

# Guiding Youth Through a Tech-Saturated World

Pastor Marshall Fant IV



# Introduction



# Introduction

- We (parents) should act as **guides** . . .
- **Through** . . .
- A **tech-saturated world.**



How should we  
think about  
tech's growing  
influence?



# Tech's Growing Influence

- Expect change.
- Change is neither good nor evil.
- Remember: human nature has not changed!







# Both Good and Bad Change Will Happen

- We should not be naïve, thinking that any change is good change. New does not always mean better.
- We also need to beware lest we think any change is a bad change. New does not always mean it is bad.



Understand  
what tech is



# Technology is a Tool

- According to John Dyer, technology is “the human activity of using tools to transform God’s creation for practical purposes.”<sup>1</sup>
- Technology is something we use to accomplish a task. It can be something as simple as a shovel designed for digging or as complicated as a wristwatch designed for telling time.

• 1. Dyer, John (2011-07-14). From the Garden to the City (Kindle Locations 1090-1091). Kregel Publications. Kindle Edition.



# Understanding Tech

- Technology is a tool.
  - People create tech for a practical purpose.
  - Technology is moral when it is used by a moral agent.
- Combining technologies.



Surveying  
the tech  
landscape



# Hardware

- Desktop computer
- Laptop computer
- Personal electronic devices
- Gaming systems
  - Console
  - Phone
  - Handheld systems
- Televisions
  - All TVs are “Smart TVs”



# Tips for Securing Hardware

- Router timer
- Firewall (like Disney Circle)





Filter



Time Limits



Pause



Bedtime



Focus Time



Rewards



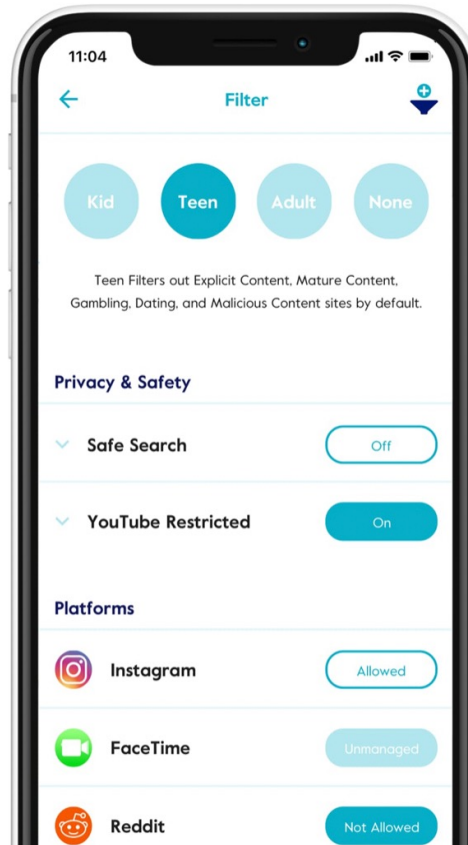
History



Usage



Location



## Filter

Choose appropriate (or block inappropriate) content by age. Customize settings to filter for individual family members and then apply to social media, videos, and games for both apps and websites.

“

Circle provides parental controls at home and away. My favorite part is filtering the Internet and controlling multiple devices across family members.

HILARY

# Tips for Securing Hardware

- Router timer
- Firewall (like Disney Circle)
- Public Places; No Bedroom Access



# Software

- Browsers (Accessing the Internet)
- VPN's (Virtual Private Network)
- P2P (Peer to Peer), Torrents, and File Sharing



# Built In Security

- Operating System (OS) restrictions
- Whitelisting



# Services

- Much of what has become known as “big tech” exerts an incredible amount of influence in the world and in our culture. The *paradigm* of thinking has **moved away from ownership of products (software) and more towards subscriptions to services.**
- Why would this matter? You might be used to checking what videos your child owns, what CDs they have in their bedroom, what books and magazines are on their shelf, but they do not have to have a CD or a DVD to listen to / watch what they want. **Almost every piece of media is available in some kind of streaming format—from comic books to symphonies.**



# Services

- Watching
- Communicating
- Performing
- Listening
- Playing



# Watching

- Netflix
- YouTube
- Twitch
- *Other Streaming Services (Amazon Prime Video, IMDB, HBO Go, etc.)*
- *How do they get it?*



# Communicating

- Texting / Messaging with text, images, voice
- Video Chat (Facetime, Skype) with a front-facing camera
- You can do this on almost any device – game console, phone, iPod, laptop, desktop
- Random Chat interfaces



# Performing

- Facebook (live), Snapchat, etc.
  - Do you have rules about your teen performing live online?
  - Do they talk to the camera and broadcast to their friends?
- TikTok
- YouTube
  - Does your teen have their own YouTube channel?
  - Are they posting on it?
  - Are they talking about private things?
  - Are they making stuff up?
  - Are they dramatizing their life for others for “their fans.”



# Listening

- Music (Spotify, Pandora, Apple Music)
  - If your child likes to listen to music, they will probably listen through Spotify or Apple Music.
  - Spotify has a “free” tier (with ads), so many younger people (and some of us older people too!) prefer to listen to Spotify this way.
- Podcasts
  - Podcasts are like radio shows accessed through a smart phone, computer, or other web-connected device. Podcasts are named after the iPod (where they debuted).
  - Some podcasts are great – most churches publish their pastor’s sermons as a podcast. But other podcasts can be very dangerous to young minds. Like with YouTube, you can find a podcast that talks about almost any topic you can imagine.



# Playing

- XBOX game pass (and similar variants)
- Free to play
- Gambling



# Tips for dealing with services

- **Watching.** Do not allow personal devices (TVs, phones, tablets, etc.) to be kept in a teen's room overnight. Instead, have an overnight charging location where everyone's phones will be kept. **Suggestion: keep them in a central, public place like the kitchen.**
- **Communicating.** Phone check. Teens should know that at any point, you might take their phone from them and check their text messages. Some messaging platforms, like Snapchat, have automatically expiring messages. These can be a temptation for teens who want to communicate without their parents' knowledge.



# Tips for dealing with services

- Performing. It isn't always wrong to do this! I'm not saying that performing is inherently sinful.
  - They need to know what you expect from them.
  - **You need to follow them wherever they are.** Subscribe to their YouTube channel, TikTok, or Facebook.
- Listening. Capture their heart. Hold them accountable for what they listen to.



# Games

- Not all games are for kids. Many are marketed to Adults and are not intended for children.
- Commonsensemedia.org will give information for problems with games (including violence, profanity, sex and nudity, etc.)
- Don't be afraid to ask what they're playing and talk with them about it. Maybe you should try to play with them, so you know what they're talking about.



# Games

- Online games may be involving others from around the world and may mean profanity. There are ways of turning this off.
- Avoid impulse buys – research before purchasing to avoid getting an inappropriate game.
- Most gaming systems can connect to the Internet, so be aware that **teens who are motivated to find inappropriate content will find it through their consoles**. I am not aware of filters available for consoles.



# Social Media: The Elephant in the Room



# Kinds of Social Media

- Platforms
- Messaging
- Dating Apps



# Dangers of Social Media

- Bullying
- Mob attacks (fear)
- The motivation to get likes
- Solicitations
- Exposure to all kinds of bad material



*Many times, teens will have more than one account — one account for the parent to see and another account for their friends to see. This is easy to discover if you keep your eyes open.*

# Tips for Guiding Teens



# Making Rules

- Do not ever *completely* trust your young person.
  - Always remember to **trust but verify**.
  - They can **earn trust**, but they can also *lose trust*.
- Never allow your child to be part of a social network **where you do not have an account**. You need to be able to see what they are saying and doing online. You need to see how they *present themselves* to their friends and the world.
- Teens should **share passwords with parents**. Have a shared file where they keep all their files **up to date**.



# Making Rules

- **Make easily enforceable rules and enforce them consistently.**
- Remember that **questions soften; accusations harden**. When you're dealing with a difficult situation, please ask questions before accusing your teen of something. Sometimes, there is more to the story.
- **Do not publicly embarrass your teen on their social media profile**. If they lose privileges by breaking rules, do not post from their profile telling their friends what happened.



# Making Rules

- **Think of rules as guardrails.** Guardrails will never prevent someone who wants to drive their car off the cliff from doing so. Guardrails are there to keep an accident from becoming a catastrophe.
- Makes rules that work for *your family* or for *your children*. Do not base what you do on what others do. **Do not demand that others follow your rules.** Remember that many of these “rules” are *wisdom issues*, meaning they are not Biblical absolutes.



# Using Resources

- Check before you watch! "I didn't know" isn't a valid excuse.
- Use the ratings (for everything)
- Books that give insight:



# WHAT THE INTERNET IS DOING TO OUR BRAINS

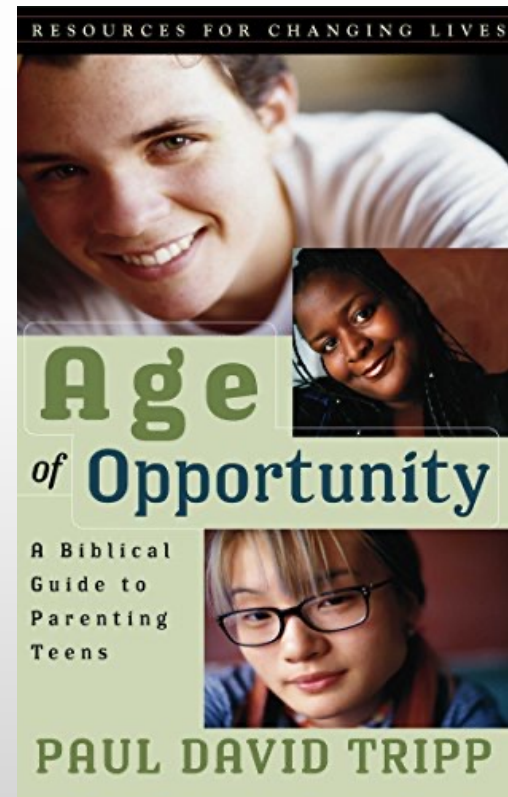
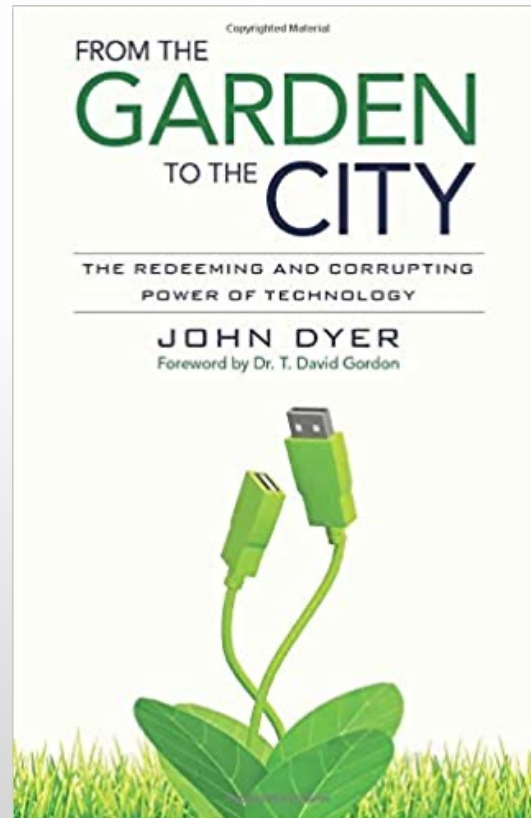
# THE SHALLOWS



Nicholas Carr  
AUTHOR OF *THE BIG SWITCH*

THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

"A profoundly sharp thinker and writer. . . I have not only given this book to numerous friends, I actually changed my life in response to it." —Jonathan Safran Foer, *The Millions*



# Conclusion



# Things to remember

- The temptations teens face today are much greater, more intense, and more diverse than you or I had to face.
- When you make steps to protect your children from the dangers of modern technology, **please do not overreact and make them feel “provoked to wrath.”** Doing nothing (being lazy) is sinful, but overreacting is also sinful.
- There is nothing wrong with keeping tabs on your teens – you are given this responsibility by God and should not feel bad about parenting.



# Develop open communication

- You need to encourage (with your words and with your actions) openness from teens regarding their struggles. Listen to what your teens say.
- Teens need to know that they will be loved and encouraged if they come to you with problems. [Question: will they be? Or will you lose your mind?]
- Communicate that if you catch them doing wrong, the discipline will be much greater than if they were to come to you on their own. Encourage honesty.



# Balance accountability with love

- Trust is always **earned**. Time does not mean they will outgrow accountability. As long as they are in your care, you should hold them accountable for their choices.
- Teens will not do what you expect, but rather what you inspect. You may inspect them without being ugly about it.



# Watch Yourself

- Temptations don't stop in the teenage years. A lot of young adults have major struggles with technology. Some of you might have some significant struggles too.
- Please don't wait to get help.
- You need accountability just like your young people need accountability.
- If you don't have checks and balances on your electronic devices, you are "making provision for the flesh" (Romans 13:14).
  - But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Romans 13:14 NKJV)



Questions?



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