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THE NEW NORMAL: PARENTS, TEENS, AND MOBILE DEVICES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Credits

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INTRODUCTION

By Willow Bay and James P. Steyer

The ubiquity of mobile devices and the rising power of digital and social media are changing the way we engage not only with the world around us but also with the people who are the closest to us. These shifts are happening faster and more dramatically than any change in recent history, and they are having an impact on people of all ages.

Mobile devices have become a powerful presence in our lives, altering the patterns of daily life and rewiring our most personal relationships, including interaction between parents and kids. We believe this is happening in many countries around the world. To truly understand the impact of technology on our relationships and the new ways we engage with our devices and each other, we need to dig deeper into the global media habits and attitudes of parents and teens.

Together, Common Sense Media and the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism have embarked upon a global mapping project designed to advance a cross-cultural exploration of family digital media engagement. When we began this collaboration more than a year ago, the idea for this work was timely. This is the first generation of teens to grow up with a mobile device in their hands — and the first generation of parents to face unprecedented challenges in managing digital media in their own lives and in the lives of their children.

For many years, Common Sense Media has conducted research on children's media use in the United States. Responding to the concerns of educators and parents about increasing mobile device use and media consumption by children and teens, Common Sense Media began to examine both the positive and the problematic dimensions of each. Their first series of reports in 2016 revealed the struggle of a significant minority of families to integrate mobile technology into their lives in a healthy way. In September 2017, USC Annenberg and Common Sense Media released their first cross-cultural study on the digital media habits and attitudes of parents and teens. That initial collaboration, *The New Normal: Parents, Teens, and Digital Devices in Japan*, focused on families in Japan, comparing the results to Common Sense's 2016 studies of American families.

We're delighted to share our latest effort: new findings about mobile device use and digital media engagement among parents and teens in the United Kingdom. With an approach anchored in the ongoing research by Common Sense Media on children's media use in the United States, USC Annenberg identified over 1,200 parents and teens (618 parent-teen pairs) age 13 to 17 across the United Kingdom. Together, we designed a questionnaire that would help deepen our understanding of the impact of technology on their daily lives, relationships with one another, and evolving digital experiences.

We included questions about the feelings of addiction, distraction, and conflict that had emerged as consistent themes in our previous work. We added new ones such as “How much time passes before

you use a mobile device on a regular weekday morning?” and “How often do you try to cut back the amount of time you spend on mobile devices?”

This UK study also attempts to elicit families' feelings about the positive attributes of new technology with additional questions about the role mobile device use plays in developing new skills and advancing creativity and self-expression.

What did we discover? The results indicate UK teens and parents feel mobile devices are daily distractions in family life and, for some, an emerging source of conflict. A significant number of parents and teens say they “feel addicted” and report a need to respond to texts, social networking messages, and other notifications early and often. Those concerns sit alongside feelings of optimism about the benefits of mobile technology.

From our work in the U.S., Japan, and the UK, it is clear that the impact of mobile devices on daily life and the challenges of navigating the current digital media environment are felt across cultures and communities. Since our initial study, the news and noise around the impact of these powerful technological, social, and cultural shifts continue to grow — as does our need for a deeper understanding. We hope to advance the conversation by grounding it in new data and by continuing to compare it across countries and cultures. As we have done with this latest work, we will adapt our questions to reflect our growing understanding of the impact of these new technologies and add new ones as we expose additional lines of inquiry.

We are grateful for the valuable guidance we received throughout this process from Sonia Livingstone, professor of social psychology at the London School of Economics and Political Science and editor of the blog *Parenting for a Digital Future*.

At this extraordinary moment in history, when so many of our personal interactions involve a mobile device, we hope to offer timely and thoughtful analysis that will spark a new wave of global interest, research, and conversation. We hope parents and teens benefit from these studies and that this research helps them integrate technology into their lives in thoughtful and productive ways.



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Both teens and parents say mobile devices are a daily distraction in family life.

KEY FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

1. Daily Source of Distraction

We've got a new relationship in our family lives, and it's a very demanding one. Both teens and parents tell USC Annenberg and Common Sense Media that mobile devices are a daily distraction in family life. Almost three-quarters of parents (72 percent) and over half of teens (54 percent) report that teens get distracted by their mobile devices at least once a day. Half of parents (50 percent) and 44 percent of teens report that parents get distracted by their mobile devices at least once a day.

2. Emerging Source of Conflict

The pull of mobile devices is powerful for both adults and teens and is emerging as a new family conflict zone. One in five parents, and one in five teens, says they argue about the teen's device use on a daily basis. An additional quarter of parents and teens say they argue over it once a week. Approximately one-third of parents, and one-third of teens, says they never argue about the teen's use of mobile devices.

Parents say "screen time" ranks as the third-most-prevalent source of conflict, following chores and bedtime. About two-thirds of families have rules about mobile device use, such as devices not being allowed at the dinner table. Yet those rules are often broken. Only about 30 percent of families say no one breaks the rules.

3. "Feeling Addicted"

We see a growing awareness among both parents and teens of the unhealthy dimensions of their attachment. Nearly half of both parents and teens say they "feel addicted" to their own mobile devices, and many see the other as being "addicted" as well.¹ Asked about time spent on mobile devices, over a quarter of teens (29 percent) feel their parents spend too much time on their devices; sixty-five percent of parents say their teens spend too much time on theirs. A majority of parents and a third of teens acknowledge trying to cut back on the time they spend on their mobile devices.

4. Urge to Check

There is an urge to check devices early and often: Over a quarter of parents (27 percent) and almost half of teens (48 percent) check their devices within five minutes of waking up. Another 45 percent of parents and 31 percent of teens check their devices within 30 minutes of waking up. Parents and teens say they feel compelled to check them frequently: Over half (58 percent) of parents and two-thirds (66 percent) of teens report checking their devices at least once an hour. And over half of parents (57 percent) and almost two-thirds of teens (65 percent) "always" or "very often" feel the need to respond immediately to texts, social media messages, or other notifications.

1. Survey participants were asked whether they "feel addicted to their mobile devices." However, this should not be interpreted as evidence of a clinical addiction. Rather, we interpret it as reflecting feelings or perceptions about the presence and impact of mobile devices on participants' lives.

5. Growing Awareness, Ambivalence, and Optimism

Despite reporting concerns about feelings of addiction and distraction, parents and teens express optimism about the benefits of mobile device use. About two-thirds of both teens and parents believe that teens' mobile device use helps them learn technological skills, and more than half of both parents and teens report that device use helps them develop skills they'll need in high school or college.

While parents and teens express awareness of mobile devices as a source of tension and conflict, most do not believe it harms their relationship. Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of parents feel their teen's use of mobile devices has made no difference to their relationship, and 15 percent say it has helped. More than three-quarters (83 percent) of teens feel their parents' use of mobile devices has made no difference to their relationship; another 14 percent say it has helped their relationship. They believe that mobile device use supports family activities such as travel in positive ways. Yet both parents and teens ranked family conversations highest on a list of family activities negatively affected by mobile device use.

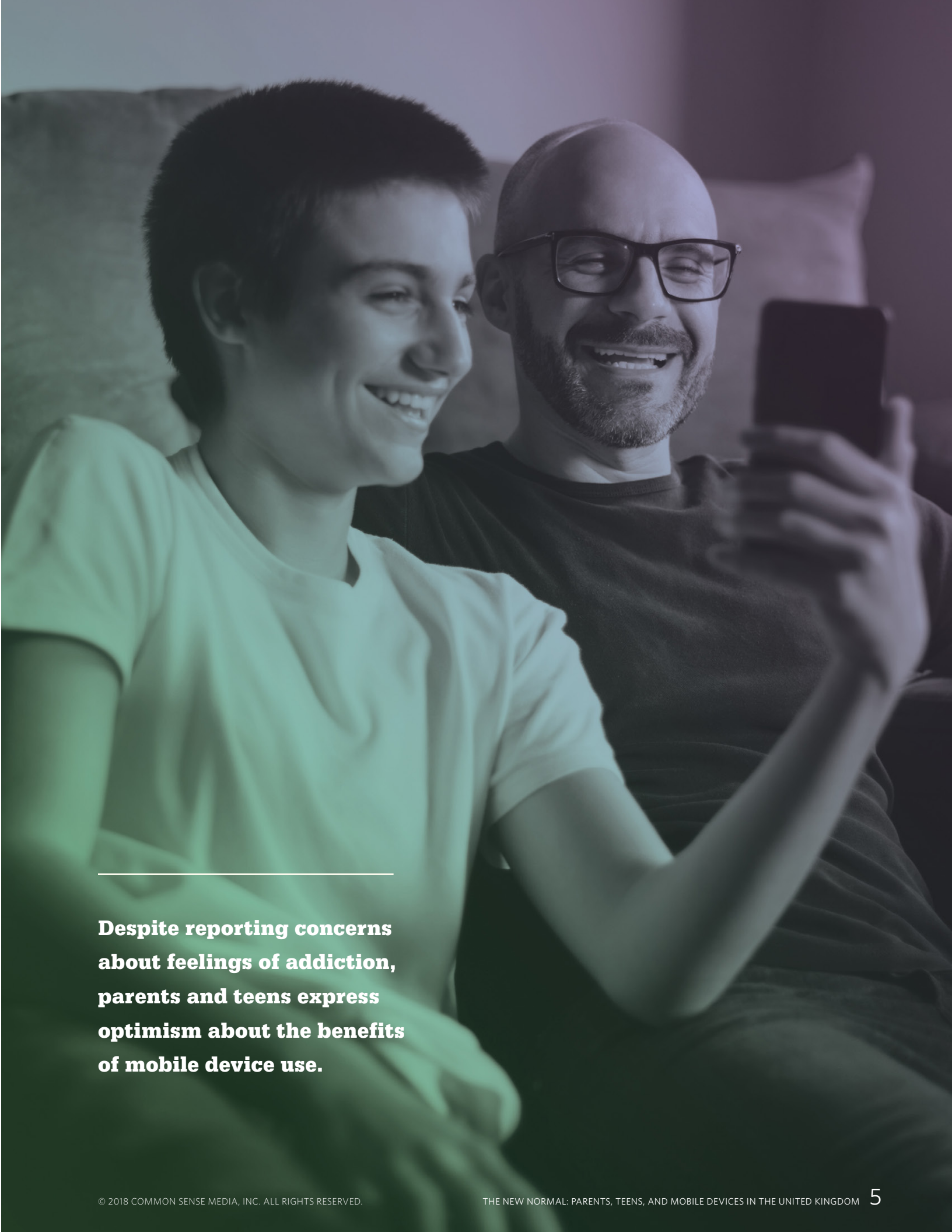
Methodology

This national online survey was conducted by USC Annenberg and Common Sense Media in June 2018 among parents and their teens age 13 to 17 across the United Kingdom. It details the media habits and attitudes of UK families today and their effects on the parent-teen dynamic. The sample included teens ($n=618$) and their parents ($n=618$), for a total of 1,236 participants who jointly completed the survey. Only one parent and one teen per family could participate. Parents took the first part of their survey and then passed it to their teenager to complete the second part of the survey. Qualifying criteria were as follows:

- Parent of at least one child age 13 to 17 living at least part time at home with them who is a primary user of an internet-enabled mobile device used for non-work purposes.
- Child uses internet-enabled mobile device for non-study purposes.

The sample used in the study comes from Research Now SSI's online sample, a panel that is managed to allow the selection of samples to reflect the target population. The specifications for this report included demographic and geographic targeting and quotas ensuring a balanced representation of parents' gender, age, and occupation. The sample distribution also was weighted by gender to reflect attributes of the actual population. The unweighted margin of error for this sample is +/-3.0 percent. After weighting, the margin of error is +/-4.2 percent.

Participants from the panel were contacted via notifications including emails. Once within Research Now SSI's system, participants were matched with the survey using multiple points of randomization. Security checks and quality verifications were used before the participant could begin any survey, including digital fingerprinting to prevent duplication, spot-checking via third-party verification to prove identity, benchmarking against known external data points, and Research Now SSI's Blend algorithm, which monitors the sample for consistency on a number of personality and psychographic measures drawn from academic literature.



Despite reporting concerns about feelings of addiction, parents and teens express optimism about the benefits of mobile device use.

THE NEW NORMAL: Parents, Teens, and Mobile Devices in the United Kingdom

Teens and Parents “Feel Addicted” to and Distracted by Mobile Devices

Percent who say they “feel distracted” by mobile devices at least once a day:

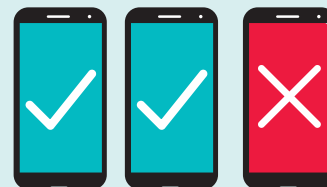


Percent who “feel addicted” to their mobile devices:



But They Are Optimistic About Them, Too

2 out of 3 parents and teens believe that teens’ mobile device use helps them learn technological skills



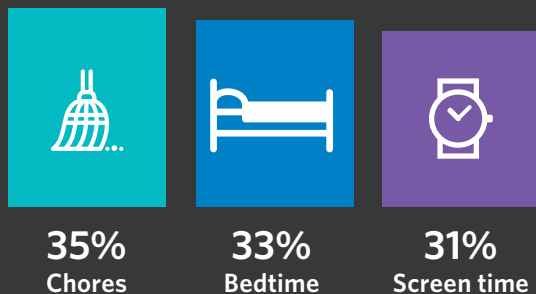
Percent who say that mobile device use helps teens develop skills they’ll need in high school or college:

Parents: 51% **Teens: 57%**

Mobile Devices Cause Tension in Some Families

20% of parents say they argue about their teen’s device use daily

Most frequent sources of conflict between parents and teens (according to parents):



But It Doesn’t Necessarily Hurt Parent-Child Relationships

86% of parents feel their teen’s use of mobile devices has made no difference or has even helped in their relationship

97% of teens feel their parent’s use of mobile devices has made no difference or has even helped in their relationship

Daily Source of Distraction

Are parents and teens distracted by their devices?

Quite often, yes. Concerns about mobile device use include potential disruptions or interference with daily personal interactions. Indeed, almost three-quarters of parents (72 percent) and over half of teens (54 percent) report that teens get distracted by their devices at least once a day (see Figure 1). By contrast, about half of parents (50 percent) and teens (44 percent) report that parents get distracted by their mobile devices at least once a day.

Emerging Source of Conflict

Are mobile devices a source of conflict in family life?

In some families, mobile devices are a regular source of tension. One in five parents (22 percent) and teens (20 percent) say they argue about the teen's device use on a daily basis. Approximately one-quarter of both groups say they argue over it on a weekly basis. Still, over a third of parents (35 percent) and slightly less than a third of teens (29 percent) say they never argue about the teen's use of mobile devices (see Figure 2).

To put conflict over mobile devices in context with other potential family stressors, we also asked parents and teens which topics, if any, cause "regular difficulties or conflicts" between them (see Table 1). Amount of screen time ranked third for parents (after chores/helping around the house and bedtime/sleep) and fourth for teens (after chores, bedtime, and homework).

TABLE 1. Cause of "regular difficulties or conflicts" between parent and teen, parents' vs. teens' perceptions

	Parents	Teens
Chores/helping around house	35%	32%
Bedtime/sleep	33%	31%
Amount of screen time	31%	27%
Homework	28%	28%
Teens' behavior	27%	23%
What teens eat	18%	18%
What teens do on devices	17%	19%
Money	14%	17%
What teens do with friends	13%	14%
What teens wear	9%	12%

FIGURE 1. Distracted by mobile devices at least once a day, parents vs. teens

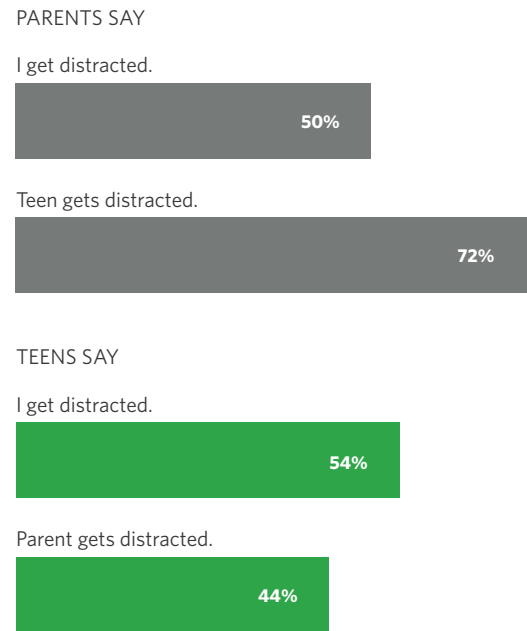


FIGURE 2. Frequency of arguing over teens' use of mobile devices, parents' vs. teens' perceptions

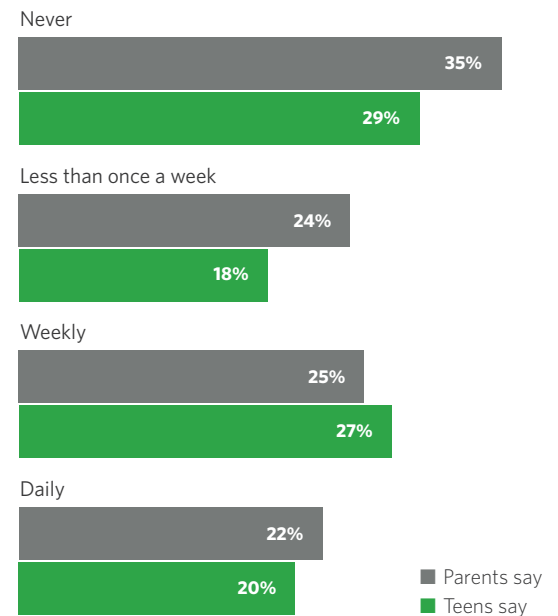


FIGURE 3. Effects of the other's use of mobile devices on parent-teen relationships, parents' vs. teens' perceptions

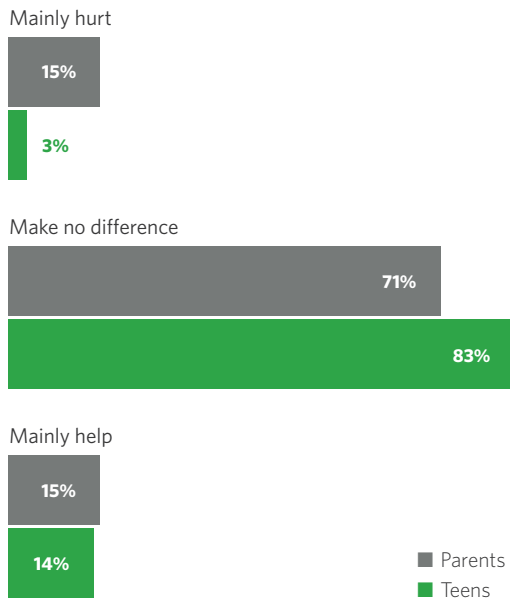
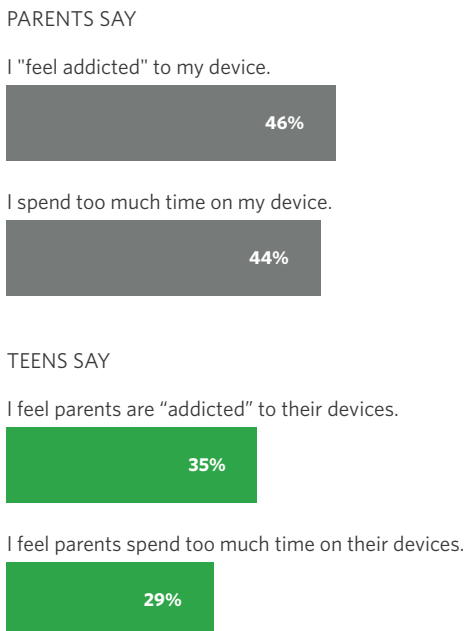


FIGURE 4. Parents' addiction to, and time spent on, mobile devices, parents' vs. teens' perceptions



How are mobile devices affecting parent-teen relationships?

The vast majority of respondents say mobile devices are not hurting parent-teen relationships (see Figure 3). Almost three-quarters (71 percent) of parents feel their teen's use of mobile devices has made no difference in their relationship; another 15 percent say it has helped their relationship. More than three-quarters (83 percent) of teens feel their parent's use of mobile devices has made no difference in their relationship; another 14 percent say it has helped their relationship. Very few teens (3 percent) feel that their parent's use of mobile devices has hurt their relationship. A slightly larger minority of parents (15 percent) feel that their teen's use of mobile devices has hurt their relationship.

"Feeling Addicted"

Do parents and teens "feel addicted"?

Many parents and teens say they "feel addicted" to their mobile devices. In this case, "addiction" is not a clinical diagnosis but a perception about the presence of mobile devices in their lives and their impact on everyday family life.

Parents say ...

Almost half of parents (46 percent) "feel addicted" to their mobile devices. Asked about time spent on their devices, 44 percent of parents say they spend too much time on them (see Figure 4). Almost two-thirds of parents (63 percent) feel their teens are "addicted" to their mobile devices, and 65 percent feel that their teens spend too much time on them (see Figure 5 on page 9).

Teens say ...

Almost half of teens (44 percent) “feel addicted” to their mobile devices. Asked about time spent on mobile devices, 32 percent of teens say they spend too much time on their devices (see Figure 5). Over a third of teens (35 percent) feel their parents are “addicted” to their mobile devices, and over a quarter of teens (29 percent) say they feel that their parents spend too much time on them (see Figure 4).

Do families try to cut back on mobile device use?

Some parents and teens are trying to reduce the amount of time they spend with their devices. A majority of parents (61 percent) but only a third of teens (33 percent) say they try to “cut back” on the time they spend using their mobile devices at least occasionally. Among those who try to reduce their use of mobile devices, almost a quarter of parents (24 percent) and almost a third of teens (32 percent) say they “rarely” or “never” succeed in cutting back. The remainder of parents who try to cut back are evenly split between those who “occasionally” succeed (39 percent) and those who “very often” or “always” succeed” (37 percent). The remainder of teens are more likely to say they “occasionally” succeed (43 percent, versus 26 percent who say they “very often” or “always” succeed) (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 5. Teens’ addiction to, and time spent on, mobile devices, parents’ vs. teens’ perceptions

PARENTS SAY

I feel teens are “addicted” to their devices.

63%

I feel teens spend too much time on their devices.

65%

TEENS SAY

I “feel addicted” to my device.

44%

I spend too much time on my device.

32%

FIGURE 6. When trying to cut back on the amount of time spent on mobile devices, how often they actually succeed, parents vs. teens

Rarely or never

24%

32%

Occasionally

39%

43%

Very often or always

37%

26%

■ Parents
■ Teens

The Urge to Check

Many parents and teens begin their day with a mobile device. About three-quarters of parents (72 percent) and teens (79 percent) check their devices within 30 minutes of waking up, including over a quarter of parents (27 percent) and almost half of teens (48 percent) who check their devices within five minutes of waking up (see Figure 7).

Many parents and teens feel a need to check their devices frequently. Over half (58 percent) of parents and two-thirds of teens check their devices at least once an hour (see Figure 8). Many indicate a pressure to respond immediately to texts, messages, and other notifications. Over half of parents (57 percent) and almost two-thirds of teens (65 percent) “always” or “very often” feel the need to respond immediately (see Figure 9).

FIGURE 7. How much time passes before using a device on a regular weekday morning, parents vs. teens

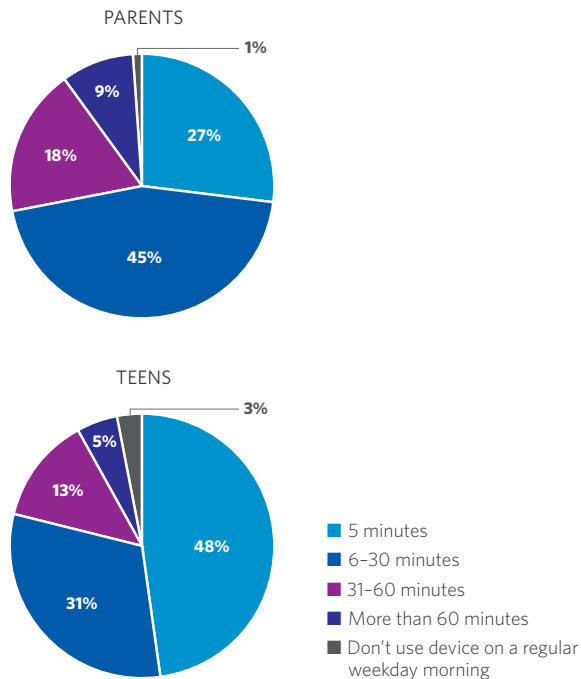


FIGURE 8. Check devices at least once an hour, parents vs. teens

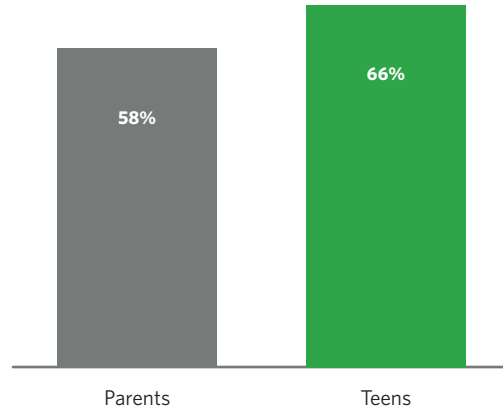
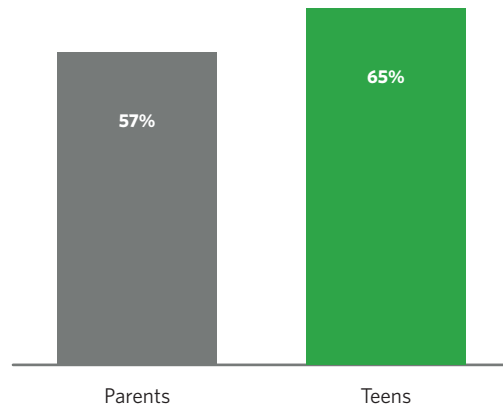


FIGURE 9. “Always” or “very often” feel the need to respond immediately to texts, parents vs. teens

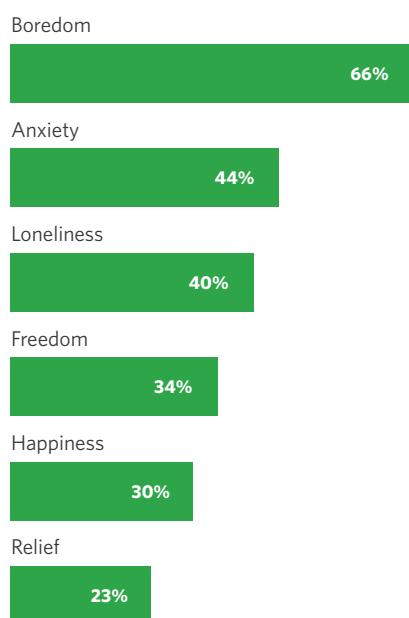


Growing Awareness, Ambivalence, and Optimism

Ditch the phone? How would teens feel without it?

Teens were asked to select from a list of emotions to describe how they would feel without their devices for a day. Most teens say that to a moderate or great extent, they would feel bored (66 percent), anxious (44 percent), or lonely (40 percent) (see Figure 10). However, almost a third would feel happy (30 percent) or free (34 percent), and almost a quarter of teens (23 percent) would feel relieved to be without their devices.

FIGURE 10. Emotions teens would feel to a moderate or great extent if they had to go without mobile devices for a day (to a “moderate extent” or to a “great extent”)



How much do parents worry about teens' mobile device use?

About a third of the UK parents we surveyed are at least moderately worried about content on the mobile devices their teens use. Twenty-eight percent worry about content on websites or apps their teens use, 32 percent worry about what their teens see on social media, and 26 percent worry about what their teens post on social media. The level of parents' worry about mobile device content was not associated with their teen's age or gender.

How do mobile devices affect typical family activities?

We asked parents and teens how their own use of mobile devices affects a range of family activities. The most common response — especially from teens — is that they “make no difference” (see Figure 11 on page 12). However, a closer look reveals that there are some areas where parents and teens see distinct benefits and harm to family life.

Parents say ...

Family travel is the activity that parents are most likely to report being helped by mobile devices. Almost half of parents (48 percent) say their own use of mobile devices helps family travel, and almost a third (31 percent) say their teens' mobile devices help. The activity that parents are most likely to cite as being hurt by devices is family conversations. Over a quarter of parents (27 percent) say their own use of devices hurts conversations, and a third (33 percent) say their teens' devices hurt conversations.

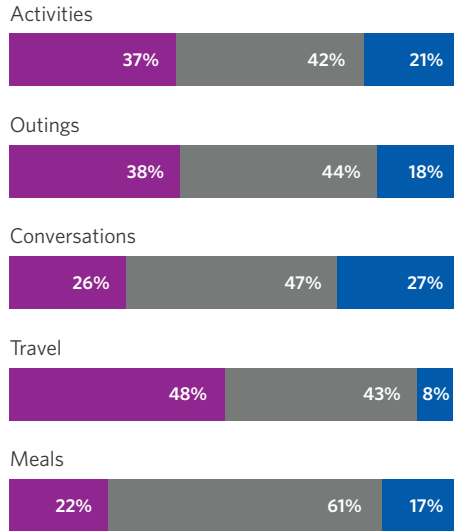
Teens say ...

Teens agree that device use helps family travel and outings. Teens are less likely than their parents to say that any family activities are negatively affected by mobile devices, but teens still rank family conversations as the activity most hurt by device use.

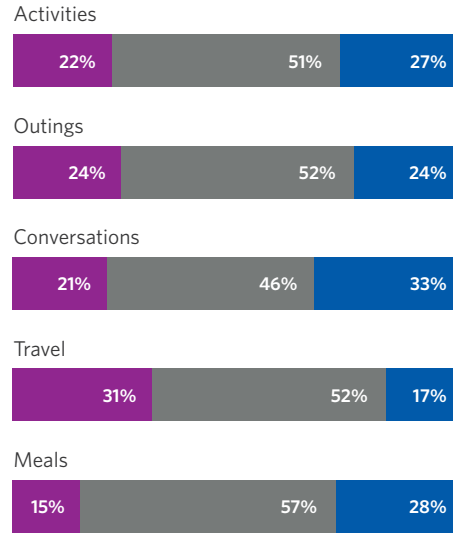
FIGURE 11. Parents' and teens' perceptions of their own and the others' use of mobile devices on family activities, by type

PARENTS' PERCEPTION

My use of devices affects family:



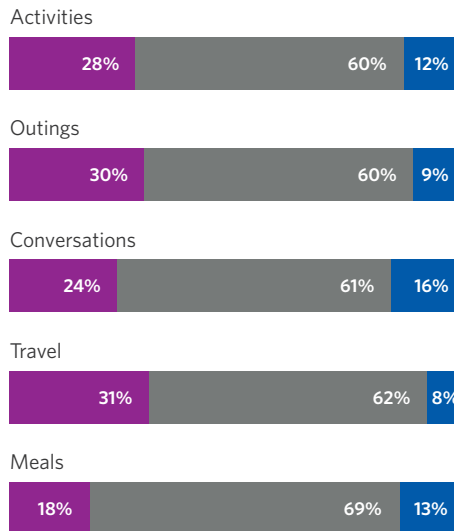
My teen's use of devices affects family:



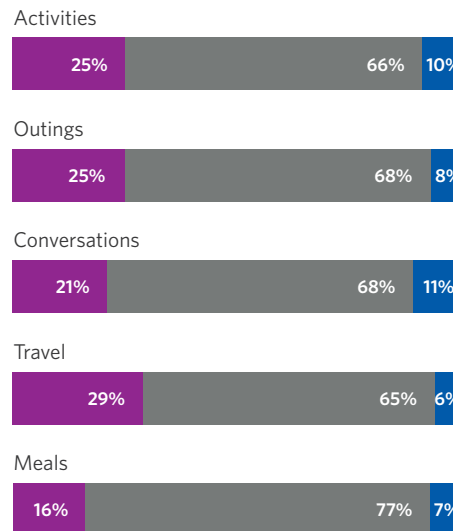
■ Helps a lot/a little
■ Makes no difference
■ Hurts a little/a lot

TEENS' PERCEPTION

My use of devices affects family:



My parent's use of devices affects family:



Note: Segments may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Managing mobile devices

Given the pervasiveness of mobile devices in family life, this survey explored the ways in which families manage mobile device use.

We asked whether families have rules about mobile device use and if parents and teens see eye to eye about those rules. About two-thirds of respondents (66 percent of parents and 62 percent of teens) say that their families have rules about the use of mobile devices, such as devices not being allowed at the dinner table.

Among those who do have family rules, 69 percent of parents and 73 percent of teens report that someone in the family breaks the rules. Teens are the most likely to break them, according to 41 percent of parents and 39 percent of teens (see Figure 12). However, 13 percent of parents and 17 percent of teens say the adults are most likely to break the rules about devices, and similar percentages say that teens and parents are equally likely to break the rules (15 percent of parents and 17 percent of teens say this).

Parents use a variety of strategies for managing their teens' use of mobile devices (see Table 2). Establishing rules about use of mobile devices is the most common (34 percent of parents do this "sometimes," and 28 percent do this "often" or "very often"). Suggesting that teens use websites or apps that parents think are good is another common approach (43 percent of parents do this "sometimes," and 14 percent do this "often" or "very often").

FIGURE 12. Most likely to break family rules about device use, parents' vs. teens' perceptions

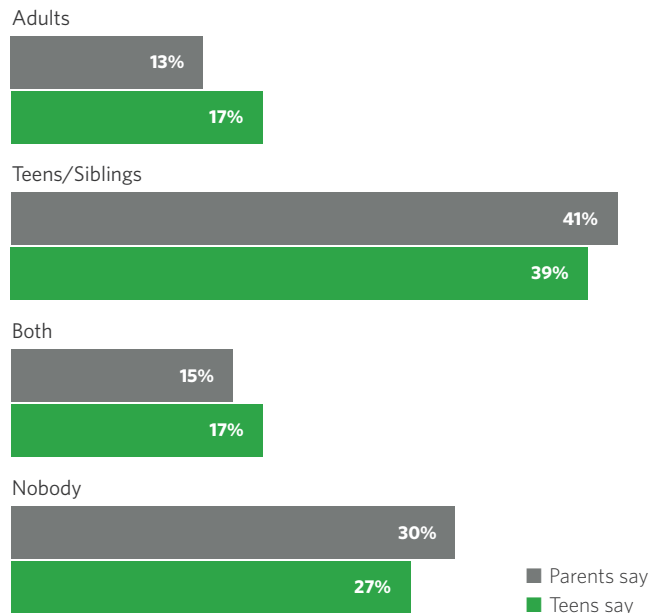


TABLE 2. Parents who "sometimes" or "often/very often" try to manage teens' use of mobile devices

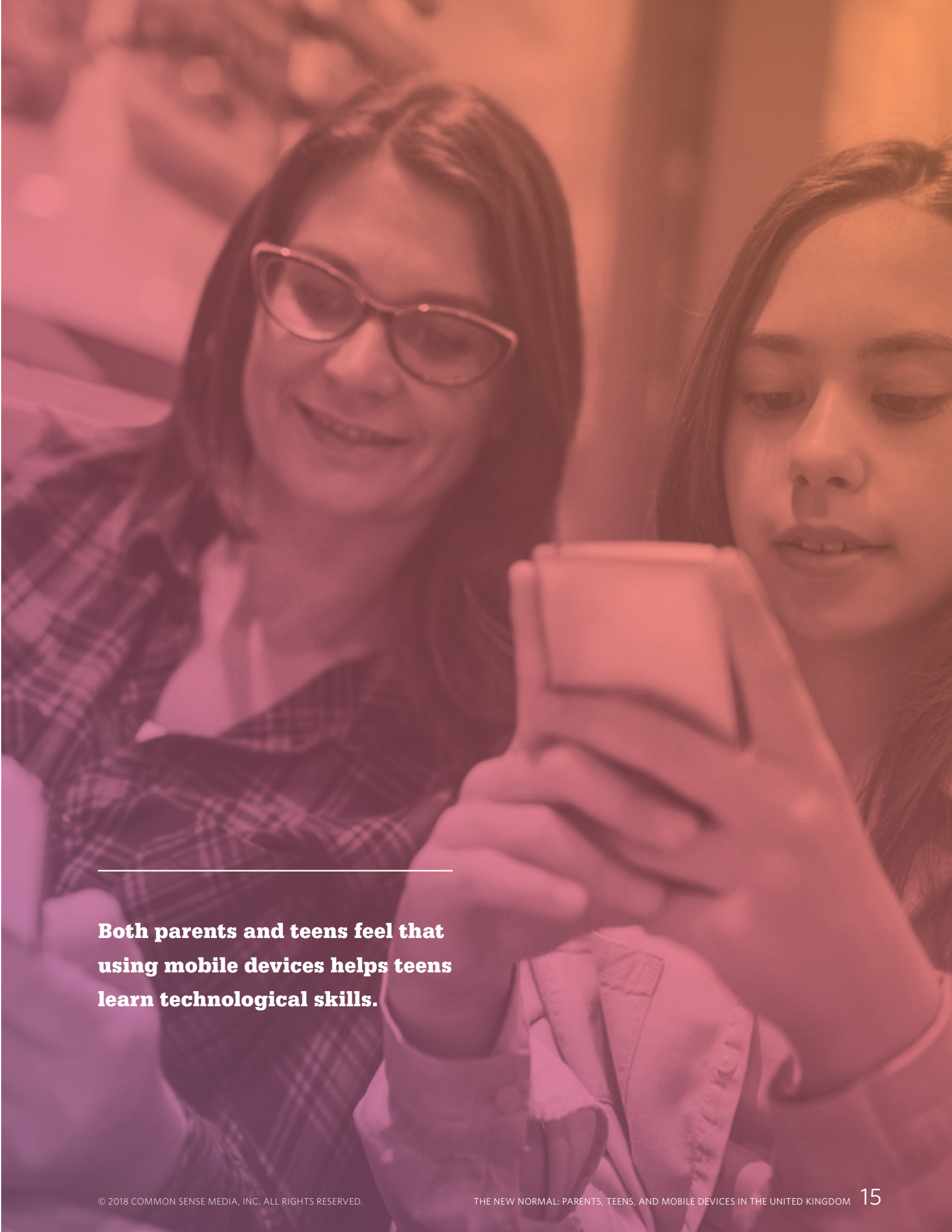
Method of managing use	Sometimes	Often/ Very often
Suggest they use websites/apps that you think are good	43%	14%
Make rules about their use of mobile devices	34%	28%
Remove device as punishment for bad behavior	30%	16%
Check which friends and contacts they add	27%	17%
"Friend" or "follow" them on social media to see what they do	26%	26%
Check their messages	22%	13%
Let them use device as reward for good behavior	21%	12%
Use parental controls/apps to block or monitor access to websites/apps	20%	20%

What are the upsides of mobile device use?

There are many areas in which parents and teens express optimism about the benefits of mobile device use, with teens being slightly more positive about the role of mobile devices in their lives. About two-thirds of UK parents and teens (65 percent of parents and 67 percent of teens) believe that using mobile devices helps teens learn technological skills (see Table 3). Additionally, about half of both groups believe that using mobile devices helps teens learn skills that help in school or college (51 percent of parents and 57 percent of teens) and helps teens pursue their hobbies and interests (53 percent of parents and 58 percent of teens).

TABLE 3. Teens' use of mobile devices, parents' vs. teens' perceptions

Device use helps "a little"/"a lot" with the following:	Parents	Teens
Learning technological skills	65%	67%
Pursuing hobbies/interests	53%	58%
Learning skills that help in school/college	51%	57%
Being creative/expressing themselves	48%	53%
Preparing for work in the future	43%	50%
Developing relationships with friends/family	40%	46%
Learning social or emotional skills	37%	46%

A photograph of a woman with glasses and a young girl looking at a smartphone together. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple and pink gradient. A white horizontal line is positioned above the text.

Both parents and teens feel that using mobile devices helps teens learn technological skills.

HOW DO PARENTS & TEENS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM COMPARE TO THOSE IN THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN?

Comparison Summary

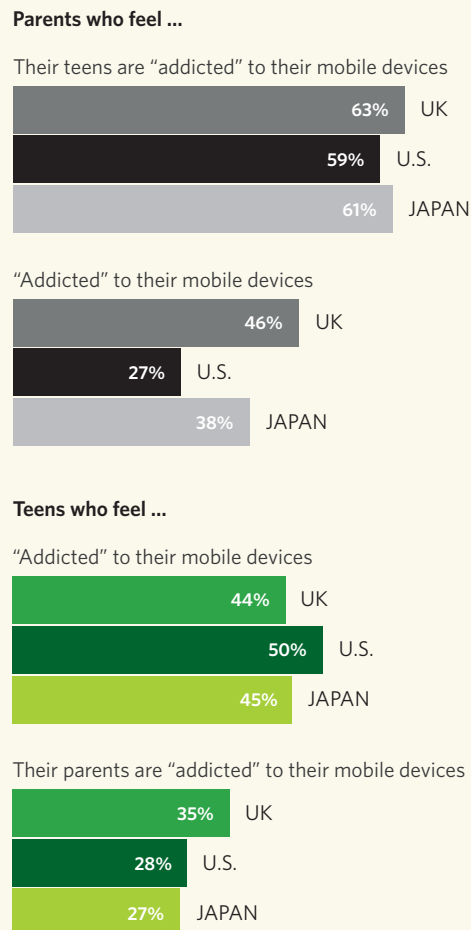
United Kingdom

- More parents in the UK “feel addicted” to their devices than parents in the U.S. or Japan (see Figure 13).
- More parents in the UK feel the need to respond immediately to texts, messages, and other notifications than parents in the U.S. or Japan (see Figure 19, page 19).
- Teens in the UK (and Japan) are much less concerned than their American counterparts about spending too much time on their mobile devices (see Figure 16, page 18).

Across the UK, U.S., and Japan

- Almost half or more of teens in all three countries are checking their devices at least hourly (see Figure 18, page 19).
- Nearly half of teens in all three countries report “feeling addicted” to their mobile devices (see Figure 13).
- Close to two-thirds of parents in all three countries feel their teens are “addicted” to their mobile devices (see Figure 13).
- Between a quarter and a third of teens in all three countries feel their parents are “addicted,” too (see Figure 13).
- The majority of parents and teens in all three countries feel that mobile device use has made no difference in parent-teen relationships.

FIGURE 13. Feelings about addiction to mobile devices, by country



Notes: Sources for U.S. data are Common Sense Media (2015). *The Common Sense census: Media use by tweens and teens*. San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media; Common Sense Media (2016). *Dealing with devices: The parent-teen dynamic*. Retrieved August 3, 2018, from <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/technology-addiction-concern-controversy-and-finding-balance-infographic>. Source for Japan data is Robb, M. B., Bay, W., & Vennegaard, T. (2017). *The new normal: Parents, teens, and digital devices in Japan*. San Francisco, CA: Common Sense. Data presented here compare findings from the current study with findings from earlier studies. However, due to minor changes in methodology and question wording, as well as possible differences resulting from translation to Japanese, comparisons are made with caution, and calculations for statistically significant differences among countries have not been completed.

Emerging Source of Conflict

Conflict over teens' use of devices

- More parents in the U.S. say they argue with their teens on a daily basis about the teen's use of mobile devices. Over a third (36 percent) of U.S. parents say this, compared to less than a quarter of parents in the UK and Japan (22 percent and 19 percent, respectively) (see Figure 14).
- Teens in the U.S. are also the most likely (32 percent) to say they argue with their parents on a daily basis about their use of mobile devices, compared to less than a fifth of teens in the UK and Japan (20 percent and 12 percent, respectively).

How are mobile devices affecting parent-teen relationships?

- The majority of parent and teen respondents in the UK, the U.S., and Japan feel that teens' use of mobile devices has had no effect on parent-teen relationships. A minority in each country does feel that the teen's use of these devices has harmed their relationship (see Figure 15).
- Japanese parents are the most likely to feel that their teen's use of mobile devices has hurt parent-teen relationships. Almost a quarter (23 percent) of Japanese parents feel this way, compared to 15 percent of U.S. parents and 15 percent of UK parents.
- Among teens, those in the U.S. are the most likely to feel that their use of mobile devices has hurt their relationship with their parents. Eleven percent of U.S. teens feel this way, compared to 6 percent of Japanese teens and 3 percent of UK teens.

FIGURE 14. Families who argue daily about teen's use of mobile devices, by country

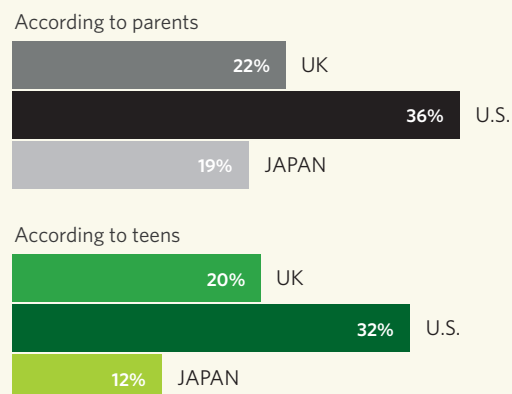
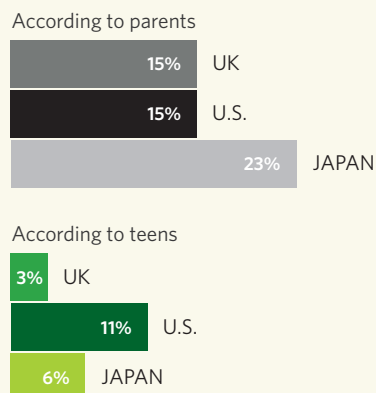


FIGURE 15. Feel that the other's use of mobile devices has hurt their relationship, by country



“Feeling Addicted”

“Feelings of addiction” are shared by significant numbers of parents and teens in all three countries (see Figure 13, page 16):

- Nearly half of teens in all three countries report “feeling addicted” to their mobile devices.
- Close to two-thirds of parents in all three countries feel their teens are “addicted” to their mobile devices.
- Almost half of parents in the UK (46 percent) say they “feel addicted” to their mobile devices. A little over a third of Japanese parents (38 percent) and a little over a quarter of U.S. parents (27 percent) feel this way also.
- About a third or fewer of teens in all three countries feel their parents are “addicted” to their mobile devices.

Spending too much time on devices

- About two-thirds of parents in the U.S. and UK (66 percent and 65 percent, respectively) feel their teens spend too much time on their mobile devices. About half (52 percent) of Japanese parents feel this way about their teens (see Figure 16).
- Almost half (44 percent) of parents in the UK feel they spend too much time on their mobile devices. Fewer parents in the U.S. and Japan (29 percent and 17 percent, respectively) feel this way about themselves.
- More than half (52 percent) of teens in the U.S. feel they spend too much time on their mobile devices. Far fewer teens in the UK and Japan (32 percent and 17 percent, respectively) feel this way.
- More than half (52 percent) of teens in the U.S. feel their parents spend too much time on their devices. Far fewer teens in the UK and Japan (29 percent and 22 percent, respectively) feel this way about their parents.

Do families try to cut back?

Similar proportions of parents in the UK and the U.S. (21 percent and 23 percent, respectively) say they try to “cut back” on their use of mobile devices “very often.” Far fewer Japanese parents (4 percent) say they try to reduce their mobile device use “very often” (see Figure 17).

FIGURE 16. Perceptions of spending too much time on devices, by country

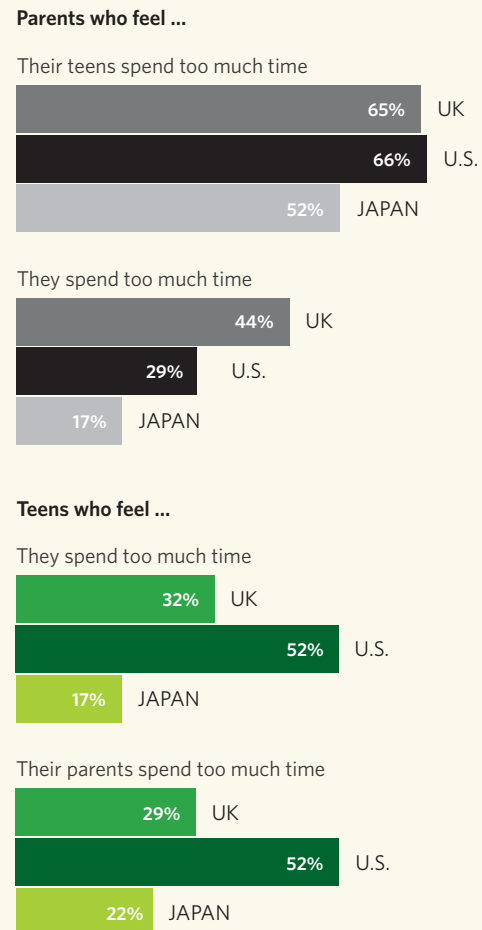
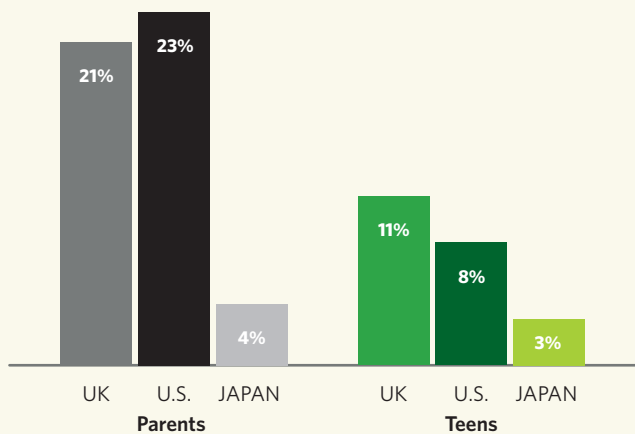


FIGURE 17. Parents and teens who try to cut back on use of their devices at least “very often,” by country



The Urge to Check

- Over two-thirds (69 percent) of parents in the U.S. and over half (58 percent) of parents in the UK check their mobile devices at least hourly (see Figure 18). Japanese parents are the least likely to check hourly — but still over a third (38 percent) do so.
- Like their parents, teens in the U.S. and the UK are the most likely to check their devices hourly. Over three-quarters of U.S. teens (78 percent) and two-thirds (66 percent) of UK teens do so. Almost half (48 percent) of Japanese teens check hourly.

Feeling the need to respond immediately

- Parents in the UK are more likely than those in the U.S. and Japan to feel the need to respond immediately to their mobile devices. More than half (57 percent) of UK parents feel the need to respond immediately, compared to under half (48 percent) of U.S. parents and over a third (36 percent) of Japanese parents (see Figure 19).
- Among teens, however, those in the U.S. are the most likely to feel the need to respond immediately, followed by those in the UK and Japan. Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of U.S. teens feel this way, compared to almost two-thirds (65 percent) of UK teens and under half (48 percent) of Japanese teens.

FIGURE 18. Check their devices at least hourly, by country

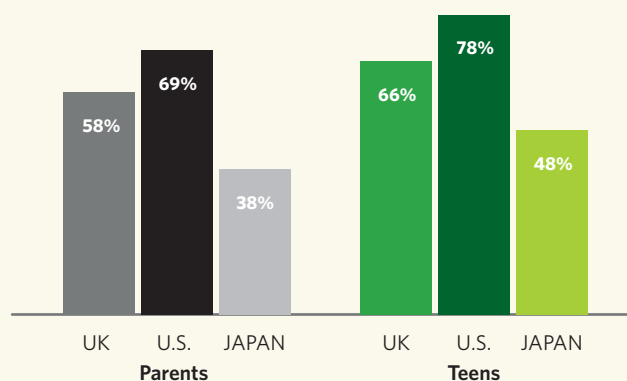
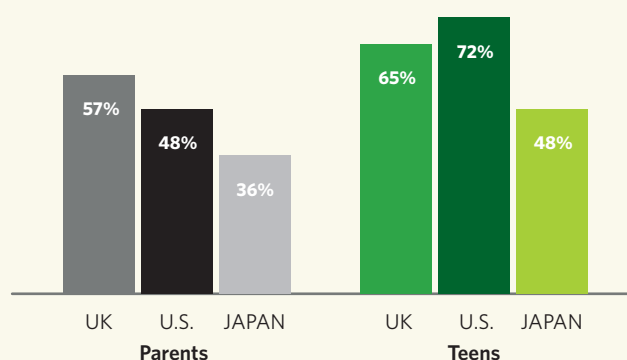


FIGURE 19. Feel the need to respond immediately to mobile devices, by country



CONCLUSION

Part of an ongoing global mapping project, this report is the second in a series of studies titled *The New Normal* that track parents' and teens' mobile device habits, attitudes, and opinions. As we navigate the fast-moving change in the technology landscape, it is critical to understand how our lives and our family relationships are affected by mobile device use.

A few limitations to this study must be noted:

- We used an online convenience sample, but we carefully specified quotas to get as close as possible to a sample representing the age, gender, and regional composition of the United Kingdom. However, we recognize that not every parent and teen in the UK had an equal likelihood of selection for participation, and thus the study could be improved with probability sampling.
- This sample only includes users of mobile devices and thus should not be taken as indicative of the attitudes of the total population, including families that do not have access to, or use, mobile devices. For example, a recent Ofcom study found that 7 percent of children age 12 to 15 did not have access to a mobile phone in their home*.
- While we did collect data about the amount of time parents and teens spend on mobile devices, analysis showed that the time estimates were far higher than comparable surveys of mobile device use in the UK*. The time estimates will not be presented until additional investigation is able to corroborate our findings.
- It is possible that parents and teens saw each other's responses while taking the survey, which might have had an effect on how they responded to the questions.
- While we have presented comparisons among populations in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan, we do so cautiously, as there may be cohort differences resulting from when surveys were conducted. In addition, we realize there are likely to be other differences that may have arisen

from slight changes in question wording. For example, it is possible that news about problematic technology use or "technology addiction" could affect how respondents perceived the survey questions. It is also possible that cultural differences affected the interpretations of questions, though we have done our best to work with advisers in the UK and Japan, and translators in Japan, to minimize these issues.

- We recognize that this is the beginning of our global mapping project. We have collected data from only three countries (the U.S., Japan, and the UK), developed nations in the global north, and our findings document the impact of mobile devices in these very specific populations. We look forward to investigating whether similar patterns emerge in other countries with high mobile device penetration, as well as identifying areas in which mobile devices may be perceived and used differently across cultures.

We believe that the constant presence of mobile devices is affecting family life in many countries around the world. As we continue to advance our global mapping project to other countries and regions, our goal remains to make this a truly cross-cultural dialogue.

Resources

Common Sense, www.common sense.org, empowers parents, teachers, and policymakers by providing unbiased information, trusted advice, and innovative tools to help them harness the power of media and technology as a positive force in all kids' lives.

Our academic partner in the UK, professor Sonia Livingstone at the London School of Economics and Political Science, conducts some of the foremost research on parenting in the digital age. To learn more about her work and her colleagues' work, please visit Parenting for a Digital Future at <http://parenting.digital>.

*For example, see Ofcom (2017). *Children and parents: Media use and attitudes report*. Ofcom. Retrieved from https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/108182/children-parents-media-use-attitudes-2017.pdf.

APPENDIX: TOPLINES

N=618 parent-teen pairs in the United Kingdom in which both the parent and the teen use mobile devices for recreational purposes.

Part 1: Parent Questions

Thank you for your interest in taking this important survey with questions about your family's mobile device use. This survey is designed for parents/caregivers and their teens. Clearly marked sections contain questions directed to the parent/caregiver and others directed to the teen. We hope you will find this experience valuable and thank you for your participation. Please note that the survey will require your teenager to be present to complete a section of the survey.

Q1. Do you have at least one child between the ages of 13 and 17 living at least part-time at home with you? If you have multiple children, please tell us about your eldest child between the ages of 13 and 17.

13-year-old boy	3%
14-year-old boy	12%
15-year-old boy	14%
16-year-old boy	10%
17-year-old boy	12%
13-year-old girl	5%
14-year-old girl	10%
15-year-old girl	13%
16-year-old girl	11%
17-year-old girl	10%

Q2. For the purposes of this survey, we define mobile devices as referring to smartphones and tablets (e.g. iPad, Kindle Fire, etc.). Does your [teen] use mobile devices? Please select only one answer. Please include instances where the child borrows the device from someone else in your household.

Uses mobile devices	100%
---------------------	------

Q3. Does your [teen] use mobile devices for non-study purposes? Please select only one answer.

Yes	100%
-----	------

Q4. Now we would like to ask a few questions about you, the parent/caregiver. Are you the primary user of a mobile device? Please exclude devices that are used exclusively for work.

Yes	100%
-----	------

Q5. What is your age?

Average age	44 years
-------------	----------

Q6. Where in the UK do you currently live?

England	87%
Northern Ireland	2%
Scotland	7%
Wales	4%
Other	*

* Indicates fewer than 0.5% but greater than zero.

Q7. Do you currently live in a town or city in the UK with a population of over 10,000 people?

Yes	86%
No	14%

Q8. What is your gender?

Male	50%
Female	50%

Q9. What is your current employment status?

Fully employed or self-employed	79%
Other	21%

If Q9 = Fully employed or self-employed

Q10. Please indicate to which occupational group you belong.

Semi or unskilled worker (e.g. manual worker, apprentice, park keeper, shop assistant)	14%
Skilled manual worker (e.g. skilled bricklayer, carpenter, plumber, bus driver)	19%
Supervisory or clerical/junior managerial/professional/administrative (e.g. office worker, nurse, foreman with 25+ employees, salesperson)	32%
Intermediate managerial/professional/administrative (e.g. middle manager in large organization, principal officer in civil service/local government, teacher)	24%
Higher managerial/professional/administrative (e.g. doctor, solicitor, top level civil servant)	8%
Independent business owner/self-employed	3%
Other	1%

If Q9 = Other

Q11. Please indicate which of the following best describes your current employment status.

Full-time student	1%
Casual worker	9%
Homemaker	50%
Retired or living on state pension	2%
Unemployed or not working due to long-term sickness	19%
Carer of other household member	5%
Other	14%

Q12. Which of the following best describes your annual net household income?

Up to £5,199	1%
£5,200 to £10,399	4%
£10,400 to £15,599	9%
£15,600 to £20,799	8%
£20,800 to £25,999	10%
£26,000 to £31,199	14%
£31,200 to £36,399	10%
£36,400 to £51,999	19%
£52,000 and above	20%
Prefer not to answer	4%

Q13. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?

White	90%
Black/Black British	2%
Asian/Asian British	6%
Mixed	2%
Other	*
Prefer not to answer	1%

* Indicates fewer than 0.5% but greater than zero.

Q14. How many children aged 0 to 17 do you have in total who live at home with you or who you have regular responsibility for?

1 child	40%
2 children	40%
3 children	14%
4 children	4%
5 or more children	2%

Q15. Who is responsible for taking care of your child/children? Please select all that apply.

I am a single parent	17%
I share the care of my child/children with a partner	77%
I share the care of my child/children with an ex-partner	9%
I share the care of my child/children with a grandparent/relative	1%
I share the care of my child/children with a paid caregiver (e.g. nanny, childminder)	0%

* Indicates fewer than 0.5% but greater than zero.

This section of the survey is again directed toward you, the parent/caregiver. Please answer the questions yourself and do not show the survey to your child until instructed to do so.

Q16. Thinking about a regular weekday, how much time do you spend doing each of the following activities on mobile devices?

	0 min	1-29 min	30-59 min	1 hr- <2 hrs	2 hrs- <3 hrs	3 hrs- <4 hrs	4 hrs- <5 hrs	5 hrs- <6 hrs	6 hrs- <7 hrs	7 hrs- <8 hrs	8 hrs or more
Work purposes	39%	16%	11%	13%	6%	4%	1%	1%	1%	2%	5%
Visiting social network sites [†]	11%	28%	19%	16%	11%	5%	4%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Browsing websites [†]	5%	26%	25%	21%	11%	5%	3%	8%	1%	1%	2%
Playing games [†]	35%	24%	16%	10%	6%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Watching videos [†]	30%	35%	13%	10%	7%	1%	1%	1%	*	1%	1%
Listening to music [†]	28%	27%	17%	12%	8%	3%	2%	2%	*	1%	*
Chatting on messaging apps [†]	19%	44%	16%	9%	5%	3%	1%	1%	*	*	1%
Making phone calls [†]	11%	59%	13%	8%	4%	2%	1%	*	0%	1%	1%
Other than those listed above [†]	65%	17%	7%	5%	3%	1%	*	0%	*	*	1%

* Indicates fewer than 0.5% but greater than zero.

† Activity for non-work purposes.

Q17. Thinking about a regular weekday, do you feel you spend too much time on mobile devices, too little time, or just about the right amount of time?

Too much time	44%
Too little time	5%
Right amount of time	51%

Q18. During a regular weekday, how often do you find yourself checking mobile devices for texts, emails, updates, etc.?

Several times an hour	39%
Once an hour	19%
Several times a day	27%
Once a day	3%
Less than once a day	2%
Never	*

* Indicates fewer than 0.5% but greater than zero.

Q19. How much time passes before you use a mobile device on a regular weekday morning? (This does not include its use as an alarm.)

I use a mobile device...

Within 5 minutes of waking up	27%
Within 6 to 30 minutes	45%
Within 31 to 60 minutes	18%
After more than 60 minutes	9%
Do not use on a regular weekday morning	1%

Q20. Do you feel addicted to mobile devices?

Yes	46%
No	54%

Q21. How often do you try to cut back the amount of time you spend on mobile devices?

Always	5%
Very often	16%
Occasionally	40%
Rarely	21%
Never	18%

If Q23 = Always-Rarely

Q22. When you try to cut back the amount of time you spend on mobile devices, how often do you actually succeed?

Always	10%
Very often	27%
Occasionally	39%
Rarely	19%
Never	5%

Q23. How often do you feel the need to respond immediately to texts, social networking messages or other notifications on mobile devices?

Always	15%
Very often	42%
Occasionally	32%
Rarely	8%
Never	3%

Q24. How often do you feel distracted by your use of mobile devices?

Multiple times a day	36%
Once a day	14%
A few times a week	24%
Once a week	4%
Less than once a week	8%
Never	14%

Q25. How does your use of mobile devices affect the following aspects of your family life?

	Helps a lot	Helps a little	Makes no difference	Hurts a little	Hurts a lot
Family meals	8%	14%	61%	11%	6%
Family travel	18%	30%	43%	6%	2%
Family conversations	8%	18%	47%	22%	5%
Family outings	10%	28%	44%	14%	4%
Family activities	9%	28%	42%	17%	4%

Now we will ask you to answer a few questions regarding your perceptions of your teenager's use of mobile devices. Please select the answers that best reflect your feelings and, again, do not show the survey to your teenager until instructed to do so.

Q26. How frequently does your [teen] use mobile devices?

Once a day or more	93%
Less than once a day but more than once a week	6%
Once a week or less	*

* Indicates fewer than 0.5% but greater than zero.

Q27. Thinking about a regular weekday, do you feel your [teen] spends too much time on mobile devices, too little time, or just about the right amount of time?

Too much time	65%
Too little time	6%
Right amount of time	29%

Q28. For which purposes does your [teen] use mobile devices? Please select all applicable answers.

Study purposes	49%
Visiting social network sites (for non-study purposes)	81%
Browsing websites (for non-study purposes)	80%
Playing games (for non-study purposes)	67%
Watching videos (for non-study purposes)	77%
Listening to music (for non-study purposes)	75%
Chatting on messaging apps (for non-study purposes)	75%
Making phone calls (for non-study purposes)	52%
Non-study purposes other than those listed above	3%

Q29. Thinking about your child's use of mobile devices for non-study purposes, do you think it helps or hurts their chances of...?

	Helps a lot	Helps a little	Makes no difference	Hurts a little	Hurts a lot
Developing relationships with friends/family	9%	31%	30%	22%	7%
Learning social or emotional skills	8%	29%	33%	23%	7%
Learning technological skills	22%	43%	29%	4%	2%
Learning skills that help at school/college	13%	38%	38%	8%	4%
Being creative/express themselves	9%	39%	35%	12%	5%
Preparing for work in the future	9%	34%	38%	15%	5%
Pursuing their hobbies/interests	12%	41%	28%	13%	6%

Q30. How worried are you about the content your child consumes using mobile devices?

	Not worried at all	Slightly worried	Moderately worried	Very worried	Extremely worried
The websites/apps they use	36%	37%	20%	6%	2%
What they see on social media	25%	44%	21%	8%	3%
What they post on social media	43%	31%	19%	5%	2%

Q31. Has your [teen]'s use of mobile devices mainly helped or hurt your relationship with your child, or has it not made a difference?

Mainly helped	15%
Made no difference	71%
Mainly hurt	15%

Q32. How does your teenager's use of mobile devices affect the following aspects of your family life?

	Helps a lot	Helps a little	Makes no difference	Hurts a little	Hurts a lot
Family meals	6%	9%	57%	21%	7%
Family travel	7%	24%	52%	13%	4%
Family conversations	6%	15%	46%	25%	8%
Family outings	7%	17%	52%	18%	6%
Family activities	7%	15%	51%	20%	7%

Q33. How often do you feel your teenager is distracted by their use of mobile devices?

Multiple times a day	58%
Once a day	14%
A few times a week	18%
Once a week	2%
Less than once a week	4%
Never	5%

Q34. Do you feel your [teen] is addicted to mobile devices?

Yes	63%
No	34%

Q35. How often do you argue with your [teen] about their use of mobile devices?

Multiple times a day	13%
Once a day	9%
A few times a week	18%
Once a week	7%
Less than once a week	24%
Never	29%

Q36. Do any of the following lead to regular difficulties or conflicts between you and your [teen]? Please select all that apply.

Bedtime/sleep	33%
Money	14%
Homework	28%
Amount of screen time	31%
What they do on mobile devices	17%
What they do with their friends	13%
What they wear	9%
What they eat	18%
Chores/helping in the house	35%
Their behaviour	27%
None of these	22%

Q37. Do you have family rules regarding the use of mobile devices (e.g. no phones at the dinner table)?

Yes	66%
No	34%

If Q37 = Yes

Q38. Who is more likely to break those rules?

You and/or your partner	13%
Your child/children	41%
Equally likely	15%
Nobody breaks the rules	30%

Q39. How often do you do any of these things in relation to your [teen]'s use of mobile devices?

	Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Suggest that they use particular websites/apps that you think are good for them	21%	22%	43%	11%	3%
Use parental controls/apps to block or monitor access to some types of websites/apps	38%	22%	20%	13%	7%
Make rules about their use of mobile devices	18%	21%	34%	20%	8%
Promise that they can use a mobile device as a reward for good behaviour	47%	20%	21%	8%	4%
Remove a mobile device as a punishment for bad behaviour	30%	23%	30%	10%	6%
Check which friends or contacts they add	37%	19%	27%	12%	5%
Check their messages	48%	17%	22%	10%	3%
"Friend" or "follow" them on social media so you can see what they do	34%	13%	26%	17%	9%

Part 2: Teen Questions

Now we would like to ask your [teen] similar questions. If you are recording the answers on behalf of your child, please record their exact answer, even if you disagree with their response.

Q40. Thinking about a regular weekday, how much time do you spend doing each of the following activities on mobile devices?

	0 min	1-29 min	30-59 min	1 hr- <2 hrs	2 hrs- <3 hrs	3 hrs- <4 hrs	4 hrs- <5 hrs	5 hrs- <6 hrs	6 hrs- <7 hrs	7 hrs- <8 hrs	8 hrs or more
Study purposes	20%	25%	19%	18%	8%	5%	2%	1%	1%	*	2%
Visiting social network sites [†]	6%	18%	25%	20%	14%	9%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Browsing websites [†]	5%	26%	24%	19%	11%	7%	3%	1%	1%	*	1%
Playing games [†]	13%	22%	20%	20%	12%	6%	3%	2%	*	1%	1%
Watching videos [†]	5%	24%	19%	21%	13%	8%	4%	2%	*	1%	2%
Listening to music [†]	9%	17%	19%	24%	13%	7%	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Chatting on messaging apps [†]	7%	21%	24%	21%	10%	7%	4%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Making phone calls [†]	23%	38%	15%	12%	6%	3%	1%	*	1%	1%	1%
Other than those listed above [†]	61%	13%	7%	7%	6%	2%	1%	1%	0%	*	*

* Indicates fewer than 0.5% but greater than zero.

† Activity for non-work purposes.

Q41. Thinking about a regular weekday, do you feel you spend too much time on mobile devices, too little time, or just about the right amount of time?

Too much time	32%
Too little time	9%
Right amount of time	59%

Q42. During a regular weekday, how often do you find yourself checking mobile devices for texts, emails, updates, etc.?

Several times an hour	49%
Once an hour	17%
Several times a day	25%
Once a day	5%
Less than once a day	3%
Never	2%

**Q43. How much time passes before you use a mobile device on a regular weekday morning?
(This does not include its use as an alarm.)**

I use a mobile device...

Within 5 minutes of waking up	48%
Within 6-30 minutes	31%
Within 31-60 minutes	13%
After more than 60 minutes	5%
Do not use on a regular weekday morning	3%

Q44. Thinking about your use of mobile devices for non-study purposes, do you think it helps or hurts your chances of...?

	Helps a lot	Helps a little	Makes no difference	Hurts a little	Hurts a lot
Developing relationships with friends/family	18%	28%	46%	6%	2%
Learning social or emotional skills	14%	32%	47%	5%	2%
Learning technological skills	27%	40%	27%	5%	1%
Learning skills that help at school/college	23%	34%	38%	5%	1%
Being creative/express yourself	21%	32%	42%	3%	2%
Preparing for work in the future	17%	33%	42%	6%	2%
Pursuing your hobbies/interests	25%	33%	37%	3%	2%

Q45. How does your use of mobile devices affect the following aspects of your family life?

	Helps a lot	Helps a little	Makes no difference	Hurts a little	Hurts a lot
Family meals	4%	14%	69%	10%	3%
Family travel	10%	21%	62%	6%	2%
Family conversations	6%	18%	61%	13%	3%
Family outings	8%	22%	60%	7%	2%
Family activities	7%	21%	60%	9%	3%

Q46. If you had to go a day without access to mobile devices, to what extent would you feel the following emotions?

	Not at all	Some extent	Moderate extent	Great extent
Anxiety	26%	31%	24%	20%
Happiness	45%	24%	21%	9%
Loneliness	31%	30%	26%	14%
Relief	57%	20%	16%	7%
Boredom	12%	22%	24%	42%
Freedom	44%	22%	21%	13%

Q47. Do you feel addicted to mobile devices?

Yes	44%
No	56%

Q48. How often do you try to cut back the amount of time you spend on mobile devices?

Always	3%
Very often	8%
Occasionally	22%
Rarely	22%
Never	44%

If Q48 = Always-Rarely

Q49. When you try to cut back the amount of time you spend on mobile devices, how often do you actually succeed?

Always	5%
Very often	21%
Occasionally	43%
Rarely	28%
Never	4%

Q50. How often do you feel the need to respond immediately to texts, social networking messages or other notifications on mobile devices?

Always	29%
Very often	36%
Occasionally	23%
Rarely	5%
Never	7%

Q51. How often do you feel distracted by your use of mobile devices?

Multiple times a day	38%
Once a day	16%
A few times a week	21%
Once a week	5%
Less than once a week	3%
Never	16%

Now we would like you to think about the parent/caregiver you're taking this survey with and answer a few questions about their mobile device use.

Q52. Thinking about a regular weekday, do you feel the parent/caregiver you are taking the survey with spends too much time on mobile devices, too little time, or just about the right amount of time?

Too much time	29%
Too little time	15%
Right amount of time	57%

Q53. Do you feel the parent/caregiver you are taking the survey with is addicted to mobile devices?

Yes	35%
No	65%

Q54. Again thinking about the parent/caregiver you are taking the survey with, has their use of mobile devices mainly helped or hurt your relationship with them, or has it not made a difference?

Mainly helped	14%
Made no difference	83%
Mainly hurt	3%

Q55. How does your parent/caregiver's use of mobile devices affect the following aspects of your family life?

	Helps a lot	Helps a little	Makes no difference	Hurts a little	Hurts a lot
Family meals	5%	11%	77%	5%	2%
Family travel	7%	21%	65%	4%	2%
Family conversations	6%	15%	68%	8%	3%
Family outings	7%	18%	68%	6%	2%
Family activities	7%	18%	66%	7%	3%

Q56. How often do you feel the parent/caregiver you are taking the survey with is distracted by their use of mobile devices?

Multiple times a day	24%
Once a day	20%
A few times a week	21%
Once a week	6%
Less than once a week	11%
Never	19%

Q57. How often do you argue with the parent/caregiver you are taking the survey with about your use of mobile devices?

Multiple times a day	10%
Once a day	10%
A few times a week	20%
Once a week	7%
Less than once a week	18%
Never	35%

Q58. Do any of the following lead to regular difficulties or conflicts between you and the parent/caregiver you are taking the survey with? Please select all that apply.

Bedtime/sleep	31%
Money	17%
Homework	28%
Amount of screen time	27%
What you do on mobile devices	19%
What you do with their friends	14%
What you wear	12%
What you eat	18%
Chores/helping in the house	32%
Your behaviour	23%
None of these	24%

Q59. Do you have family rules regarding the use of mobile devices (e.g. no phones at the dinner table)?

Yes	62%
No	38%

If Q59 = Yes

Q60. Who is more likely to break those rules?

The adult(s)	17%
You/your siblings	39%
Equally likely	17%
Nobody breaks the rules	27%



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