

7 August 2014

## PARENTS LEFT BEHIND BY THE RATE OF TECHNOLOGY CHANGE

- **The majority of parents feel the rate at which technology is developing is creating a divide between the generations**
- **Schools are not seeing the opportunity to help bridge the digital divide in UK homes**
- **Vodafone teams up with The Parent Zone to release Digital Parenting Guides and both commit to helping families cross the digital divide**

A new study shows that a third of parents wish they had more experience of using technology to play and be creative in order to join in with their child's digital life.

With smart devices, social networks and applications now an intrinsic part of family life, the study from Vodafone, conducted by The Parent Zone, reveals a growing digital divide between parents and their children. Of the 1000 parents surveyed, 63 per cent stated that the rate at which technology is developing is widening the generation gap and changing the way their children communicate with them.

The study looked at the amount of time that children spend online, finding that over 50 per cent of parents have children now spending more than 3 hours a week using digital technology, while 37 per cent spend 5 hours or more. As a result, a fifth (20 per cent) of parents are struggling to keep up with the pace of change, saying that their lack of knowledge of different games, apps and social networks is making it difficult to share experiences with their children.

The digital divide in the home is presenting itself in a number of ways:

- 33 per cent of parents do not value the creative work (e.g. drawing, writing, video, music) that their children create online as highly as similar achievements made in traditional ways (e.g. painting or written work accomplished with pens and brushes.)
- 20 per cent feel that it's difficult to share digital experiences with their children such as creating and sharing video or art

The research also reveals that schools are not seeing the opportunity to bridge the digital divide in UK homes, with 20 per cent of parents saying that the homework their children bring home never encourages them to spend time with them using technology, while over 50 per cent only very occasionally share digital experiences with their children during homework.

To help parents, teachers and those who work with young people better navigate and understand the digital world, the Vodafone Foundation will be entering into an enhanced partnership with The Parent Zone to double the print run of the Digital Parenting Guide, releasing a further 600,000 copies to schools and other public bodies this year. The guide is also available to parents online [here](#).

## Vodafone UK

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# news release

Building on the Digital Parenting Guide, Vodafone Foundation and The Parent Zone also announced today a commitment to create resources for schools and parents. Based around creative activities, these resources will aim to encourage co-creation in the classroom, but will also include a 'take home and share' element so that parents get more involved in digital creativity. The resources will be launched this autumn.

Cindy Rose, Consumer Director, Vodafone UK, said, "Children today are born into a world where connected devices like tablets and smartphones are an intrinsic part of their family life, their social life and their education too. The pace at which the digital space is evolving is both exciting and disruptive, and ultimately offers children and their families opportunities to share experiences across generations in ways that are not otherwise possible. At Vodafone, we are committed to helping and enabling families to embrace mobile technology to enrich their family lives in a way that's simple and worry free."

Vicki Shotbolt, Founder and CEO, The Parent Zone, said: "Helping parents to share digital experiences with their children is a great way to bridge the digital divide. Vodafone has led the way in helping families to enjoy technology safely together, and we are now delighted to be working with them on this new initiative, designed to get children and parents creating more digital memories together. There is a great opportunity for schools to help parents and children bridge the digital divide and we look forward to equipping schools with what they need to facilitate this."

Andrew Dunnett, Group Director Sustainability & Foundation said: "the Digital Parenting Guide has been hugely popular amongst parents and in schools. As part of our Mobile for Good programme we are delighted to be partnering with The Parent Zone to support an enhanced digital parenting programme which will build on the current successes and through further developments will reach a wider audience of schools and parents".

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About the research:

The research was conducted by Parent Zone on behalf of Vodafone with over 1000 UK parents from across the UK during July 2014.

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