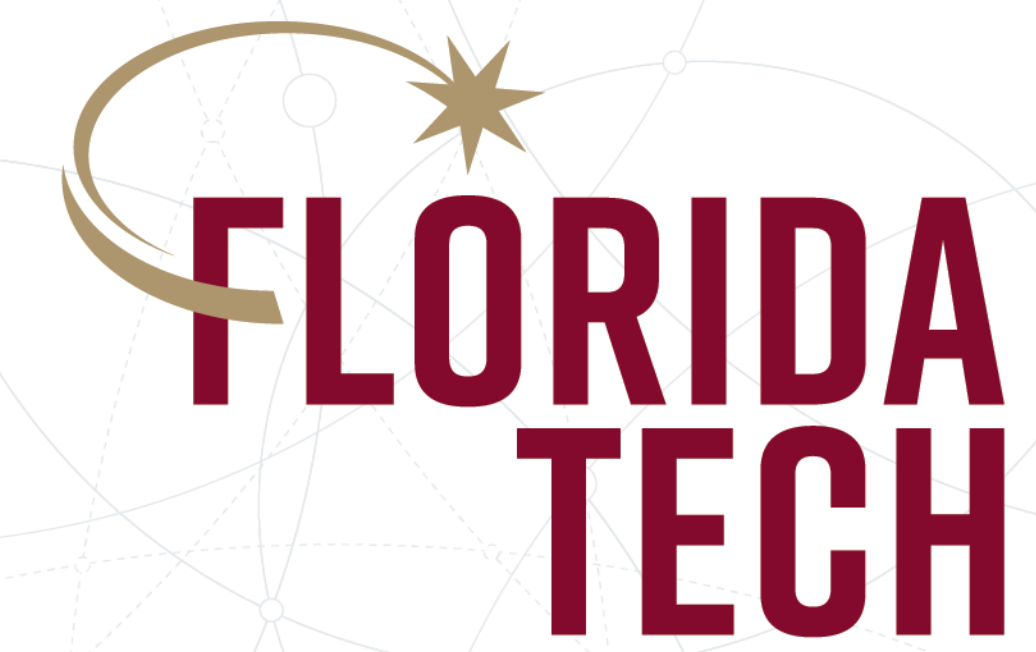


Florida Tech Reads

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Introduction

Florida Tech Reads is a community outreach program initiated by the Honors College. Honors College students are able to serve the community by providing resources to individuals who find themselves without access to services. This service may be of particular interest to the vision impaired, young readers, English-second language learners, and those who have increased screen time during the pandemic, it is our intention that this program will be beneficial for everyone.

Aim

Students at Florida Tech will have the opportunity to volunteer their time for reading books that will be recorded and made available for everyone's enjoyment. Our goal is to provide audiobooks over the internet. The audiobooks will be free of charge to the public and readily available on the university YouTube channel.

Implementation

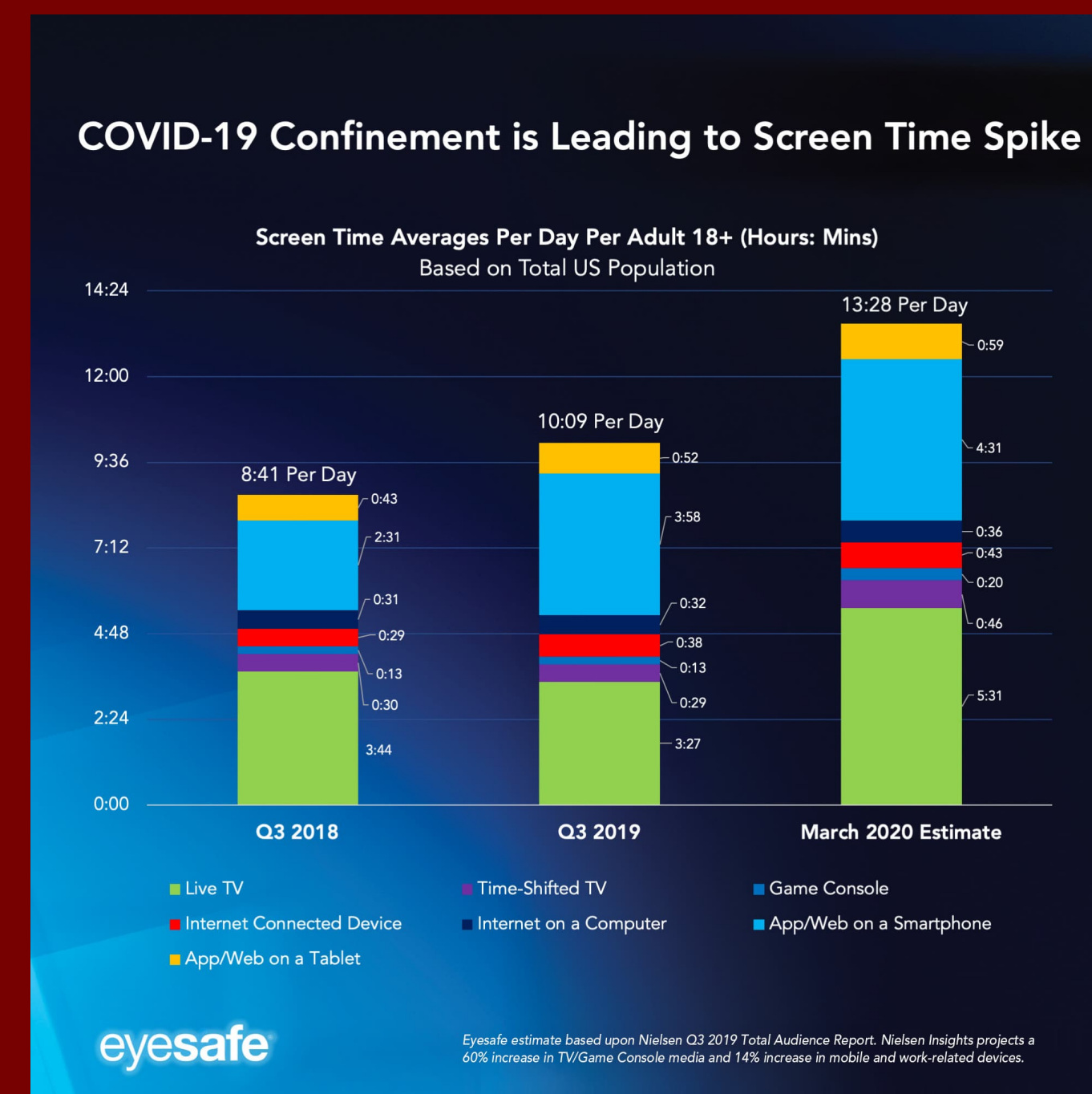
The Honors College will be partnering with the Marketing Department to create a channel on the university's primary YouTube page. Books will be selected from the public domain to avoid copyright infringement and audio will be provided by the students. Florida Tech Reads will add to the extensive list of opportunities from the Honors College.

Learn more about us here:

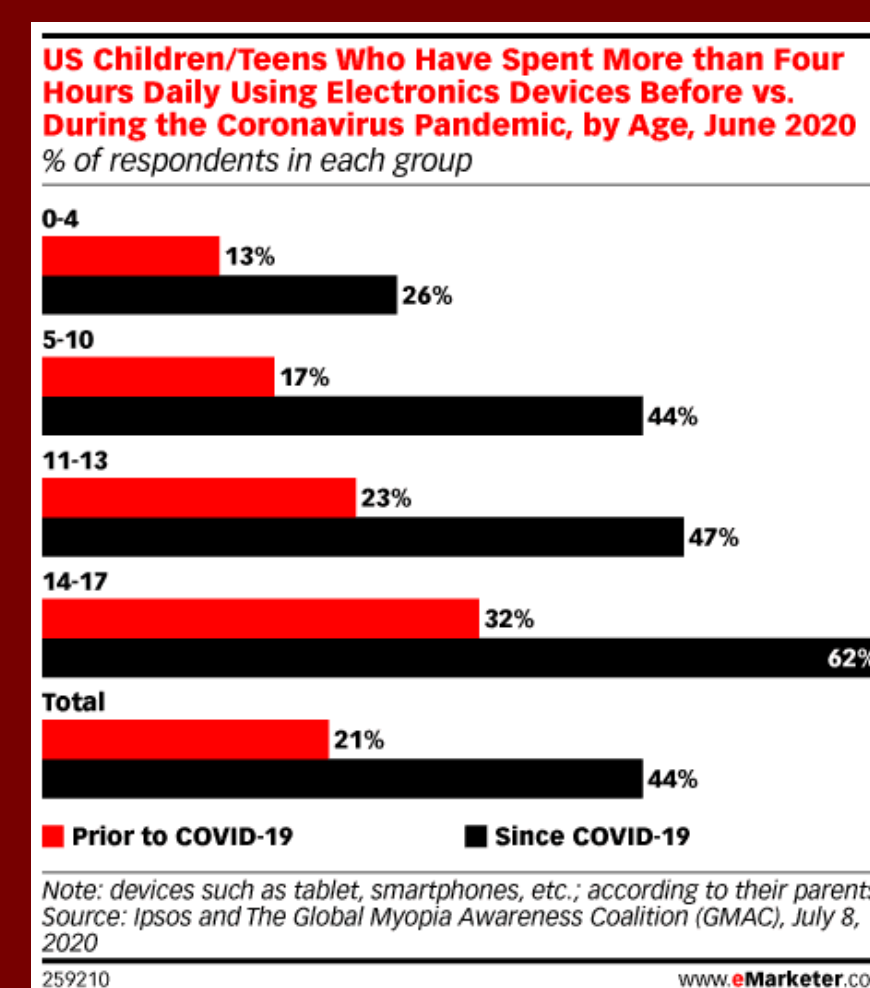
<https://www.fit.edu/honors-college/>



Screen Time Usage During The Pandemic

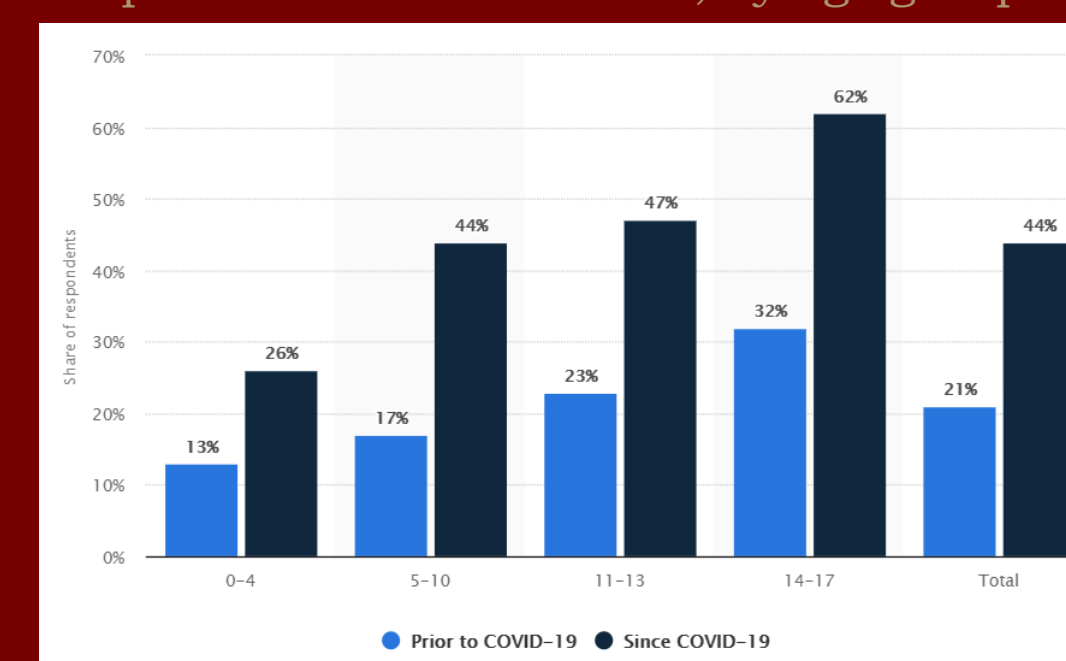


Eyesafe (2020) <https://eyesafe.com/covid-19-screen-time-spike-to-over-13-hours-per-day/#:~:text=With%20a%2060%25%20increase%20in,per%20day%20in%20Q3%202019.>



Dolan, Shelagh (2020) eMarketer <https://www.emarketer.com/content/electronic-device-usage-nearly-doubled-among-us-kids-during-pandemic>

Children and teens from the United States who spent more than four hours daily using electronic devices before and during the coronavirus pandemic according to parents as of June 2020, by age group



Statista (2020) <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1189204/us-teens-children-screen-time-daily-coronavirus-before-during/>

Implications

- The pandemic has led to an increase in screen time for many individuals to facilitate working remotely, attending school virtually, and recreational purposes while adhering to safety guidelines. As a result, eye strain and migraines are a common problem. Readily available audiobooks provide entertainment without the need for staring at a screen.
- After school programs and extracurricular activities are on hold for younger students. Young learners can improve their reading competency by following along to age-appropriate classics, thereby strengthening their skills outside the classroom.
- English Second-Language Learners (ESL) have experienced disruptions to the vital support ordinarily available to promote study. Access to audiobooks at different reading levels can help fill this need in a safe, convenient format.
- The visually impaired face additional struggles during the pandemic. Text-to-speech is a helpful tool, but it lacks the quality of human speech. Access to free audiobooks created by students with a passion for reading and those in their community can make a positive impact on quality of life.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Dr. Perdigao and the Honors College along with Florida Tech and its Marketing Department for supporting this endeavor. A special thanks to the Honors Council and especially to Alecea Nelson, student lead of Civic Engagement on the Honors Council.

When Florida Tech Reads, Everyone Succeeds!