

RSA® Conference 2019

San Francisco | March 4–8 | Moscone Center

A large, abstract graphic in the top right corner consists of numerous thin, colored lines (blue, yellow, orange) originating from a central point and radiating outwards, resembling a network or a burst of energy.

BETTER.

SESSION ID: SEM-M02

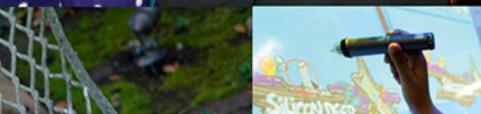
The Psychology of Technology

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Co- Founder
My Digital TAT2



My Digital TAT2



Our Mission

To facilitate conversations that inspire thoughtful and ethical online behavior by helping people to think critically about their power and responsibility in a connected world.

We believe in creating a kinder online culture by equipping all young people with the tools they need to make responsible and ethical online choices.

Workshop Goals

- To discuss the psychological impact of technology and social media on teens.
- To discuss strategies for building self awareness and digital resilience.



A photograph showing the lower halves of six teenagers (three boys and three girls) sitting on a set of stone steps. They are all looking down at their mobile phones. The teenagers are dressed in casual summer clothing like t-shirts, shorts, and jeans. The background shows some greenery and sunlight filtering through trees.

In The Last 15 Years...

2004 Facebook was created

2005 average texter sends 35 texts per month

2017 average texter sends 3,853 texts per month

First iPhone released in 2007

First iPhone app in 2008

As of 2018 teens have access to 3.8 million apps



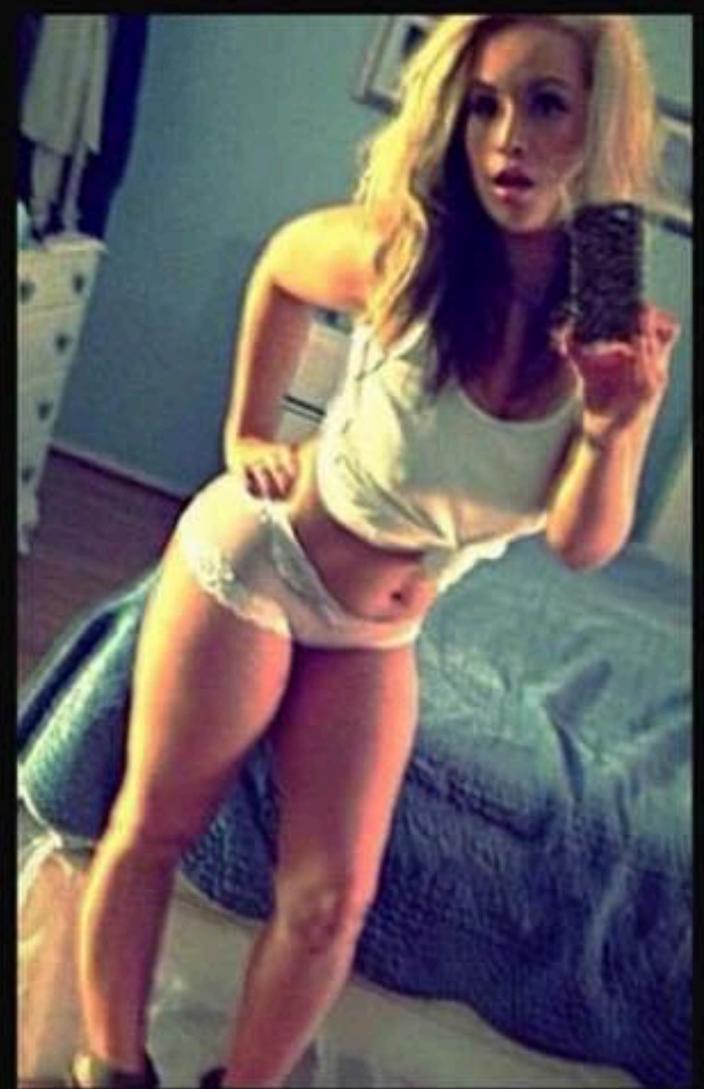
WHAT'S CHANGED?

Honey, I found a picture of your grandmother...

2019



2090



Developmental Tasks Have Not Changed

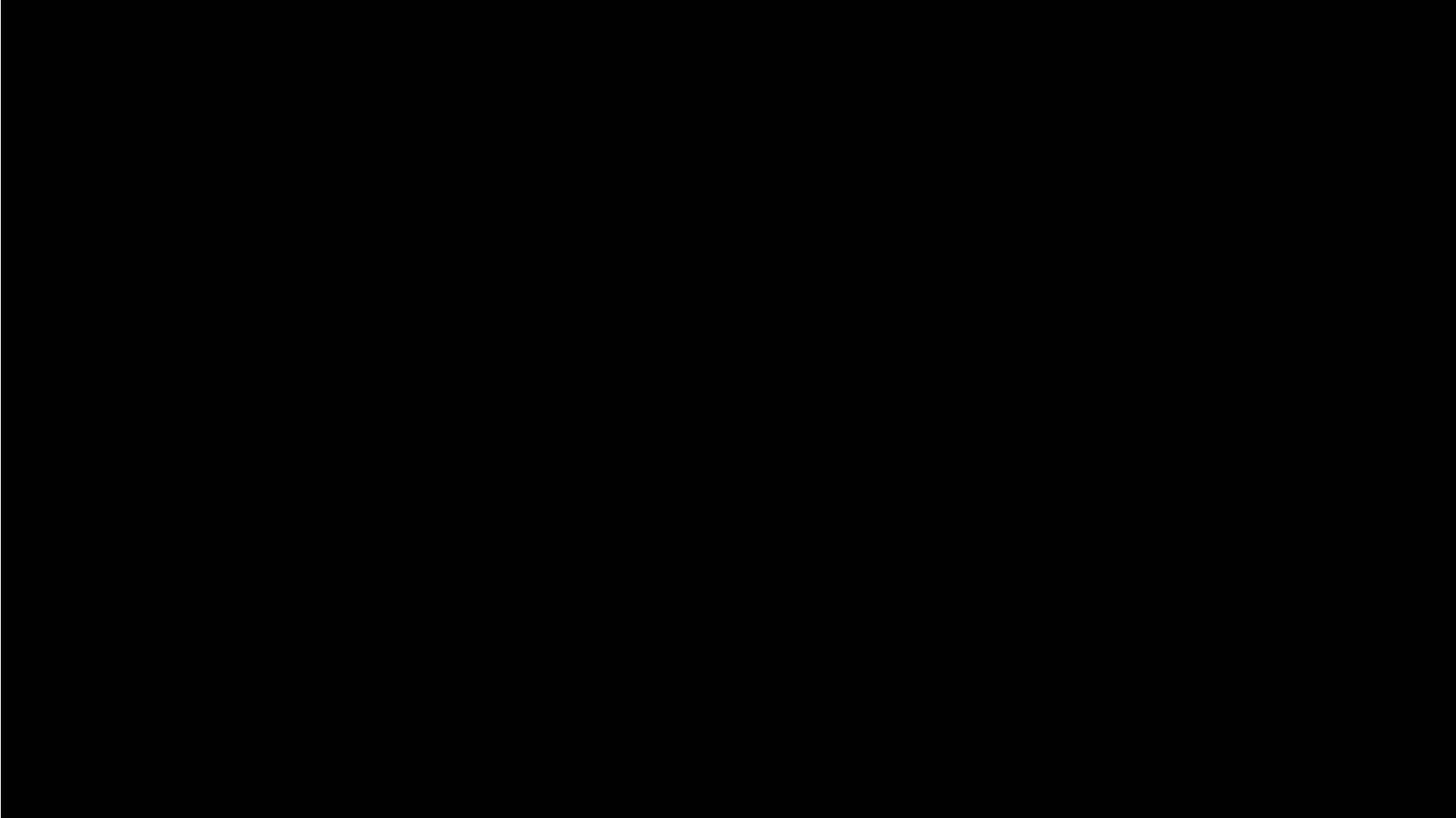
- Socializing with peers
- Investigating the world
- trying on new identities
- Establishing independence



The Power and the Challenge

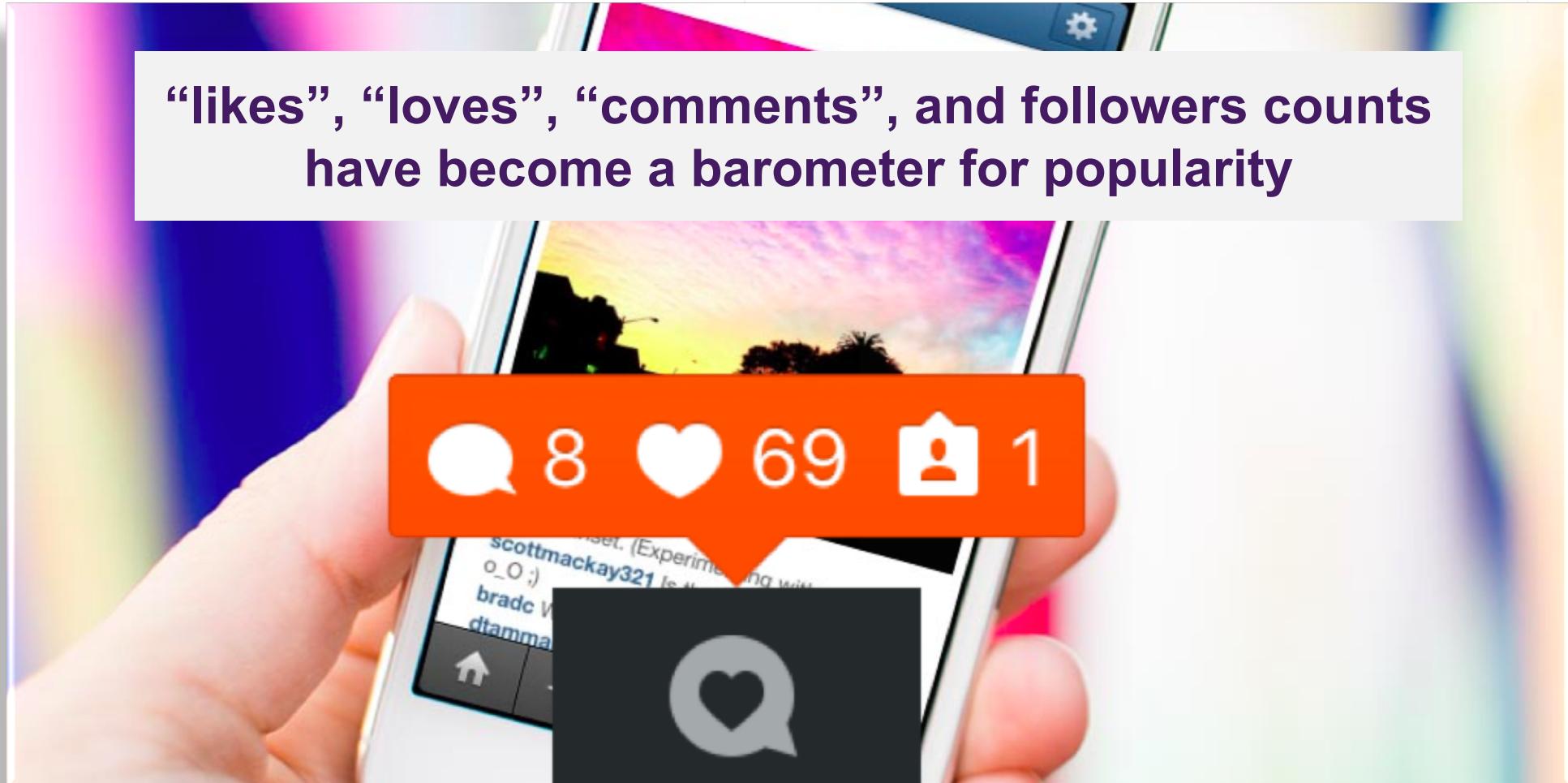


Our Teen Advisers Describe the Challenges



The Importance of Being Liked

“likes”, “loves”, “comments”, and followers counts have become a barometer for popularity



Peer Validation and the “Pull” of Social Media

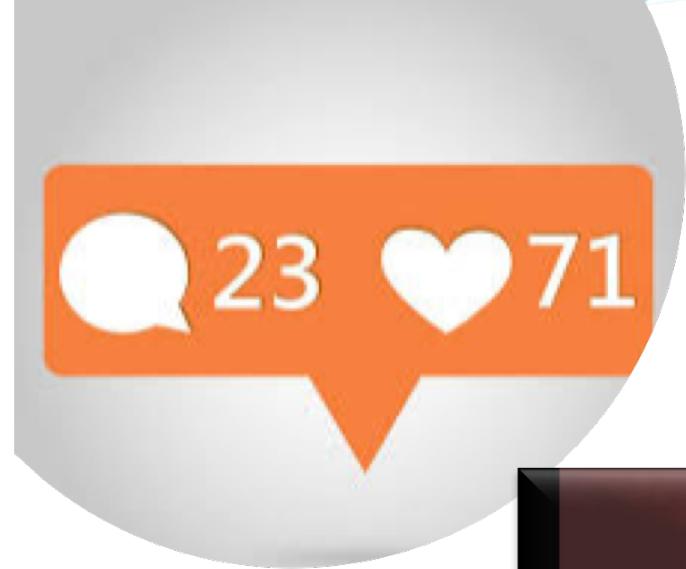
Teens care deeply about peer validation. Feedback on social media, positive and negative, is hard to resist.

Brains are hard wired to seek new information. We get a shot of dopamine with each new text, tweet, “like”.

Dopamine is stimulated by unpredictability, small bits of information and reward.

The very things we get on social media.





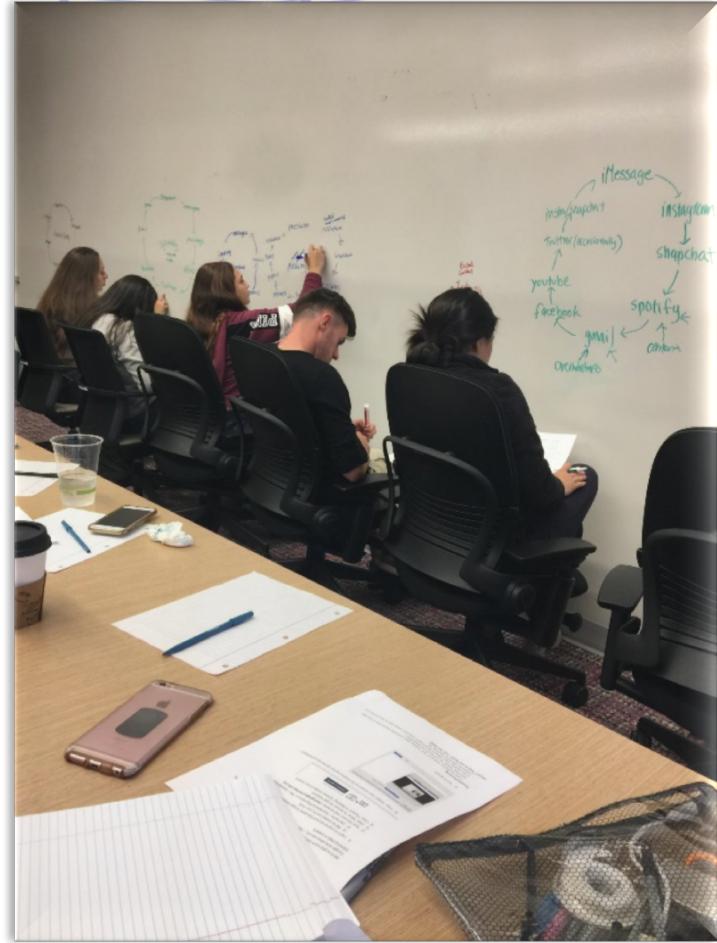
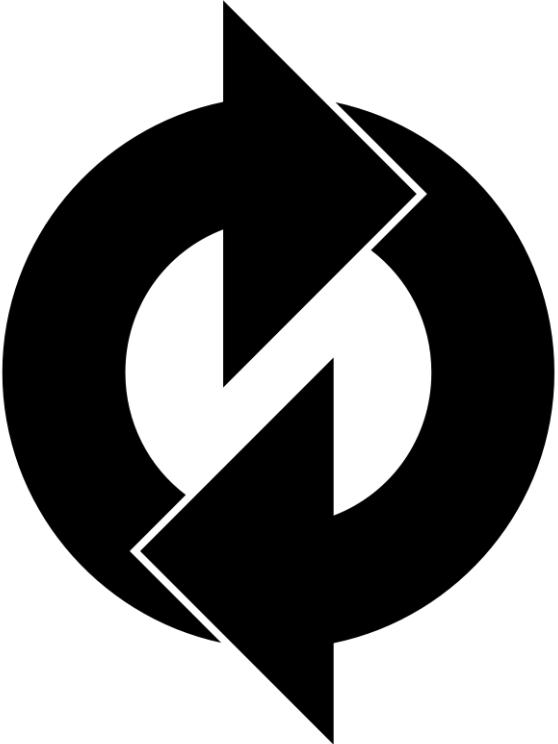
Understanding the Pull of a “Snapchat Streak” and Instagram “Likes”



999 back and forth snapstreaks within a 24 hour period with 3 friends

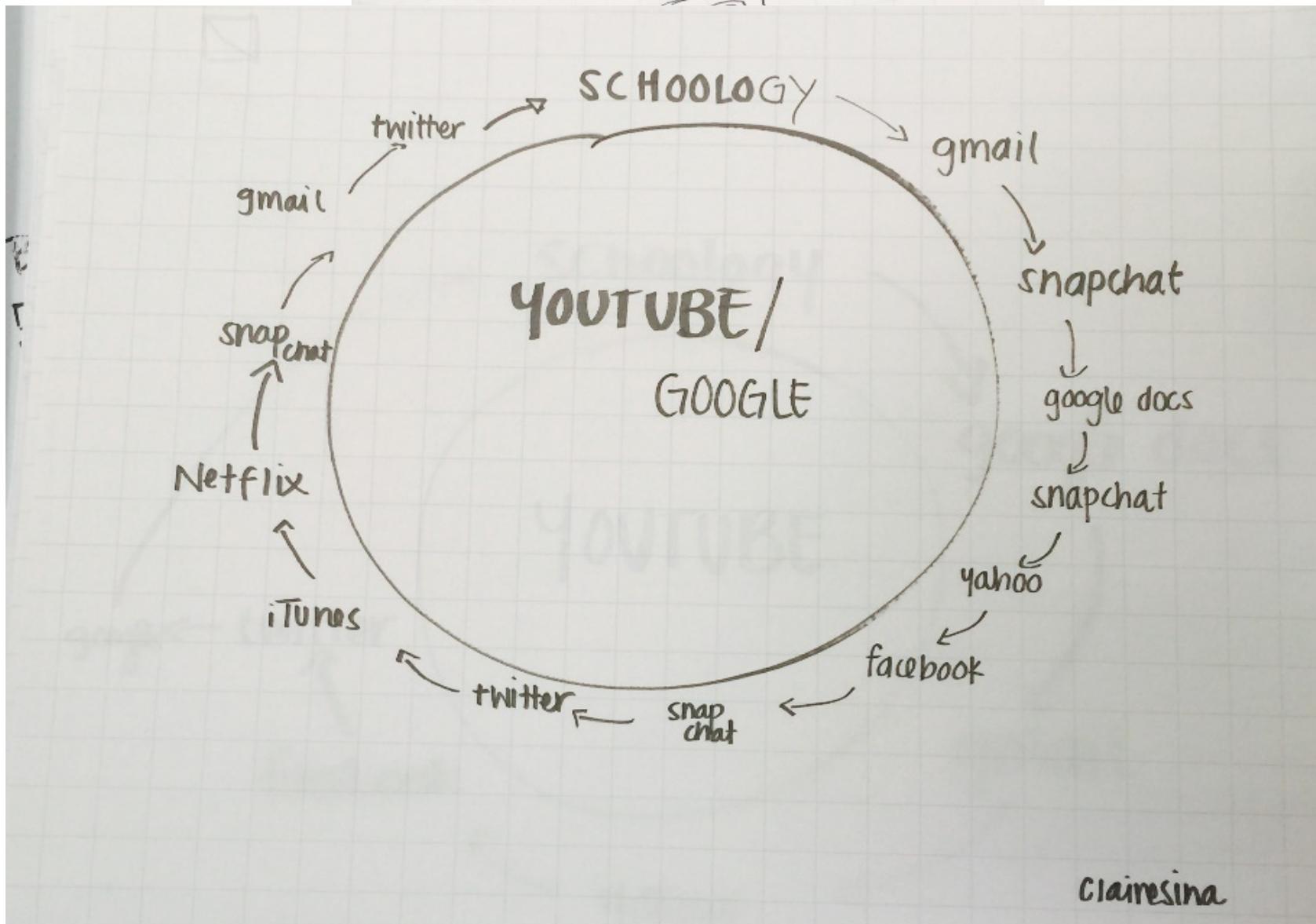


Our Loop



“The cycle of sites, apps, platforms that we check regularly, often, and religiously.”
- 10 grade student

We All Have Our Unique Loop



Playing a lot or Overuse?

*"When tech and social media
are used to fill a void."*

-10th grade student



Is it opening up their world, or closing it down?

Behavior gets in the way of responsibilities

Used as an escape or self-medication

Keep doing it even after it stops being fun

Can't stop even when they try

Keep going in spite of negative consequences

From Unconscious to Conscious Looping

What did you notice about your loop?

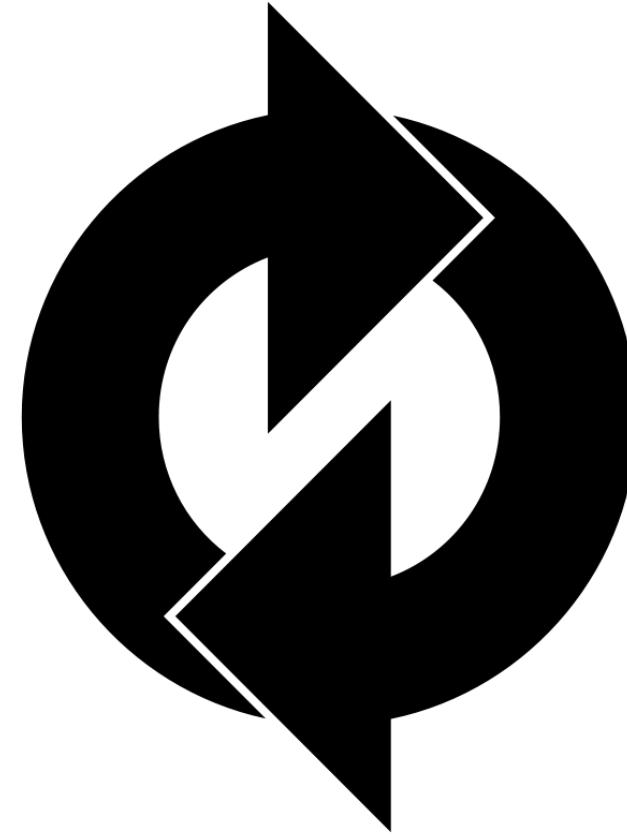
What are you constantly checking?

What stays on in the background?

Do you check more after a post?

Is there an emotion attached to it?

Are you ever free of your loop?

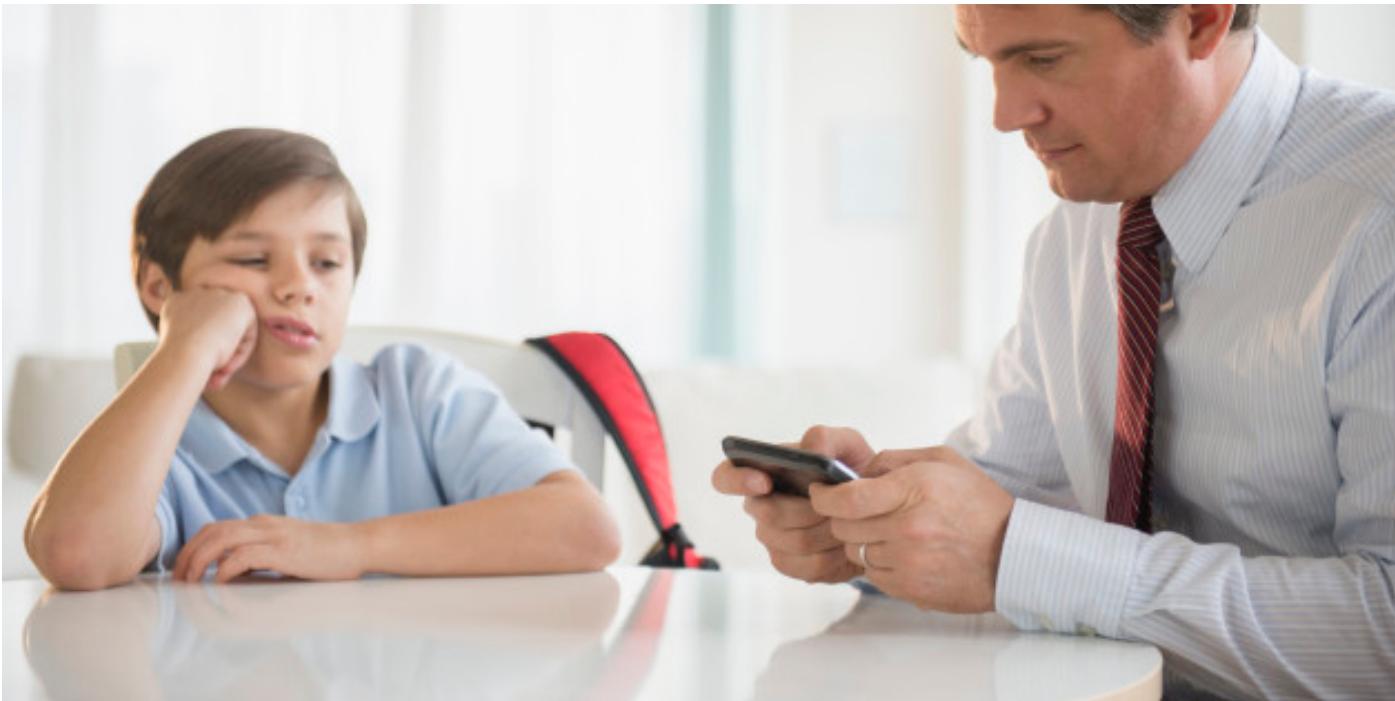


It's not just a kid thing...





“When we’re out to dinner my mom is texting under the table while we are talking. She thinks I don’t know.”
-5th grade student



*“When my Dad get’s home at 6:30, I go downstairs to say hi.
He’s on his phone and doesn’t see me.
I come down again later and he’s watching his shows.
There’s never a good time to get his attention.”*

-6th grade student

Wired and Tired



*“Sometimes I close my eyes
to go to sleep, and I feel like
my brain is on caffeine.”*

-6th grade student



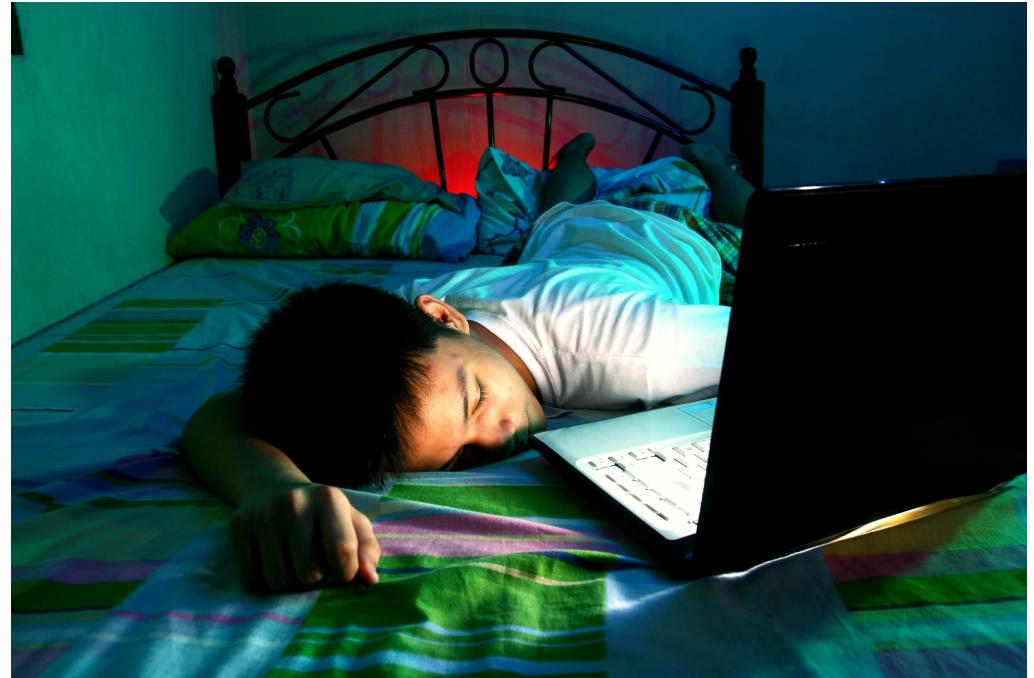
Coming to School with Digital Hangovers

- Multitasking/task switching in the last hour before going to
- The **content itself** can over-stimulate the mind and emotions
- **Lights and sounds** affect the body's natural timing and alertness.



Developing Good Sleep Habits

- Put devices to bed at least 1 hour before bedtime.
- Becoming self-aware: Help them understand how their body is being tricked into staying awake.
- Learning to do something consistent in preparation for sleep will have lifelong benefits.



Strategies for Setting Limits

- Charge all devices in your room.
- Consider no cell phones on car rides and sleepovers.
- Buy an old fashioned alarm clock.
- Create a family media agreement.



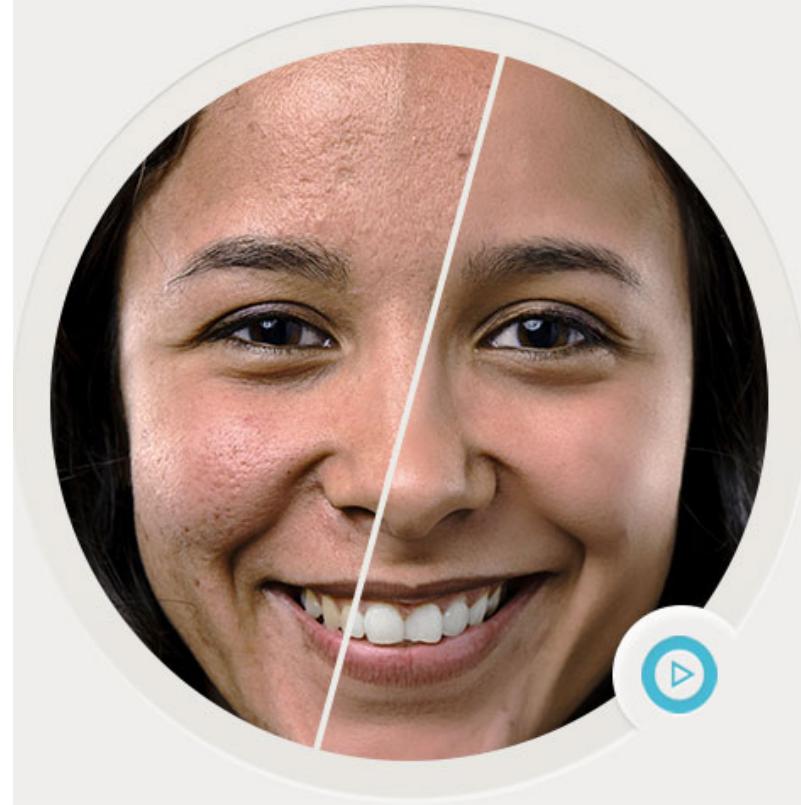
Digital Perfection: Living in a Curated World

*"We have permission to be harsh to each other, hyper-critical.
You can't get it right."*

-10th grade girl

"Sometimes I stare at that image for a very long time, and just go wow, and that wow is, I can never be that."

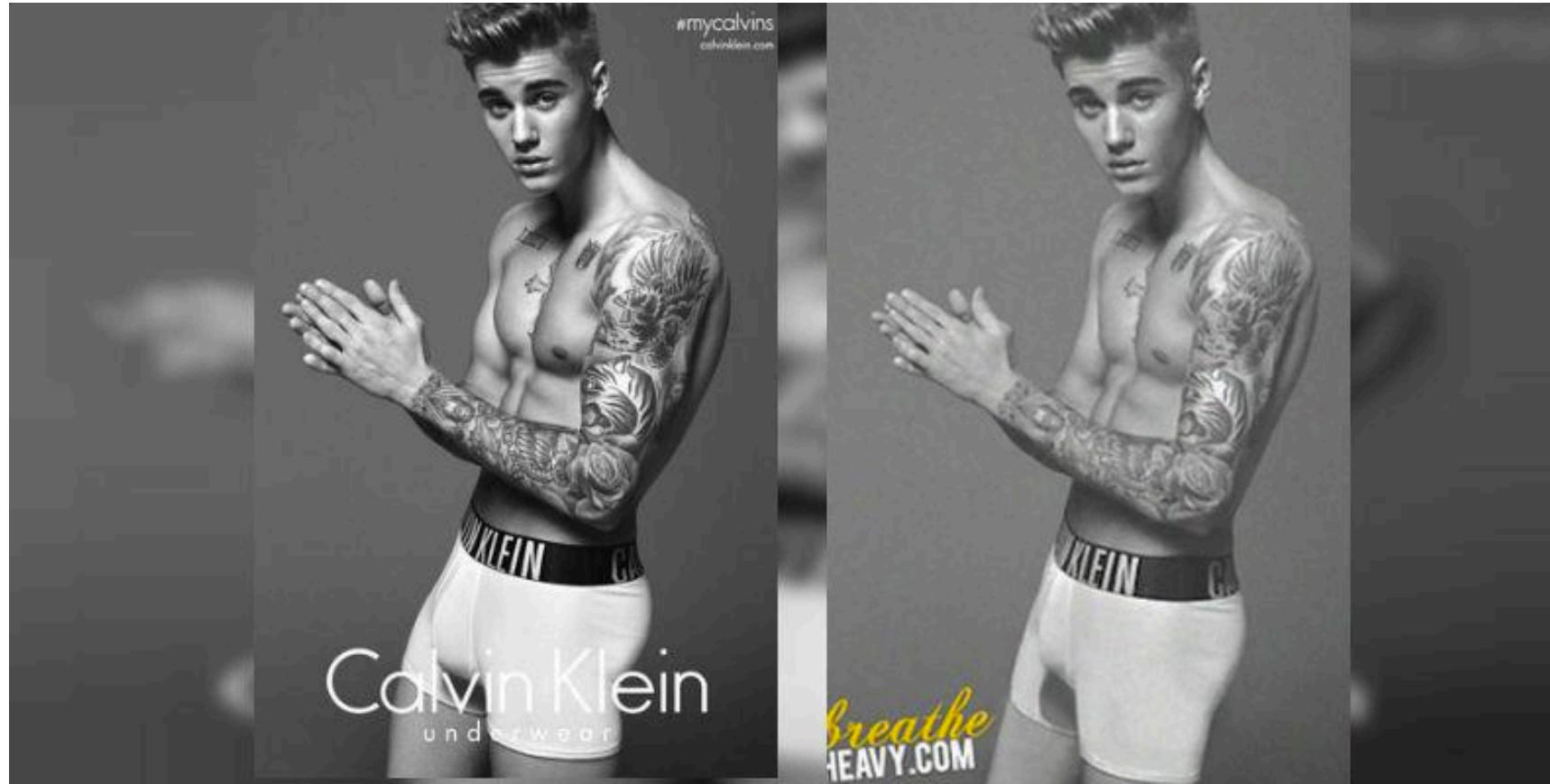
-11th grade girl



Facetune

"Beauty" is unachievable

Digital Perfection Impacts Every Body



*"I overthink how I look. I'm insecure and feel
I'm not good enough."*
-11th grade boy

Increase in Toxicity

- An acceptance of toxicity
- Just a part of the culture
- A thickening of the skin

"I call it helpful criticism. People can be mean, but if it's the truth, we can take it."

-7th grade Youtuber

"I need to just take it."

-8th grade boy

"We just have thicker skins."

-11th grade boy



Anonymity is part of it, but not all...

A young girl with dark hair tied back, wearing a bright yellow t-shirt, is sitting in a dark room, looking intently at a laptop screen. Her right hand is resting against her cheek, and she wears a red and black beaded bracelet on her left wrist. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the glow from the laptop screen.

*When you are online, there is a wall
between you and the other person.*

*You don't have to face the guilt
because you don't see what you've
done to them.*

-7th grade student

Discuss the Power and the Challenge of Anonymity

- Allows teens to divulge a part of themselves they may hide offline.
- Provides a platform to process anxiety and find others with similar struggles and interests



- Can also lead to group cruelty, self-harm, and risk-taking.



What Children Need But Will Never Tell You



Sacred Family Time

Create Sacred family time and zones that are device-free for conversation or alone time.

Rules that apply to the entire family.

For the adults in their lives to model how to be present in a world filled with digital distractions.



Digital Resilience: The Ability To...

- **Think critically and reflect** on what parts of technology use are truly meaningful
- **Recognize marketing manipulation** and not be defined by it
- **Assess** when social technology detracts from their lives
- **Be the boss of their own attention**
- **Make these decisions on their own** as technology continues to change



We are seeing young people developing digital resilience, agency, social awareness, and a recognition of their power and responsibility growing up in a connected world.



www.mydigitaltat2.org



We aim to create a kinder digital culture