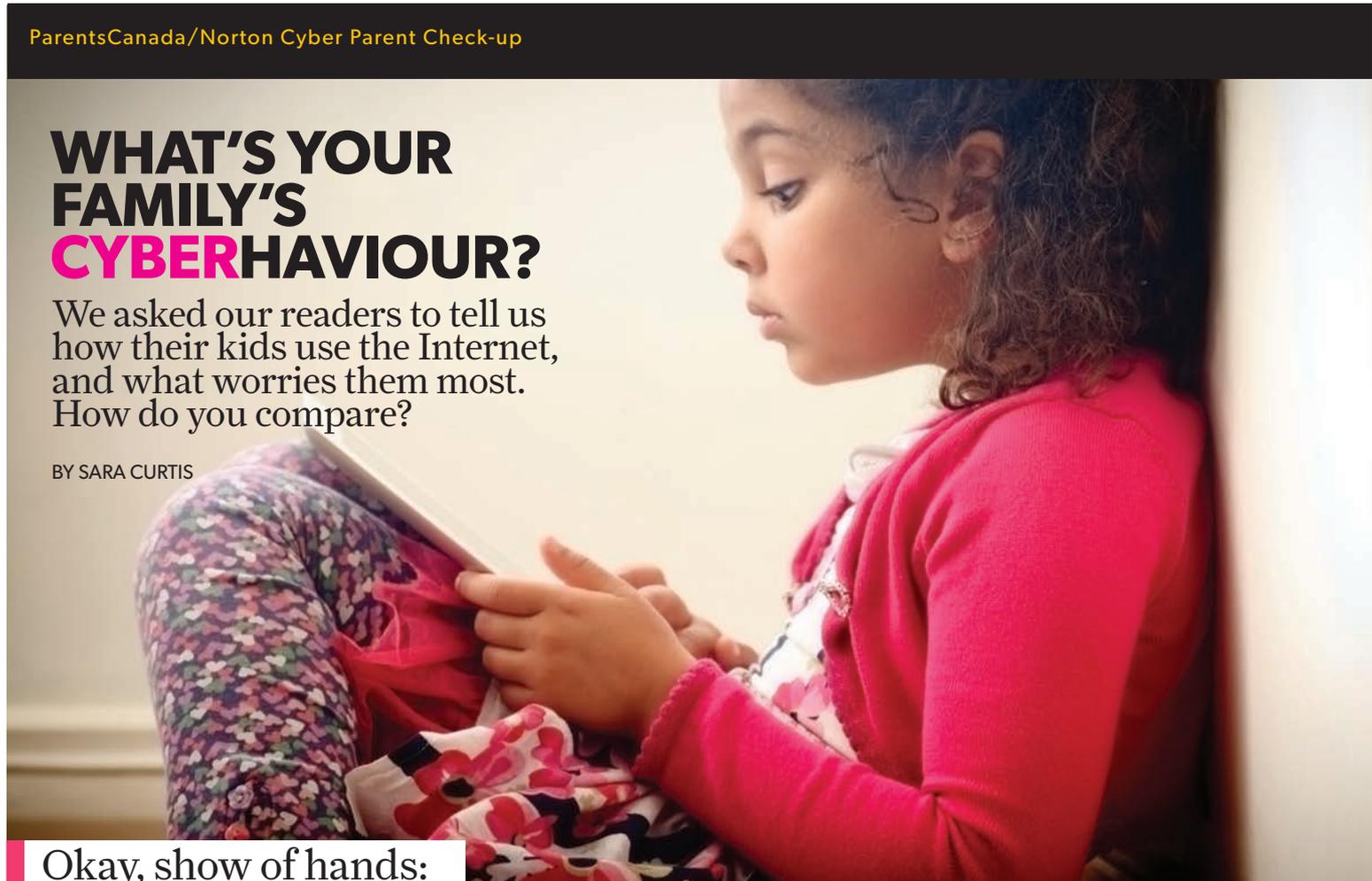


WHAT'S YOUR FAMILY'S CYBERHAVIOUR?

We asked our readers to tell us how their kids use the Internet, and what worries them most. How do you compare?

BY SARA CURTIS



Okay, show of hands:

how many of you have watched, in awe, as your seven-year-old beat your high score at Angry Birds, or created a music playlist on your iPod. "We are parenting the first generation of truly online kids," says Lynn Hargrove, Director of Consumer Solutions for Norton by Symantec, a maker of anti-virus and computer safety software. "They're growing up with technology. They don't fear it. It's how they communicate." From Smartphones to Facebook, iPads to YouTube, texting to Twitter to Instagram, welcome to the world of the 21st century child.

Like most great human advances, communications technology is a double-edged sword: it's both marvellous and terrifying. How are parents dealing with it? In partnership with Norton, we surveyed more than 1,600 parents from across the country to find out. The answers were illuminating and far-reaching, but one thing is clear: online safety is a major issue among Canadian families, and parents need to be involved and informed about what their kids are doing. "It's no longer acceptable to say 'My kid knows more than me,'" says Lynn. "Parents need to become educated and there needs to be an ongoing discussion in every home about technology use and how to stay safe."

How do you establish safe cyber activity in your house?

FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN 5-7
HAVE A LIST OF SAFE WEBSITES THEY CAN VISIT

FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN 7-12
HAVE A SET TIME LIMIT AND USE PARENTAL MONITORING SOFTWARE

FOR PARENTS OF TEENS
REGULARLY CHAT ABOUT SAFE ONLINE ACTIVITIES



Lynn says:

- Sit down with your child and ask questions like 'What interests you?', 'What websites do you like?' 'Who is on your chat list?' Once you build a dialogue of trust, you're able to get to questions like 'Have you ever been somewhere on the Web that has made you uncomfortable?' The key is to open the door slowly and build trust.

- Parental control software is the first line of defense. **Make sure there is a password on your child's phone.** Simple things like that can go a long way. It's about creating layers of protection.

- Teach your kids about safety. You wouldn't send them out to the mall without talking to them first, **so don't send them onto the Internet without first preparing them.**

Left to their own devices...

Kids ages 5-7 want tablets, while kids 13 and over pressure their parents for smartphones



“High speed internet seems like a necessity for school-aged children. The pressure to get a tablet, iPad etc., is not from my own children, but pressure is from other students who are allowed to use their electronics during school. This has created a clear divide between those who can afford them and those who can't. Very sad.”
LORI, CRANBROOK, B.C.

“All the kids have them – it's hard to tell your child no. Especially if their homework plan is online. My child is 10 and has to consult the Internet for homework, and the teacher has a website for the class that he needs to refer to as well.”
JENNIFER, MONTREAL



What is parents' biggest fear of kids being online?

FOR PARENTS OF KIDS 5-12, it's exposure to indecent material.

FOR PARENTS OF TEENS, it's racking up charges online.

OTHER FEARS? Giving out too much personal information, cyberbullying and online predators.

Lynn says:

Identities are bought and sold every day on the black market. Your child's identity is as valuable as anyone else's. A lot of kids have their own bank accounts, credit cards – keeping their info private, and their identity safe, is paramount.

Control issues...

Do you feel you have control over your child's online reputation?

SIX OUT OF 10 PARENTS OF KIDS 5-7 SAY



THAT NUMBER DROPS TO LESS THAN 3 OUT OF 10 FOR PARENTS OF KIDS 13+

Lynn says:

Parents really feel unsure about what their kids are doing online, because they don't necessarily have control. Children have access on these devices at school, at the library – you can no longer limit Internet access. We are a connected society, and that's great, but the onus is on parents to teach online safety, and what can happen if you don't obey the rules.

71%

of parents of kids 13+ do not know their child's online passwords.

Do you?

82%

of parents who have kids over the age of 13 feel they have no control over their child's online activities

Protecting kids...

MORE THAN **THREE QUARTERS** OF PARENTS CONSIDER CYBERBULLYING TO BE A MAJOR PROBLEM.



“Kids can no longer hide from their bullies. They leave school, and get bullied online. Home is no longer a safe place.”
RAVINA, SURREY, B.C.

“With my children, we tell them to **THINK**: is it **True**, is it **Helpful**, is it **Inspiring**, is it **Necessary**, is it **Kind**. If what they are going to say, respond to, or post meets this criteria, it's OK. If not, better not say anything.”
KEVIN, BEDFORD, N.S.

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING CYBERBULLYING? PARENTS SAY EVERYONE.

91%

PARENTS

67%

SCHOOL

59%

POLICE

“Parents of children who bully need to be accountable for their children's actions.”
ALLAN, EDMONTON

“The majority of this should be taught by parents, but reinforced by the other members of the community.”
KARI, TORONTO



“I just hope that I have instilled the right things in them to keep them safe, and that I have the lines of communication open so they know I am here to listen.”
DAVID, EDMONTON

“It's difficult to monitor when our home has wireless and smartphones allow unlimited access to the Web.”
CASSIDY, VANCOUVER