

GENERATIONAL CHANGES AND CHALLENGES IN THE WORKPLACE

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Comparison review of research findings about generational differences.

- Demographics
- Play
- Problem-solving skills
- Socialization and inter-personal skills
- Views and acceptance of authority
- Work behaviors
- Psychological trends
- Digital impacts and distractions
- Best ways to lead younger workers
- Suggestions for managing generational changes

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DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

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US Population Data

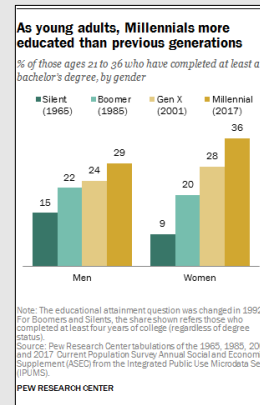
- Total Population - 331.89 million
- Largest Cohort - Age 20 - 34 - 23.3 million
- Silent Generation - Age 75 -84 and older - 22.19 million
- Boomers - Age 74 to 55 - 76.41 million
- Generation X - Age 54 - 36- 84.1 million
- Millennials - Age 43 - 15 - 88.57 million
- Generation Z -Under Age 5 - 14 - 60.57 million

Source Statista-2021

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Today's young adults are better educated than previous generations.

- Today's young adults (Millennials ages 21 to 36 in 2017) are much better educated than the Silent Generation.
- A greater share of Millennial women have a bachelor's degree than their male counterparts – a reversal from the Silent Generation.



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Women are more likely to be working today.

- Young women today are much more likely to be working, compared with Silent Generation women during their young adult years.
- In 1965, when Silent women were young, a majority (58%) were not participating in the labor force and 40% were employed.
- Today, 71% of young Millennial women are employed, while 26% are not in the labor force.
- This shift to more women in the workplace occurred as early as 1985, when Boomers were young.
- Then, nearly seven-in-ten young Boomer women (66%) were employed and 29% were not in the labor force.

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Millennials are three times more likely not to be married today.

- About six-in-ten Millennials (57%) have never been married, reflecting broader societal shifts toward marriage later in life.
- In 1965, the typical American woman first married at age 21 and the typical man wed at 23.
- By 2017, those figures climbed to 27 for women and 29.5 for men.
- When members of the Silent Generation were the same age as Millennials are now, just 17% had never been married.
- Still, about two-thirds of never-married Millennials (65%) say they would like to get married someday.
- When asked the reasons they have not gotten married, 29% say they are not financially prepared, while 26% say they have not found someone who has the qualities they are looking for; an additional 26% say they are too young and not ready to settle down.

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Millennials more likely to be racial or ethnic minorities than the Silent Generation.

- Fifty years ago, America was less racially and ethnically diverse than it is today.
- Large-scale immigration from Asia and Latin America, the rise of racial intermarriage and differences in fertility patterns across racial and ethnic groups have contributed to Millennials being more racially and ethnically diverse than prior generations.
- In 2017, fewer than six-in-ten Millennials (56%) were non-Hispanic whites, compared with more than eight-in-ten (84%) Silents.
- The share who are Hispanic is five times as large among Millennials as among Silents (21% vs. 4%), and the share who are Asian has also increased. However, the share who are black has remained roughly the same.

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Young Silent men were more than 10 times more likely to be veterans than Millennial men are today.

- Although Millennials came of age at a time when the United States engaged in military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, they are far less likely to have served in the military than their Boomer or Silent predecessors.
- Among men, only 4% of Millennials are veterans, compared with 47% of Silent men, many of whom came of age during the Korean War and its aftermath.
- The number of young men serving in the active-duty military has decreased drastically since the establishment of an all-volunteer force in 1973, which is reflected in the decreased share who are veterans since then.
- Comparable historical data for veteran status by generation is not available for women, but contrary to men, the number of women serving in the active-duty military has risen in recent decades.

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Greater shares of Millennials today live in metropolitan areas than Silents or Boomers did when they were young.

- In 1965, when members of the Silent Generation were young, two-thirds (67%) lived in a metropolitan area, while one-third (33%) lived in non-metropolitan areas.
- And a similar share of Baby Boomers (68%) lived in metro areas when they were young.
- More than eight-in-ten Gen Xers (84%) lived in metropolitan areas when they were young and about nine-in-ten Millennials (88%) today live in metro areas.

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Comparative Incomes

- 79% of children born in 1950 made more than their parents.
- 50% of children born in 1980 earned more than their parents.
- Today's Millennials earn 20% less than Boomer at the same stage of life (\$40,581 medium household income).

Source - Stanford Study Daily Herald 2017

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CHANGES IN PLAY, PROBLEM SOLVING,
SOCIALIZATION, VIEWS OF AUTHORITY
AND WORK BEHAVIOR

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According to sociologists, play has changed significantly over the past 20 years.

Self-directed play has been replaced by adult supervised play and menu-driven (digital) play. Implications include:

- Reduced abilities to problem-solve, understand the context of issues and resolve inter-personal conflict.
- A heavier reliance on leaders to make decisions and identify the steps in addressing a problem.
- Reduced person-to-person communication skills and to be pro-active .
- Reliance on reactive processes.

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Problem-solving skills resulting in changes in play and child-rearing.

Impacts on younger learners and workers

- Increased satisfaction with their place in life, and less desire to work at improving.
- Decreased ownership of problems and challenges.
- Heavy reliance on adults to organize and manage their issues and work.
- Avoidance of failure
- Higher expectations of reward and recognition.

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Socialization and inter-personal skills.

As a result of several factors, including emersion in a virtual worlds, many younger learners are less inclined and capable of engaging in direct interpersonal relations:

- More comfortable in a digital-screen environment.
- Reduced abilities to read body language.
- Reduced abilities to deal with conflict.

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Views and acceptance of authority

Several factors contribute to changes in the views of authority by younger people over several decades.

- Two-income households.
- Parental guilt.
- The self-esteem movement.
- Parents desire to be their child's friend.

Impacts on younger learners include:

- Greater wiliness to challenge the directives of those in authority.
- Increased challenging of past practices.
- Sense of equality relative to those who have experience or those that are in charge.
- Sense of entitlement to receive the same treatment or perks as more senior members of the team.

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Work Behaviors

Facts and statistics

- By 2025 millennials will make up 75% of the global workforce. (Deloitte)
- Typically 1 in 4 people in the workforce turnover in the first three months. The rate for millennials is 1 in 3.
(Greg Weiss, Career Support 365)
- Top reasons for Millennials turnover:
 - 62% poor performance
 - 50% absence
 - 25% tardiness
 - 30% gross misconduct. (Greg Weiss, Career Support 365)

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Work Behaviors

Younger people are much more likely to quit voluntarily - reasons given are:

- It is not as great as I want.
- It is not as exciting as I thought it would be.
- Under paid.
- Weiss indicates that they don't want to work hard and they are just "lazy".
- 84% say their employers should help them grow their careers (2021 Talent index.)
- 44% report the employer has no talent acceleration program.
- "Quiet Quitting" and the "Great Attrition" are seen as post-pandemic response to previous lags in wages and work benefits.
- 36% who quit in a 6 month period did not have another job. (Pew Research)

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TRENDS OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Jonathan Haidt, Psychologist, New York University

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Psychological Trends

According to Haidt, there is a significant change in the group born after 1995.

- Higher rates of anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide and fragility. (These rates are higher than any previous cohort.)
- Depression rates began to “soar” among teen girls by 2013 and were epidemic by 2015.
- By 2020:
 - 25% of teenage girls had major depression, compared to 13% in previous generation.
 - 9% of teenage boys had major depression, compared to 5% in the previous generation.

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Psychological Trends

Haidt attributes deepening problem to multiple factors.

- Overprotected generation who had not practiced adult skills in low-stakes environment.
- The “selfie era” supported by forward facing cameras on I-Phones in 2010.
- Explosion of social media and the commensurate drop in face-to-face relationships.
- Girls are attracted to high visual platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook, that show others as perfect. The result is the “Compare and Despair” phenomenon.
- Boys are more likely to play video games and thrive on group competitions.
- Social media promotes a culture of fear, low risk-taking and conformity.

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DIGITAL IMPACTS AND DISTRACTIONS

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Tacit knowledge versus extrinsic knowledge

The difference between extrinsic versus tacit knowledge is using a calculator versus learning math.

Tacit Knowledge:

Internalized information, experiences, and knowledge attained through life experience and training.

Extrinsic Knowledge:

Externalized, not internally retained information and knowledge attained through external devices or means.

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Some of the impacts on increased reliance on digital devices on learners and workers.

Automation bias

- Over-reliance on digital problem solving.
- Reduction in the learners' capabilities to solve similar problems.
- The reliability of automation reduces the attentiveness of the learner (The calculator is never wrong.)
- In the physical area, a reduction in psycho-motor skills.

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Reduced complex problem solving-skills

Christof Van Nimewegan's Experiment

*5 U of M Fans and 5 OSU Fans—One boat holds three fans. Must get everyone across the river
You can't leave more U of M fans in one place, or they will wipe out the remaining OSU fans.*

One group with a computer:

- Accomplishes problem faster.
- Is less strategic in solving the problem.
- Are less skilled and easily confused.
- They didn't learn from the experience.
- Failed to apply computer lessons when tasked with the same problem without a computer.
- Much slower than the original group that didn't have a computer.

One group without a computer:

- Slower than the initial computer group.
- Excelled at creating and plotting a strategy.
- Understood the conceptual underpinnings of solving the problem.
- Learned from the experience and were able to apply knowledge when given a computer to do the same task.
- They could complete the task faster than the initial computer group with the computer.

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*“The more accurate Google becomes
in matching answers-the lazier the
questions become.”*

One of Googles top engineers.

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Behavior experiments related to increases and decreases in workload.

The Dancing Mice experiments:

- Significant increases in workload produces over-whelmed sense and reduced motivation to perform. “Why try-it will never be completed.”
- In addition to significant decreases in workload, there is an under-whelmed sense, reduced attention, decreased motivation to perform, and boredom and complacency.
- Humans perform best when we are challenged and not over or underwhelmed.

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Digital Dementia

Researchers in South Korea and Germany studying frequent digital users found significant patterns of right-brain atrophy (deficits), including:

- “The more you train kids with computer games, the more attention-deficit you get,” Manfred Spitzer
- The more time you spend with screen media, the less your social skills will be.” Manfred Spitzer
- “Over-use of smartphones and game devices hamper the balanced development of the brain.” Byun Gi Won, M.D.

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Numerous studies site negative impacts of expanded use of digital devices and screen time.

- Sleep.
- Inter-personal relationships.
- Ability to communicate face-to-face with another person.
- Ability to engage in deep, conceptual based, problem-solving.
- Short attention spans.

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Teach younger workers to micromanage themselves.

- Stick to the principle that all work should be divided into clearly delineated tangible results.
- With new employees, assign 100 % ownership for solid results that are smaller in scope.
- Attach a firm deadline to every assignment.
- Spell out any parameters, guidelines, or specifications at the time of the assignment.
- Require an action plan for large projects.
- Encourage the monitoring of change.
- Be prepared to adjust goals and fine-tune plans.

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Training and retraining younger workers

- Think Visually.
- Use lots of white space.
- Use large and different fonts.
- Beaucoup pictures.

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Ideas for Teaching and Training Millennials

Get them to own it.

- How will knowing “X” help you?
- How would you apply this?

Engage them.

- Touch it.
- Talk about it.

Praise and coach but don't lie to them.

- “You did this well” “
- “How could you have done it differently?”
- Use visually engaging material.
- Use inter-personal engaging scenarios.
- Good ‘Ole Socrates is still useful!

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Training and retraining younger workers, continued.

- Provide immediacy.
- Use bullets - no massive paragraphs.
- Train on the job - not in classrooms.
- Replace phrases with symbols.
- Training materials should include space for taking notes.
- Emphasize fun. (They need to be entertained at times.)
- Performance based exercises and projects, not tests.
- Employee drawings often depicts information.
- Train/play/exercise to retrain.

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Training and retraining younger workers, continued

- Leverage benefits.
- Use as a form of recognition.
(Ten years at Hard Rock Café gets a Rolex watch!)
- Emphasize benefits that have a unique features.

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How to manage a younger worker:

- Accept them
- Care about them
- Support them
- Don't baby them
- Hands off but be there
- Discuss your methods
- Train and orient
- Set specific standards
- Make work fun

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Younger workers want

- Challenging work that matters *and that is goal driven.*
- Personal relationships *they want to be connected.*
- Technology *encourage technological solutions.*
- Show me the money!
- Recognition - know what they are doing and *acknowledge it.*

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Best ways to lead younger workers

- Show them authoritative expertise.
- Invest in their outcomes.
- Celebrate their victories.
- Don't micromanage, let them get the job done.

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Managing Generational Changes

SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPERVISORS

1. Lead by question

- Questions force ownership of the issue, problem and answers.
- Train the officers and new people to think
- De-briefs
- What-if scenarios

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2. Divide work into trainable, supportable and accountable segments.

- Don't assume problem solving abilities or inclinations are the same as yours.
- Use visual and action engaging examples and demonstrations.

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3. Create and reinforce the team approaches.

- Discuss roles and expectations.
 1. *What should the team expect of the team leader?*
 2. *What should the team leader expect of each team member?*
 3. *What should all team members expect of each other?*
 4. *What are the ground rules that all members of the team must obey?*
 5. *What should the team do differently to be more effective?*
- Periodically revisit these expectations.

4. Use “Ask – Discuss” to expand participation and ownership in the outcomes.

- Teams and Individuals
- Scenario based training
- **Ask-Discuss**
 - Team Leader***
 - Ask and Discuss
 - Decide
 - Give Reasons
 - Team Member***
 - Give 100% Follow Through

5. Don't lower the bar, accommodate or enable lower performance.

- Be clear about the standard.
- Be prepared to mentor, coach and guide.
- Be prepared to offer praise and sanctions.

6. Re-examine your recognition and reward approaches.

- Are they based on “your” generational assumptions?
 - Frequency of recognition may increase with younger people.
 - Time flexibility may be more desired by younger workers.

7. Lighten up!

- Don't make it a zero-sum game.
- Play with it!

ORGANIZATIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR MANAGING GENERATIONAL CHANGES

Suggestion One: Create a recruitment/selection process that captures necessary abilities of employees.

- *Have supervisors identify needs*
 - Ability to communicate?
 - Ability to problem solve?
 - Oriented to team.
 - Others.
- *Create scenarios and tests for these abilities*

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Suggestion Two: Create a probationary process that reflects the needs of the organization.

- Have first line supervisors create benchmarks for performance over the course the probationary period.
- Establish regular Command/Leadership discussions regarding probationary employee's performance

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Suggestion Three Get the management team on the same page.

- Identify the differences and issues and determine why they exist
- Examine organizational assumptions.
- Examine supervisory assumptions.
- Agree on standards and don't waiver.
- Create a cohesive strategy.

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Suggestion Four: Create a stronger connection between the first line supervisor and the employee.

- Closely examine duties and responsibilities of 1st line.
- Reduce paper work.
(To the degree feasible.)
- Increase guidance, instructional and feedback contact.

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Suggestion Five: Create meaningful opportunities for inter-generational contact.

- Work Assignments
- Project involvements
- Ride together

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Suggestion Six: Re-examine feedback and performance appraisal processes.

- Make appraisals job relevant.
- Seek input from staff in creating the appraisal instrument.
- Increase feedback and mentoring frequency.
- Link performance appraisal to employee development and training.

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Suggestion Seven: Training and personal development.

- Have the first line supervisor be in charge of employee training and development.
- Create training and development plans to fit organizational needs.
- Create training strategy that is focused and deliberate.
- Follow through.

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Suggestion Eight: Examine the rewards system

- Boomer oriented?
- Use of time as a carrot/stick.
- Create shorter reward milestones.

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Suggestion Nine: Re-examine and clarify promotion and special assignments

- Qualifications, qualities and timeframes should be very clear and communicated.
- Consider shorter time assignments for some special assignments.
- Involve the management team in all changes with input from staff.

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HIGHLIGHTS AND THOUGHTS ABOUT:
What the experts say about families.

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Don't over schedule.

- Limit activities.
 - Think before you sign up for something new.
- Make family a priority.
 - Spend more time alone as a family.
- Be unproductive.
 - Kids shouldn't be judged on everything they do.

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More suggestions for families.

- Be skeptical of the latest parenting advice.
- Childhood is a preparation, not a performance.
- "Trust yourself, you know more than you think you do."
Dr. Benj. Spock.

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Boomerang Kids “They’re Baaaack!”

Suggestions:

- Set a move-out deadline before the move-in date.
- Share responsibilities.
- Don’t be perma-parents.
- Identify and share household chores.

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Boomerang Kids “They’re Baaaack!”

- Stay busy
 - Boomerangers get active in local activities.
 - Parents carry on with normal day-to-day life.
- Set Goals
 - Discuss and set goals with each other.
 - Save for house, business, etc..
- Pay rent
 - Pay something - no free ride.
 - Parents (if they feel guilty) can set the money aside.

Linda Waacyk, “They’re Baaaack!” in Michigan Country Lines, May 2008 www.countrylines.com

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Father's roughhousing teaches: risk-taking and boundary setting.

- Father:
 - Is immersed in the game emotionally, smiling and laughing.
 - Shows spontaneity, creativity or silliness.
 - Is good natured about losing with no signs of ego.

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Father's roughhousing teaches: risk-taking and boundary setting.

- Helps the child control his or her emotions and calms him or her when overexcited.
- Adjusts his effort and his technique based on the child's cues.
- Motivates the child to stay engaged and keep going, or rejoin the game.
- Is dominant but share the upper hand, allowing the child to win sometimes.

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Create a Family Media Pledge

- The following is a Family Time Media Pledge that you can use for your family.
- Use this as a starting point and modify as needed for your family's needs.
- The goal is to incorporate technology into our lives in a meaningful way that allows us to have a healthy balance of online and off-line time.

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Kids and Teens

- I will never give out personal information online or by text and will avoid all chat rooms except ones my mom and dad have looked at and approved.
- I understand my parents have a right to check into my media history on my computer and phone and other devices such as iPod Touch, games, and whatever else I use regularly. I will try and keep my total screen time to 2 hours a day except when doing a project for school, or when my parents give me permission.
- I will not watch shows or play games that are inappropriate for me or for friends and family watching or playing with me.

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Parents

- I will check what my kids are doing online and on their phones, consider using parent controls, and use them judiciously.
- I will let my kids know before I check their computers or enable parent controls on their computers or gaming units.
- I will take the time to be interested in what my kids are doing online and in the digital world and talk to them about that world.
- I will help them make good media choices.
- If my child makes a mistake, I will ask questions and learn what happened before I punish or take away technology.
- I will only take away technology as a last resort for defying our family pledge when other consequences have failed to work, such as reinforcing the rules and increase off-line chores.

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Entire Family

- We will talk as a family at a meal a day with no technology in sight!
- We will agree to technology-free times such as meals, weekends, and vacations.
- We won't sacrifice important family time for media or digital use of any kind. If media gets in the way, we need to recognize we are using it too much or in a way that is not helping our family.
- We agree to use technology responsibly by not
 - Texting or talking on a cell phone while driving
 - Using cell phones in a public location where it may annoy others
 - Using technology to harm others by engaging in bullying or slanderous actions
 - Listening to music with earbuds in a manner that prevents us from hearing passing cars or pedestrians, and never while in the car as the driver

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Family Media Pledge – Sign in and live by it

- Date: _____
- Signed
- Parents: _____
- Kids and Teens: _____

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CyberSafe: Protecting and Empowering Kids in the Digital World of Texting,
Gaming, and Social Media (Copyright © 2011 American Academy of Pediatrics)

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