



Family Matters

Making Family Life Easier

'Digital Natives' & 'Digital Immigrants'

'Stop checking your Facebook every 2 minutes and start your homework!', *'You're wasting your life playing these meaningless online games'*, *'No you can't bring your mobile phone to bed, you need your sleep'*, *'Why don't you go out and kick a ball - Spend some time in the real world!'* These are sentences concerned parents often hear themselves saying as they see their children spend many hours every day on their laptops, mobile phones and games consoles.

Conflicts in families about technology tend to take place regularly and often because parents are what is known as 'digital immigrants' and most young people are 'digital natives'. 'Digital immigrants' are people who were born before the digital era and 'digital natives' describe those who were born during the digital era. Both these groups have different views on technology. 'Digital immigrants' prefer to talk on the phone or in person; tell friends about a trip or how their day was face to face. They text sparingly and socialise in person. They tend to use the Internet to gather information and see the Internet as not "real life". They often feel that young people waste their lives online and have concerns around young people's online lives; such as predators and cyber bullying. 'Digital natives' on the other hand prefer to connect via text, chat, Facebook, games, etc. They tend to text more than call (interesting fact - 47% of teens can text with eyes closed). They use the internet to socialise and hang out with each other; chat about their lives, post videos and photos and play games. They often see the internet as real, and sometimes more pleasurable, than their offline life. Their main concerns in terms of safety relate to cyber bullying, hacking of their accounts and sexting.

The clash of the 'immigrants' and the 'natives'

The digital divide can often result in power struggles, breakdown of communication and strife in families.

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