead of grammatically correct, properly spelled sentences. For example: "R U going 2?" is much faster and easier to type than "Are you going, too?" This becomes an especially attractive option when using a small keyboard like those on cell phones.

But is this making kids illiterate? Educators, parents and others are divided on that question. Some argue that language is always evolving, and newer and more efficient spellings are a good thing. After all, a glance at a page of Old English will show you that we don't use the same spellings now that our ancestors used. Other, more pessimistic people say IM isn't so much making kids illiterate as reflecting the growing illiteracy of younger generations.

Some researchers have concluded that teenagers are able to **slip** easily between abbreviations and conventional spelling, but some teachers say they are seeing the messaging lexicon show up in kids' school work. Does Shakespeare lose something in translation to "2 b R not 2 b"?

From Internet. Adapted

gadget: dispositiu, maquineta / aparato, artilugio
juggling: fer jocs de mans, provar / hacer malabarismos, probar
desensitize: insensibilitzar / insensibilizar
cell phone: telèfon mòbil / teléfono móvil
shorthand: escriptura abreujada / escritura abreviada
slip: passar (sense pensar) / pasar (sin pensar)

Part 1: Reading comprehension

Choose the best answer according to the text. Only ONE answer is possible.

[0.5 points each correct answer. Wrong answers will be penalized by deducting 0.16 points. There is no penalty for unanswered questions.]

		A emplenar pel corrector/a		
		Correcta	Incorrecta	No contestada
1.	Many older people believe that...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> a teenager can solve most problems with computers or high tech devices.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> lots of kids grow up today with a joystick in their minds.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> high tech trouble is quicker and cheaper to fix today.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> kids should be introduced to tech devices at an earlier age.			
2.	“Folks” in line 1 means...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> ‘educators.’			
	<input type="checkbox"/> ‘specialists.’			
	<input type="checkbox"/> ‘philosophers.’			
	<input type="checkbox"/> ‘people.’			
3.	One of the good things about high tech is that kids can...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> meet all the people living in their hometowns.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> coordinate their hands and eyes into one single skill.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> buy a lot of information from the best libraries.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> have a richer social life.			
4.	According to the author, one of the ill effects of videogames is that kids...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> can attract other youngsters into their web traps.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> may behave violently in real life.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> do their homework through Internet only.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> can’t meet real-time chatters on line.			
5.	“R U going 2?” is an example of...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> phonetic shorthand.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> a properly spelled sentence.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> IRC mobile phone.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Old English.			
6.	Some pessimistic people complain that...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> parents and educators should not be divided on this issue.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> language is always changing.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Old English ancestors did fewer spelling errors than we do now.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Instant Messaging shows that young generations are more and more uneducated.			
7.	According to the text, researchers and teachers...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> agree that teenagers can tell conventional from messaging spelling.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> think Shakespeare does not lose his literary power in messaging translation.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> support the use of abbreviations and conventional spelling.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> disagree about the influence of text messaging in school work.			
8.	The author of this article is...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> a young man crazy about high tech gadgets.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> an adult who reflects on the use of new technology among kids.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> a young father who is worried about the harmful effects of text messaging.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> an educator who wants to reflect the growing illiteracy at British schools.			
		Correctes	Incorrectes	No contestades
Recompte de les respostes		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nota de comprensió escrita		<input type="text"/>		