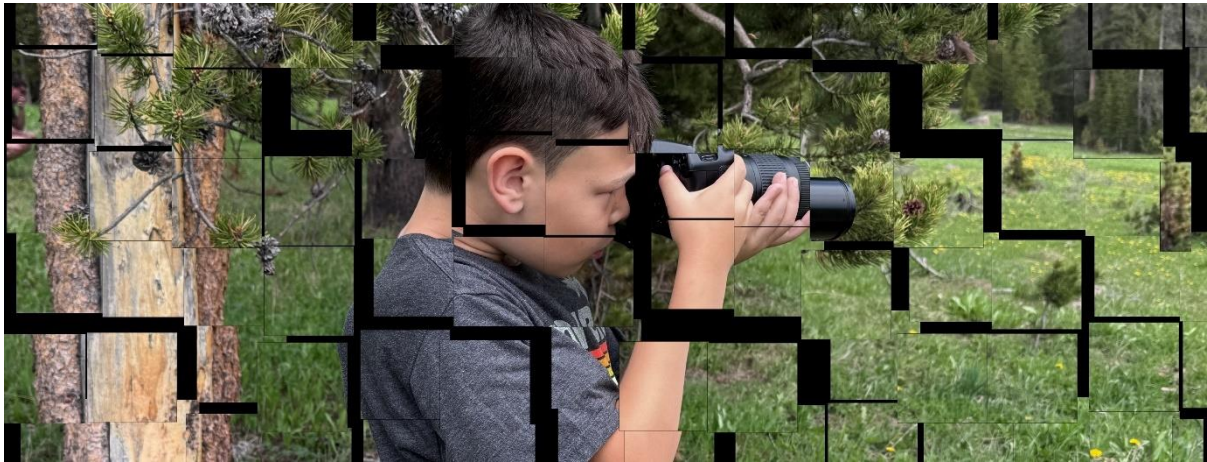


YouTube is the Ideal Platform to Encourage Kids to PRODUCE Content Rather Than CONSUME

Shôn Ellerton, January 10, 2026

We often become concerned with screen time for kids, but it's not so much the TIME, but rather, what they DO on their screens.



Any parent will know the frustration of trying to limit the time their kids spend on electronic devices, whether it's a phone, a tablet, or on their desktop computers.

But here lies the problem.

It's not so much the screen *time*, but rather, what they *do* on their screens.

As a parent, I *do* spend a lot of time behind the screen of a computer. For example, I have to do the finances, spend time with a multitude of emails, and, of course, write articles like these. I'm not going to use a typewriter just for the sake of trying to set an example of having less screen time.

That's impractical at best.

But kids see it differently.

If their parents spend so much time on the computer, why should kids get less time?

It's a fair question.

We should encourage kids to *produce* content rather than *consume* it.

This is the key takeaway that I've discovered.

I've seen kids spend hours and hours watching *someone else* play video games on YouTube. I don't understand exactly why, but there's obviously something in it that attracts kids.

On the other hand, I can spend hours of time watching train driver's view videos on YouTube, at 4X speed or greater. There're quite a few others who also share this bizarre pastime. For me, there's something fascinating about watching the scenery roll by from the front cab view of the train going from place to place along railway tracks built on the greatest achievements of engineering. It's better in reality, but it's unlikely you're going to be able to hop in the cab seat of a TGV train going from Lille to Nantes!

Perhaps those kids who watch others play video games is a sort of equivalence to this. I don't know.

Moreover, I also enjoy *producing* content similar to what others have posted for train cab view videos. For example, I've produced many 5X and 10X sped-up videos using a GoPro on various bike rides and hikes around my local vicinity including a series of videos of walking the entire seashore of the city I live in. I've also posted a series of sped-up videos of various car journeys using a dashcam.

Now, here's the solution for kids.

Get them *producing* content rather than *consuming* it.

It's easy to do.

Set them up with a YouTube account but set yourself up as the manager of that account.

Why YouTube?

Because YouTube has the greatest reach. What's the point of creating content on a platform that no one watches? To put that in vernacular parlance, that's just dopey!

As for social media platforms, examples being Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and X, these are often time-sucking distractions being a doom-scroller's paradise. There are kids out there who have genuine businesses who *do* use Facebook and Instagram professionally, but it's generally rare.

Anyway, back to YouTube.

Tweak the settings of that account to exclude harmful content, disable comments, and all the monetisation settings that kids just do not need.

YouTube is a vast repository of everything you want, or don't want, to know about. But it's generally a safe environment with respect to pornography or videos of extreme violence. But there are settings in YouTube which moderate this further. Trouble is that most parents are not aware of these built-in features.

Logging into an account in YouTube is far safer than watching not logged in. I've seen quite inappropriate material pop up when kids watch YouTube as a guest. YouTube just throws anything that it wants as recommended material.

And yes, most parents don't know this either, you can *switch off* the recommendations if logged in.

As for producing content. Kids love it but often, they don't have the means or will to do it. Sometimes, they don't have their parent's support because they lack the technical ability to get them started.

Take, for example, creating videos.

Many kids are really into making videos, especially in their early teen years. They follow tutorial programs on YouTube and, being logged in, YouTube will recommend more tutorial programs without throwing in some random crap. If you can afford one pay streaming service, YouTube Premium, is an excellent choice because adverts are, in my opinion, very distracting. Also, with Premium, there are options for better resolution and access to additional material.

Once set up with a YouTube account, kids can exercise their creativity by producing rather than mindless consuming.

Armed with a video camera, or even a smartphone or tablet, kids can really get into the world of video production *and* have the ability to show it to the world. Again, what's the point of creating something but not having a platform to flaunt it?

Kids can develop skills that, back in our days as parents, would have found it more difficult to do because it was harder to access the equipment and even harder to spread it to the local community, let alone the world.

It's an excellent way for them to understand choreography, film editing, audio and sound engineering, and, most important of all, to challenge them how to be creative and get that edge.

I've seen some amazing YouTube channels run by kids covering everything from photography to politics in such a way that other kids can understand.

I've come across YouTube channels of kids interviewing prominent public figures as well. Kids who have YouTube channels that involve interviewing others is the best way to attain confidence and strive for better speaking skills.

And finally, I've found that today's kids are more insular relative to the days I was brought up. Many teenagers *never* leave their bedrooms because they're either chatting with mates or playing online games.

Giving kids a platform to show off their work is the solution to reduce the amount of *mindless* screen time kids do so often these days.

To reiterate again.

It's not so much about screen *time*, but what kids *do* on their screens.

Parents included, the percentage of those who *produce* content is extremely low. I don't mean posting photos, memes and one-liners on Facebook or X, whether shared or created. I mean creating stories, articles, videos, and music. Stuff that needs time and effort to create before posting.

But kids tend to have a little more time on their hands than adults and hence, this is the perfect opportunity to create and produce video content on platforms like YouTube for others to enjoy *and* possibly, even learn from.

You never know, perhaps one of those kids out there who started early to produce videos on YouTube may become the next Stanley Kubrick!