

Boys' Lifestyles - UK - June 2012

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“Boys’ free time is dominated by solitary play in front of television, computer or games console at home. Digital communication affords extra privacy and password-protected access to social networks might be a modern day equivalent of a locked diary. Parents could bridge this gap by joining their offspring in online environments, which ultimately builds up real-world relationships.”

– Ina Mitskavets, Consumer and Lifestyles Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- How does video game and smartphone usage by boys differ by age?
- What are the top spending categories?
- What are the most regular family activities of boys?
- How influential are parents in their choice of snacks?
- How does mobile phone ownership differ by age?
- How much influence do boys have when it comes to technology products within their family and friendship groups?
- What are boys’ attitudes towards virtual vs. physical social interactions?

Today’s boys aged 7-15 use a wider array of technologies in increasingly more sophisticated ways, with digital play and interactions dominating their pastimes, and this trend only grows stronger into their teenage years. Progressively shorter attention spans also suggest user fatigue, and social and mobile brands need to listen carefully to rapidly evolving preferences amongst this demographic.

Access to technology is not uniform, and children growing up in more affluent families typically use more devices and are considerably more active online and on their mobile phones. Boys from wealthier backgrounds are more likely to be early adopters of technology, which likely translates into a higher degree of bragging rights amongst peers.

Spending time with family becomes less frequent as boys grow older, perhaps linked to a higher propensity of family units to break up after their children reach the age of 5. Teenagers in particular are more likely to give preference to virtual interactions, whilst playing outside or spending time with their family suffers. Thus, there is a growing need to merge family leisure and the digital world, to ensure greater family unity.

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