Opinion: Internet will not make kids stupid

By Yalda T. Uhls

I come bearing good news: Our teens are not growing into brain-dead zombies or emotionally stunted sociopaths. After more than a decade of research by child psychologists like me, we have discovered that the kids are all right. In study after study of emotional and intelligence indicators, 21st-century children use media to connect with their friends and learn about the world, just like those of us who were children of the 20th century did.

But you don’t have to take it from me. The proof is in the past. Every time a new technology is introduced, it becomes a cultural battleground. And ultimately, we come to a truce.

Take this one example: Near the end of the 19th century, a new medium was unleashed upon the world. Children took to it like ducks to water, and this terrified adults. Young people everywhere spent hours on end immersed, while simultaneously ignoring the grown-ups in their lives. Understandably, parents were alarmed and worried that this new medium and its racy content were ruining young minds.

Change 19th to 20th, and I could be talking about the Internet. So what was this addictive content? Romantic novels.

Example two comes from Azriel L. Eisenberg, writing in the American Journal of Psychiatry:

This new invader of the privacy of the home has brought many a disturbing influence in its wake. Parents have become aware of a puzzling change in the behavior patterns of their children. They are bewildered by a host of new problems, and find themselves unprepared, frightened, resentful, helpless. They

cannot lock out this intruder because it has gained an invincible hold of their children.

What was this dreaded intruder that Eisenberg wrote about in 1936? The radio.

Example three comes from an academic study on parents' reactions to a new media:

One mother reports that her children are aggressive and irritable as a result of over-stimulating experiences, which leads to sleepless nights and tired days.

Overstimulation and aggression? Her kids must be addicted to social media and violent video games. But this article was written in 1950. She's talking about TV.

In the second decade of the 21st century, with more information at our fingertips than any time in human history, you can find evidence of all of these old fears and trends and studies online. But we haven't still haven't managed to assuage our concerns about kids today, who have adopted their generation's media with ardent fervor.

In a recent Pew poll, 75 percent of 13- to 17-year-olds reported they had smartphones, 52 percent said they spent time with friends playing video games, and 24 percent said they go online "almost constantly." What are we to make of these statistics? Each time I speak to adults, parents, teachers, and anyone who cares about kids, they express their worry about the "addictive" nature of digital media and mobile phones and the dangers kids are exposed to online. Meanwhile, Silicon Valley evangelists claim their new devices and apps are going to make the world a better place. Who is right, and who is wrong? The answer is somewhere in the middle: digital media are a new environment that has both positive and negative effects on our children and our society.

While research on the Internet and the developing brain is in

the nascent stages, we can learn about our brain's ability to successfully adapt to new environments from past research. Studies show that our brains are incredibly plastic, and never more so than in early childhood and adolescence. This means our brains rapidly attune to new surroundings—whether we're moving to a new city or to a new kind of virtual environment. Moreover, we are learning that our brains adapt to new social worlds, too: As tweens and teens use the Internet and video games to connect with friends, their social brains are adapting quickly to this new environment. Remember, humans adapted and thrived in many different habitats and climates over thousands of years; as the digital natives continue to develop, so will their ability to adapt successfully to the online environment.

We may finally be at a tipping point, one we have seen with every introduction of new media. New data from respected social scientists around the world continues to demonstrate that children are adapting and sometimes thriving as they embrace 21st-century media; these small and incremental changes may be building to permanent change. Perhaps now the hysteria will finally come to an end. Encouraging signs point to a leveling out of the national conversation.

For example, the American Academy of Pediatrics just published new key messages for families regarding media and technology use. While they didn't go so far as to change their recommendations on the amount of screen time that is healthy for children, they did state that the quality of the media content is more important than time spent. They also made it clear that online relationships are essential for adolescent development. Ultimately, their message was that media is just another environment—like the playground—where children will spend time, but require careful supervision to do so safely.

Childhood is still childhood. I couldn't have put it better than K.G., a first-grade teacher whose words have become an Internet meme: "Yes, kids love technology, but they also love

Legos, scented markers, handstands, books and mud puddles. It's all about balance."

It's time for adults—digital immigrants to the next generation's natives—to adapt, step in, and be that balance. Instead of focusing our energy on being "for" or "against" technology, let's guide children in how to use it wisely and safely. Let's help them make the most of this new place they love, while continuing to teach them the importance of face-time, discipline, and moderation. Judging by history, when this generation grows up, they'll be busy coping with their own fears of whatever new thing their kids are using.

Yalda T. Uhls is a child psychology researcher who studies how media affect children. Her new book is "Media Moms & Digital Dads: A Fact Not Fear Approach to Parenting in the Digital Age". Uhls does research at UCLA, and works with Common Sense Media, a national nonprofit.

Health officials: Don't eat Dungeness crab

By Nanette Asimov and Paolo Lucchesi, San Francisco Chronicle

Do not – repeat, not – eat crab caught along much of the California coast until further notice. That's the stunning message issued Tuesday by health officials just days before Saturday's start of the recreational crab season, which may be delayed.

The California Department of Public Health is warning that potentially deadly levels of domoic acid have been found in Dungeness crab and rock crab caught along the coastline

between Oregon and the southern border of Santa Barbara County.

As a result, the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment is recommending the Dungeness season be delayed and the rock crab fishery be closed.

Read the whole story

Young writers invited to South Lake Tahoe Library

November is National Novel Writing Month, and the South Lake Tahoe library is inviting teens and young adults to meet up with fellow writers for an afternoon of free socializing, discussion, and – of course – writing.

Bring whatever it is you happen to be working on, whether it is a book, poem or short story.

Some laptops will be available for use in the library. Snacks will be provided.

The writing sessions will be every Saturday this month (Nov. 7, 14, 21 and 28) from 3-4pm.

Artist to share portraiture

techniques

Local artist and teacher Catherine Lockner will share techniques for how to create a quick portrait.

This free art demonstration will take place as part of the Tahoe Art League's monthly meeting on Nov. 11 at 6pm at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center.

Lockner, a professor of art and art history at Lake Tahoe Community College, works primarily in oil
and watercolor with a focus on portraiture. She will be teaching watercolor painting at the college
in winter quarter.

In her demonstration, Lockner will explore how to capture the likeness of a live model, in oil, while
preserving vibrant colors and not overworking the image.

Heroin near epidemic status in S. Lake Tahoe



SLEDNET agents confiscated this gun and

> at the same bust found a syringe in warm water to keep the heroin from solidifying.

By Kathryn Reed

Heroin is the No. 1 drug problem in South Lake Tahoe.

“It’s the biggest issue of law enforcement,” Russell Liles, a detective with South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team, said. “Once you do it, your biggest goal is to get more.”

It’s that initial rush that people want to keep reliving. The side effects and coming off the high are physically wrenching. It’s why people keep reaching for the next needle. Even if the user started by snorting, eventually they seem to go for an injection because reaching the state of euphoria is faster that way.

Liles on Nov. 3 spoke to the local drug coalition about the growing epidemic.

Black tar heroin is mostly what is found locally. Users are predominantly men between the ages of 18 and 25 who started the habit by first becoming addicted to prescription medication. They are doing five to 10 points a day at a cost of more $100/day.

Seldom do they have jobs because it’s near impossible to function at a coherent level being that high. Committing crime is how they pay for their heroin habit, Liles said.

But this issue isn’t new to the South Shore. ***Lake Tahoe News*** ran a two-part series about heroin in February 2012. It was the **same story then** – prescription opiate leads to addiction that leads to heroin. Heroin is an opiate coming from the poppy plant.

“Nearly 50 percent of young people who are injecting heroin reported abusing prescription opiates before using it,” Liles said.

Prescriptions run out, heroin is easier to get and it can be cheaper.

Liles said the people using might surprise people. Some come from good families. They had other plans for their lives. The addiction, though, became too strong.

In the last four years what Liles has noticed is more users are people one year out of high school.

The National Institutes of Health says, “Our data show that the demographic composition of heroin users entering treatment has shifted over the last 50 years such that heroin use has changed from an inner-city, minority-centered problem to one that has a more widespread geographical distribution, involving primarily white men and women in their late 20s living outside of large urban areas.”

And more people are dying from overdosing on heroin. In 2013, 8,260 people died, which is four times the number in 2000.

The local drug coalition has been focused on getting unused and expired prescription drugs out of homes. A drop off location is at the South Lake Tahoe Police Department.

The annual **Drug Store Project** is an all-day reality based drug education workshop for sixth-graders on the South Shore. Prescription drug use is the main component of the event.

Liles said the best thing people can do is educate young people to the dangers.

President Obama is proposing spending $133 million to increase access to drug treatment and prevention programs.

New drug laws aren’t helping the guys with the badges.

Proposition 47 was passed last year by California voters. It made possession of heroin, cocaine, illegal prescriptions, concentrated cannabis, and methamphetamine all misdemeanors. Officers have the choice to arrest the person or cite him, like a traffic infraction.

If the District Attorney's Office chooses to prosecute the case, the defendant is often out on bail or on his own recognizance until a deal is reached or the trial starts. If convicted, the person faces at most a year in county jail and even then people are often let out for good behavior.

South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler was an opponent to Proposition 47 before it was passed and continues to be. He has written about how it puts more criminals on the streets, which has increased some criminal activity in town.

California is not alone in rejiggering penalty guidelines. Penalties for nonviolent drug crimes were reduced by the U.S. Sentencing Commission in April 2014. Because that change could be applied retroactively, last month it was announced that the Justice Department would be releasing about 6,000 federal prison inmates who were serving time for being nonviolent drug dealers.

Liles said the reason SLEDNET doesn't want the names used in heroin arrests is because it negatively impacts ongoing investigations.

Heroin users are a close-knit group. They don't readily welcome others into the circle. That is why it is hard for narcotics officers to penetrate the inner sanctums, and therefore difficult to arrest the dealers.

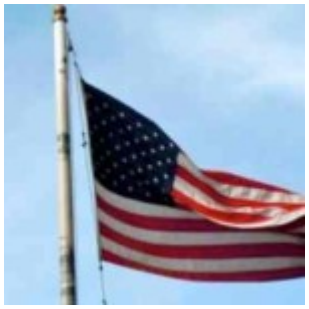
Local heroin dealers tend to be white men between 25 and 35 years old who are able move an ounce of heroin every few days. They get their supply from Stockton, Modesto or Reno. Mexican drug cartels are turning to heroin from pot because the profit is greater. Plus, now it's so easy to get marijuana in the

U.S. without importing it and a lot of users prefer the weed that is grown indoors to outdoor cultivation.

Local heroin dealers are also unemployed. And they are often armed.

A heroin ounce is considered 25 grams, which is about 250 doses. This costs about $1,800. Dealers can turn that into about $3,750 on the street. Why they aren't rolling in money is that they are also users. It's not like the heyday of cocaine where dealers were flush with cash because they didn't use the product they were peddling.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



· California State Parks will honor veterans, as well as active and reserve personnel, by offering free admission at 143 participating state parks on Veterans Day.

· Alaska Airlines is adding nonstop service between Reno-Tahoe International Airport and Orange County's John Wayne Airport.

· Santa and Mrs. Claus will be available for photos at the Ritz-Carlton Lake Tahoe on Dec. 19 from 5-7pm in the Living Room, followed by story time with Mrs. Claus from 7-8pm.

· The fourth annual Light Up South Lake Tahoe is a Dec. 5 starting at 6pm. Decorated fire trucks and snowplows will lead the procession along Highway 50 beginning at Stateline

and concluding with a Christmas tree lighting celebration at the Y. Santa will be part of the fun.

· Tahoe South Restaurant Week is Jan. 8-15. Establishments will feature specially priced and prix fixe menus highlighting the theme Made with Altitude. Diners simply visit their favorite spots throughout the week to enjoy the special menus. Passes, tickets or coupons are not required. Go **online** for more info.

Letter: Barbells for Boobs a success

To the community,

South Tahoe CrossFit would like to thank the following businesses and individuals for their time and donations for our successful fundraiser, Barbells for Boobs, on Oct. 24.

They are: Mo’s Place, Manish Patel; KFC, Lisa and Pat Kern; Verde Mexican Rotisserie, Domi and Katy Chavarria; Lake Tahoe Golf Course, Bobby Jaeger’ Landing Resort and Spa, Casey Lucas; Hall Creations, Angie Hall; Hestra Gloves, Justeen Ferguson; Nel’s Hardware; Deerfield Lodge at Heavenly Resort, Jessie and Spence Romine; Casto Chiropractic, Nichole and Jason Casto FatFace Skin Care, Cassie Burnside; Heaven Scent, Sarah Sullivan; Overland Meat and Seafood Co., Brian Cohen; Thirty One Bags, Melanie Turner; Arbonne, Lisa Malone; Azul Latin Kitchen, Stephanie Feeney; Cold Water Bistro, Justin Kaplan; Kalani’s, Tara Chiarpotti; Tahoe Keys Deli, Jenn and John Galea; Flight Deck Bar and Restaurant; Classic Cuts; Tahoe Vapory; McDuff’s Pub; Posh Finds; Hot Cha Cha; Tahoe Blue Vodka; Fashletics; Ashley

Lindner; Robyn Lindner; Karen Haslam; Robin Kroeger; Judith Strand; Jodi Messex; Kim Caringer; and Renée Gorevin, to whom we dedicate this event.

With your support, we were able to raise over $12,000 for the organization that has early detection through breast cancer screenings as its primary mission.

Thank you also to all the South Tahoe CrossFit members and the general public that came out and participated in the event.

Thank you,

Daunelle Wulstein, South Tahoe CrossFit

Hunting deals available for disabled vets

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife offers a reduced-fee hunting and fishing licenses to resident and nonresident disabled veterans. CDFW also offers several special hunting opportunities for eligible veterans.

Disabled veterans may prequalify to purchase reduced-fee disabled veteran licenses via email. Once a disabled veteran has pre-qualified, they can purchase low-cost disabled veteran sport fishing and/or hunting licenses, each year, anywhere licenses are sold. Information on how to prequalify for a disabled veteran license is available on the **sport fishing licenses webpage**, under the “Free and Reduced Fee” tab.

The 2015 Disabled Veteran Sport Fishing License and Disabled Veteran Hunting License cost $6.95 each when purchased at CDFW license counters.

Special hunting blinds have been constructed to be accessible to people with mobility impairments at some state wildlife areas and ecological reserves, and at some National Wildlife Refuges. For more info, call Melissa Carlin at 916.651.1214.

Efficiency of buildings key to meeting climate goals

By Stephanie Pincetl

In energy, we are learning how to make the invisible visible.

We now know that cities are responsible for 70 percent of the globe's green house gas emissions (GHG). We know that 60 percent of those urban GHG emissions comes from cars, trucks, and other forms of transportation, with the remaining 40 percent coming from building energy use – electricity and natural gas to heat and cool.

But we don't know many of the particulars about energy use in buildings. How much do different types of buildings, or different aged buildings, or various other social and demographic factors contribute to energy use? How much does each building, and how much do different parts of the building, use energy? Even with modeling to give us some data, we don't know energy use down to the meter-by-meter, building-by-building level. While we know that car emissions reporting has been fraudulent, we at least have a sense of emissions by make and by year. That's not so for buildings, and that leaves a gaping hole in what we know; it's like not knowing the difference between the emissions of a diesel truck compared to a hybrid car.

The county of Los Angeles and UCLA's California Center for Sustainable Communities Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, which I direct, are determined to fill this void. We need to understand building energy use so we can make the right investments to reduce building energy use, and the emissions. After four years of technical, scientific, and legal efforts, and after participating in California Public Utility Commission proceedings to enable greater data access, UCLA obtained address-level data under a non-disclosure agreement with the PUC. UCLA and the county have developed an interactive web energy atlas as a result .

It's the first such interactive atlas in the country. (New York City built a map prototype at the ZIP code level in 2012.) Our atlas provides an innovative platform to build and share knowledge of the actual energy use of buildings by neighborhood, city, building type, use, age, size, and demographics of residents.

Such an atlas was overdue. About $13 billion in investments in energy conservation and efficiency have been made in California since 2002, paid for by private utility ratepayers through their bills. Taxpayers, utilities, and the government need to know what efforts have been effective in changing the amount of energy used in buildings, and what has not worked; local governments also needed a way to account for Green House Gas emissions in a precise manner – which buildings are the most significant in energy use? The website has a contact address where users can send in their own discoveries in investigating the website – patterns across the landscape, some unexpected correlations or other insights.

In assembling, analyzing and aggregating all the data, we came up with a number of surprising findings.

For example: Malibu residents use 10 times more energy per capita than residents of Bell, in southeast LA County. But the buildings in Bell are far less energy-efficient, using more

energy per square foot than those in Malibu. And Compton actually has the highest median per square foot consumption in the region. The atlas also shows energy use by building-age categories. The highest energy-using buildings were uniformly built before 1950, and the lowest from 1990 onward, perhaps proof that our building standards are working.

Those findings have major implications for interventions at a building and neighborhood level that could generate big and rapid energy efficiency gains. Knowing the specifics of buildings makes it possible to target investments where and when they will make the most impact. The atlas also points out that existing efforts to improve efficiency – like smart meters with time-of-use pricing that changes depending on the time and season – might be useless if your building has massive structural inefficiencies.

But the implications are still broader. Why, for instance, should we force individuals to decide between turning off their refrigerator or their air conditioner when their buildings themselves are energy hogs?

Buildings are becoming more important in reaching climate targets, and should be included in December's Paris climate change talks. And Gov. Jerry Brown has just signed, a new law that requires California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The only way we'll get to that goal is by looking more closely at individual buildings. It will also greatly improve the wellbeing of people who live, work, learn, and play in them.

Stephanie Pincetl is director of the California Center for Sustainable Communities Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA.

San Francisco says yes to Airbnb

By Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO – San Francisco voters have rejected a proposal to restrict Airbnb and a second ballot measure prompted by the city's housing crisis.

Tuesday's vote went against restrictions on Airbnb and a ballot measure to freeze construction of luxury housing in the Mission District.

Airbnb, by far the world's largest home-share platform, spent more than $8 million to defeat the measure.

Proposition F would have limited home-shares to 75 nights and required Airbnb and other hosting platforms to pull listings that exceed the limit.

With more than 90,000 votes counted, 58 percent of the voters rejected the measure.

A proposal to freeze development of luxury housing in the city's trendy Mission District also lost with 60 percent of the votes against it.

Mayor Ed Lee who swept through election victory had opposed both measures.