**Is technology helping families communicate or holding them back?**

**F**orget the cliché of teenagers spending their lives glued to their phones, sending Snapchats, messaging friends and running the risk of cyberbullying – digital technology is offering a whole host of brand-new ways to bring families and friends closer together for happier relationships.

That was the message from a roundtable discussion sponsored by Vodafone and hosted by the Guardian, and attended by a range of experts in the fields of education, psychology, wellbeing and communication. The event launched the third edition of Vodafone's Digital Parenting Guide, which includes research that sheds light on the role of digital technology in modern family life.

Indeed, it's clear that some technology can encourage stronger emotional connections within families. If you're in different countries, you don't have to wait for weeks for a letter to arrive, or rack up gigantic phone bills – you can just connect via Skype or FaceTime. In this new context, it goes without saying that educating young people about e-safety is essential – but whose responsibility it is remains unclear. Adults – whether parents or teachers – might not have the necessary skills or understanding of young people's online habits; and certainly the packed school curriculum, focused on qualifications, has limited space to address these issues.

Governmental policy is still attempting to get to grips with the possibility of internet regulation in order to protect children from potentially harmful content. Yet, not everyone necessarily agrees that there needs to be a tighter rein on young people's digital usage; in fact, there's an argument that allowing them to develop their judgement through trial and error is important.

All in all, young people don't see the internet as scary – they enjoy it and see it as an important way to communicate. They're just experimenting with new ways of interacting and as these experiments continue, adults need to stay in touch too – not just with their children, to build up stronger, more communicative relationships, but also with the technology. It may be evolving, but it is here to stay.

Article adapted from <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/may/06/technology-helping-families-communicate-or-holding-back>

**1. Vocabulary. Find in the text words that mean:**

1. Not yet used:
2. Received as a guest:
3. Health, happiness:
4. To clarify, explain:
5. In fact:
6. Accumulate:
7. It is obvious that…:
8. To give attention to something:
9. To make an effort to understand and deal with a problem or situation:
10. Control:
11. In short:
12. To develop:

**2. Write an opinion essay replying to this question:** *Is the Internet really killing family life?*