



Technology is constantly changing and advancing. It's rate of change is mind boggling. There are people who remember when the television did not exist, when cars were not common, and when computers were just punch cards and vacuum tubes. Now, you can purchase High Definition TV and DVDs, families own a car for each member, and computers have shrunk and been merged with cell phones.

New technology often scares people. They are afraid of what it means for their way of life, and of what dangers it may bring. Modern technology does indeed offer a plethora of pitfalls. However, the right response is not to hide from it, ban it, or fear it. Instead, we should learn as much as we can about it - so that we can protect our families, churches, schools, and students from the damage that can arise. Knowledge is power. Get stronger.

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THE DEFENSE SERIES

Technical Pitfalls

FACILITATOR EDITION



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NOTES:

PARTICIPANT PAGES

CREATE A HOLY HOME

READ IT

- DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9; PROVERBS 22:6

NOTES

1. WRITE GOD'S WORD ON YOUR DOORPOSTS

2. _____ GOOD BEHAVIOR

We are in a war for our children. That is not an exaggeration. Satan is trying to destroy the family, destroy your children. And we are the last line of defense. We have to be willing to fight for our kids

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Technology Today

DO IT

Have the class read the following list of terms and, in the space provided, write what the item is used for. After a few minutes, go through each one and see what everyone put. Then, share what it each actually is

1. Facebook -- Online friend community. Over 400 million active users. Facebook is the third largest country in the world.
2. Twitter -- Quick way to update your status. Very popular with celebrities and business. About 25 million users.
3. BitTorrent -- Download process used to download large media files - like entire television shows or movies.
4. Hulu -- NBC owned online video service. You can watch whole episodes and movies online. Most of them are free. (Similar to Fancast, YouTube, others)
5. Sexting -- Sexy Texting. The modern equivalent to phone sex. Texting explicit or seductive messages.
6. Web Enable TV -- The next step in HDTV technology. Vizio already offers several. TV with WiFi and a browser. You can watch online content on TV.
7. Netflix -- Movie rental service, at first. Now also allows movie downloads, ordering movies through BluRay players. Next is through the Wii and iPhone.
8. Phishing -- Email & web scam where information is stolen through phoney surveys, updates, or installed software via email.
9. Blog -- A web log - or web journal. People anywhere can create one and write on anything.
10. ChatRoulette -- Online site that pairs you with random other people to have a video chat.

Sometimes it seems like there is a completely different language being spoken, doesn't there? For those of you who are not well versed in technology, some of the above terms sound just as foreign as something you would hear on the streets of Paris or Rome. But, the big problem, is that those are not part of a language from far away. It is spoken by your children, your students, your co-workers. It is a language that, like it or not, we all must learn to succeed in the world of business – or in the business of family.

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Technology is such a part of our lives, it seems odd to think about life without it. As strange as it is for parents and adults to think of life without technological advances, think about how students and children feel. The average high school student has no real recollection of a world without the internet or email. The average college student cannot remember a day when computers were only a luxury or limited to business use. The reality in most cases is that the children and students probably know more about technology than the adults. For those of you who had trouble identifying all of those terms, most teens would get all of them without a second thought. If we are going to be the adult leaders and parents we are supposed to be, then we need to be aware of what is going on around us. That is the point of this lesson. It is to give you a quick primer on basic technology, and what those items are for. We also want to let you know the dangers in those items – where it can be a moral or ethical pitfall (especially when it comes to pornography and sexual imagery). Lastly, we want to give some tips on some steps you can take to protect your family – and stay on top of trends that you may have thought beyond your grasp. To begin, let's look at some facts about the porn industry with technology.

THE STATS

THINK ABOUT IT

1. How much does the porn industry generate each year? How much is through the internet?
2. What percent of teens have visited a porn site?

Perhaps the one technological advance that affects the most people on a daily basis is the internet. It has become a communication method, shopping mall, banking center, reference resource, polling place, music store, radio station, and sermon source all in one. Even the most technologically deficient person has probably sent an e-mail, or visiting a website. Unfortunately, it has also become the largest battleground for the introduction of sexual imagery and pornography. There are over 250 million websites on the web (with more than 9 billion webpages) (*Google Research*). It is

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1. TALK FREQUENTLY AND HONESTLY

2. BE OPEN WITH YOUR KIDS

3. MAKE YOUR HOME A SAFE PLACE

CREATE PROTECTION

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1. RESTRICT ON COMPUTER USAGE & TIMES

2. INSTALL SECURITY SOFTWARE AND VIRUS SCANS

VIRUS SCANNING: AVG, NORTON, COMINSKY

SPYWARE SCANNING: ADWARE, MACSCAN

CONTENT FILTERS: K9, SAFE EYES

ACCOUNTABILITY SOFTWARE: X3 WATCH

HARDWARE SOLUTIONS: MAC, IBOSS

3. CHECK YOUR COMPUTER'S HISTORY AND CACHE

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marketers and economists and long-range planners. They hire the best minds in electronics and computers and business. That is why their industry is continuing to explode even in the midst of an economic downturn. Wherever the technology curve is, they are several steps beyond – planning the next move. They were one of the first industries to embrace the infant internet. They moved to the cheaper and easier digital format of movie filming far before even Hollywood did. Now, they put out 10,000 movies a year, at the average cost of \$100,000 per film, with the average income of \$1.2 million per film. They were the first to take advantage of pay-per-view, first to allow people to download movies, and first to let people move those downloaded movies to their DVD players. They are far smarter than you, and they have more political and legal protection than almost any other industry. They have been protected by the Supreme Court under the First Amendment – something that few others have ever achieved. It is easy to see how Satan could be described as both a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour AND an angel of light, tricking people. Satan is sneaky and vicious. He has promoted lust (which is all that pornography really is) over love since the beginning of time. Naturally, this creation of his will be constantly vigilant to see how to snare people.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Were you really aware of the online situation?
2. What do you think when you read those stats?
3. Do you feel prepared to deal with technological issues with your children/students?

TECHNOLOGY INFO

This next section is a very brief and far-from-exhaustive list of what we call “technological pitfalls.” Many of these things have a very positive up-side – and this list is far from a “hit list” for parents to eradicate in their homes. They are labeled as pitfalls because they are places where you CAN find a problem. The potential definitely exists to find inappropriate material in and for these things. But, in many cases, there are more positive things to find in these things. We are going

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PITFALLS WITH TELEVISION

NOTES

1. NETWORK TELEVISION _____
2. CABLE TELEVISION _____
3. PREMIUM STATIONS _____

PITFALLS WITH MOVIES

NOTES

1. THE UNRATED DVD _____
2. UNRATED DVD FEATURES _____

MEDIA MESSAGES

NOTES

1. EVERYONE HAS SEX; MARRIAGE IS OPTIONAL

30 ROCK, LOST, THE OFFICE, GREY’S ANATOMY, TWO AND A HALF MEN, BIG BANG THEORY, BONES

2. HOMOSEXUALITY IS GENETIC

MODERN FAMILY, GLEE, UGLY BETTY, THE OFFICE, BIG LOVE, LAW AND ORDER, MAD MEN

3. EXPERIMENTATION IS NORMAL

GOSSIP GIRL, FRIENDS, HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER, 90210, MELROSE PLACE, THE GOOD WIFE, CASTLE

4. WOMEN MUST BE SEXY

UGLY BETTY, AMERICAN IDOL, BIG BANG THEORY, 30 ROCK, THE OFFICE, CSI, ESPN SPORTS, CASTLE

5. IF IT MAKES YOU HAPPY; IT CAN’T BE THAT BAD

CSI, 30 ROCK, REAL SEX, DANE COOK, FUNNY OR DIE, SEINFELD, BREAKING BAD, WEEDS, DEXTER

6. PORN IS NORMAL, HEALTHY ENTERTAINMENT

GIRLS NEXT DOOR, FRIENDS, OCEANS THIRTEEN, KNOCKED UP, DEADSPIN, BILL SIMMONS ON ESPN

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www.cnn.com) has to be renewed every year. If it is not renewed, it is open for someone else to purchase it. So, what has been common practice in the online porn community is something called porn-napping. A purveyor of porn will "park" themselves on a domain name, and when it is not renewed, it is purchased by the porn company. Usually, it is then redirected to an existing porn site. That way, those people who used to visit the site will now find themselves somewhere else entirely. A corollary to this is when porn companies will buy close variations of a site, or other extensions of a site. That is why for years, people get a rude awakening when visiting whitehouse.com instead of whitehouse.gov. Many of these tweaked spellings are obviously aimed at children. They are common misspellings that children would make, or based on characters that children love. Some of them over the years have been plays on Britney Spears, Barbie, Sesame Street.

NON-PORN BUT SEXUAL SITES

This includes Victoria's Secret, SL.com, Maxim, Stuff, FHM, Blender, Perez Hilton, College Humor. As mentioned earlier, these sites do not get counted in the porn statistics. Technically they fall under sports, male interest, entertainment, celebrity gossip, or clothing. But they contain more than enough images to titillate. And since they are not caught by so many parental controls, it is easy for someone to start here - and then get onto a road to somewhere else. They are kind of "entry level" sexuality sites. You may see a nipple slip or an upskirt shot, which will get the blood flowing and lead other places. [Side Note: If you think that every site with sex or porn on it has an obvious title, you are wrong.]

VIDEO SHARING SITES

The main examples are You Tube, Google Videos, Meta Cafe. This is the genre of online video sharing - which has absolutely exploded recently. You can find all sorts of old television clips, movies, amateur comedy videos, spoofs, music videos, even sermon. And the vast majority of these sites are pretty good and clean. And they provide links next to the video you are watching to show you other popular and similar videos for the funny one you are watching. Most of them even claim

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PARTICIPANT PAGES

internet?

- What percent of teens have visited a porn site?

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- 1. THERE ARE 250 MILLION WEBSITES. 150 MILLION ARE BLOGS.
- 2. THERE ARE BETWEEN 1.5 AND 5 MILLION PORN SITES
- 3. THE PORN INDUSTRY TOOK IN \$97 BILLION WORLDWIDE. AT LEAST \$15 BILLION WAS IN THE UNITED STATES.
- 4. \$13 BILLION OF THAT WAS FROM ONLINE PORNOGRAPHY. IT IS ESTIMATED \$3 BILLION IS FROM CHILD PORN.
- 5. OVER 90% OF TEENS HAVE VIEWED A PORN SITE
- 6. TWO-THIRDS OF PORN SITES HAVE NO WARNING POSTED

THINK ABOUT IT

- Were you really aware of the online situation?
- What do you think when you read those stats?
- Do you feel prepared to deal with technological issues with your children/students?

The people who run it are absolutely brilliant. They are incredible marketers and economists and long-range planners. They hire the best minds in electronics and computers and business.

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to other fans and like-minded people. However, those people who use them still can find themselves caught up in situation beyond what they imagined. It doesn't take too many viewings of NBC's "To Catch a Predator" segments on *Dateline* to see the danger. Underage people are chatting in an underage chat room. An adult enters the room and pretends to be a teen as well. Or, one of these predators looks for underage teens in a normal chat room and engages them in conversation – and even proposition of sexual activities. A site like ChatRoulette.com just raises the danger level higher.

COMPUTER/TV INTERFACE

This is a relatively new technology that merges television and computer. The Slingbox is a device that allows you to access your digital cable or digital satellite service via your computer. The AppleTV and Slingcatcher both allow you to send your computer videos and music to your television. Netflix has helped create BluRay players that allow downloading of movies from Netflix. They also have their own boxes to accomplish that. All of these are helping to break down the line between computer and entertainment. They give you freedom to watch what you want, when you want. But there are dangers already in these new technologies. With the Slingbox, it is possible to access whatever is available on tv on any computers that are installed – wherever they are. That means you can watch television on the computer in the other room – or across the city. That means that your kids can watch shows when they are beyond your control. If you have channels they are not allowed to watch at home, they can access them via their laptop at a friend's house. And the iPhone just got permission to stream Slingbox and Netflix via their cell network directly to your phone. The porn industry allows purchasers to burn DVDs that would work on a DVD player from downloaded films - the first industry to do this. (iTunes and other movie download sites do not allow movie burning on DVD.) Web Enabled TVs will make it even easier to do your web surfing directly from your television.

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will have to make the decisions of faith for themselves – but they will have had a model set before them. So make God the center of your home – not just some side note. Let Him flow through all of your decisions and be an active part of conversation. Spend time in the Word together with the family – praying together, studying together, discussing together. Let your kids come to you with theological questions and do your best to answer. If you don't know the answer, go find it. This will show your children how important it is to know the Bible – and know how to pray and study. Research has long shown that modeling is the most effective teaching method. So, when following Proverbs 22:6, the best way to train up a child in how he should go is to SHOW him how he should go. If God is that active of a part in your family, and you are that active in showing God to your family – you will discover that all of those communication issues and boundary issues will be much easier.

We are in a war for our children. That is not an exaggeration. Satan is trying to destroy the family, destroy your children. And we are the last line of defense. We have to be willing to fight for our kids. Any military veteran will tell you that there are keys to success: be equipped, be prepared, be alert, be unified. In this battle, you get equipped by finding tools like software filters and accountability programs. You are prepared by finding as much information about technology that you can find. You are alert by continually keeping an eye on the situation – willing to talk about any problem or question that arises. And you are unified when you bring your family together around the throne of God.

then someone is probably trying to hide something. Be aware and proactive.

CREATE A HOLY HOME

READ IT

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Proverbs 22:6

The last step is perhaps the most difficult in today's world. One of the biggest struggles families face in this age is noise – there are so many competing voices and things to grab our attention. So it takes a concerted effort to stand out through the cacophony. But, we must make sure that we establish Holy Homes. This is a concept that Clay Crosse and his wife Renee promote across the country. It is a commitment to see our homes set apart for God and His purposes. This is a challenge – and it takes a lot of effort. But this is what we are called to do as Christians.

The Deuteronomy passage commands us to pass the words down to our children. We are supposed to make the Word of God a common presence in our home. In those days, there was not the luxury of printed Bibles in every home. There was a verbal tradition. The parents would sit the children down and tell them of the great things the Lord had done. They would tell the Creation story, the story of Abraham and his covenant with God, the story of Joseph in Egypt, the story of how God led the Israelites out of Egypt. They would share the Law with their families. It would be a part of their family. That is what God desires us to do. He wants us to share how God has played a role in our lives – sharing triumphs and defeats. We should help our children to understand that God is a part of every decision and every direction. In the Old Testament, God would have the nation of Israel build altars when He did a great thing for them – when they won a battle, received a blessing, increased their land. It was a monument of God's faithfulness, something for them to physically go and see when they began to doubt. We should have these same reminders in our lives.

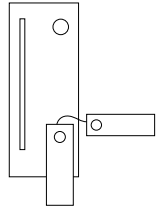
How does this apply to technology? If we make God a part of our family from the beginning, our children will learn to make Him a part of their decisions. It will be something that they use to fight of temptation. Yes, they

VIDEO GAMES

For a long time, the biggest debate over video games was whether or not spending too much time on them would make kids dumber. Were they wasting opportunities to play outside and create their own world of imagination? While they were developing incredible hand/eye coordination, there was the fear that they would also develop short attention spans and addictions to the flickering images. However, there are also numerous other issues besides the one of playing time.

ALL PLATFORMS

All game systems have games that will be addressed. Every gaming system on the market now has web access. They may require an installation or a code hack. But networked gaming is huge. The biggest games out there (*Halo*, *Call of Duty*, *Left 4 Dead*) have components to play with friends via the Internet. There also are what are called Massive Multi-Player Online Games (MMPOG). These are games that many people play at once by logging into a central server. Some of these include *World of Warcraft*, *City of Heroes*, *Matrix Online*, *Star Wars Empires*. There also is an even larger level on online games – where the MMPOG format is combined with the online community. This is a game like *Second Life* or *The Sims 3*, where you create a character and go around interacting with other characters in that virtual world. There is not really a “safe” gaming system when it comes to the dangers.



HIDDEN SEXUAL CONTENT

Game designers often put hidden levels and interactions in their games that can be unlocked with hidden codes – which are readily available online. These used to be things in games like *Mortal Kombat*, where if you won a certain number of games or entered the right code, you could unlock a hidden level or character or weapon. But now, this has also included unlocking secret levels or scenes with sexual content. This can be seen in the game *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, where entering the right code allowed your character to

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have graphic sex with a naked woman. Hidden content can also be found in *World of Warcraft*. Another source of hidden content is when a player who knows code hacks into the code and alters characters, or adds other characters, and then he posts the new code online. Players who understand code can insert this new code. Many times, this involves including nude characters or sexual activity in a game.

OVERT SEXUAL THEMES

Some games bypass the hidden content and have overt sexual content. These games are available at Blockbuster for rental, or at your average video game store for purchase. *Leisure Suit Larry* is a series that has been around for over twenty years. It follows a guy and his nephew as they go on sexual adventures. *Playboy Mansion* is a game where you play as Hugh Hefner and start the Playboy empire – and help it expand. *Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball* contains a full array of scantily-clad women playing volleyball. This is also one of the more popular game-hacks, where these bikini-clad ladies became nude ladies. Then there is a long list of games like *Tomb Raider* where the ladies are drawn with skimpy clothes, enormous breasts, and a ravenous sexual appetite. On top of all of that is the fact that the porn industry has jumped into the game market, producing and releasing loads of adult-only games. They have even pointed out that this is to recruit new customers from the younger ages – by appealing to what they like to do (play video games). Then there are the games like *Second Life*, where you can upgrade your character to have working genitals, have it visit the “red light district,” or find other characters for yours to have sexual encounters with at one of the numerous places designated for that. In *The Sims 3*, you create a person that goes around and interacts with others. You can create a whole family. And the spouses have blurred out sex to create kids.

DISTURBING MESSAGES ABOUT MEN & WOMEN

The more subtle issue in video games is how they portray men and women. Men are usually huge strapping bodies – with violent tendencies and little concern for those around them. They get to play

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children and teenagers develop an internet addiction, where they will stay on the computer for countless hours – playing online games, checking websites, sending instant messages, visiting chat rooms. You need to understand that an overuse of the computer is just as bad or worse than an overuse of the television. Set boundaries for recreational computer usage.

INSTALL SECURITY SOFTWARE AND VIRUS SCANS

Even if you need to take your computer in to a store to have it done, get content software and virus protection installed. Yes, most teens know how to get around it – but it is a speed bump that will make them think twice. Find an accountability software like Accountable2You, Covenant Eyes, or X3 Watch, where you can get a detailed list of inappropriate sites visited. With some of them, you can even get emails when someone tries to disable the software. Also, find a content filtering software, where it will block sites. Some samples are K9, Safe Eyes, Be Safe, and Net Nanny. Also, find a good virus protection (Norton, McAfee, Cominsky, AVG, Avira, F-Secure) to install – as well as a good spyware protection (MacScan, AdAware, SpyBlocker). These are two different classes of software - one blocks viruses, the other removes tracking and phishing software from your computer. Install both kinds. This is important for several reasons. One, it will protect your computer from destruction due to viruses. Two, it will keep websites from being able to track your movements online. Three, it will keep your personal information safe. Four, porn companies love to use spyware and worms to get into your computer – to send pop-ups and spam.

CHECK YOUR COMPUTER CACHE/HISTORY OFTEN

This is where the whole privacy debate gets heated up. But, again, as a parent you have the right and responsibility to protect your home. So you should check where the computer has been visiting. Go under Internet Options and look at the history. Also look at the Temporary Internet files and look at the cookies and file names. Just that check should be enough to clue you in on if someone is going to the wrong places. And if those places are empty and you didn't clear them,

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let them know we will believe and defend them. If they are slipped something at a drink at a party, or raped on a date, or abused in a relationship – they need to know that we will defend them and help them. A 2006 Teenage Research Unlimited study showed that 25 percent of teens in a serious relationship said they were physically abused; 61 percent reported some level of emotional abuse or manipulation. That same study showed that one-third of teens said that sex was “expected” in a dating relationship. These are real issues – make sure your child knows that you will be there if it happens to them.

CREATE PROTECTION

Children have no way to know what is best for them. You, as parents, do know the long-term consequences of behavior. While a teen may think that they should be able to watch anything they want, we know that the introduction of sexual imagery is something that can never really be forgotten. They may think that playing games and surfing the internet is fine to do all night, while we know that too much of it creates virtual worlds and social awkwardness. We need to take the steps to set up protection for our family.

RESTRICT ON COMPUTER USAGE AND TIMES

The computer needs to be set up in a central location – not in bedrooms. This removes the secrecy that leads to temptation. If you know that at any minute someone could walk by and see something on your screen, you are less likely to visit inappropriate sites. Be observant even when the computer is being used in a public locale. A lot of clicks with mouse when you walk by may mean they are hiding windows that have stuff they don’t want you to see. Jumpiness when you walk into the room may mean the same thing. If you walk in and your teen immediately flips the station, they may have been on a channel you don’t approve of. The same thing goes if you come into the television room at 2am and they are watching an infomercial. Be smart about your child’s behavior. Think long and hard before you let your child have a television, dvd player, or computer in their room. Also, control computer usage. Many

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as villains and build crime syndicates (*Scarface, Godfather, Grand Theft Auto*). Women in these games are usually just sexual objects or side issues. The women that do make it to major character status have cartoonish bodies that emphasize their breasts and butts. They usually wear skimpy outfits. There is often an underlying S&M message as well – where characters who are beating the tar out of each other also are drawn to each other sexually. It is easy to see why this is so. Males make up the majority of gamers – by an enormous margin. And that skews heavily to the younger demographic. Those players see themselves in the games – and they want to be powerful and dangerous, live in a world full of hot women, and have the ability to score with any of those women. It is the same exact desire that pornography itself capitalizes on.

IPODS AND MP3S



The iPod and its fellow MP3 players are basically just hard drives, with a program on them that allow them to play music and/or movies. But this innovation has opened up access to music and audio unlike anything before them. Online stores like iTunes, Rhapsody, Yahoo Launch, and Napster allow

music fans to find all kinds of music at one place – and purchase those at reasonable prices. In addition, the creation of the Podcast has done the same thing for the spoken word. A podcast is basically an online offering of an audio or video file – which you can subscribe to and receive automatically on a regular basis. These can be things like training sessions, news updates, comic performances, sermons, or product reviews. It is a great place to find all sorts of information. If there is a pastor or a radio show that you love, but cannot catch on a regular basis, you can subscribe to their podcast and download every one of their offerings. You can hear the chapel services at seminaries or weekly sermons from churches across the country.

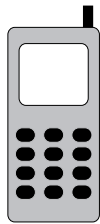
But there are dangers in this as well. There are lots of podcasts that are called “explicit” due to their adult dialogue. And, even if Apple doesn’t allow them to be posted on their online store, there are adult-

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only podcasts available out there. It is just a matter of finding out the web address. In addition, just about anything you can watch on television, computer, or video system can be viewed on your iPod or in iTunes. You can purchase television shows and movies through iTunes and upload them to your iPod. And there are tons of software programs that allow you to copy your DVDs onto your computer. Plus, you can download videos from dozens of places – most of them naturally are sexual in nature. And, in true typical fashion for the porn industry, they are the number one source of iPod-ready videos. That is before you consider the older argument about the content of music lyrics. Most music today has a very strong sexual message – and one that is far less moral or ethical than ages past. You cannot assume that your child or student is not being exposed to anything damaging because they are just “listening to their iPod.” There is a world of inappropriate content aimed at that very device.

That is before you even get into the issue of the iPod Touch and iPhone. These two products opened the door to what is called smartphones. They are not just phones or MP3 players. They have applications of all sorts (some good and some awful). They have a bigger screen to watch videos. They can access any website through WiFi or cell network. If a parent is not going to keep up with the content of these items, they are VERY dangerous.

CELL PHONES



The cell phone was a major innovation as well – and one that made sure we were always in touch, even when we didn't want to be. They are great to have in case of emergency. And the smartphone explosion (Palm Pre & Pixi, Blackberry Storm,

Apple iPhone, Google Android) double as PDAs, MP3 players, date books, email access, and web browsers in addition to phones. They are at the point where they are just small computers with a phone function. And as this process takes place, the cell phone brings the dangers of the computer onto the phone. In early cell phones, there was just the phone part and maybe a

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that you show that you are desiring a relationship, the more they will believe you. And even if they fight it for a time, they will know they can trust you when the time comes. Set aside time to talk to your children about their days, their friends, their interests. And listen. Don't wait for the opportunity to jump down their throats or immediately tell them why they are wrong. Listen for what they are really saying. If you do that, you can actually deal with the issue at the heart instead of the words of frustration or fear that come out first.

BE OPEN WITH YOUR KIDS

Being open and real is critical. If the kids think this is just a ploy to get information, or a trick, they will never agree. We as parents hate to admit we did something wrong, so we often are tempted to keep our failures secret from our kids. But they need to know that living a pure life is hard. So we need to make sure they understand where we have messed up – and that they see there are consequences for our actions. They also need to know that they can ask anything and we will seriously and honestly address it. As a parent, you need to understand that your kids want to know about things like drugs, sex, ethics. And if you won't answer them, they WILL find the answer somewhere. That should be the most terrifying thing to us. In the movie *The American President*, the President's advisor chides him about being silent on a major issue. He says, "People are desperate for the truth. They will crawl across the desert to find it. And if they can't find any, they will drink the sand. Why? Because they don't know any better." We need to understand that kids need answers – and we should be thrilled to be the ones to give them. Even if talks about sex are terrifying to you, DO NOT let them formulate their understanding of it from movies and health class.

MAKE YOUR HOME A SAFE PLACE

The reality of sexual predators, bullies, and abusers is sickening to parents. But it is real nonetheless. We need to make sure that our children know that no matter what happens, they can come to us and tell us. So many victims are scared to talk about what happened for fear they will be judged or blamed or called a liar. We need to be on our kids' side and

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impact on culture. And it also gives a true perspective of what the world is teaching about all sorts of topics: evolution, atheism, ethics, environmental issues, politics. Go to a website like *cnet.com*. The site offers reviews of new technologies. Go to *apple.com* and check out their Apple News section. Keep up with things as best as you can. And find someone like your IT or Network guy at work. Take them out to lunch once a month and pick their brain about things you need to know.

KNOW WHO THEIR FRIENDS ARE

Find out whom they are hanging out with and what those kids are like. Even if you have completely locked down your house and shut off the influx of porn or sexual imagery, if the guys your son is hanging out with have a stash of porn, he is still going to see it. What do the kids do when they are together? Do they go to movies? What did they see? Are they behaving? When we have young children, we are so careful about the environments we let them into. But when those children grow up, we don't want to stifle them or invade their privacy. So we don't "pry" into their social plans. But, that may mean they are getting into situations far worse than those preschoolers could have gotten into.

CREATE DIALOGUE

How do you find out all of that stuff up above? Well, you need to talk to your kids. We all know that teenagers love to spend hours and hours chatting with their parents about all kinds of topics. (What?) Seriously, this is going to be a lifelong battle. It is something to start early, to show your young kids that talking to mom and dad is a good thing. And it needs to be reinforced time and again. For those of you with teens already, let this be an example of being humble. Talk to your teens and tell them you have not been as open with them as you should be. Ask for their forgiveness and tell them you want to work on it.

TALK FREQUENTLY & HONESTLY

This cannot be a once-a-month grilling session. There needs to be continuous and honest discussion. The more

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game or two. Now, almost every phone comes with text messaging and web access. That web access comes with the ability to see everything on the web – including the porn sites. There also are downloadable wallpaper images for the phone. Most of those include sexual or pornographic imagery. And text messaging (in addition to the possibility of a huge phone bill) allows for inappropriate conversations, sexual spam messages, and communicating with predators. One person we knew had to have the text message feature disabled at the cell company source due to receiving over twenty pornographic spam text messages a day!

TELEVISION

While the debate over television is decades old, the standards today are far worse. In a supreme twist of irony, the Janet Jackson incident at the Super Bowl almost emboldened television executives instead of reducing sexual content. There are three different areas to look at when it comes to television: network, cable, and premium.

PREMIUM

These are the stations like HBO, Showtime, Cinemax, and Starz. These channels run movies unedited – complete with all the content. One of the longest running jokes about premium content is referring to Cinemax as Skinemax – due to their penchant for airing soft-core porn all night. But these channels also produce highly acclaimed dramas and comedies as well. *Sex in the City*, which started on HBO, walked away with countless Emmys – as did *The Sopranos* and *Six Feet Under*. These shows do not have to wrestle with the standards of the networks or even basic cable. They are free to include anything they want. So, shows like *Entourage*, *Spartacus*, *Tru Blood*, *Big Love*, and *Weeds* all have graphic sex scenes, nudity, massive violence, drug use, and enormous profanity. They also all are embraced by critics and award-voters. One of the most buzzed shows on tv is Showtime's *Dexter* – about a medical examiner who helped catch serial killers, largely due



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to the fact that he is one himself. In the episodes, you can actually watch the killers murder their victims and dispose of them. All of this is before you get into the shows like *G String Divas*, *Katie Morgan's Porn Series*, and *Real Sex* on HBO – which are actually labeled as “Adults Only” and come complete with full nudity and actual sex.

CABLE

Basic Cable, Digital Cable, and Digital Satellite shows are the ones that need a secondary subscription or service to access. These channels are not held to the same standards as the network shows. While they used to refrain from nudity and foul language, that is not the case now. Some stations are worse than others. Again, they rely on that warning screen – as if that excuses what is shown. Shows like *Nip/Tuck*, *Sons of Anarchy*, and *Rescue Me* on F/X routinely show graphic sex and violence – complete with profanity usually reserved for R-rated films. Speaking of R-rated films, stations like Spike, Bravo, and Fox Movies will run movies in their original format – complete with the language, gore, and violence. Syndication has also hit basic cable. In addition to the shows mentioned earlier, a show like *The Sopranos* now can be seen on Bravo. The porn and soft-core porn industries have also landed on basic cable. E! airs *The Girls Next Door* – a reality program about Playboy Playmates. The *SI Swimsuit Edition video* is aired every year on cable – as is the *Hottest Hooter Girl Competition*.

NETWORK

Network television is made up of the basic stations you can receive with just an antenna. This is made up of NBC, CBS, ABC, CW, FOX, PBS, and any local independent stations. This is the realm that has the most stringent restrictions. There have to be labels on shows indicating what age group they are for. These stations have to produce and air a certain percentage of educational shows. And prime-time shows – the 7pm-10pm hours – are supposed to have restrictions on how much language, violence, and sex is allowable. However, over the last few years, this has seemingly changed. Shows can show more and more. If it gets

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areas that they are going to have to do battle to remain holy. For example, if your child is into surfing, you can know that they are going to be exposed to a lot of sexual imagery on surf sites. One of the biggest advertisers on surf sites is swimsuit sites. There are usually tons of shots of bikini-clad women. If you child is into skateboarding, you can know that they are going to be faced with a lot of Manga and Anime (Japanese animation) ads, as well as a lot of anti-establishment, anti-authority messages. These are common among skater sites. If your child spends a lot of time on Facebook, there is going to be a ton of American Apparel and Evony game ads – complete with their seductive images. If you know what your kid is into, you can know what to read up on and check up on – so you can be on the same page.

KNOW WHAT PRODUCTS THEY OWN

In addition to whatever products you have purchased for your child, you need to keep track of what items they purchase with their allowance or paychecks. If you never bought your child an iPod, you may not think they have one. But they may have gotten their own. Be aware of what products they have at their disposal. Do they have a laptop or computer? Does it have internet access? If so, should they be able to have it in their room, where no one can see them? Or should it have to be used in a common location to remove the temptation of visiting porn sites? Do they have a DVD player? Who keeps track of what they are watching? Do they have a cell phone, an iPhone, an iPod Touch? Are the parental controls activated? As a parent, you should know what they have – and each them about how to use those items responsibly. Talk to them about software and movie pirating. Discuss the ethics of music sharing. Educate them on copyright laws. Show the importance of making sure what they are watching, hearing, reading are drawing them closer to God.

KEEP UP WITH THE TECH DEVELOPMENTS

For those of you who do not know about technology, get help. Subscribe to a magazine like *Wired*. It costs \$10 for 12 issues. Yes, it is a secular magazine with a very non-Christian outlook. But, it has updates and reviews of new products. It covers items that are making an

WHAT TO DO

So what are we to do? The technological advances are only going to continue – at an even faster rate. Those people who feel there are inadequate to handle current advances are going to be at a greater loss in just a few years. But as parents and leaders, we are held responsible for being there for our kids. We have to protect them and lead them in the right path. This challenge has always existed: how to show the next generation to live in a world that we feel is passing us by. But, we do not have a choice. We have to stand in the gap and defend our children and our students. That is what we are called to do. Here are a few ways to make sure that we are doing everything we can.

CREATE AWARENESS

One of the big debates going on right now is about the rights of parents to violate the privacy of their kids when it comes to computers. Does a parent have the right to check their internet cache or history? If you are one of those parents who don't want to violate your child's privacy, think about this. Would you want to know if your child had poison or a weapon? Would the danger of that item overrule the privacy and trust you want to extend that child? The answer is obviously yes. That is how you HAVE TO view this issue. Your children are playing with fire with the internet. And do not think that they are too mature, too spiritual, or too good to mess up. How many pastors have to fall to show that anyone is vulnerable? Bill Perkins once said, "If you think that you can't fall into sexual sin, then you are holier than David, stronger than Samson, and wiser than Solomon." That is to show that the sexual desire is alive in every human – and especially strong in young people. To assume that, with hormones and curiosity raging, they will always run from sexual sin, is to assume your child is stronger than you. This is not a cry to spy on your children. It is a call to get to KNOW your kids.

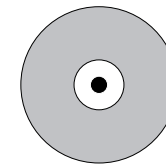
KNOW WHAT YOUR KIDS ARE INTO

What are your child's interests? What do they enjoy doing and following? That alone will help you to know some

too bad, they just slap a disclaimer on the first screen (Viewer Discretion is Advised). This began back in the 1990s with *NYPD Blue* and *Civil Wars*. But it now is just about every show. Shows like *Gossip Girl*, *90210*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *Desperate Housewives* have very high amounts of sexual content. There is a large amount of near-nudity – or even "minor nudity" in some of them. The prime time restrictions were due to the fact that kids were up during that time, so networks were supposed to save those programs for after 10pm. But now, shows like *24*, *the Victoria's Secret Runway Show*, *Lost*, and *CSI* run at the earlier hours, complete with extreme violence, gore, and sex. If the prime time hour is bad, the 6pm-8pm time slots are even more troubling. This is right during time frames when almost all kids are still awake. But thanks to syndicated shows, entertainment shows, and gossip shows, all sorts of sexual dialogue and actions are available as early as 5pm. Some of these shows like *Friends*, *That 70's Show*, *Two and a Half Men*, and *Sex in the City* air multiple times in early time slots – with heavy sexual content. Other shows like *The Insider*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *TMZ TV*, and *Access Hollywood* show photos and interviews that have a high level of inappropriate content.

MOVIES

It seems like beating a dead horse to pick on movies in general. To anyone who has been paying attention, it is easy to see that the ratings have gotten looser over the years. And filmmakers have made more and more offensive films recently. But, this is more than just again bringing up the increasing sexuality in movies. This is to point out some things about movies and their subsequent appearances on DVD that you did not know about.



THE UNRATED DVD

One of the biggest practices in the release of movies onto DVD is the Unrated Version. This is where the producer releases a film in an "unrated" format – which means that it did not have to screen before the Ratings Board. This used to be how movies that were going to get hit with an X or NC-

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17 rating got released. But now, movie companies have realized this is a way to cram more sexual or offensive content into a film without getting a harder rating. These version outsell their milder versions 2 to 1. And now, that has made it so that the default plan is to put out Unrated versions. In most video stores, that is all they carry. So, when you go to rent or buy the movie, what used to be a PG-13 movie now may contain nudity and sex scenes. *Dukes of Hazzard* and *Talladega Nights* are two examples of movies that made that jump between theater and DVD. Normally the unrated version will contain from a few seconds to several minutes of unaired footage. Sometimes this added time brings nothing to the table (like *Mr. & Mrs. Smith's* unrated version). Other times, it can bring a comedy from a PG-13 rating to a hard R rating.

UNRATED FEATURES

The other element of DVD releases that people are not aware of is the fact that all of those added features and goodies on the DVD are unrated. There is a simple reason for this – the Review Board does not want to have to view hundreds of hours of bonus features. So, even on harmless movies like *Cars* and *Narnia*, the extra features are unrated. That just means they were not reviewed. But, on other films, the extras may include bloopers or deleted scenes or commentaries that have very offensive content in them. This is another way that filmmakers get the sexual content they had planned for the movie into the DVD. They may label the scene as deleted, since the Review Board made them cut it. But you may not realize what exactly is going to be shown or said on your PG or PG-13 disc when you go to the bonus section.

MEDIA MESSAGES

All television shows have messages they are communicating. Nothing is ever reported or communicated via the media and/or entertainment industries without an agenda. That isn't a paranoid belief, it is true. It is inherent in the way we communicate. Our biases, opinions, history, and beliefs color what we present. So those things are often subtly

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HUGE AGE GAPS ARE NOT PROBLEMATIC

“May/December” romances had been a part of the industry for decades. Dustin Hoffman hit superstar status largely due to his scene with Anne Bancroft’s “Mrs. Robinson” in *The Graduate* in 1968. However, this message of large age gaps has become even more prevalent over the last two decades. Part of this was due to marketing. The biggest names in male actors were older, and the biggest names in female actresses were younger. Also, the target audience of many films and shows were men – who all wanted to be like the male star and who all wanted to score the young hottie. Now, with the emergence of the older “cougar” woman, there is an equal opportunity for women. We frequently see gaps of twenty years or more between couples in media and entertainment - and in celebrities.

EXAMPLES: *Modern Family*, *Cougar Town*, *House*, *30 Rock*, *The Proposal*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Tru Blood*, most movies with any male star from the 90s in it

THERE ARE NO CONSEQUENCES

Very rarely are unplanned pregnancies incorporated into stories – unless it is for a ratings boost. Arrests are not made when criminal activity is done. People get shot and then stand right back up and keep running. It would be overkill (no pun intended) to go through the unrealistic views of violence in media. The point is, people can do whatever they want and be fine. They can take extreme physical risks and survive, extreme sexual risks and stay healthy, extreme relationship risks and remain whole, extreme ethical risks and be justified.

EXAMPLES: *24*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Two and a Half Men*, *Human Target*, *Gossip Girl*, *iCarly*, *Lost*, video games, action movies

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Looking at this information, what are some areas that surprised you?
2. Are there areas that you can see weakness in your own family?

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origins were in the old style of entertainment where the men were always capable and the women were clueless and/or helpless. In today's entertainment scene, the rule is that the normal dad is a dithering dope – oblivious and out of touch. In fact, many preschool shows promote this message – or expand it by making both parents into idiots or removing them completely. The basic message coming across is that men are dumb and basically just big kids. However, there is hope for them. Most of these offerings have the touching story lines where the man-child begins to grow up and get responsible – at least to some extent. They may have to nearly kill themselves or others, blow up a town, or reach the point where they almost lose their family. But, eventually, they can be taught to have some sort of intelligent and responsible air about them. These lessons can come from enlightened neighbors, children, their wives, gay men in their community, or even imaginary characters. The good man will try to learn. The stubborn man who tries to stay the same soon may realize that it is completely justified for his spouse to find someone better – a classic story line in most of these offerings.

EXAMPLES: *Bob the Builder, Modern Family, Castle, The Middle, Everybody Loves Raymond, King of Queens, Mike and Mike* on ESPN, most commercials

NORMAL TEENS HAVE SEX

If you watch television involving teenagers, at some point the issue of teenagers and sex must come up. What is the right age for teens to have sex? There is not a discussion about the morality of the issue so much as whether or not the teen is “emotionally ready” or if they “truly love the person.” The basic opinion is that a teen does not want to be seen as a slut or as a player – but they also don't want to be seen as a prude. Having sex is fine, as long as it is not with a ton of people. And the sex itself was only painted in a negative light when it was with the wrong person.

EXAMPLES: *Glee, Secret Life of American Teenager, Gossip Girl, 90210, Friday Night Lights, Modern Family, Parenthood*, numerous teen starlets

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communicated. But, there also is a overt message that is sent out through these organizations. It could be a company demonstrating “synergy” by cross-promoting the products of sister companies. It could be using a news story to help out an advertiser's influence. And, sometimes, it could be to change the way their viewers and consumers see things. MTV, at its cultural heyday, was reported as saying that they were never interested in following teen culture. They wanted to dictate it. They were not alone, and they still are not. That is why the messages of media is so important. We can see these messages played out across movies, television, music, video games, newspapers, blogs - any media source. We have identified ten major messages that deal with sex. There are many other damaging messages that relate to violence, community, religion. We chose to focus on these ten messages, since so much of what we cover is in the realm of sex. (This a smaller survey of a lesson we usually do with students on this topic. For a more in depth coverage, see that lesson.)

EVERYONE HAS SEX; MARRIAGE IS OPTIONAL

Try to find entertainment that does NOT teach this. According to media (music, television, movies, internet), every single person has sex. The only people who do not have sex are portrayed as fruit loop religious fanatics or mouth-breathing, socially-retarded, basement-dwelling nerdy momma's boys – or obese people. In fact, the only group that consistently does NOT have sex are married couples.

EXAMPLES: *Lost, 30 Rock, The Office, Grey's Anatomy, Two and a Half Men, Big Bang Theory, Bones*, too many others to mention

HOMOSEXUALITY IS GENETIC

One of the major arguments by the homosexual community – and aired frequently in today's media – is that homosexuality is just something that someone is born with. It is controlled by genetics – not by choice. A person does not choose to be gay – they realize that they are gay.

If you believe this argument to be true, then it changes how you view homosexuality. It is no

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longer a sin. It is not something that you can fight against. You cannot help someone recover from that. By taking a stand against homosexuality, you are actually demonstrating that you are a bigot by hating a people group. Thanks to their unbelievably vocal and powerful lobbies, the homosexual community has been able to receive treatment from the media and even federal government that usually is reserved for ethnic minorities.

EXAMPLES: *Modern Family, Glee, Ugly Betty, The Office, Big Love, Grey's Anatomy, Law and Order, Mad Men*, the smart and witty gay friend/assistant

EXPERIMENTATION IS NORMAL

Guys like to watch lesbians – well as long as beautiful models or actresses play them. This is something that has become a driving element in today's media. The position itself is a result of the proliferation of porn usage, where lesbian activity plays a huge part. Guys are visual and the idea of watching a naked woman is only bettered by the idea of watching two naked women. As this sexual fantasy has become more and more common after repeated viewing, mainstream media has caught on and started to incorporate it – largely through the guise of sexual experimentation being a normal rite of passage.

EXAMPLES: *Gossip Girl, Friends, How I Met Your Mother, 90210, Melrose Place (new), Swingtown, The Good Wife, Castle, Brittny Spears' song Three*

WOMEN MUST BE SEXY

In the entertainment world, women have to be sexy every hour of every day or they lose worth. Take a quick glance across the movie landscape – the female lead characters are always these beautiful women who dress perfectly and show just the right amount of skin. If a woman is not attractive, she gets relegated to oddball character parts. In fact, Hollywood is so blinded by beauty that it even believes that a standard beautiful actress without makeup qualifies as “making herself ugly.” Look at tv and see what kind of women are seen: sexy reporters, sexy designers, sexy investigators, sexy cops, sexy doctors, sexy writers,

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sexy teachers, sexy housewives, sexy cheerleaders, sexy lawyers. The un-sexy people are cast as maids, grandmothers, supporting nurses and lab techs, and freaks. Out shopping, or at a premiere, any blemish or flaw will be a reason for ridicule and humiliation.

EXAMPLES: *Ugly Betty, American Idol, Big Bang Theory, 30 Rock, The Office, Castle, CSI, SportsCenter*, celebrity web sites

IF IT MAKES YOU HAPPY, IT CAN'T BE THAT BAD

It is the end result of the Postmodern mindset. All of this philosophy comes from the fact that it is now taboo to judge someone else's actions – or to hold up a common morality standard. “Who are you to tell me what is right?” The only possible result of this stance is that everything is okay. We may not be into it. But that doesn't mean that we are condemning it.

EXAMPLES: *CSI, 30 Rock, Real Sex, Dane Cook, Funny or Die, Seinfeld, Breaking Bad, Weeds*, the blogosphere

PORN IS NORMAL, HEALTHY ENTERTAINMENT

Friends was one of the most popular shows in America for an entire decade. It also was a show that could be held up as an example in literally every message in this lesson. However, one of the most glaring examples to be pulled from *Friends* was the prolific use of pornography. Every male character used porn. Every female character had used it on several occasions. Several times, the entire gang sat and watched it together. It was no big deal. And that is the big message about pornography in today's media: Porn is no big deal. One of the characters on *Friends* even said that every guy uses it – and those who say they don't are lying.

EXAMPLES: *Girls Next Door, Friends, Two and a Half Men, 30 Rock, Oceans Thirteen, Knocked Up, The Internet, Deadspin website, Bill Simmons sportswriter*

MEN ARE STUPID, BUT CAN BE TRAINED

The idiot man bumbles around until his long-suffering wife, secretary, assistant, partner comes and saves the day. It has been a comic tradition for generations. Its