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Children into computers younger than ever

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7th June, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Children into computers younger than ever

Children are using and owning consumer electronics from a younger age than ever before, according to US market researcher NPD. Its research shows the average age at which children begin using computers, games and other electronic gadgets has declined from 8.1 years in 2005 to 6.7 years in 2007. The NPD report, "Kids and Consumer Electronics Trends III", says the youngest consumers are also getting choosy about what they buy. More and more young children now own a DVD player, portable video game, digital camera or cell phone. NPD's Anita Frazier said: "Kids are drawn to the latest and greatest digital devices just as their parents are." She added: "They appear to have no fear of technology and adopt it easily and without fanfare, making these devices a part of their everyday lives."

The study is based on data collected via an online survey to a sample of American adults aged 25 and older who had children aged between four and fourteen. The survey also found that kids use electronic devices an average of three days per week. Surprisingly, many of the families surveyed were not regular consumer electronics buyers. Almost 25 percent of parents surveyed said they had made no electronics purchases during the previous 12 months. Father of two Robert Garside, 38, said he was amazed at what his children want to buy. He admits to often having to ask his nine-year-old how to operate his Sony PlayStation. "Children nowadays are so tech savvy that soon Sony will bring out a PlayStation for babies," he said. His son Robert Junior said all the gadgets around him really were child's play.

WARM-UPS

1. CONSUMER ELECTRONICS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about consumer electronics and children. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

children / market research / computers / trends / DVD players / parents / fear / data / online surveys / averages / consumers / instructions / child's play

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. GADGETS: With your partner(s), decide which of these gadgets are most important to you. Rank them from first to last. Change partners and share your findings.

- television
- computer
- cell phone
- games machine
- music player
- electronic dictionary
- digital camera
- other _____

4. SAVVY KIDS: What are your feelings about children doing the following: Rank them: 10 = "No problem"; 1 = "No way".

- surfing the Internet
- having their own mobile phone
- driving a car
- cooking burgers in McDonald's
- taking out loans
- travelling around the world
- policing other children
- other _____

5. KIDS VS. ADULTS: Brainstorm a list of things kids seem to be able to do better than adults. Discuss the reasons why. Change partners and share your dangers.

6. ELECTRONICS: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with electronics. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

7. QUICK DEBATE: Students A strongly believe children should not play video games until they are ten; Students B think children can play video games from any age. Change partners often. When you have finished, share your findings.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. More and more kids are designing and selling computer software. T / F
- b. The average age at which kids start using gadgets has fallen. T / F
- c. Young consumers really don't care what kind of gadgets they buy. T / F
- d. Young children seem frightened of electronic devices. T / F
- e. The data were collected from many simple American adults. T / F
- f. A quarter of parents surveyed don't buy gadgets regularly. T / F
- g. A father had to teach his son how to use Sony's PlayStation. T / F
- h. Sony will soon bring out a version of its PlayStation for newborns. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| a. according to | buys |
| b. gadgets | confesses |
| c. choosy | through |
| d. adopt | a piece of cake |
| e. fanfare | embrace |
| f. via | questioned |
| g. surveyed | fuss |
| h. purchases | fussy |
| i. admits | as stated by |
| j. child's play | machines |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. from a younger age | about what they buy |
| b. the average age at which | latest and greatest digital devices |
| c. consumers are also getting choosy | are so tech savvy |
| d. Kids are drawn to the | a sample of American adults |
| e. adopt it easily and | around him really were child's play |
| f. an online survey to | without fanfare |
| g. kids use electronic devices an | than ever before |
| h. made no electronics | average of three days per week |
| i. Children nowadays | children begin using computers |
| j. Robert Junior said all the gadgets | purchases |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Children into computers younger than ever

Children are using and _____ consumer electronics from a younger age than ever before, according to US market researcher NPD. Its research _____ the average age at which children begin using computers, games and other electronic gadgets has _____ from 8.1 years in 2005 to 6.7 years in 2007. The NPD report, "Kids and Consumer Electronics Trends III", says the youngest consumers are also getting _____ about what they buy. More and more young children now own a DVD player, _____ video game, digital camera or cell phone. NPD's Anita Frazier said: "Kids are _____ to the latest and greatest digital devices just as their parents are." She added: "They appear to have no fear of technology and _____ it easily and without _____, making these devices a part of their everyday lives."

drawn

choosy

shows

fanfare

owning

adopt

portable

declined

The study is _____ on data collected via an online survey to a _____ of American adults aged 25 and older who had children aged between four and fourteen. The survey also found that kids use electronic devices an average of three days per week. _____, many of the families surveyed were not regular consumer electronics buyers. Almost 25 percent of parents _____ said they had made no electronics purchases during the _____ 12 months. Father of two Robert Garside, 38, said he was amazed at what his children want to buy. He _____ to often having to ask his nine-year-old how to operate his Sony PlayStation. "Children nowadays are so tech _____ that soon Sony will bring out a PlayStation for babies," he said. His son Robert Junior said all the gadgets around him really were child's _____.

surprisingly

savvy

surveyed

admits

based

play

sample

previous

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Children into computers younger than ever

Children are using and owning consumer electronics from a younger age _____, according to US market researcher NPD. Its research shows _____ children begin using computers, games and other electronic gadgets has declined from 8.1 years in 2005 _____. The NPD report, "Kids and Consumer Electronics Trends III", says the youngest consumers are also _____ they buy. More and more young children now own a DVD player, portable video game, digital camera or cell phone. NPD's Anita Frazier said: "Kids are _____ greatest digital devices just as their parents are." She added: "They appear to have no fear of technology and _____ fanfare, making these devices a part of their everyday lives."

The study is based on data collected _____ to a sample of American adults aged 25 and older who had children aged between four and fourteen. The survey _____ use electronic devices an average of three days per week. Surprisingly, many of the families _____ consumer electronics buyers. Almost 25 percent of parents surveyed said they had made no electronics purchases during the previous 12 months. Father of two Robert Garside, 38, said he was amazed _____ to buy. He admits to often having to ask his nine-year-old how to operate his Sony PlayStation. "Children nowadays are _____ Sony will bring out a PlayStation for babies," he said. His son Robert Junior said all the gadgets around _____.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'fan' and 'fare'.

fan	fare
------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• owning• declined• choosy• drawn• fear• everyday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• via• three• regular• amazed• operate• babies
--	---

STUDENT GADGETS SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about GADGETS in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What do you think about children owning electronic gadgets?
- c) What kind of gadgets did you use when you were a child?
- d) Do you think electronic toys will totally replace traditional toys?
- e) What are the dangers of children using computers from such a young age?
- f) What kinds of toys will children of the future use?
- g) Have you ever feared technology?
- h) What gadgets are part of your everyday life?
- i) What latest and greatest digital devices are you currently interested in?
- j) Are you choosy about the kind of computer, cell phone, video games console... you buy?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you like taking part in online surveys?
- c) How much time do you spend using electronic devices?
- d) What is the ultimate gadget for you?
- e) Do you like wandering around electronics stores?
- f) Do you think kids are more tech savvy than you?
- g) What do you think of the idea of a PlayStation for babies?
- h) What would happen if all electronic devices suddenly stopped working?
- i) What do you think really old people think about computers and electronics?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

PLAYSTATION BABY:

Your new job is to market the new PlayStation Baby, a games console for babies aged 6 months or over. Complete this table with your marketing partner(s).

Decisions	Your notes
Slogan	
Games	
Special features and functions	
Colours	
The kind of advertising	
Educational value	

- Change partners and share your ideas.
- Decide on an overall winner.

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Children into computers younger than ever

Children are using and owning consumer (1) _____ from a younger age than ever before, according to US market researcher NPD. Its research (2) _____ the average age at which children begin using computers, games and other electronic gadgets (3) _____ declined from 8.1 years in 2005 to 6.7 years in 2007. The NPD report, "Kids and Consumer Electronics Trends III", says the youngest consumers are also getting choosy about what they buy. More and (4) _____ young children now own a DVD player, portable video game, digital camera or cell phone. NPD's Anita Frazier said: "Kids are (5) _____ to the latest and greatest digital devices just as their parents are." She added: "They appear to have no fear of technology and adopt it easily and without (6) _____, making these devices a part of their everyday lives."

The study is (7) _____ on data collected via an online survey to a sample of American adults aged 25 and older who had children aged between four and fourteen. The survey also found that kids use electronic devices an average (8) _____ three days per week. (9) _____, many of the families surveyed were not regular consumer electronics buyers. Almost 25 percent of parents surveyed said they had made no electronics purchases during the previous 12 months. Father (10) _____ two Robert Garside, 38, said he was amazed at what his children want to buy. He admits to often (11) _____ to ask his nine-year-old how to operate his Sony PlayStation. "Children nowadays are so tech savvy that soon Sony will bring (12) _____ a PlayStation for babies," he said. His son Robert Junior said all the gadgets around him really were child's play.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) electrons | (b) electrics | (c) electronics | (d) electricity |
| 2. | (a) shows | (b) showing | (c) show | (d) shower |
| 3. | (a) be | (b) did | (c) was | (d) has |
| 4. | (a) most | (b) more | (c) mostly | (d) many |
| 5. | (a) drawn | (b) painted | (c) sketched | (d) doodled |
| 6. | (a) affair | (b) airfare | (c) funfair | (d) fanfare |
| 7. | (a) basked | (b) basted | (c) based | (d) bashed |
| 8. | (a) an | (b) of | (c) to | (d) with |
| 9. | (a) surprised | (b) surprisingly | (c) surprise | (d) surprises |
| 10. | (a) by | (b) and | (c) with | (d) of |
| 11. | (a) having | (b) have | (c) has | (d) had |
| 12. | (a) down | (b) up | (c) out | (d) in |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about gadgets for kids. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. KIDS' TOYS POSTER: Make a poster about the toys that were popular with children through the ages. Show your poster to your class in the next lesson. Vote on the best one(s).

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about the pros and cons of children using electronic devices from increasingly younger ages.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the head of an electronics company. Ask him / her three questions about PlayStations for babies. Give him / her three pieces of advice about how to make a nice gadget for babies. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. F e. F f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| a. according to | as stated by |
| b. gadgets | machines |
| c. choosy | fussy |
| d. adopt | embrace |
| e. fanfare | fuss |
| f. via | through |
| g. surveyed | questioned |
| h. purchases | buys |
| i. admits | confesses |
| j. child's play | a piece of cake |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. from a younger age | than ever before |
| b. the average age at which | children begin using computers |
| c. consumers are also getting choosy | about what they buy |
| d. Kids are drawn to the | latest and greatest digital devices |
| e. adopt it easily and | without fanfare |
| f. an online survey to | a sample of American adults |
| g. kids use electronic devices an | average of three days per week |
| h. made no electronics | purchases |
| i. Children nowadays | are so tech savvy |
| j. Robert Junior said all the gadgets | around him really were child's play |

GAP FILL:

Children into computers younger than ever

Children are using and **owning** consumer electronics from a younger age than ever before, according to US market researcher NPD. Its research **shows** the average age at which children begin using computers, games and other electronic gadgets has **declined** from 8.1 years in 2005 to 6.7 years in 2007. The NPD report, "Kids and Consumer Electronics Trends III", says the youngest consumers are also getting **choosy** about what they buy. More and more young children now own a DVD player, **portable** video game, digital camera or cell phone. NPD's Anita Frazier said: "Kids are **drawn** to the latest and greatest digital devices just as their parents are." She added: "They appear to have no fear of technology and **adopt** it easily and without **fanfare**, making these devices a part of their everyday lives."

The study is **based** on data collected via an online survey to a **sample** of American adults aged 25 and older who had children aged between four and fourteen. The survey also found that kids use electronic devices an average of three days per week. **Surprisingly**, many of the families surveyed were not regular consumer electronics buyers. Almost 25 percent of parents **surveyed** said they had made no electronics purchases during the **previous** 12 months. Father of two Robert Garside, 38, said he was amazed at what his children want to buy. He **admits** to often having to ask his nine-year-old how to operate his Sony PlayStation. "Children nowadays are so tech **savvy** that soon Sony will bring out a PlayStation for babies," he said. His son Robert Junior said all the gadgets around him really were child's **play**.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - c 2 - a 3 - d 4 - b 5 - a 6 - d 7 - c 8 - b 9 - b 10 - d 11 - a 12 - c