



AVG

DIGITAL DIARIES

AVG Technologies Digital Diaries: Parenting Dilemmas for the Digital Age: For Children Ages 14-17

By Jason Brand, LCSW and Rona Renner, RN

Introduction

To snoop or not to snoop? This is a big question for parents when it comes to a child going through the 'digital coming of age'. Parents of teens often feel worried and unprepared to deal with all of what new technology can bring into their homes, and snooping is one way to approach the desire for more information.

- ✓ In the AVG study, a majority of parents in the USA (61%), Spain (61%), Italy (54%) and Canada (54%) admit to secretly accessing their teen's Facebook account without them knowing.

Has your curiosity and concern crossed the line into snooping? Here are some tips for monitoring your child respectfully.

Set smart limits and rules

Give your teen clear messages about how you will be monitoring their experiences online. You have the right and responsibility to check up on what they're up to, but you don't need to do it behind their backs. For example, you might insist that technology is used in the family room, and that you have the right to look over their shoulder and see what they're doing. Some parents insist that cell phones are charged in the kitchen at night, so sleep isn't disturbed by late night searching on the internet or texting.

Maintain ongoing and open dialogue

The best way to know what's going on in your teen's life is to have respectful communication that puts the emphasis on how they're feeling and what they're facing. Some parents set up regular family meeting to discuss schedules and plans. This is a good time to go over rules and expectations, as well as setting aside time to help each other out with technology questions. If you do this, plan for some fun time together afterwards, online or outdoors.

Stay observant and curious

Is your teen doing well socially, at school, and at home? If your child is trustworthy off line, let that inform the amount of privacy you can give him or her online. At the same time, if you pick up on cues that cause you to be concerned, don't ignore them. Talk to your teen about your observations and see if you can get to the bottom of the issues together. If you see behaviors or attitudes that concern you don't hesitate to get help.

Respect privacy

Teens need private places to be with their friends. Separating from parents and finding their own way in the world is a developmental task of adolescence. It's a parent's job not to be involved in everything their teen is doing. Just as you do offline, allow them to explore the digital world within limits. There may be times when you think snooping is appropriate, or restricting the use of electronics is called for. This is up to you to decide based on your teen's emotional, social, or educational needs and on your own values.

Strive for Safety

Installing software to help protect your teens is an important part of setting rules, limits, and reducing the need to snoop. Get help if you're not sure how to do this. There are many products to choose from, and it's worth your time and effort to do the research. There is no guarantee that your teen won't figure out how to navigate around your restrictions, but that's true offline as well. Parenting a teen is a day-to-day learning experience for everyone.

Resources

Common Sense Media is a terrific resource for up-to-date information on all types of media for kids.

<http://www.commonsensemedia.org/advice-for-parents>

Net Family News is a great place to find out about all of the latest happenings in teens tech lives.

<http://www.netfamilynews.org/>

Teach Parents Tech – is a “Tech Support Care Package for Parents.”

<http://www.teachparentstech.org/>

You can find more detailed information on the research at

[http://www.avg.com/us-en/press-releases-news.ndi-672,](http://www.avg.com/us-en/press-releases-news.ndi-672)

<http://www.avgdigitaldiaries.com>

To learn about Jason Brand, visit

[http://www.jasonbrand.com.](http://www.jasonbrand.com)

To learn about Rona Renner, visit

[http://www.childhoodmatters.org.](http://www.childhoodmatters.org)