

New report recommends Limiting teens web access to two hours a day

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A report released in the last few days by the University of New Mexico has recommended that a two hour per day limit on web access should be enforced by parents, on children.

nit should be imposed on using the internet for entertainment, including Facebook,

The problem with this report is that it is let down by its traditional view on internet usage, and thus data consumption. The report has a central theme, and its findings also align to this theme, despite pointing out new device usage patterns within the report.

The traditional (historic) view of internet usage is that consumers require specific devices or workstations to access the internet. This lead to a 'resource' measuring model. Data and speed became the measurements for how fast your access is, or how much you are allowed to consume.

With the growth of internet and the ease of access to it, both from a proliferation of network access and the abundance of internet enabled devices this traditional resource measuring model simply isn't applicable anymore.

The modern view of the internet should be realigned to one of that of a persistent layer, a non-tangible pervasive entity that sits comfortably over our existing social infrastructure. This is quite a common view when you go back to classic internet literature like SteamPunk or Manga.

The internet is integrating into everyday life so much that it is becoming impossible to separate it from the fabric of everyday activity. We need to stop viewing it as a commodity resource and instead move it into an amenities category. Would you deny your children access to lighting or heating? No, you wouldn't but go back in history a little bit and you'll find that those two items were also rationed against a resource model.

The best thing you can do is inform them of best practices in using the internet. You wouldn't ban them from spending all day in a library, instead you'd teach them how to use it. Now this does rely on parents knowing how it works (often far less technology savvy than their children) and there is still a strong requirement to shape exactly what content they can get to. The idea here though is to shape their desire to access inappropriate content, rather than shaping their access to it. No present day internet management software can blanket cover all items of concern in terms of access, it just isn't possible.

Instead of trying to measure access out, why not help integrate it into everyday life, the usage pattern will develop on its own. Otherwise education establishments will continue to produce inaccurate reports based on historical understanding that just propagate a jaded view of our modern digital era.

A link to the Telegraph article is here:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/internet/10410349/Limit-teens-web-access-to-two-hours-a-day-parents-told.html>