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In addition, young people are watching the videos on websites such as YouTube, which is supposed to be off-limits to children younger than 13 years old.

“It really is the air they breathe,” said Michael Robb. He directs research at Common Sense Media, the nonprofit organization that issued the report. The group tracks young people’s tech habits and offers helpful advice for parents.

Ditching TV In Favor Of Streaming Services

The findings on video-watching, however, indicate just how quickly young people are shifting from traditional television to streaming services. They are often watching videos on smartphones, tablets and laptops. Among the teens surveyed, only a third said they enjoyed watching traditional television programs “a lot,” compared with 45 percent four years ago. Half of pre-teens said the same, compared with 61 percent in the last survey.



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The survey of American youth included the responses of 1,677 young people, ages 8 to 18. Among other things, it found that 56 percent of 8- to 12-year-olds and 69 percent of 13- to 18-year-olds watch online videos every day. In 2015, the last time the survey was conducted, those figures were 24 percent and 34 percent, respectively.

Overall screen time has not changed much in those four years, the survey found. The average pre-teen, which is anyone between the ages of 8 and 12 years old, spent four hours and 44 minutes with entertainment media on digital devices each day. For teens, it was seven hours and 22 minutes. These amounts did not include the time using devices for

homework, reading books or listening to music.

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YouTube was their overwhelming first choice for online videos, even among the preteens who were surveyed. Three-quarters of preteens say they use the site despite age restrictions. Only 23 percent in that age group said they watch YouTube Kids. The separate service is aimed at preteens and younger children. Among YouTube Kids viewers, most still said they preferred regular YouTube.

"It puts a lot of pressure on a parent to figure out what they can reasonably filter," Robb said.

In response to the findings, YouTube said that it will share how it is rethinking its approach to kids and families.

For now, Farshad Shadloo, a spokesperson for YouTube, repeated the company's terms of use on age. "YouTube is not a site for people under 13," Shadloo said. Among other things, the company also cited its restriction filters and YouTube Kids.

Screen Time Is Hard To Monitor

Even so, many children with access to the Internet are skilled at using regular YouTube or other streaming content. Part of the problem is that parents are too busy, said Sarah Domoff. She teaches psychology, the study of feelings and behavior, at Central Michigan University. Domoff specifically studies technology's impact on youth and families.

Those parents could be doing more to track screen time, she said. However, she also believes the filters on services such as YouTube are not good enough.

"It's really hard to block out certain things unless you're really standing over your child," Domoff said. Monitoring use is especially hard to do when devices are portable.

Some people do not believe YouTube can really change. The service depends on leading users, both young and old, down a "rabbit hole" of video content, much of it created by everyday people.

"If your model is built on maintaining attention, it's really hard to do something," said Robb.

To families, Robb says, "Protect homework time, family time, dinnertime and bedtime. Have device-free times or zones."

Domoff added, "There needs to be a game plan."

A Baker's Dozen

A New York Christmas Story

Back in the old days, I had a successful bake-shop in Albany. I had a good business, a plump wife, and a big family. I was a happy man. But trouble came to my shop one year in the guise of an ugly old woman. She entered my shop a few minutes before closing and said: "I wish to have a dozen cookies." She pointed to my special Saint Nicholas cookies that were sitting out on a tray. So I counted out twelve cookies for her.

The old woman's eyes narrowed when she saw the cookies. "Only twelve?" she asked.

I knew at once what she wanted. There were some bakers in town who sometimes gave an extra cookie to their customers, but I was appalled by the custom. What man of sense would give away an extra cookie for free?

"I asked for a dozen cookies, and you only give me twelve," the woman said.

"A dozen is twelve, my good woman, and that is what I have given you," I replied.

"I ordered a dozen cookies, not twelve," said the old woman.

I was upset by this demand. I always gave my customers exactly what they paid for. But I was a thrifty man, and it was against my nature to give away something for nothing.

"I have a family to support," I said stiffly. "If I give away all my cookies, how can I feed my family? A dozen is twelve, not thirteen! Take it or leave it!"

"Very well," said she, and left the shop without taking the cookies.

From that moment, my luck changed. The next day, my cakes were stolen out of my shop, and the thieves were never found. Then my bread refused to rise. For a week, every loaf of bread I made was so heavy that it fell right through the oven and into the fire. The next week, the bread rose so high that it actually floated up the chimney. I was frightened when I saw the loaves

floating away across the rooftops. That was the first moment I realized I had been bewitched. It was then that I remembered the old woman who came to my shop, and I was afraid.

The next week, the old woman appeared again in my shop and demanded a baker's dozen of the latest batch of my cookies. I was angry. How dare she show her face in my shop after all the bad luck she sent my way? I cursed her soundly and showed her the door.

Things became worse for me then. My bread soured, and my olykoeks (donuts) were a disgrace. Every cake I made collapsed as soon as it came out of the oven, and my gingerbread children and my cookies lost their flavor. Word was getting around that my bake-shop was no good, and one by one, my customers were falling away. I was angry now, and stubborn. No witch was going to defeat me. When she came to my bake-shop a third time to demand a baker's dozen of cookies, I told her to go to the devil and I locked the door behind her.

After that day, everything I baked was either burnt or soggy, too light or too heavy. My customers began to avoid my cursed shop, even those who had come to me every day for years. Finally, my family and I were the only ones eating my baking, and my money was running out. I was desperate. I took myself to church and began to pray to Saint Nicholas, the patron Saint of merchants, to lift the witch's curse from myself and my family.

"Come and advise me, Saint Nicholas, for my family is in dire straights and I need good counsel against this evil witch who stands against us," I prayed. Then I trudged wearily back to my empty shop, wondering what to do.

I stirred up a batch of Saint Nicholas cookies and put them into the oven to bake, wondering how this lot would turn out. Too much cinnamon? Too little?

Burnt? Under-done? To my surprise, they came out perfectly. I frosted them carefully, and put my first successful baking in weeks onto a tray where they could be seen through the window. When I looked up, Sinterklaas (Saint Nicholas) was standing in front of me.

I knew him at once, this patron Saint of merchants, sailors, and children. He was not carrying his gold staff or wearing the red bishop's robes and mitered hat that appeared on the figure I had just frosted on my cookies. But the white beard and the kindly eyes were the same. I was trembling so much my legs would not hold me, so I sat down on a stool and looked up at the Saint standing so near I could have touched him. His eyes regarded me with such sadness it made me want to weep.

Saint Nicholas said softly: "I spent my whole life giving money to those in need, helping the sick and suffering, and caring for little children, just as our Lord taught us. God, in his mercy, has been generous to us, and we should be generous to those around us."

I could not bear to look into his eyes, so I buried my face in my hands.

"Is an extra cookie such a terrible price to pay for the generosity God has shown to us?" he asked gently, touching my head with his hand.

Then he was gone. A moment later, I heard the shop door open, and footsteps approached the counter. I knew before I looked up that the ugly old woman had returned to asked me for a dozen Saint Nicholas cookies. I got up slowly, counted out thirteen cookies, and gave them to the old woman, free of charge.

She nodded her head briskly. "The spell is broken," she said. "From this time onward, a dozen is thirteen."

And from that day onward, I gave generously of my baking and of my money, and thirteen was always, for me, a baker's dozen.