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## Using Technology to Strengthen Family Ties



While it may seem like you've "lost" your teen to social technology, like Facebook or text messaging, a new report finds that this technology - namely the Internet and cell phones - is actually creating a "new connectedness" for American families.[1]

In particular, parents say cell phones allow their families to stay more regularly in touch. And many parents say they are now using the Internet to view material online together.

Are you using technology to its best advantage? Before you put your trust in the latest gadgets, make sure you set a few ground rules for your family:

- Limit your teens' time spent online and keep computers in a common area of the house;
- Monitor your teens' digital devices regularly, checking Internet history and cell phone call logs; and
- Talk to your teens about their Web sites, profiles, blogs, etc., and ask them to show you

You might be using the same gadgets as your teens, but probably in very different ways. Do you know the answers to these questions?

1. What is a "poke"?
2. How many "friends" does the average teen have?
3. What is "getting crunk"?
4. If a teen is "leaning," what is he or she doing?
5. What do "space cakes" and "skittles" have in common?

[Take the pop-culture quiz to see how well you speak teen.](#)

what they're doing online.

Take this **crash course for parents on teens and technology**.

### Risks and Rewards

Many parents are still unaware of the risks their teens may be exposed to online or through their cell phones, many of which have Internet access. In fact, a Nielsen study conducted for the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign found that in a one-month period, nearly one million teens were exposed to one or more drug-related videos online. And more than a third of teens viewing drug-related content are under the age of 16. Before your family can reap the rewards of technology, it's important to understand the risks.

Review the latest findings on **teens and online exposure**.

[1] "Networked Families," Pew Internet & American Life Project, October 2008.  
[www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Networked\\_Family.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Networked_Family.pdf)

#### NEWS »



##### TV habits, risk of pregnancy linked

A new report finds that teens who have the greatest exposure to TV programming with high sexual content are twice as likely to get pregnant. [Read full article >>](#)

#### ADVICE »



How do you measure up on technology? Are you hip to social networking and text messaging? [Test your tech savviness.](#)

#### FREE RESOURCES »



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And check out our comprehensive package of materials, including an e-guide, fact sheet, pop culture quiz, and more on [teens and technology.](#)

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