Meric: Lets start of easy, what's your name, age and schooling?

Mary: Okay, I'm Melanie Cosdon, I'm 13 and I go to Meadville Area Middle School

Meric: So what grade are you in now?

Mary: 7th

Meric: So you're going into 8th?

Mary: Yeah.

Meric: Very cool, are you excited?

Mary: Yes

Meric: So tell me a little bit about yourself like who you are and what you like to do?

Mary: Um..I do a lot of the arts, i act a lot. I sing and I dance. I don't like to draw or point, i'm not very good at it but i like ceramics.

Meric: Who do you live with and what is home life like?

Mary: Well i have an 18 year old sister. And she's going to college this year. I kind of learned a lot from her. I live with my dad. that's how i got started in theater, because my dad works in it. He shows me broadway shows and yeah, that's how i really got into theater.

Meric: Very cool, and do you live with your mom as well?

Mary: Yeah, yeah.

Meric: What does she do?

Mary: she's a therapist and has her own practice.

Meric: Here in Meadville?

Mary: Yeah and she's certified to teach yoga.

Meric: What college is your sister going to?

Mary: Denison

Meric: Do you now when she officially heads out?

Mary: I think like mid august, i'm not sure

Meric: And she graduated from Meadville High School?

Mary: Yeah

Meric: Cool, so tell me about a typical school day and summer day for you.

Mary: Well during a school day, i like to wake up at 6:50 but its usually like 7 o'clock, 7:10 am and i walk to school most days so i have to be out the door at 8:07 because it takes me about 7 min to walk to school. And then i do the announcements at my school. Then I have like a few classes before lunch. Then i have more classes and then i just go home. Sometimes i have lie extra curricular activities or like im on student council and have meetings.

Meric: And a summer day? Are you doing anything this summer or trying to relax and have some fun.

Mary: I'm doing a couple camps like creativing landscapes. I apprentice there, so in the morning i help one of the teacher and in the afternoons i learn. Im also doing Camp Notre Dame, which is more traditional. Canoeing, bow and arrow, stuff like that.

Meric: So you're staying pretty busy then.

Mary: Yeah, trying.

Meric: Jumping back to the school really quickly, is your school doing the same thing where the high school is blocking off certain websites when you use the wifi.

Mary: Oh yeah, there's like, we use school laptops a lot powerpoints and things like that or small papers and sometimes you'll be allowed on certain websites and some are blocked. Even youtube is blocked but there's a way to get around that. People found sneaky ways. If you type in just the word youtube on google's search bar and then press the link it'll work.

Meric: It's funny people found a way around. I'll come back to the school subject in a bit but what's it like being a young person in Meadville?

Mary: Well i ride my bike a lot, around town. And, i like going to the really cheap movies, because it's just a fun thing to do and it might not always be a good movie but me and my friend go to rite-aid beforehand and stuff our purses being going in the theater, it's really funny. Consider yourself lucky to have never been in a movie theater with me because we're really obnoxious.

Meric: You're talking about the Park Ave. Cinema right? Yeah i love it down there. Watched Need for Speed there with my friend. We had the whole place to ourselves.

Mary: I love when that happens

Meric: So are there any other places other than the movies that you like to hang out at?

Mary: Sometimes I like to bike to the top of the parking garage and look around.

Meric: The one where they just had the concert?

Mary: Yeah, that's the one, it's a lot of fun.

Meric: Thats cool. So tell me about a typical day with technology and what kind of stuff do you own?

Mary: Well I have a regular smartphone. And we have a computer at home and it's so old. I feel like it's one of those big box ones from the 90s and its very angry a lot. You hear all this air wishing in and out of it and the printer is worse, you'll turn it on and it's loud and warming itself up.

Meric: What other stuff do you own like tablets or video games?

Mary: We have an xbox that connects to our tv and we play videogames on there. But mostly i'm on my phone.

Meric: Do you ever play online with people?

Mary: I know people who do but we use the kinect to dance and do sports on it.

Meric: How often do you use the media devices you mentioned?

Mary: Very very often, i usually have my phone on my person all the time, like now. It makes me feel safer to have it, you feel more connected with people.

Meric: It sounds like you use your phone really often, how often do you use the other devices?

Mary: I don't really use the computer too much but the occasional game. I watch TV probably and hour and a half to two hours a day. and my phone all day.

Meric: What are some things that you use your devices for like videos, music, blogs?

Mary: I like to watch buzzfeed videos and i have the buzzfeed app on my phone. And I have a lot of social media on my phone like snapchat and instagram.

Meric: Any others?

Mary: I use instagram the most and i don't think email counts but i have that.

Meric: Were you ever interested in getting other ones like twitter or facebook?

Mary: I don't think enough of my friends are online, i know my sister has it but that's like, twitter is more her, its older. And facebook is just like, my parents use it, so i don't.

Meric: So what are a couple of the benefits or drawbacks of media and technology in your opinion.

Mary: Benefits are, its easier to make plans, just a quick text away or a snapchat throughout the day. Instead of like having to call them or it they don't pick up you don't know if they're going to call back or not. Drawbacks are probably finding yourself on their there much like i do. or like there's definitely like cyber bullying and all that stuff.

Meric: Interesting point. No one's mentioned that yet. You mentioned you like watching TV, what kind of tv or movie provider do you have? Hulu, netflix VUDU any of those?

Mary: We have like all of that Amazon videos too.

Meric: If you had to recommend something, what would you recommend above all the other shows and movies?

Mary: Oh definitely stranger things.

Meric: Nice, yeah that's a really good one. Before stranger things did you have another show you loved?

Mary: Its a bit dated but Buffy the Vampire Slayer, i'm a very fantasy, mystery type person, that's also the books i read.

Meric: So you mentioned some old products you have at home but including everything you own, what is your general experience when interacting with those items? is it good and positive or bad negative

Mary: Sometimes you'll feel like "it's breaking, what do i do?" I've never dropped my phone in water and had to put it in rice my sister has though. My mom has been through like 8 ipods. My dad once had his tablet run over.

Meric: What, like by a car?

Mary:Yeah, he like was at presque isle and put it on his roof as he was packing up the car and forgot it up there, and so he was driving and couldn't find it and went back and it was all run over. My moms also run over her phone, lots of bad blood with technology. Our Netflix either takes .2 seconds to load or will take forever to load, the screen will get dark before it finishes loading.

Meric: So poor internet connection is something you guys struggle with often?

Mary: Yeah

Meric: So the technology located in your house, you already said the TV is in your living room. Where is the rest of the stuff located and where is your phone when its not on you.

Mary: Well the computer is in the upstairs study. And my sister usually uses that one for school work when she was in high school. My dad brings his tablet with him to work. i don't know why because he has a smart phone too, i don't know why, it's unnecessary.

Meric: The xbox is with the TV in the living room? What about the old laptop you mentioned?

Mary: The really old laptop is floating around somewhere in the house. You have to press the on button for like 5 minutes and itll turn on and be like "reboot whole system" and then you like "Not worth it." and turn it back off. My mom has a newer laptop that she uses at her office.

Meric: When I first got my phone, my parents would make me leave it in the livingroom or their room before bed, do you parents do something similar as well?

Mary: Oh yeah, but sometimes i'll be sneaky and say that i'm leaving it out and my parents will be like "So you did have it in your room" and i'll say i got up in the middle of the night or morning.

Meric: What impacts your use of technology? and what drives you to use it in situations?

Mary: Well i feel like a big part is that "the other kids are doing it" and you sort of want to show off on certain platforms like instagram is a big "hey look at what i'm doing with my friends" and on snapchat it's like "hey look at funny things". It's about people i think. You wanna get more followers than someone else.

Meric: That's a pretty good response! So you already mentioned that you're on your phone all day, but do you think your use of technology is more that it should be or should it be less or is it appropriate?

Mary: I think that i'm using it the regular amount for kids my age and that kinda scares me because i know i'm on it kinda a lot.

Meric: Mostly your phone though?

Mary: Yeah.

Meric: So what do you do on your phone other than texting and instagram and snapchat?

Mary: I have the buzzfeed app that keeps me updated and has some quizzes and games that i enjoy. I don't really have any games on my phone because i'm very low on storage. I have a lot of music on my phone. I listen to a lot of music.

Meric: I mentioned before about the schools blocked internet. Do you think that's appropriate or should it be removed?

Mary: I think it's appropriate. I think kids aren't reliable enough to be able to not be on those sites during school. Because like, this school year we were allowed to have our phones on us so long as they were on silent or turned off completely. And even then there are people with their phones under the desk or people would go to the bathroom to check on their sites. At the end of the school year after the award ceremony, where they give like honors and stuff and Mr. --- was like "okay great school year, but next year you can't have your phones in your person. They must be in your locker." And there was a big up rage at that.

Meric: So you mentioned music before, the new music you listen to, how do you get it? Do you use spotify, apple music or any of those music providers or like through pandora and iheartradio?

Mary: I don't like Spotify or pandora or websites like that. I usually have my phone on a play app. I buy the music and then put it on my phone. Or I get some illegal music apps or download it right off of youtube.

Meric: So how do you hear about the new songs that come out?

Mary: I'm not a very pop music type of person so like, in the high school on friday, sometimes they'll play music between classes. Usually its more popular songs or the ones at school dances. Or the teen life teacher Ms. -- will play music before each lesson starts. And that's all the popular music that i don't like too much. I listen to a lot of show tunes which is probably my big thing. Then classic rock, then like, i could listen to some pop.

Meric: You already mentioned that you use snapchat and instagram and those are your primary bases for social media.You touched on why use it but do you mind elaborating on that?

Mary: It's just a wide range of functionalities that instagram does. It has stories now which i don't use, i find it a bit tedious. they're trying to take over more sites. You can also message people which is useful because it says if they have read it or not.

Meric: so snapchat and instagram aren't too different but how do you choose when to post what?

Mary: If i'm being obnoxious or not, like there are people who post like 20 things a day and they're a non-spam account. But they'll be like "look at this cool rock" or "this tree is weird" things like that. Instagram is more like a picture app for if you did something cool whereas snapchat, you can be more silly, i guess.

Meric: So how much of your life do you share on snapchat and instagram?

Mary: A lot i guess. You want people to know what you're up to and when you're doing cool things.

Meric: When do you use social media? I guess how often are you on social media as well?

Mary: I'm on it quite often, like i don't post a lot a day, i try to keep it down to one photo a day, or like 5 a week. because you can be too obnoxious. I post things about my birthday or someone else birthday, Last day of school.

Meric: I've started to learn that people who use social media often fall on a spectrum of content creators and content consumers. Where do you think you fall in that spectrum?

Mary: I guess I create a lot of my own content. I get irritated with people who just post quotes or something and stuff like that. There are other people who really like to do it for attention and will post hints. Things like "feeling really sad today" or "wish they cared" and i'm like (shrugs) It can get a bit tedious.

Meric: Do you thin your social media post mirror your real life? If i was to see your social media before meeting you, would i get a good idea of who you are?

Mary: Oh yeah.

Meric: Why do you say that?

Mary: You can really get good feeling from seeing the clothes I wear and what I do. Or like, I post updates on shows i'm in like "we work real hard on this, come check it out". So definitely

.

Meric: Cool, so what do you think it means to be authentic when online and do you think you are?

Mary: I'd like to think i am. I think so. Being authentic online is, "keeping it 100" (Laughs) I don't know how to put this, like not being fake online. Like "omg my bae came home" or "hanging out with my girls" because when you use lingo like that, it seems like you're doing it for a show. The main thing is try to be you doing, just cause, like trying to make it look natural.

Meric: Do you think the world would be a different place without digital media and technology? And do you think it would be better or worse?

Mary: Oh yeah. I think people would probably be less narcissistic because there's a big thing about followers and likes on a picture. And there have definitely been times where people around me or my self have been like "I didn't get too many likes on this picture, i should take it down because people don't like it." I Think it's an attention thing, but also staying connected to people and letting them know you're up to date. Just like cool things you're doing today. You can use it to be a little narcissistic like i said or like, to just show people, this is what i do with my life.

Meric: So do you use your snapchat or instagram to keep in touch with any family that may not be around here?

Mary: My family doesn't really have those modern social media apps. I know my grandparents have facebook and that's how they communicate with my sister sometimes.

Meric: So it sounds like you use social media to keep in contact with friends more than family?

Mary: Yeah.

Meric: Are you part of any media scenes in Meadville and do you listen to any local bands or makes films? You yourself make art, right?

Mary: yeah.

Meric: So what is that like? What's that scene like in Meadville?

Mary: I think Meadville is good at supporting local businesses or projects like Grow Meadville who had local bands and art shows. I do a lot of my art in the market house over the summer and that was fun.

Meric: Do you think people should use media in their everyday lives and why or why not?

Mary: Yeah, i think they should because it's a good way to catalog your memories each day. Yeah there are pictures but it's better to show people.

Meric: Thats a good point, do you think technology can give someone the power to change the world? Personally do you think you have this power?

Mary: I don't know. I don't think i have the power because im 13 and living in a very small city. But there are accounts that are making people more aware of things like wildlife research type things.

Meric: How do you define success and do you think that lines up with the societal definition?

Mary: Success i think to me is, like, being, happy with how your life is going. I think that's pretty much society's version of success. I guess societies version could also be lie how many friends or how much money.

Meric: Do you think becoming knowledgeable about internet spaces and social media is important in becoming successful by your definition?

Mary: Not necessarily because like, if you're happy with yourself, why would you need to show these pictures off. But it could be good, i mean...

Meric: Do you think it could help success if it was defined as making a lot of money?

Mary: Yeah, honestly. Because like, itll give you more of a feeling of what people are like and what type of effort they'll put into what they're doing.

Meric: I'm sure your sister has dealt with some of that during the college process.

Mary: Oh yeah.

Meric: What would you like to do for employment in the future?

Mary: I would like to be either a marine biologist or a space engineer.

Meric: Very cool. Do you think your social media will affect your employment in anyway

Mary: Probably because like you said people are going back to make sure you're not a garbage person.

Meric: Do you think you represent yourself well on social media? Like if a job looked back all the way to now, more positive or negative?

Mary: I think its pretty good, i think they'll cringe when they see me at this age but i've also gone back and seen my hair cut and im making weird faces.

Meric: How do you typically get updates on the new trends or the new thing..

Mary: Like fidget spinners

Meric: Exactly, like that. Or for a while dabbing was a thing or the harlem shake, there's been a lot. How do you hear about that kinda stuff in meadville and when you hear about it do you think it's relatable?

Mary: Every trend or fad that comes out is all "we should all do this" and after a month two, the perspective changes and everyone's like "oh, it's so weird". and it usually is.

Meric: You said you have a smartphone, how old were you when you got it?

Mary: When i first got a smartphone, like a year and a half ago. I got my first phone when i was in like 5th grade. and that was like a slide up phone. I didn't have a case on it and it was real ugly so i painted the back with nail polish.

Meric: Why did you want your smartphone so bad and what were you excited about the most when you finally got it?

Mary: I was excited about all the different apps and i wanted to show people my life and what i was doing. And i wanted one because all the other people had one and it was just, you felt cooler i guess, because its like "i'm connected look at me."

Meric: You've spent a lot of time in Meadville and the Allegheny Campus, do you think Meadville needs a technological upgrade and if so where and why?

Mary: I think it's pretty advanced, like, i know for a fact next year in the high school we are all getting two in one laptops. They want us to be like, even if we go on vacation, like i know i'm going to italy for a month in the fall, it's so that when we're away we can still do our work and it's easier to be connected. And it think it's also a big part of meadville. Like we are a small city.

Meric: So do you think that Allegheny College's campus needs an upgrade or is it evolved enough?

Mary: I think it's also pretty advanced. I mean like, you guys have all the computers in the library and the TV in the gyms. Do you guys do a lot of work on the computers here?

Meric: Yeah, there's a ton we have to do online, almost everything. So my last question is just you opinions on what you think some of the effects of media have been on youth.

Mary: Well, there's a positive effect because you can tell what people are doing and what things are in. You can be more connected which is a pro social media thing to say but cyber bullying is a thing at our school but i think people could be more aware of it. I know people have made laws about it but yeah. I think, it depends on how you use it.

Meric: Anything, you want to add or change to any of your previous responses?

Mary: Nope.