



Online gaming with Max Toper

Part three: Managing screen time

Welcome back. My name is Max Toper, author of "Why is He Still Here?". today I will talk about screen time, and how to manage it. To be honest, that's misleading, while I could share tips on forcefully preventing screen time as other videos on the topic do. This is the PDA home education hub, and a young person with PDA will almost certainly not respond well to such measures.

I would like to share a story with you. For my eighth birthday, I got my first computer in my bedroom. A few months into having it, my parents felt I was spending far too much time on it. So they invested in a web filter, which after a certain period would cut off internet to my computer.

For a week, the internet kept cutting out at crucial moments. In the middle of an online game, a YouTube video, or a huge download which, if the internet did cut off in between a huge download, I would have to start it all over again so I'd get frustrated and eventually I decided to find a way around the web filter that my parents had installed on my computer.

From there, my parents and I engaged in a constant back and forth. They would buy new software to stop me using the internet, I would find a way around it. By the end, my dad and I ended up shouting at each other and arguing. With my situation at primary school already deteriorating, my parents felt it best to let me have the escapism of my computer. So after tones of money wasted on web filters and multiple arguments had, nothing had really changed.

Spending your time 24/7 on a computer is no way to live. Even now, as much as I love my machine, I know that. As I've got older, I have been able to discipline myself to come off after a certain time, or to do something else with my day.

The reality of PDA as a condition is that often everything must be done on the terms of the young person. The more you try to obstruct the natural freedom "PDAers," thrive off, the more strained and stressed things become. Thinking about it, I would actually argue halting screen time can make a young person with PDA spend more time on their devices.

Say that young person is pulled away as they attempt to reach a goal in a game. This may make that goal seem even more lucrative and heighten said defiance that PDA is known for. In fact, achieving the goal may now be for the sake of defiance, and it might become the young person proving to themselves they can subvert the will of an authority.

Shutting out the digital world also risks the young person developing resentment for the real world. They may feel that only the digital world understands them, and that you are attempting to lock them out and that could mean they feel the world is

restricting them from achieving their full potential – something they feel they can only do online.

Therefore, I am reluctant to suggest anything like forceful management. Young people with PDA rarely do well with rules or boundaries. Instead, I will suggest three things:

Be patient, it is important to remember that young people with PDA are still only children. They do not develop in the same way as their peers, and skills like self-control and resilience may only come after a few years of maturity.

Try to understand what the young person is actually doing on their devices. For instance, some people they play with may be in different countries and the only way to be with those people might be to stay up late, given the time zone difference. Also remember that other players can be a positive influence, they may notice your child is online for a long time and encourage them to take time out, which is something that happened to me.

It is possible to gently persuade a young person, over time, into doing other activities they enjoy. Think carefully before you do this, and how you go about it, perceived demands and PDA do not mix.

Thank you for joining me in this three-part series. I sincerely hope this has given you a more informed view of online communities and online gaming. If you would like to learn more, I strongly suggest doing your own research. And perhaps purchasing my book to read about my experiences, and what it can actually be like online.