**Parent’s Dilemma: Are You Raising Tech-Addicted Kids?**

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This summer a mom I know told me her 12 year-old bookworm daughter regretfully handed back her Kindle Fire, saying she couldn’t handle the temptation to play games rather than read. Her mom was stunned. She assumed that all of those hours on the Kindle were being spent pouring over the school summer reading list. It turns out her daughter couldn’t resist Doodle Jumping her days away.

I was impressed that a young girl could admit this growing addiction and hand over her Kindle, but she’s the exception, and not the norm. Most parents are slowly recognizing that what starts out as an innocent distraction and fun way to integrate tech into our lives can easily turn into a full blown addiction to the games and gadgets that our kids now have access to all the time.

One of the reasons I chose my daughters’ overnight camp this summer was because of their “no electronics” rule. No gadgets are allowed – and there’s no electricity in the bunks. I admit, I needed them to be completely unplugged, and it’s much easier to do that in a place where there are literally no plugs. At home, somehow, the one hour of allowed screen time easily morphs into two or three.

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When a Taiwanese 18 year old died in July after playing *Diablo 3* for 40 straight hours, the Internet was abuzz

with tales of the dangers of prolonged gaming. But, those cases of extreme use aren’t what most modern parents are dealing with. Closer to home, my Facebook wall and real life chatter have been lighting up with tales of kids addicted to *Minecraft*, glued to their iPod Touches, and clocking in the hours watching Yo uTube videos or playing *Angry Birds* and *Temple Run* on iPads. One friend announced she was cutting off her son cold turkey from *Minecraft* after he had a temper tantrum at 7:00am because she wouldn’t let him play as soon as he woke up.

So what is a digital parent to do? We have pretty strict rules in our house – no screen time during the week at all, and the supposed one hour a day on the weekends. I had a fantasy that when my daughters returned from camp they would eschew the computer. And, they tried. But, the lure was too great. They had virtual pets to check up on, stats to look at, and basically, their online world has become an extension of their normal world. Part of assimilating back into post-camp world was getting back into their tech groove too.

Like most aspects of parenting, balance is key. Technology is an incredibly positive part of our lives, and our kids should be able to create and use it to their benefit. My twin daughters are 10 years old and they need to use a computer for school. By the time most kids reach middle school they will need to conduct research, write papers and, if their school is moving into the 21st century, they’ll most likely have classroom blogs, assignments and school communication online as well. This is where it gets more difficult. Just as adults have a difficult time shutting off the email when they get home — kids will need rules to merge their “work” and home lives with technology.

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There are all sorts of ways to set tech rules inside the house. In our family, it’s no cell phones at the dinner table, or in bedrooms. Laptops are kept in the kitchen or living room. I do know first hand the hard part is having everyone follow the rules. The lure of technology in our lives is so strong; the goal has to be to figure out how to teach our kids to master technology and not let technology master them.

*This post is part of a series on the dilemmas of raising digital kids. We’d like to hear some of the parenting issues technology has raised for you. Please let us know in the comments, or on our Mashable Lifestyle Facebook page. You can also follow and tweet us @mashlifestyle.*

As a digital family how do you monitor and moderate your child’s tech use – and your own?