An exploration of the lived experiences of parents mediating the digital lives of children in the home and an analysis of preferred sources of advice

(Stage one)

Dr Jacqueline Harding MA Cert Ed SFHEA

Abstract

Increasingly, international research literature (Sanders et al., 2016; Nikkelen et al., 2016; Valkenburg et al., 2013; Wartella, 2016) has sought to explore a range of factors that potentially combine and contribute to parenting in the digital age. The pivotal point of significance appears to lie at the point of families' social lives, which are fluidly influenced and impacted by and with digital technologies. In view of the wider empirical research (Ofcom, 2017; Livingstone, 2018) that confirms the appetite of parents for support and advice in this area, the study explores this aspect further within the context of a proposed a free online TV channel offering support and how it might be welcomed. The TV channel is led by experts in the field, together with the contribution of parents and children and is underpinned by signposting to other trusted sources. Furthermore, it houses a research portal that provides further resources for parents in the broader context of new technologies emerging and their possible impact on children.

Whilst there is a wealth of literature regarding the challenges experienced by parents of children from birth to eighteen years in the media age, this study offers an insight into ways in which styles of 'enabling mediation' in the digital age may be analyzed (although this study does not limit itself to one particular mediated style), and reveals some of the real challenges that parents face. This small-scale study utilises charts and semi-structured interviews to explore the views of parents and carers to better understand lived experiences in relation to mediated digital parenting in the home that will also inform further production of relevant content for the channel.

Although this study was limited in duration and scope, the results clearly support earlier research (Livingstone, 2018 and Ofcom, 2017) regarding the desperation of parents felt by the lack of advice they feel they are able to access in the way they want it, and overwhelming support for the potential benefits of predominantly visually-based online content.

Essentially, the study raises questions about the empowerment of parents/carers in their own digital skills as a way of transferring confidence to their children, in navigating their way through the educational and social affordances and online safety issues through the use of targetted and accessible filmed content (with significant contributions and syndication potential from trusted organisations, such as the NSPCC, Childnet and the Children's Commissioners Office).

Table of contents

Forward

That far-off 'digital future' spoken about at the start of the new Internet age, came upon us both much faster and in more myriad ways than expected, and for those of us in positions of responsibility to children and young people, it is a strong possibility we did not feel ready. Perhaps we still don't. Harding's TCTV research project described below, highlights the fact that many parents of children of all ages neither feel fully prepared for the digital onslaught that surrounds their children from TV to i-Pads and X-boxes to phones, nor aware of where and how to find support to inform their parenting decisions.

The Livingstone Report (2018) and Harding's pilot research outlined here (2018), agree in suggesting that parents' own expertise in digital media directly correlates to managing and engaging with their children's use positively (rather than merely restrictively).

Both studies reveal a real need for policy and practitioner support for parents: to access advice on privacy, protocol and safety issues, as well as knowing how to find and evaluate the best online creative and educational material for their children. These are generation gaps and gaps in knowledge that carry a certain urgency, given the time, space, energy and finance pressures on parents and children to 'belong' to the digital realm, now, not tomorrow.

The digital age is upon us, whether we are ready or not. The online TV channel TCTV project is an exciting new opportunity for us to offer parents the experience of 'feeling ready', with guidance based on research evidence, by tackling their gaps in knowledge and their questions, and in parallel, researching what knowledge and access parents need most for their children's best interests. We want to know what role the TCTV site, its participants, university academics and school policy could play together, in better meeting parents and children's needs in our challenging digital present.

Dr. Victoria de Rijke,
Associate Professor in Arts & Education, Middlesex University

Acknowledgements

Executive summary

Wider context
For parents of this generation, mediating digital use is associated with managing and balancing opportunity and risk. Digital experiences now offer compelling, enjoyable and educational opportunities never thought about just one generation earlier, but parent's own competence and confidence with what is best in the market is a key issue, as their own familiarity with different media. Many parents of children of all ages neither feel fully prepared for the digital onslaught that surrounds their children from TV to i-Pads and X-boxes to phones, nor aware of where and how to find support to inform their parenting decisions. In this report, released for the launch of Tomorrowschildtv.com, we present key findings from the first stage of a national study of UK parents of children aged 0-18.

Main findings
- Overwhelmingly, parents are declaring that they are in *'desperate need of help'* in mediating their children's experience.
- Strikingly, issues such as online safety and related behavioural pressures remain key subjects for which parents have identified a need for advice.
- The educational affordances of media are of interest and may in some way (parents tend to report), reassure them regarding media usage in the home.
- Most notable during the study was the parents' desire to share their challenging experiences of managing media in the home. So too, were the welcome responses to the offer to contribute to new live TV shows on the Middlesex University's *Tomorrowschildtv.com* website with the motivation to share their personal experiences with other parents alongside experts and children.
- Crucially, as a policy priority, it appears that investing in empowering parents/carers with digital skills, whilst also making them more aware of safety online, may yield positive results for subsequent similar empowerment for children.

Conclusively, the data yielded within this study provides further evidence of the need for parental guidance regarding a move towards a more 'enabling mediation' style of parenting in the digital age, as proposed by Livingstone (2018).

Chapter one: Introduction

The Study

This paper provides the core findings that emerged from the first stage of a longitudinal study and must, therefore, be considered to be preliminary findings (a pilot study) upon which stage two and three (national and international studies) will be built in anticipation of the launch of a new free online TV channel dedicated to parents (pilot launching in November 2018). The channel itself will enable the continuation and refinement of both the research tools for the study and subsequent TV content.

This study examines closely the range of mediation approaches taken by parents/carers with children from birth to 18 years in the home and probes for detailed information regarding where it happens and when and why it occurs, in order to establish a rich framework to consider stage two and three of the work. Furthermore, it explores the nature of support parents are seeking and how targeted advice might meet their needs which are ever-evolving in the present media environment, and, secondly, how we might begin to understand the extent to which a video - based resource (led by parental concerns) may or may not offer the range of advice identified (to be examined in the second and third stage of the study).

The increasing sense that our social lives are influenced and impacted by and with digital technologies, the introduction of a web-based video source of information for parents regarding the digital age – appears ripe for study. It should be noted that the authors have resisted the temptation to investigate the broader aspects of media in the home such as; Cyborg life; parental disputes regarding mediation and evidence – based parenting styles in the broader context of new technologies emerging and their impact. These, and other relevant issues, will be considered for examination in study two and three of the work.

The results are drawn from both quantitative and qualitative work of parents with respect to 40 children achieving a reasonable spread of gender and age of children from six months to 18 years. The authors also aimed to take into account diverse cultural and familial backgrounds.

1.1: The context

With children's media usage increasing in the home and the age at which children first start to engage in media as ever-younger coupled with an expansion in terms of its actual form (wearables, Alexa etc.), attention has most recently turned to how parents/carers might be mediating this experience. Moreover, a deeper discussion of how digital technologies have created new power relations for those younger parents who are both consumers and creators of digital sources is also pertinent. In stage two of the study, we intend to bring a new dimension to the debate of parenting in the digital age by proposing that the intimacy brought about by the physical immediacy of phones renders the narrative even more interesting regarding parenting in the digital age, the ease of access to information and how it is

consumed, which will inevitably lead to further discussions around Cyborg life (Lupton, 2015).

1.2 Previous studies
Parental mediation in the home
This small-scale research recognizes the importance of recent larger studies in this area (In the digital home, how do parents support their children and who supports them? *Parenting for a digital future Survey Report 1*, Livingstone et al, 2018, and *Family dynamics in digital homes: The role played by parental mediation in young children's digital practices around 14 European countries*, Brito, Francisco, Dias and Chaudron, 2017.

Importantly, Livingstone et al (ibid), also acknowledge the challenging task ahead for parents of all ages of children, at a time when they are investing in new technology in the home (despite their misgivings regarding privacy) and address this dilemma in: Parenting for a Digital Future: Survey Report 3 (2018): *What do parents think, and do, about their children's online privacy?* Of course, parents' attempts to regulate children's media use is not new and this issue is not confined to the UK. Interestingly, studies around parents' engagement with their child's media use (e.g., Nathanson, 1999; Valkenburg et al., 2013) tend to discuss three main forms that this regulation might take: active mediation (defined as monitoring media content), co-viewing (for example, watching TV with their child), and restrictive mediation (rules around media consumption).

1.3 Restrictions, rules and boundaries
Previously, studies in this area both in the United States (Sanders et al., 2016) Australia and the United Kingdom, Sanders et al., 2008) tend to discuss mediation in its more punitive or restrictive form as a prominent pattern (there is increasing literature regarding how parents seek to restrict children's media use, and how rules are developed, but there is little examination of the wider context other than the work of Livingstone, 2018). For example, it is crucial to consider how parents are living with the tension between performing the role of educator in this context: explaining, helping and encouraging usage (i.e. Face-timing family) against the more restrictive measures that tend to focus on concern for the negative impact of media and attempts to set rules (Nikken & Jansz, 2014; Warren, 2003). US and UK research studies (Rideout et al., 2010; Livingstone & Helper, 2008; Livingstone et al, 2018) found that a significant amount of time is dedicated to restrictive mediation.

1.4 Styles of parenting and communication and scales
Turning to an analysis of communication style, studies (eg: Nikkelen et al., 2016, Valkenburg et al., 2013) seek to understand the range of communication styles parents undertake with 10-14 year olds and this provides some useful data regarding how chosen parenting styles might impact and control exposure to media violence. Interestingly, for the purpose of our proposed study, this position is inherently suggested within the subsequent choice of terms for scales of mediation that we proposed to parents: 'monitoring,' 'restricting' 'helping,' 'intervening,' and, 'encouraging' (together with brief suggested examples to help guide them) in order to afford

the researchers the scope to analyse both the more punitive and restricting styles as well as the more permissive.

In further discussion of the need to define terms and develop scales to measure parental mediation of young children's Internet use, Nikken and Jansz (2014) identified scarce research regarding parental guidance for media online activities for young children. The survey with 792 Dutch parents of children aged between 2 and twelve years, revealed the same strategies that parents will apply for television and video games. They chose the following terms: *Supervisions, Co-use, Active, Restrictive general, Restrictive specific, and* discussed new strategies: *Technical Safety guidance*, which, in some ways permits this study a degree of useful background information. Although a more comprehensive study will be conducted in stage two and three, nevertheless, for the initial study, we sought to probe for more specific and detailed narrative around case studies which could bring to life exactly what is occurring for families on a daily basis.

The terms we have chosen for this study, such as 'Monitoring' have replaced some of the terms used in other studies, such as: 'Supervision' (as provided by the Nikken and Jansz (ibid) and we have proposed that parents tend to view monitoring as a more specific way of behaving rather than 'supervising' which suggests the notion of 'sitting alongside'. We have also chosen the terms 'helping' and 'encouraging' from a pedagogical view point, as our interest lies in the way in which parents/carers might identify child-led activities (helping) and (encouraging) as a way of identifying a child's agency in the process, although both could be seen to correlate with the term 'co-use' or 'co-viewing,' (Nathanson, 1999, Valkenburg et al., 1999).

The more polarised aspects of the styles of 'encouraging' set against 'preventing' (identified by Livingston, 2018, in *How do parents support their children and who supports them? Parenting for a Digital Future: Survey Report 1)* where parents typically discussed 'sometimes' engaging in 'enabling' and 'restrictive' forms of parental mediation were often driven by the age of the child: for the under-fives, they tended to see parents laying down rules and using parental controls, an/or co -sharing digital activities, whilst for the 5-12 year olds, parents were engaging in a balance of restrictive enabling strategies. A different style also, at times, emerged for parents of teenagers, who employ a 'chattier' style of monitoring and mediating digital experiences.

1.5 Enabling mediation
Livingstone et al (2017: 2018) provide a useful direction of travel for parents with regards to the adoption of new skills and styles of parenting in relation to managing their children's media usage. They argue that 'enabling mediation' is practiced more by parents who judge their own or their children's digital skills to be relatively high, but are also aware of the risks of Internet use. Thus, even though the issue is possibly more about online risk as well as offering greater opportunities, such parents may be confident that they and their children can deal with risk when it occurs, thereby in the future possibly minimizing actual harm. The study suggests a parenting style of 'enabling mediation' which is akin to the well-established 'active' mediation style

discussed for television viewing (Harding, 2015) but acknowledges the greater complexity of the internet age. Whilst it includes active 'mediation' alongside a strong sense of safety measures, enabling mediation seeks to supports children's agency. Livingstone recommends therefore, that parents are supported to acquire digital skills (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2016)

1.6 What is digital media?
Essential to this study is a brief discussion of what constitutes digital media. Whilst, many definitions emphasize the technology itself, for the purposes of this study, the most pertinent discussions are provided by Dewdney and Ride (2014), who propose ideas that arise from the technology itself and how the cultural concepts are ported across contexts. Furthermore, for the purposes of our analysis within this small - scale project, a brief discussion of the emergence of a visual culture within digital media theorization leads to the visual dominance prevalent within modern culture, which, in turn, raises its own issues of convergence and screen-based interactivity and immersion in that experience (Harding, 2015; Harding, 2017; Csikszentmihalyi, 1991).

1.7 Sources of available support
Despite a vast amount of support and advice available for parents and educators from trusted sources such as the NSPCC, Childnet and others, parents still appear bewildered about where to access help that suits them. Livingstone's blog (2018) reveals that they '*found that parents are broadly optimistic about the role of digital media in their children's lives, and are turning to the internet for all kinds of parenting dilemmas. However, it also reveals that they are still drastically under-supported when it comes to digital parenting advice. So parents have few resources to turn to either when they or their children run into problems or when they want positive recommendations'.* Hop and Delver (2011: 9) agree concerning the lack of parental guidance: 'children and young people have a right to our guidance and supervision, and yet this is exactly what they have lost.'

1.8 The online TV channel
Tomorrowschildtv.com (TCTV) was built on the model developed for Parentchannel.tv (the principle author of this paper, Dr Harding, in 2008- 2012 developed this resource for government with a technical partner and the charity Family Lives). TCTV was also built upon her subsequent doctoral work and experience in producing and researching children's content for main broadcasters. TCTV is a pilot online web channel for parents of birth to 18 year olds, with over 40 films designed to help and support parents in the digital age. It consists of fifteen-minute round-the-table live discussions led by a former BBC presenter with parents, experts and children debating specific issues. Under each main film, there are two or three vox pops conducted by contributors to the fifteen-minute filming, with the aim of providing their most salient thoughts for parents in a condensed manner. Signposting for further help to trusted sources is provided for each subject raised. Expert contributors to the content include: NSPCC, Childnet, The Children's Commissioner's Office, Beano, Collingwood and company, Kidzania and parents and children providing their views. The films will be syndicated out to trusted sites. Stage two and three of the study will continue to research the effectiveness of the

work. Middlesex University provided the studios for filming and the work was conducted by media students under the expert guidance of senior lecturers in the department, and produced by Dr Harding. Full ethical consent forms were completed by each contributor. Of course, the presence of an online TV channel would yield no results whatsoever if attention of the audience was not held. Dewdney and Ride (2014) discuss the changes in the way in which audience attention has been measured due to the convergence of media and 'patterns' and 'spikes of attention.' These are now considered important and contain a parallel meaning in 'trending' of topics, in other words, what is important 'in the moment,' but with an aspiration to attracting repeat viewers.

Ross (2008) in *Beyond the Box*, highlights a trend for producers to encourage viewers to gain power and control over their viewing experience and the necessity for them to *feel* as if they are directly contributing to the TV show in a variety of ways. Ross discusses how audiences are indeed looking for guidance on a variety of issues and seeks to explore how audiences are sustained as part of a social entity. The sense of 'community' is emphasized in his work: 'the power of the Internet to promote a sense of community – unfettered community – around media texts is a strong and persistent rhetoric…' (2008:259). The author also argues that the re-emergence of oral culture (and at the same time encouraging audience participating in that oral culture together with contributing *their* views and their interpretation of the narrative being told), is vital. In our view, the *transaction* taking place firmly places the TV show and its audience within a mediated culturally specific place. Ross is particularly enthusiastic about the participatory experience and the creation of new ways of storytelling in the modern world. Her enduring belief is that although TV may be constructed differently, audiences will always seek 'a story that resonates' (2008:263).

Turning to the content itself for the parental audience, various definitions are available regarding the mix of information/news and entertainment, and, for the purposes of this study, we draw upon Thussu's (2007:7) understanding: 'Infotainment - a neologism which emerged in the late 1980s…which refers to an elicit genre - mix of 'information' and 'entertainment' in news and current affairs programming.' Thussu (ibid) also raises the point that 'infotainment' is also associated with the notion of 'dumbing down' and its reliance on emotional discourse to drive interest and less reliance on academic enquiry. However, it could be argued that those who seek out 'infotainment' would otherwise not have engaged in the debate in any case and acknowledges that at least younger people may indeed be attracted to take part. Lupton (2015:29) notes that cultural studies scholars are interested in 'spreadable media.' In other words, how sharing content is reshaping the media landscape and the necessity for content producers to make a move away from distribution to circulation – this is particularly pertinent to the TCTV format which intends to rely upon syndication. This concept of 'sharing' is described by Lupton (2015:29) as one that 'seeks to re-circulate content as part of their identity and participation in social networks and communities...'

Tolson (2001) argues that talk shows are meaningful to the fabric of public discussion on current issues. Although talk shows have been subject to some

academic scrutiny, the actual 'talk' has largely been less investigated. The genre is complex and ripe for analysis in terms of its ability to persuade an audience of any particular idea. 'Discussions therefore range from the apparent fraudulence of some talk show productions to broader pronouncements of other victimization of guests,' Tolson (2001: 8) and with this, he explores interesting questions around the social construction of reality in talk shows. Berger (2014:10) identifies a crucial feature of the social aspects of semiotics which are pertinent to this study 'because meanings are socially produced, society has to teach individuals what signs mean…we are unaware of the extent to which culture shapes are feelings, actions, and even our identities.' Meaning, then, is always social' (Berger 2014: 5). Furthermore, Berger offers a checklist for semiotic analysis for television, which in part, is useful to this study under four headings (although there are others that can be utilized, for the purpose of this work these are the most relevant: to isolate and analyse the important signs in a text; investigate what is the paradigmatic structure of the text? How does the medium of television impact the text? (These research questions must wait for study two and three).

In addition to the useful work conducted by Livingstone (2018) and Ofcom (2017), we have also drawn upon our own surveys (2016) which became the main foci of each filmed content, for example, Sakr, (2017); de Rijke, (2016); Coulson, (2017) all of which are housed on the research portal page of TCTV, where parents can access more in-depth information if they wish (further research in stage two and three will confirm if this is useful and relevant).

1.9 The content
The research made available for the Government in 2012 regarding the impact of Parentchannel.tv (ran by one of the authors of this project: Dr Harding) also provided the underpinning for the TCTV original format (whilst acknowledging that media applications in the home have since evolved and so too have some of the opinions of parents). This study is also built on a small-scale survey that revealed the top five concerns for each age range with over 120 parents (Harding, 2016) upon which TCTV began to be built:

Birth -5 years	6 – 11 years	12 -17 years
1. How much screen time is OK?	How can I protect my child from online bullying?	How can I protect my child from online bullying?
2.How can I protect my child from online bullying?	How can I help my child understand about stranger danger (online)?	How should I manage my child's online privacy?
3.How can I help my child understand about stranger danger (online)?	How much screen time is OK?	How can I teach my child to balance online gaming or screen time with doing homework?
4. At what age should I allow my child to use with an iPad?	What are the dangers involved in my child accessing online porn?	What are the dangers involved in my child accessing online porn?

5.Should I let my baby play with my phone?	Is it Ok for my child to use the internet on their own if there are safety controls?	What age should I allow my child to engage in any social media?

The authors drew upon the *Checklist and Concrete Criteria for Positive Content* funded by the European Commission (2015), with which the author Harding was involved in criteria formation.

In view of the format chosen for TCTV (one of expert, parent and child contribution), Hartley's work (2012: 144) is drawn upon, which discusses citizenship as 'more individuated and privatised…where 'knowledge shared is knowledge gained. It is a connect-collaborate – create model …' Indeed, this is a fitting place to start when considering an online channel that might (subject to further research) bring about a sense of community for parents. Although it could be argued that the 'live show' and the vox pops elements for TCTV provide no immediate editing requirements - this too raises questions about the control of 'safe messaging' which has received little discussion amongst academics (these considerations will be examined in stage two of the study with the advisory board in conjunction with robust research).

Interestingly, and with direct relevance to TCTV, Tolson (2001:15) comments that testimonials take a narrative form, suggesting that 'more generally, it is suggested that they amount to a repetition of statements with the emphasis more on diversity than reaching conclusive resolutions.' Tolson (ibid) recognizes the importance of the challenge to the expert to translate the information being conveyed into something all audiences might understand. Indeed, the host often assumes the role of orchestrator by enabling the direction of the content to form a 'bridge' between the audience and the contributors to the show (which, in turn raises a further question about power and control in terms of: who has the mic; for whom does the autocue rely on for direction? Of course, the host is invariably the one to whom this 'power' belongs by enabling strong control of the direction of conversation. The choice of guests contributes another dimension worthy of examination: who chooses them and why? Tolson (2001:39) points out that in the TV show 'Kilroy', the presenter 'rarely remains neutral on social and political issues …taking the side of ordinary people, constructing the experts as evasive and …even silencing them.' A further interesting issue to explore is the role of host as 'story elicitor '(Tolson 2001:132), where the telling of the narrative is between the *contributor and the audience,* thus maintaining an audience interest in the story. Of course, this all depends on the individual personality of the host and choice of storytelling techniques. Tolson (2001:140) examines the hosts' 'discursive functions and performative components and nodes of address'. Nevertheless, these important questions arising from a sense of agency and control, will largely remain unanswered until stage two and three of the study.

Chapter 2.

2.1 Research questions
Study 1 (as indicated, this is a three-part study)
1. How, where and when are parents mediating their children's media experiences/digital skills in the home?
2. With which particular media are their children engaging, when they choose a particular form of mediation: 'monitoring', 'restricting', 'helping', 'intervening' or 'encouraging'?
3. In what ways can 'enabling meditation' be exemplified in everyday life with families?
4. Are parents identifying specific help/ advice regarding mediation of their child's digital skills in the home?
5. Where are parents turning to for advice (should they need it)?
6. Might parents value a free online TV channel dedicated to the provision of advice about the digital age – led by experts in the field and supported by real parents' and children's experiences?

Note: Subject to the findings in this study, further research to be conducted in stage two and three are likely to address issues as set out in the recommendations (see end of the report).

2.2 Methodology
Given the general sensitivities of research with families, and particularly in relation to the mediation of their children's media usage, (together with the challenge of connecting with them in meaningful ways to elicit data that genuinely tells their story), the study took a qualitative approach (tick charts with supplementary narrative and semi-structured interviews conducted face-to-face or on the phone) in an attempt to explore less well investigated areas. This initial study will provide the foundational work for stages two and three.

The concept of selfhood and embodiment in the digital world means that research needs to be reconceptualised, (Lupton, 2015). Digital sociology is now considered a sub – discipline and has brought with it new theoretical and methodological needs, that are essentially reflexively directed. This dynamism and permeable state is high on the agenda (Lupton, 2015). Hine (2015:13) and also suggests how 'inventive methodological strategies are required to enable us to explore the textures of social life which result in people combining online and offline experiences in complex, and unpredictable fashion.'

Hine's insight when discussing pop-up moments when the online and offline world collides is that: 'it is in these everyday non- digital moments that we make sense of the digital' (2015:195). With that aim in mind, the close examination of a limited number of cases should permit the range of parental experiences to be captured with greater ease within the tight time framework.

Research tools include tick charts to be completed by parents detailing daily moments of interventions/mediation or interaction over a period of five days

(as described against specific media applications), accompanied by narrative at the end of each day to bring the charts to life, followed by predetermined questions (semi-structured interviews) via 20 minute telephone conversations or visits to discuss the experience over the five days period and their perceived advice 'needs' during that time. Phone calls and visits were not recorded. Notes were taken, which will be shared with participants if requested.

2.2 Ethical consideration and the protocol
All surveys and phone call contributions were anonymised and participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time during the process and that their contributions will be destroyed. No personal data was stored. Participants were able to seek clarification and ask questions before or during the interviews. The study received ethical approval from Middlesex University.

Participants were recruited employing a mix of strategies, including more formal introductions via schools and through personal networks and snowballing sampling. Participants were selected based on a combination of criteria: age range, social economic status and geographical location. Whilst we were keen to recruit more families from low socio economic backgrounds they were not reasonably represented, and this limitation will be addressed in stage two of the study.

Families were recruited resulting in 40 case studies with the aim of providing a five day snap shot of mediation of digital media activity in the home, supplemented by verbal (translated verbatim) and written responses that provide a narrative around the charts that were completed).

2.3 Analysis of qualitative data
The approach to analysis of the data was crucial, in order to probe how families made meaning of their experiences and the way in which the broader social contexts might have a bearing on those meanings. Consequently, the data was then analyzed using a hybrid approach based on thematic analysis (a foundational method for qualitative analysis permitting a deep level of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns presented by data), and used to examine the essence of reality for the families (Boyatzis, 1998). Furthermore, the approach was supported by theoretical sampling and coding techniques from grounded theory, (e.g., Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Our commitment to the notion of mixed method research compelled us to take the direction of mediated communications with some trepidation. We were aware that the viewpoints of the children within the home would provide a more rounded picture, but time and resources would not permit this level of research at this stage. We share our troubled views with Hine (2015) who discusses the danger of 'relying on one medium when the participants involved have many different ways of communicating and representing themselves to each other'…and could jeopardise that holistic, rounded understanding that ethnographers aim to develop,' (2015:3).

2.4 Thematic analysis
The presentation of the results relies upon excerpts from transcriptions and

have been chosen to highlight particular themes. In accordance with issues of confidentiality, no names or identifying information will be provided in relation to the chosen citations.

Chapter three

3.1 Findings and discussion

Introduction
As described earlier, all the data collected was analyzed thematically:
1. Theme one: 'Monitoring' and 'Restricting'
2. Theme two: 'Intervening'
3. Theme three: 'Helping' and 'Encouraging'
4. Theme four: 'Seeking advice'

In addition, verbatim responses, which tended to add clarity around the charts offered over the five-day period, are presented under relevant *themes* (rather than the headings provided for the raw data as they were less representative of the emerging trends). References to other relevant research permits a level of examination against by which the data can be better interpreted and understood. Finally, modest conclusions are drawn from the analysis and recommendations made specifically regarding stage one and two of the research.

3.2 Theme one: 'Monitoring' and 'Restricting'

In relation to the act of 'monitoring' children's media experiences in the home, parents with children under 12 years of age tended to report that the very essence of 'monitoring' was frequently driven by the need for vigilance around safety online (often resulting in 'restricting' the use of particular devices, depending on the time of day).

Typically, parents reported a difference in approach according to the age of the child, with younger children receiving intense focus and vigilance regarding safety issues and time restriction, and a gradual relaxation in terms of time restriction, remaining concerned about safety as the child matured. Also, at times, parents reported restricting media as a form of incentive or punishment. For example: "*I restrict TV if he has not done homework.*" However, few spoke of filters or technical tools but, of course, that may now be a 'given' rather than a piece of information that they felt they needed to share. Indeed, Ofcom's latest study (2017) reveals that nearly 2 in 5 parents of 3-4 and 5-15 year-olds, use network content filters and that more than 9 in 10 who use parental controls consider it useful.

When discussing restrictive use of digital media in the home, there was a tendency for parents to report rather precise time limitation in terms of their children's media access and, as raised by numerous recent studies (Carey and Hoyle, 2015; Dunkley, 2015; Draper, 2016) this was unsurprising: "*I limit everything: …games on a phone – I allow 15 minutes, …for a CBeebies games (I allow one hour)…when it comes to the I pad I allow one hour,*" and "*I let my child play a game on an app but I limit it to half hour.*" Parents of 6 to12 year olds frequently reported precise monitoring of screen time: '*between one-and two hours' screen time a day.*' Indeed, of course, these comments may well be attributed to the Hawthorne effect (Adair,1984), especially as

parents also tended to speak of not wanting to appear to others as a 'bad parent' (see comments below) when it comes to media mediation in the home.

Interestingly, two parents with under-fives discussed limiting their own adult screen time: "*I have to restrict myself!! I can see that I spend two and a half hours on social media,*' whilst another contributor to the study commented: *"I spend five hours a day on Facebook."* They both concluded that they believe they might well have to restrict their own children's screen time in the future.

3.3 Consumption of content and strategies used by parents
Nevertheless, four parents were more concerned with the content than the time spent and typically commented:*' I look for educational content that will help my two year-old with colours',"* and *"I love sitting watching some TV shows with my two year old: I even suggest the ones to watch together'".*

Moreover, parents with children between six and 18 years tended to report how content often 'connected them,' and this was especially true when it came to talking about sensitive issues. For example, "*we watched a documentary together about transgender."* Researchers such as, Nikkelen, et al. (2016) discuss the language and communication style whilst mediating media usage. Indeed, as can be seen in the example below within the 12 – 18 year old section, a parent was particularly aware of her use of language in communicating with her son: "*I discuss and I recommend.*" Padilla-Walker, Coyne, & Collier, (2016) study how parents' attempts at restrictive monitoring of young people (teenagers) media usage actually inhibits the young person's own attempts to self- regulate the behaviour. In other words, if the parent's aim is to increase self-monitoring then the very act of mediation in the restrictive form tends to disrupt that aspiration. Crucially, Nathanson's (2001) work in this area goes some way in demonstrating that that parental energetic attempts to restrict can increase the desire for 'forbidden activity,' rather than decrease it.

Other monitoring activities described by parents/carers of younger children frequently stated what they hoped to be 'unobtrusive strategies', such as: *"keeping all media in the living room."* Whilst previous advice to parents was to ensure the computer is in the living room – this is no longer applicable and difficult for parents to simply 'keep an eye' on them and there is little doubt that children and youth are becoming more dependent on influences from their own peer group (Hop and Delver 2011). Contrastingly, other parents spoke of the need to model their expectations of their children with their own media usage, or, through positive approaches, such as becoming more involved in their children's media experiences: "*I like to sit with them and watch the shows on Youtube."* Indeed, Ofcom's study (2017) also reveals the fact that 53% of parents of 5-15 year olds say that they are usually somewhere close by (perhaps checking in with them) and just under half stating that they question their children about what have been doing online.

A high percentage of parents/carers (ranging from 34% - 43%) rising with the age of the child, reported that 'monitoring' was the main way they viewed their choice of mediation within the home (irrespective of age, gender or device).

Their reflective daily comments substantiated this position. However, the in-depth telephone or face-to-face conversations which probed for better understanding, revealed that, in fact, 'restricting' (particularly in reference to safety issues) was a significant way in which they conducted their 'monitoring' activities. However, some parents were also keen to point out that (both in their five-day monitoring of their own behaviour and through the subsequent semi-structured interviews) in fact, under the selection of the choice of 'intervention,' they often found themselves declaring the position of needing to withdraw (intervene with) the device. The highest level of intervention appeared to occur at 24% for the 5-12 year olds, followed by the 13-18 year olds with 23%, and the lowest level occurring for the 0-5 year olds at 15%. Therefore, parental choice of 'monitoring' was, at times, found to be directionally associated with restrictive mediation.

Strikingly, our findings were in complete agreement with Livingstone (2018), who proposes that there is a need to discuss the relevance of adoption of an 'enabling mediation' style of parenting (suggestive of tendencies towards awareness and protection of possible online dangers, yet holding the tension and permitting a level of independent exploration).

3.4 Snapshots

The following examples provide a series of interesting snapshots of the way in which parents typically offered useful narratives around the ways in which they 'monitor' and/or 'restrict' in terms of the use of specific media devices:

Age	Device	Theme one: Monitoring and/or restricting parental activity narratives examples
0-5	Phone	*"It's always about the phone – not just my phone - everyone's phone –she likes to pretend everything is a phone – (laughs) she brings me the phone – so I don't forget it – makes me realize how much I use it… that she thinks I might need it!"*
0-5	iPad	*"They are watching less TV 2 year old and 5 year old - all have iPads – so I have to keep an eye on them. I'm always in the same room. I like to be with them so I can see."* *"My younger child (2-year-old) finds and uses* Peppa Pig on *YouTube. They are so clever. So quick too."* *"It's different now – it's user driven not schedule driven – my child will use Netflix and YouTube. It's constant watching everything for safety:"* *"I'm constantly asking her if she is OK and I look*

		at what she is playing on the iPad."
0-5	TV/Video/Youtube	*"He likes TV in the background too – notices if it's off – which I do sometimes."* *"My little one (15 months) is very interested in repetitive TV/video/Youtube – watches Buzz Lightyear over and over again… and I am aware of it –think he needs it so I don't turn it off."*
6-12	TV	*"It's easier to manage everything when as a family of three children we watch TV together …when it is a film – that's good."* *"It's all about the room layout… makes it easier for me. I have the TV in the corner and another one facing the room…I can hear all the time and I monitor all the time. I don't want to be accused of being a bad parent."* *"I have always said 'no' to the TV in the bedroom…I couldn't monitor then."* *"I checked today what she was watching on her tablet and it was all about dolls! Relief."* *'I worry about being a bad parent.'*
6-12	Xbox	*"I check the Xbox (it's in front room so I can always see the screen) and he asks my permission before he plays a game on the Xbox and then I check age ratings."* *"When he asked if he could play a game on X box I said once you have put away your school uniform."*
6-12	Phone	*"I say 'no' to the phone in the bedroom for my six year-old."* *"I'm always asking if she is OK and I look at what she is doing."*
13-18	Phone and TV	*"I remember his 'fear of missing out' from last year and worried that it might happen again…I'm looking out for him all the time."* *"Strangely enough, he comes to me in the other room when I am watching TV (after he has been online gaming in his bedroom)… he wants a break and is bored so comes to chat to me. I*

		guess that is not exactly monitoring but my way of doing things." *"I can see that my parenting style as he was growing up has helped in some ways – it's always been a trusting and casual relationship but with boundaries when he was little such as no TV in room until he was 9 'cos I was worried."* *"Well … mediation of his digital life is non-existent really because like a lot of other things like curfew –I always advised but was there when it ever went pear shaped. My parenting style is the same across the board – I discuss - recommend –and then give choice for him to ignore. I don't reprimand. I know he takes drugs – he told me and I gave him condoms. We have a very honest relationship."*

3.5 Theme two: Intervening (closely linked to Theme one)

Overwhelmingly, in the area of 'intervening,' the main concern for parents was challenging behaviour, and, in many ways, this was closely linked to the first theme. However, due to the level of anxiety for parents when discussing their concerns, a separate theme was allocated.

Parents used quite strong vocabulary to discuss their levels of distress (such as: 'addiction' when discussing the behaviour of two-year-olds watching 15-20 minutes of favourite cartoons a day) in relation to TV consumption. They also mentioned how surprised they were that their young children believed that seeing/using sufficient TV/media was *their* right and typical examples were: "*But I haven't seen TV today."*

Two other issues that arose when parents spoke in terms of when they had needed to intervene were situations where a young child had been accessing porn (see below), and another where a parent had become aware (during the research) that their child was a perpetrator of abuse online (see below). Recent research (Marriner, 2016; McKee, 2010) is helpful in this area and in study two and three are likely to be key areas for filmed content accompanied by the latest research for parents to access on TCTV.

In contrast, other comments offered were around the more positive usage of intervention in terms of using media to distract their child: "*To distract him I show him pictures of himself on the phone…prefers stills over videos and likes to see his family members. He's happier playing with people though."*

Other parents adopted a more pragmatic view when it came to frustration concerning their child's media usage and discussed how they handled digital issues that arose in much the same way as they managed other issues in their child's life. Comments such as: "*I transfer my parenting skills to digital world,*" captured this sense of transferring existing parenting skills into a new arena.

Most commonly, parents of children over 12 years of age, tended to lament the time children were spending on their phones and felt unable (or unwilling) to intervene explaining: *"It is the way they communicate."* In addition, one parent stated that he knew in advance of completing the chart that the phone was going to be an issue as it was a recent birthday present and felt conflicted over having bought it. As Livingstone et al (2018) point out, it is a challenge for parents when, despite their concerns over privacy and safety, they are still buying new technology for the home.

In conclusion, the data yielded within this theme provides further evidence of the need for guidance for parents regarding a move towards an 'enabling mediation' style as proposed by Livingstone (2018).

3.6 Snap shots

During the semi-structured interviews, (following submission of the five-day chart) parents of older children were keen to convey specific real – life situations where they had intervened and how they had *'felt like a bad parent,'* declaring that the motivation to take part in this study was to share how they had felt with others (see chart below):

Age	Device	**Theme two: Intervening** Managing challenging behaviour
0-5	iPad	*"I had to take the iPad away from my 14 month-old or he will damage it."* *"Another day – too much Tablet use so I had to take it away."*
0-5	TV	*"Too much TV today so had to turn it off! "* *"I turn the TV off – I interrupt it as I am always in the same room."*
0-5	Phone	*"I stop the older one (2 and a half years old) after five minutes looking through videos on my phone…I keep an eye."* *"She wants my phone to look at but I say no."*
6-12	Xbox, TV and tablet	*"The challenges are just 24/7 so I have all YouTube restricted stuff."*

		"Porn was accessed by my child when he was at my elderly aunt's house… then social services got involved and we were accused of being a dysfunctional family. It affected him (he used to minimize the screen and my aunt didn't notice)… it was bad for him…I wanted to take part in this study to say how these things can easily happen." *"I stick to rules when other parents don't because I know they want a peaceful life but I can't – so when their friends come round it's hard."* *"There's a lot of peer pressure about these things – I have to be firm."* *"My child has meltdowns and forgets the rules and wants to buy things and has to be reminded of rules – he has autism."* *"I have a chart and I deduct stars for bad behaviour …like swearing (often caused by the Xbox itself)."* *"I make sure he is not allowed to communicate with others online."* *"During the week they are out at clubs so that's better but it (mediating media) becomes an issue at weekends."* *"TV is less desirable now –it's all about Xbox and Playstation and all about managing their behaviour around these!"* *"At breakfast no tablets allowed – I let them watch TV though."* *"I allow TV on in the background (children's TV) and I turn it off occasionally. Xbox is the issue."* *"Today, I reminded my child not to communicate with others on line (Minecraft)…I tell him all actions are deactivated."* *"As my child was difficult last night I told him he had a choice of playing with X Box or playing with his friends – he chose friends."*
6-12	Laptop/phone	*"I was surprised to find out that my daughter can be mean online so I had to stop her from using online chat and had a conversation about why this is happening. She said she is saying exactly what*

		others have said to her, but after explaining the negative consequences of this, I encouraged her to think about how she felt when others commented like that about her. I also cancelled her membership on the Roblox website. She understood that this is unacceptable and stopped chatting online with other people."
		"I am intervening mostly because they are overusing their phones or computers and they don't know when to stop."
		"She is playing online games mostly on Roblox. I have to constantly check up on her but at the same time I also try to show that I trust her that she will not use online chat."
		"I have to always intervene and tell them to shut down the computers, especially with my daughter; I have to remind her 10 minutes before her time is up."
		"She is overusing her phone to watch YouTube videos, thinking that taking a break from computer means using the phone, so I had to tell her to stop using it… if not, it will be confiscated."
		"They spent most of the time on their computers in their room, and I try to go in there as often as I can, but I am not always there. I do check the browser history periodically though."
13-18	TV, laptop, hones, Tablet	*"Our boys absolutely love computer games, TV etc. Unfortunately, they would have them every day if we let them, and they would end up playing games for hours on end if we didn't intervene. So, we do two-hour blocks of time on games, twice or three times a week. They always want longer than two hours, we also only let them have games in the afternoon, we've found that if they have them in the morning nothing compares, they find it very hard to find things they enjoy inside after they have had games. I think it depends on where you live, we live in a rough area and the children can't go out to play like I did as a child, so games inside become a safe option. They would actually love to be playing out if they could make friends. If we had that available for them, then, I think we wouldn't need to be as strict with the game time. Games are also becoming very realistic and I'm sure it isn't doing children any good,*

		especially with games like Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto. These are the games the children end up playing if they go to friend's houses." *"I think we do a good job balancing it all, at the end of the day we're all guinea pigs as technology is moving so quickly."* *"At dinner time I don't allow phone."* *"When he is playing football and doing a referee position he reduces the use of his phone – but I say nothing for peace and I want a good relationship with him…it seems to be working.'* *'He has spent too long on the phone…not doing anything else even though it is a nice day…not coming off before bedtime."* *"It's how kids communicate today, so I'm not going to take it away – but I do try and limit it as much as I can. However, I am constantly monitoring them, they tend to be on their phones."*

3.7 Theme three: 'Helping' and 'Encouraging'

The most enthusiastic discussions for 'helping' or 'encouraging' children with digital devices were described by parents with the youngest age range (0-5 years) and oldest age range (12-18 years) where parents tended to offer more in-depth descriptions for ways in which devices in the home afforded a number of benefits: encouraging communication; bonding; meeting a specific developmental need. The greatest percentage within the category of 'encouraging' or 'helping' (with the knowledge that mostly parents did not differentiate between the two categories despite the examples provided before the study) lay with the 0-5 year olds (with a combined figure of 34% as 'encouraging' and 'helping' results have been combined for the above reasons). The 6-12 year olds and 13-18 year olds each attracted 26%.

Surprisingly, there is a consistent choice of mediation style across all the age ranges with 'monitoring' as the primary choice and 'encouraging' as the least likely style for parents to adopt. It should be noted that the descriptive accompanying notes against each choice during the five-day period, together with the answers to the semi structured interviews, suggested that the choice of 'monitoring' was focused mainly on safety issues. The other choices of styles were broadly consistent with the verbal and written accompanying notes (although 'encouraging' and 'helping' were similarly interpreted). Furthermore, when it comes to 'monitoring' a particular device, the usage of 'phones' for 6-12 year olds and 13 -18 year olds appeared to require the

greatest attention, whilst the iPad and TV received the most attention within the 0-5 year age range,

Notably, in agreement with Livingstone (2018), who found that parents enjoyed shared positive experiences around time spent as a family around the use of television and films (highlighting this is indeed an important feature as in 'enabling mediation') the families in our study also shared several similar scenarios where joint media experiences had encouraged communication (see snapshots below). Similarly, Livingstone's (ibid) study found that other uses of technologies (playing computer games together, Skyping and using technology for creative activities) brought closeness to the family, as also claimed by some of the families in our study (see examples below). When it comes to fun and enjoyment, only a few parents comment on this aspect: "*makes us laugh and it helps him,*" although this is, of course, an important contribution to the whole family experience. When it comes to discussing apps, Harding (2014) discusses the need to not underestimate the value of humour in the development of enjoyable apps for children.

Parents also shared some examples which could fall within the aspired 'enabling' mediated use of digital media in the home' and the way in which it can lead to fulfillment of specific needs for their children. As Livingstone points out: '*parents have the most influence on children's values and behaviour – the media will never compete with their influence. But the two can work together to help kids develop in a confident and positive way,*' (2014:11). For example, one parent commented on his participation in an online game and the impact on the teenager: "*He enjoyed having me involved in his game.*" Parents also spoke of their delight in using apps for music (drumming) with their children; aiding language development for a child with dyspraxia and general educational use of TV and videos for learning about names of animals, colours, etc.

3.8 Snapshots

The following further examples provide a series of interesting snap-shots of the way in which parents typically provided a useful narrative around the ways in which they were 'helping and/or encouraging' in terms of the use of particular media devices:

Age	Device	Theme three Helping/encouraging
0-5	iPad/Tablet	"*My husband tends to show her new things on the iPad (rather than me) – he helps her learn.*" "*Apps… we use drums on iPad – great for learning –makes us laugh and it helps him.*" "*He has dyspraxia so when he is on the tablet I get him to talk to me about it and he uses actions too great!*"
0-5	Phone	"*Facetime – we use it with relatives in other*

		countries!! We encourage it." *"I give the 15-month-old my phone to play with, he likes the way the display changes as he touches it."* *"She's only 23 months but I think it's probably more phone she is really interested in – I help her… but then we don't have a TV. This research made me notice it more…now she has language she tells me: I want to look at a picture or a person. I can see her desire to communicate has made me more aware of what she wants – digitally – speaking. I show her animals on a video on the phone… if she is interested in an animal. It doesn't replace a book though."* *"We walk through the park and it takes ages from nursery so we stop on a bench and look at pictures on the bench and now she associates the picture we see on my phone with the bench."* *"When my son was in hospital he was only ten months. Staff were trying to fit a feeding tube and had to distract him and the only thing that would work was a video (not a picture) of his older brother who is 18-months older. It worked every time they had to do the procedure!"*
0-5	TV	*"I can give you an example: she saw a baby Toucan on a TV show then in her book and it was the same…in a book and a video… then we made a puppet and saw the toucan on video again. Brings it to life."* *"My younger one (14 months) likes TV with music so I turn that on for him. I show him educational shows with songs on TV where he learns days of the week etc."* *"My child likes dancing - moves around…it's great. He likes theme songs but not whole TV shows. I like that he moves and is not just sitting."* *"I use Charlie and Lola and Peppa Pig whilst I cook dinner. It helps."*

		"We watch In The Night Garden and talk about it…it's like talking to an adult… I chat with my 2 - year-old... and last week she said: Look mummy here's the one (the character) you wanted to see! Real chatty style." *"I have a 5-year-old and a 2-year-old and I think (I hope) I have a balanced approach. I see the benefit of the digital age and all the devices…it's not going away…I must help them prepare!"*
	Internet/Skype On laptop/laptop/Tablet	*"I was surprised by how much my 18 month old used media when I was asked to take part in this study: I realised we use Skype a lot and it helps us connect with family members."* *"I have a brother in Holland so we Skype him on the laptop every week."* *"There are positive sides: the internet is good for homework and I'm sure when he goes to school it will help. It has helped me with my studies, so I can see the benefits."*
	Camera	*"My three-year-old and two-year-old grandchildren use the camera…it gives lots of interaction… all good."*
6-12	Laptop	*"I watched drawing videos with my 10-year-old to encourage her drawing skills…she loves mythical animals to draw and we use online games to practice timetables."*
13-18	Phone/tablet/ robots/AI/laptop	*"I think Alexa and Cosmo (a robot) are interactive things and brilliant. I enjoy them myself and it brings me closer to my teenagers as it's something we both enjoy."* *"I am a Grandmother and I live with my grown-up child and with a 16-year-old: he shares phone pictures with me so I ignore the screen time battles for the sake of a good relationship with him where he will include me in his digital life."* *"I think social media can be good for down-time… a kind of relaxation after homework."* *"My 14-year-old shows me how to use*

		Photoshop to create a piece of work."
		"We watch documentaries together about drug abuse on YouTube channel. Helpful."
		"He told me how to use Snapchat. I still don't get it."
		"We watched a video about transgender together and gender neutrality and he wanted clarifications… good conversation."
		"I joined in with my 13-year-old on the computer game and the object was to build an army truck. I wasn't very good at the controls so, I directed him where I wanted things to go and where to put the parts… he enjoyed having me involved in his game."

Chart demonstrating percentage of choices of mediation style across the five-day period

Mediation	Age range 0-5 years	Age range 6-12 years	Age range 13-18 years
Monitoring	34%	36%	43%
Restricting	17%	14%	8%
Helping	16%	16%	13%
Intervening	15%	24%	23%
Encouraging	18%	10%	13%

3.8: Theme four Seeking advice

In agreement with Livingstone's (2018) observations of the lack of support for parents, our study revealed significant anxiety right across all age ranges. Indeed, Ofcom's study (2017) revealed a similar picture where more than three quarters of parents of 5-15 year olds have sought information about how to manage online risks (an ever increasing picture emerging). In answer to questions about identification of specific help/advice regarding media that a parent might seek out regarding these matters, answers typically fell into the following four broad categories: safety; behaviour; time restrictions and educational opportunities.

Several parents expressed similar concerns and the need for sources of help around behaviour and media with most parents admitting to feeling like a 'bad parent' or wishing not to appear negligent (this was a reason for seeking help). Parents frequently commented on the lack of information or advice available about suitable lengths of time for their children to spend on a particular media device: *"I need to know how much screen time is too much?"* Although overwhelmingly, parents were primarily concerned about online safety regardless of age, parents of younger children tended to speak of their fear increasing? as their child matures.

The following quotes from parents in the study are typical of the anxieties expressed throughout all age ranges:

"For me, it's about safety…it's my main concern."

"She will overtake me soon in her digital abilities!!! Help what can I do?"

"Desperate, yes, I'd say I was desperate for help."

"They are so quick… they minimize the screen…I need support from someone who knows about these things."

"My daughter often wants to go outside but when her friends visit it is hard to get them to leave the computers."

"I'm concerned about online safety all the time."

"I'm concerned about YouTube security and the way as it suggests the next video…compulsive!"

"Even though there are positive impacts - I still think more about the negative things like about grooming…even then I could monitor it… but if it was a stranger stalking them – I couldn't do much about it…so I guess real life is more dangerous."

"I worry about TV exposure but I make sure it is educational so talk to him…I say: how many people are with Buzz Lightyear… or who is with him? I worry about dangers online for him in the future."

"I won't allow a phone until secondary school – it's too worrying - although there is less about stranger danger nowadays it's more fear about online."

"I heard about a child in the media…they were bullied online and committed suicide… it's so worrying."

"I'm worried about when my child getting older… social media concerns really."

"I worry about YouTube videos with inappropriate content still coming up even

> *with parental controls."*
>
> *"One of my children (11-year-old) is addictive in his behaviour towards everything so she has to control that with others in the family and this includes anything to do with media."*
>
> *"I'm worried about my child (six years old) and her use of apps to insult people."*
>
> *"Access to porn had such a bad impact on my child – it caused him to act up at a later age (child now 13)."*
>
> *"I caught my child being the abuser online – I was shocked..."*

Furthermore, our study found agreement with Livingstone's (2018:11) enquiry into where parents might turn to for advice about digital media. In answer to the question: *Where would you turn to for advice about how to handle media with your child in the home (should you ever need it?),* answers differed according to the age of the child. Parents of younger children were more confident of where to search for help and spoke of: *going online for help; going to Google; Mumsnet; CBeebies; peers; Facebook mum's group; forums; mum's groups;* others suggested that the responsibility shifts to the child as they matured: *My own children will get advice when they are older at primary school.* Parents of children in the 6-12 year age range spoke of *going to the school and asking for help.* This also correlated with Ofcom's (2017) study, where 61% of parents seek help or advice from their child's school.

In our study a number of other parents seemed mystified and tried to think of places they might go for help (feeling unable to seek help from their own parents in this area) as: "*They wouldn't know what to do… all this stuff happened after their time,"* and continued by trying to offer suggestions such as: "*Kids YouTube might help… maybe; or a neighbour?; perhaps a friend?"*

Parents of 12-18 year olds were the most puzzled and felt unable to think of where to begin to access help, and three parents with children ranging between 13 and 17 years, were openly sad and bewildered about where to start to access help. Ofcom's recent study (2017: 209) found that: 'one in six parents of 12-15 year olds feel they don't know enough to help their child manage online risks'. One parent stated: "*I guess I feel pretty helpless."*

However, in contrast, another parent reflected on how she saw the connection between the way she had built a trusting and close relationship with her son at an early age as an important factor in how she manages his media in the home now that he is a teenager: "*He is very talkative to me as a mum… so I think that helps… we work it (any worries I have about media usage) out together. He never went through the grunting stage! For example, when he was younger we watched CBeebies together (although it drove me mad and I didn't understand the shows) it helped build that bond…I'm an open person … he can talk to me about anything."*

In response to questions around whether a TV channel dictated to parents using film and underpinned by experts interviewing parents and children, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. The strength of feeling in the accompanying written and verbal comments were notable and some participants were even anxious to ensure that other parents would know about the resource by suggesting that it must be discoverable and that visits to schools to raise awareness of such a resource would be helpful. At stage two and three of the study, clarity around the appropriateness of the resource will become apparent and refined.

Overall, a majority of responses to the suggestion of an online video-based platform tended to suggest the level of anxiety that parents are feeling about managing their child's media: "*I'm desperate for help*; "*Just what we (my partner and I) need.*" "*Online TV great…so it's available on my phone,*" "*Definitely yes,*" and, "*Please…this is what we need*". Two parents of teenage age children were quite emotional at the thought and revealed the anxiety and loneliness attached to trying to cope with social media pressures with a teenager.

In light of Livingstone (2018) comments: 'parents have woefully few sources of support and advice when they have digital questions and dilemmas,' the parents' responses in our study were unsurprising.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

Early indications suggest that the main findings in this study are replicable in multiple cultural contexts and can lay the foundation for phase two and three. However, the promising results of this first stage in the study should not be over interpreted, and although participation rates in the study were high in general, the study sample was limited and not fully representative of UK parents. Moreover, the largely under-explored area of simultaneously investigating children's accounts of the effects of different parental mediation strategies has been noted, and further studies will provide a more comprehensive picture. It must also be noted that particular bias may have occurred due to the example descriptors provided for parents under each heading (for ease of explanation) from which they could choose (although the telephone conversations and face-to-face interviews sought to address any deficiency in that area). However, the strengths of this study lie in perhaps more personal accounts of lived experiences and the depth of emotion that fills parent's everyday lives which are, at times, dominated by media in the home.

This study builds on existing research in many ways, yet offers a window of understanding into the lived experiences of families over a period of five days. The limitations of the study are acknowledged, safe within the knowledge that stage two and three will address issues such as the number of participants and the capacity to monitor specific feedback to the films (when TCTV has launched in November 2018). Furthermore, the study will increase its reach by involving other countries who have already shown interest in participation.

We were particularly interested in how parents navigated their way around the increasingly moral panic fueled by the media (and, as Livingstone points out - not always wholly justified) and the disconnect between the need to be seen as 'a good parent,' which was also believed to be synonymous with being one who restricts. Strikingly, the honesty and trust invested in the researchers, perhaps due to the strength of feeling about parenting in this area, revealed feeling like a *'guinea pig'* feel like a '*bad parent,'* (feeling strongly about either their present challenges, or fearing the future), coupled with the inability to turn to their own parents for support as they might do in other areas of parenting. Furthermore, despite a vast amount of advice available for parents and educators from trusted sources, parents remained desperate for easily accessible support, declaring that the *"challenges are 24/7; and having…"No idea where to go,"* together with the general bewilderment of parents and grandparents of 12-18 year olds who were largely unable to think of where to begin to access help.

Also notable in the study was the evidence generated that is significantly in agreement with Ofcom, 2017 and Livingstone et al; 2018, and invites us to consider perhaps those more problematic questions around *what content is more appropriate* rather than the more simplistic view of *precise time restrictions* associated with particular media device, thus moving the discussion away from questions around: *How much screen time?* to: *What is on the screen?* And*, How might it impact my child in particular?* The crucial

point appears to be the desired adoption of 'enabling mediation' and advice about positive content and how to weigh up the risks. As described by Livingstone 2018), 'enabling mediation' tends to be adopted by parents who have acquired greater digital skills and are aware of the risks of Internet use and are able to pass on this confidence and vigilance to their children. As a policy priority, it appears that investing in empowering parents and grandparents with digital skills, whilst also making them more aware of safety online, may yield positive results.

The study has contributed fair evidence that parents (with well thought-out advice in ways that they can easily access through the launch of TCTV) could indeed provide them with the direction of travel which embraces the 'enabling mediation style' and trusts them to function and parent confidently, as they tend do in other areas of their lives.

4.1 Further research and recommendations

Stage two and three will build on these recommendations and, additionally, the content, format and user experience of TCTV will be the main subject of investigation.

Recommendations are specifically made in relation to the preparation of stage two and three of the study, whilst other aspects suggest further consideration within the wider context of policy making. The following areas lay the foundation for the second and third phase of the research:

As Livingstone et al (2017) acknowledge, there is now a need to investigate *children's perceptions* of the way in which their parents mediate their digital lives and combine this with parental and cultural values in different countries to provide secure and knowledgeable parenting advice that truly meets varying needs. In agreement with Nikken and Jansz (2014), there is a need to study the child's perspective on mediation.

4.2 Content

- Endeavour to provide support and advice around the style of 'enabling mediation,' and ensure that the new TCTV site is discoverable (as advised by parents).
- Ensure that the content of TCTV is accessible to schools.
- Ensure that the content reflects the lived experiences of parents who often 'feel like a bad parent' and offer sensitive content from experts and other parents.
- Include content on TCTV that, a) carries an emphasis on the ubiquitous affordances of mobile technologies where learning is occurring outside traditional locations with regards to how parents are keen to optimize learning in the home, b) continues to offer support around issues of safety online, and, c) continues to offer guidance regarding age appropriate digital activities.
- Explore the affordances of a 'Cyborg life' in relation to offering younger parents what they need in terms of advice when and where they need it (perhaps in increasingly mobile formats given the debate around

parenting in the digital age enhanced by the intimacy brought about by the physical immediacy of phones). This aspect will undoubtedly render the evolving narrative even more interesting with the increasing ease with which young parents access advice and information regarding parenting in the digital age and the way it is consumed and may lead to further discussions regarding Cyborg life.

4.3 Enabling mediation
In support of Livingstone's (2018) recommendations, our small-scale study harvested useful data which confirms the need for parental support in two areas: 1) encouragement to engage in a more 'enabling mediation' style of parenting and how to make daily calculations about what to restrict or permit, 2) improve the digital skills of parents themselves.

References

Adair, J. (1984). The Hawthorne effect: A reconsideration of the methodological artifact. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69(2), pp.334-345.

Berger, A. (2014) *Media Analysis Techniques* London: Sage.
Boyatzis, R. E. (1998)*Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brito, R., Francisco, R., Dias., Chaudron, S. (2017) Family dynamics in digital homes: The role played by parental mediation in young children's digital practices around 14 European countries. *Contemporary Family,* 39(4), 271-280.

Carey, T. and Hoyle, A. (2015) 'Worrying rise of the iPad childminder: More and more parents admit using tablets to keep their children quiet.'
The Daily Mail. 8 January.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1991) *Flow: the Psychology of Optimal Experience.* London*:* Harper Collins.

Dewdney, A., Ride, P. (2014) *The Digital Media Handbook* London: Routledge.

Dunkley, V.L. (2015) *Screentime is making kinds moody, crazy and lazy.* London: Psychology Today.

Draper, J. (2016) Children risk becoming cross-eyed if they over use Smartphone's and hold devices too close to their face' *Daily Mail.* 21 April.

Glaser, B. (1992) *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis* Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Harding, J. (2106) 'The power of digital symbolic representation' in (ed) Kaye, L. *Young Children in a Digital Age*: Supporting learning and development with Technology OXON: David Fulton.

Harding, J (2014) 'How to make kids smile? Laughter and apps' in (eds) Pljpers, R. & Van Den Bosch, N. *Positive Digital Content for kids Experts reveal their secrets* Brussels: Poscon & MLJN Online.

Harding, J. (2015) *Children and Media: developing a tool for analysis* PHD, London: Middlesex University.

Hartley, J (2012) *Digital Futures for Cultural and Media Studies* West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hine, C (2015) *Ethnography for the Internet, embedded, embodied and everyday* London: Bloomsbury.

Hop, L and Delver, B (2011) *The Wifi Generation Netherlands*: Media Literacy Network.

Livingstone, S. Blog (2018) Lse.ac.uk common sense media report UK "What's the new normal for parents and teens online"
Blum-Ross, A. and Livingstone, S. (2016) From youth voice to young entrepreneurs: the individualization of digital media and learning. *Journal of Digital Media Literacy*, 4(1-2). Available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/67045/

Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Vincent, J., Mascheroni, G., & Ólafsson, K. (2014). Net children go mobile: the UK report: a comparative report with findings from the UK 2010 survey by UK Kids Online. London. Retrieved from http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/57598/1/

Livingstone et al (2018) Parenting for a Digital Future: Survey Report 3 (2018): What do parents think, and do, about their children's online privacy? In the digital home, how do parents support their children and who supports them? Parenting for a Digital Future: Survey Report 1

Livingstone, S., & Helper, E. J. (2008). Parental mediation of children's Internet use. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media,* 52(4), 581e599. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/08838150802437396.

Livingstone, S., Olafsson. K., Helpser, E., Lupianez-Villanueva, F., Velrri, G.A., & Folkvord, F. (2017) Maximizing Opportunities and Minimizing Risks for Children Online: The Role of Digital Skills in Emerging Strategies of Parental Mediation. *Journal of Communication,* 67(1), 82-105.

Lupton, D. (2015) *Digital Sociology* London: Routledge.

McKee, A. (2010). Does pornography harm young people? *Journal of Communication*, 37(1), 17-36.

Marriner, C. (2016). *The damage pornography did to a six-year-old child*. The Age, February 7, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.theage.com.au/national/the-damage-pornography-did-to-a-sixyearold-child-20160205-gmmuv2.html>

Nathanson, A. I. (1999). Identifying and Explaining the Relationship Between Parental Mediation and Children's Aggression. Communication Research, 26 (2), 124-143.

Nathanson, A. I. (2001). Parents versus peers: Exploring the significance of peer mediation of antisocial television. *Communication Research,* 28,

251e274.

Nikken, P & Jansz, J (2014) Developing scales to measure parental mediation of young children's internet use, *Learning, Media and Technology*, 39:2, 250-266, DOI:10.1080/17439884.2013.782038

Nikkelen, S., Vossen, H., Piotrowski, J., & Valkenburg, P. (2016). Media violence and adolescents' ADHD-Related Behaviors: The role of parental mediation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media,* 60(4), 657e675.

Ofcom (2017) Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report. UK: Ofcom.

Padilla-Walker, L. M., Coyne, S. M., & Collier, K. M. (2016). Longitudinal relations between parental media monitoring and adolescent aggression, prosocial behavior, and externalizing problems. *Journal of Adolescence,* 46, 86e97.

POSCON (2015) Checklist and concrete criteria for positive Content Brussels:

European Commission.

Rideout, V. J., Foehr, U. G., & Roberts, D. F. (2010). Generation M^2: Media in the lives of 8- to 18-year-olds. Henry J. Menlo Park: Kaiser Family Foundation. Retrieved from https://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/8010.pdf.

Ross, S M (2008) *Beyond the box Television and The Internet* Oxford: Blackwell.

Sanders, W., Parent, J., Forehand, R., & Breslend, N. L. (2016). The roles of general and technology-specific parenting in managing youth screen time. *Journal of Family Psychology*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0000175

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for Developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thussu, D. K (2007) *News as Entertainment The rise of Global infotainment* London: Sage.

Tolson, A ed (2001) *Television talk shows Discourse, Performance, Spectacle* London: Routledge.

Valkenburg, P. M., Piotrowski, J. T., Hermanns, J., & de Leeuw, R. (2013). Developing and validating the Perceived Parental Media Mediation Scale: A selfdetermination perspective. Human Communication Research, 39(4), 445e469. https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12010.

Warren, R. (2003). Parental mediation of preschool children's television

viewing. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media,* 47(3), 394e417. https://doi.org/ 10.1207/s15506878jobem4703_5.

Wartella, E., Beaudoin-Ryan, L., Blackwell, C. K., Cingel, D. P., Hurwitz, L. B., & Lauricella, A.R. (2016).What kind of adults will our children become? The impact of growing up in a media-saturated world. *Journal of Children and Media*, 10, 13–20.

Appendix

Parents! Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. At the end of each day (for only 5 days), simply take *one minute* to recall and enter a tick on the chart for every time you 'checked in' with your child in some way:

- Monitoring (i.e. maybe just checking to see if all was ok or what they were doing on the device)
- Restricting in some way to do with safety (i.e. guide them about social media danger)
- Helping (i.e. maybe your child was asking: how do I use this app? Or, help needed for homework)
- Intervening (i.e. stopping them from carrying on, warning/reprimanding/taking the device away)
- Encouraging (i.e. perhaps suggesting they FaceTime a relative)

Age of child and gender……

DAY 1	Phone	IPad/tablet	Games console/player	TV	Other Media device
Monitoring					
Restricting					
Helping					
Intervening					
Encouraging					

Comments:………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………

DAY 2	Phone	IPad/tablet	Games console/player	TV	Other Media device
Monitoring					
Restricting					
Helping					
Intervening					
Encouraging					

Comments:………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………

DAY 3	Phone	IPad/tablet	Games console/player	TV	Other Media device
Monitoring					
Restricting					
Helping					
Intervening					
Encouraging					

Comments:………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………

DAY 4	Phone	IPad/tablet	Games	TV	Other

			console/player		Media device
Monitoring					
Restricting					
Helping					
Intervening					
Encouraging					

Comments:………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………

DAY 5	Phone	IPad/tablet	Games console/player	TV	Other Media device
Monitoring					
Restricting					
Helping					
Intervening					
Encouraging					

Comments:………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………

Semi structured questions for call/visit

1. Were there any surprises over the last week in terms of the mediation of your child's media experience?

2. What were they actually doing when you mediated/intervened (in any form) - can you elaborate in any way?

3. Where were you mostly when the mediation (of any form) took place? For example, in the same room?

4. Did you identify any specific help/advice regarding media that you as a parent might seek out regarding these matters?

5. Where would you turn to for advice about how to handle media with your child in the home (should you ever need it?)

6. Is there a need for a free online TV channel dedicated to parents about supporting children in the digital age?