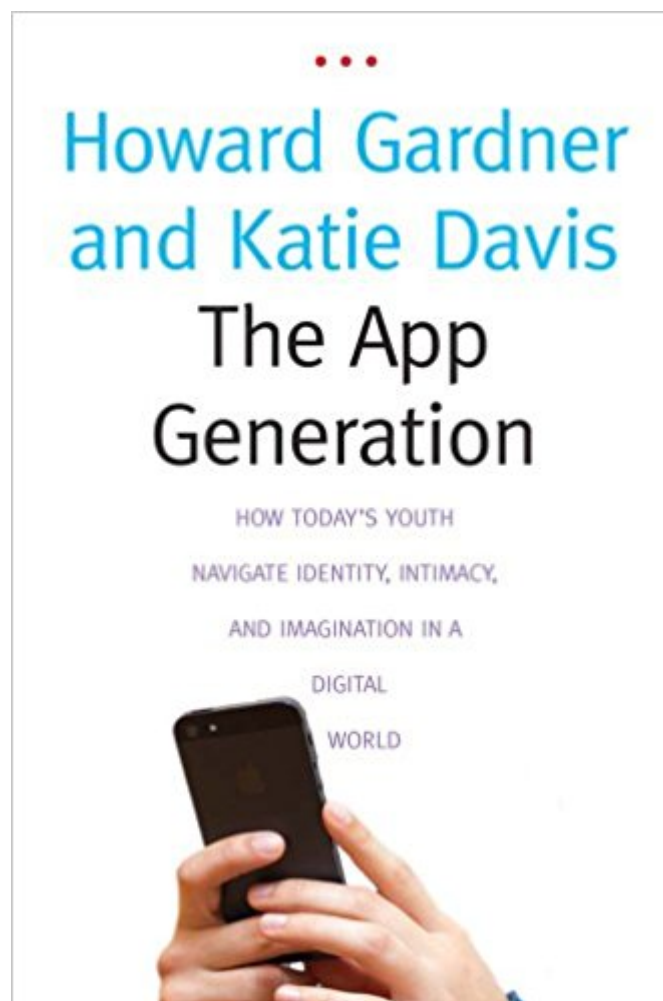


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# The App Generation: How Today's Youth Navigate Identity, Intimacy, And Imagination In A Digital World



## Synopsis

From the famed Harvard psychologist and an expert on the impact of digital media technologies, a riveting exploration of the power of apps to shape our young peopleâ€”for better or for worse No one has failed to notice that the current generation of youth is deeplyâ€”some would say totallyâ€”involved with digital media. Professors Howard Gardner and Katie Davis name todayâ€™s young people The App Generation, and in this spellbinding book they explore what it means to be â€œapp-dependentâ€• versus â€œapp-enabledâ€• and how life for this generation differs from life before the digital era.Â Gardner and Davis are concerned with three vital areas of adolescent life: identity, intimacy, and imagination. Through innovative research, including interviews of young people, focus groups of those who work with them, and a unique comparison ofÂ youthful artistic productions before and after the digital revolution, the authors uncover the drawbacks of apps: they may foreclose a sense of identity, encourage superficial relations with others, and stunt creative imagination. On the other hand, the benefits of apps are equally striking: they can promote a strong sense of identity, allow deep relationships, and stimulate creativity. The challenge is to venture beyond the ways that apps are designed to be used, Gardner and Davis conclude, and they suggest how the power of apps can be a springboard to greater creativity and higher aspirations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An ambitious and admirable project. . . . Meticulously researched and thoughtful."â€”New York Times Book ReviewÂ "[The App Generation] possesses an interesting insight. &#39;Young people

growing up in our time are not only immersed in apps, . . . theyâ™ve come to think of the world as an ensemble of apps, to see their lives as a string of ordered apps, or perhaps, in many cases, a single, extended, cradle-to-grave app."â "Dwight Garner, New York Times "Many of the observations . . . are illuminated with careful thought and research [and] offer a readable and intelligent summary of where we are today."â "Josh Glancy, The Sunday Times "Gardner is a renowned psychologist who has long decried box-ticking behaviourist approaches to education . . . he and Davis . . . build a strong case that a dependency on apps is having a reductive effect on young people."â "Gautam Malkani, The Financial Times "Provocative . . . Provides useful frameworks for future research."â "Publishers Weekly "Elevates the discussion beyond knee-jerk complaints about &#39;those #@#! kids who are on their phones all day.&#39;"â "Mindful Magazine "Gardner and Davis have offered a challenging and thought-provoking book: particularly rewarding for educators who are interested in thinking about how young people are changing, and how we might preserve the best practices of our profession while adapting the tools that define a generation."â "Education Week&#39;s EdTech Researcher "This compelling book explores what it&#39;s like to be &#39;app-dependent&#39; and what life was like before the power of apps on our society. Howard Gardner, the renowned father of the multiple intelligence theory, along with co-writer Kate Davis, offers readers an in-depth look at the benefits and drawbacks of apps, and how the power of these apps can lead to greater creativity."â "Top Books for Educators,Â About.com "A thoughtful overview of how digital media and applications have contributed to a pervasive app mentality among youth. . . . The combination of conversational style and scholarly annotations makes the book rewarding for a broad audience, including parents and educators. . . . Highly recommended. All Readers."â "Choice "Here we have a serious consideration that a generation has grown up with an emotional aesthetic as instrumental as their technology. That is, this generation approaches intimacy, identity, and imagination through the prism of the apps that have surrounded them. Gardner and Davis further consider the proposition that &#39;What canâ™t be an app doesnâ™t matter.&#39; But the authors do more than this. They approach their subject in a constructive spirit, providing analytical tools to distinguish among apps, the ones that will stifle and the ones that will nurture. In the end, they see a way forward: We are responsible, individually and in our communities and families to use technology in ways that open up the world rather than close it down. The App Generation is not anti-technology; it simply puts technology in its place."â "Sherry Turkle, author of *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* "The App GenerationÂ deals with a crucial issue for our future, and it is a pioneering and prophetic work in its genre."â "Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author ofÂ *Flow: The*

Psychology of Optimal Experience

"This book is must reading for parents, teachers and policy makers. It presents a portrait of today's young people, not in terms of the traditional historical events of their lives, but instead the digital technology that shaped this generation. It compellingly and powerfully examines the impact, consequences, and implications for their and society's future."

—Arthur Levine, President of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation & former President of Teachers College, Columbia University

"Most discussions about youth and technology tilt toward one extreme (digital wonder-kids!) or the other (perpetual distractions!). In *The App Generation*, Howard Gardner and Katie Davis combine academic research with personal reflections to provide a more nuanced perspective on both the challenges and opportunities for young people as they navigate the dynamic digital currents in today's society."

—Mitchel Resnick, LEGO Papert Professor of Learning Research and head of the Lifelong Kindergarten group at the MIT Media Lab

"Howard Gardner is one of America's most celebrated developmental psychologists and public intellectuals. His latest work is always worth reading."

—Robert Putnam, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

A conversation with Howard Gardner and Katie Davis . . .

Q: Have digital media shifted the way we form and maintain personal relationships?

A: Social media have made it incredibly easy to keep in touch with friends and acquaintances. But there is considerable concern that the effort we put into maintaining our weaker social ties may crowd out the sustained attention needed to nurture deeper relationships. Even so, our research suggests that most of today's young people seek traditional qualities in their online relationships: empathy, trust, reciprocity, and self-disclosure.

Q: How can we help young people to use apps positively?

A: Parents and teachers can encourage imaginative exploration, beyond the letter of the app. But part of the burden also falls on those who devise apps. Too many educational apps are just digital versions of "drill-and-kill." We need apps that open up new possibilities and then allow the user to explore, imagine, expand, and, on occasion, toss aside the digital device and go it alone.

Q: How does an older person, a nondigital native, recognize the harmful uses of digital technology?

A: We would be concerned if any young person spent too much time in the digital world, at the cost of face-to-face contact or time to relax, reflect, rest. And of course, one has to be on the lookout for frankly damaging behavior—bullying, invasion of another's privacy, sexting, and so on. But by the time a child is 12 or 16, adults have difficulty knowing, let alone controlling, what the young person does. That is why both co-exploration when the child is young and learning enough so that you are not completely a digital immigrant are very important for adults of any generation. --This text

refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Mr. Gardner and Ms. Davis have put together a very interesting book that describes some of the impacts of personal web enabled devices and social media have on our youngsters. My good friend, Fred Stein, divides the US population into: digital natives, digital immigrants, and digital fossils. Fred and I are both avid technologists, but age and background wise we are dangerously close to being in the antediluvian category. :-) The book also looks at and in most cases tries to dispel some of the negative myths surrounding youth use and immersion with these devices. The book is clearly well researched, and it is an interesting read. The science and math behind the assertions is documented and appears accurate. I need to cogitate on some of the implications that the book makes and then write an addendum to this review sometime in the next couple of months. I have some lingering anxiety about the book. The book feels a smidgen overly ebullient about the purely positive affect that social media and web devices have. While I see much of the potential good, I am not sure that I buy into all of the benefits described. One particular story comes to mind, a student from a third tier medical school recently told me that the students there were allowed to use their i-devices, Androids, etc. on tests. While I am not in favor of causing undue stress and hazing that comes with memorization, I also know that there are certain learning benefits that come from having certain facts in your own personal recall space. I would hate to be at a crash site just out of cell tower range and have one of the graduates of that program stand between me and death's door. Brrrrrrrrrr. More to come ...

I have read quite a few editorials, books chapters, even listened to podcasts that condemned or bemoaned the state of "today's youth" especially when the effects of wide spread technology and education are being discussed. As a 26 year old university graduate, I can nod my head and acknowledge that there are "issues" with both my generation and my much younger siblings' generation, however, I am often left feeling out in the cold, as if the older generation writing the piece is simple whining and getting on his/her soap box without understanding the context or having ever logged into a social media sight themselves. Not so with Howard and Katie, as they refer to themselves in The App Generation. They come to the issues of the "app" generation with an open, academic, yet sympathetically human mind and access actual data and information given in a variety of studies and their own investigations. Three distinct generations, Howard's, the grandfather age generation, Katie's, middle age or parent generation and Katie's daughter, the youth generation are present fully in the pages of the book and used as the starting point of a useful and clearly well

consider contribution to the conversations of today on of education, generation gaps, and technology. I recommend this read to people of all generations, especially parents and young adults. If you're looking for something to bash over someone's head, you will not find it here, but if you're looking for something well thought out and fuel to start conversations, this is a good point of departure.

I used this text in an undergraduate class on social media and communication ethics. The authors provided some key insights on what they call "The App Generation." I often return to their distinction between digital natives and digital immigrants in my work on social media. Yet nuggets such as these proved too often buried under layers of unnecessary diversions that failed to support their thesis. I expected a text called "The App Generation" to contain a clear definition of an "app" as opposed to a platform such as "Facebook"; however, Gardner and Davis do not clarify the two. They ramble when they try to define key terms such as "generation. My greatest disappointment with this otherwise promising work involved the authors' definition of two types of "digital natives": the "app-dependents" (i.e., lazy) and the "app-enablers" (i.e., creators or modifiers of apps). The latter group, contend Gardner and Davis possess the ability to change the world. Yet the authors fail to account for the "digital divide." All "digital natives" possess neither the material nor the education to create new apps, thus widening the gap between the "app-dependents" and the "app-enablers." I understand Gardner and Davis are not economists, but an explanation of this divide would better support their overall thesis than their opaque idea of what constitutes a generation. I will search for a new book when I teach this class once more.

Reads more like a textbook than a narrative. The authors explain the procedures and results of their study on how technology has affected youth development, including creativity, interpersonal communication, and relationships. Commentary was a bit verbose and cumbersome at times, specifically the authors' personal opinions. Way more explanation was given than necessary at times. It was an easy read and informative for my youth development grad school course, but my book club (who I convinced to read it) didn't like it and most wouldn't finish it.

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