

# M R C C REVIEW

The newsletter for all media professionals

## Tweens and Multiple Media Touchpoints

John Spadaro & Lisa Kim  
Disney Media Sales and Marketing

In today's world, media and technology have produced a variety of marketing possibilities geared towards younger consumers and banking on their unique position of influence on not only their own spending, but their families too. Kids and teens alike are popular consumer targets for marketers as they develop brand loyalties and exhibit a proven influence over household spending. One

segment of this group, tweens, is becoming a driving focus for many marketers due to their increasing maturity, both intellectually and as consumers. Because of their transitioning lifestyles, they are also more elusive than their

younger and older counterparts. There are an estimated 24.6 million tweens in the U.S. with a projected expenditure of more than \$50 billion dollars a year and are estimated to influence another \$170 billion of spending by their families.

Tweens today are categorized as persons aged 8 and 14, a complex time between childhood and adolescence. This group is at a crossroads; dealing with conflicting pressures regarding school, style, friends and family. Tweens are looking to fit in and look up to their older teen siblings. They want to wear the latest styles, yet are self-conscious about growing up. This set still enjoys spending time with family and are not quite ready to cross over into the rebellious teen stage so commonly associated with later adolescence. At the same time, this group is extremely open to marketing messages and views them as a part of every day life.

In recent years tweens have been exposed to more media and consumerism than ever before, mostly due to the changing technology that sits in almost every room in their

home. On average, kids and teens spend 6.5 hours a day consuming some form of media. As they become technically sophisticated, tweens have come of age faster than past generations, becoming more aware of their surroundings from their access to these mediums.

With these external pressures, parents are getting more involved in their children's day to day lives. The majority of tween parents are Gen Xers, who in their own upbringing have experienced divorce and latchkey-kid syndrome. They have a very different approach to parenting than

the previous Boomer generation. Gen Xers spend more time with their children, sacrificing career goals for family balance if necessary. They communicate better with their kids and are watchful of their activities. These parents also monitor their kid's media usage much more diligently with concerns on not only content, but security.

Of all the different media available to kids today, television continues to be the primary form of entertainment among tweens. Even with the emergence of other technologies, time spent watching television among kids and teens has remained stable in the past ten years according to Nielsen Media Research. Much of this can be attributed to the home environment, as more than two-thirds of kids and teens now have a television in their bedroom, giving them ample opportunity to view this medium, even amid many other media choices. Additionally, in many households, the television is consistently on throughout the day. Disney Channel, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network are the top networks viewed among tweens. The tremendous success of High School



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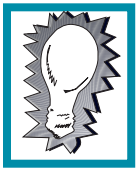
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## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by [Julia Johnston](#)  
[Arbitron](#)

### A Look to the Future

**R**ight now buying a living, breathing dinosaur is as much of a reality to my toddler as buying a doll with a pretty dress at the local toy store. So, it's hard to imagine that in only a few short years, her wants will intrigue marketers. We are all looking more and more for information about the youth audience. What captures their attention? And, more importantly, how do we keep their attention?

Just 25 years ago, we didn't have much research on youth media habits. There weren't many different choices to reach them or an understanding of why to reach them. Saturday morning cartoons, Gilligan's Island and School House Rock were the only choices (okay, maybe those were just my choices!) Today, there is so much more.

With digital distractions in every room, and around every corner, we are lucky to also have the research to help us understand youth media consumption based on age, gender and interests.

But still, many studies have shown that youth are loyal to their TV programming, radio stations and over the past 5 or so years also loyal to their online, age-appropriate choices. The digital world for them is just a virtual neighborhood much like the terrestrial neighborhoods of mine and probably your growing up years. Digital environments have changed social networking for all of us including our youth.

The authors of this month's newsletter dig deep into youth marketing and media habits as well as provide a plethora of resources for understanding tween and teen media

consumption. Who knows, you might also find a holiday gift idea for a young person in your family too.

Speaking of holiday gift-giving - there are 42 shopping days left before Christmas! Until then, I'm sure your social calendar is filling up with fun events with friends and family. Be sure to save the date for the MRCC Holiday Party slated for Tuesday, December 11. Our Holiday Invitational Planning Team (aka: the HIP Team) is out now sampling the city's finest locations for the event. We will confirm

the location and date very soon as well as post on the MRCC website and send out a Holiday Party Evite.

This being the final newsletter of the year, I wanted to be sure to remind you of a few other things to add to your to do list and calendar for 2008:

- Luncheon and newsletter topic planning is underway. If you have any suggested topics,

pass along your ideas to me or Jen Rhodes. Soon, we'll send out a survey to get your ideas for the year.

- Renew your personal or corporate membership now for 2008! Check out the website for the benefits of our club.

- Planning for the MRCC Symposium will soon begin. You are an integral part in making this year as successful as the past. Please let us know if you can dedicate volunteer time, topics of interest, and speaker suggestions.

Please join us **Tuesday, November 13th** for our luncheon on Youth marketing and trends. Our speaker guests from **MSN** and **Nielsen Games** will share their thoughts on this fast growing and complex target group. **MRCC**

**Digital environments  
have changed social  
networking for all of us  
including our youth**

### RSVP by Credit Card

Note: The MRCC has made arrangements to accept credit cards via PayPal (Visa, MC, Amex, Discover). This must be done when registering online. Credit cards cannot be accepted at the door. Please be aware that there will be an additional 4% processing fee when paying by credit card.

## November Meeting Notice

### PLEASE RSVP!

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Youth Marketing and Trends</b>
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Gerardo Guzman &amp; Nicholas Covey, Nielsen Games Beth Uyeno, MSN</b>
<b>Date</b>	Tuesday, November 13th, 2007
<b>Place</b>	Maggiano's Banquets 111 W. Grand Avenue The Amarone Room
<b>Time</b>	Noon to 2 p.m.
<b>Price</b>	<b>\$35 member \$45 non-member \$5 additional charge for Walk-Ins</b>
<b>Menu</b>	Buffet-style lunch
<b>RSVP</b>	FAX your reservation to <b>312-846-8277</b> or RSVP at <a href="http://www.mrcc-online.com">www.mrcc-online.com</a> by noon Friday, November 9th. Cancellations must be received by Noon on November 9th.

**NOTE: Be sure to RSVP to guarantee yourself a seat. We can only handle a small number of walk-ins.**

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**December 11 —  
Annual Holiday Party  
Parthenon Restaurant  
314 S. Halsted St.**



## Speaking Kids' Language

Donna Sabino  
Nickelodeon

Effective communication with kids starts with an understanding of how they experience the world. It is worth reminding ourselves that kids are not little adults. Whether because of physical size (Are they tall enough to see your point of purchase display on the store shelf?) or stage of development (Are the words used on the website the appropriate reading level for the age target?) kids' perspective on the whole world is very different than ours.

Therefore, the importance of research when communicating with kids cannot be overstated. High-quality kids research is essential to helping those adults who want to move, inspire and motivate kids to understand what they see and how to navigate their world.

Kids are keenly aware of what is "for kids like me," and what is not. It's a skill they hone in school- they quickly learn about cues such as size (chairs for Kindergarteners are smaller than chairs for 5th graders, font sizes in books for preschoolers are bigger than for 14 year olds), color (the color palettes in media for kids are bolder and brighter than for adults), and imagery/representational style (Are kids the main characters? Do animals talk? Are inanimate objects anthropomorphized?). Kids use these cues to sort through the messaging they are bombarded with each day. Moms reinforce this sorting paradigm by pointing out and approving what is appropriate and saying "No" to what is not.

Kids use the same kind of strategy when it comes to their media selections. They are quickly able to sort through various media options to find just the experiences that suit their needs. They are the experts at programming all their selections into a custom package that is "just right" for them.

Interestingly, to kids, the actual "Technology" (in the literal sense) is irrelevant. They don't even "see" it as an entity-it is an organic part of their lives. Talking to them about the role technology plays in their lives is like talking to children about the role park swings play in their lives – it's invisible. A newly released study, jointly produced by MTV Networks and Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions, surveyed 18,000 kids ages 8-14 in 16 countries, offered new insights on digital entertainment and communications for this generation. One major finding was that kids are not focused on the detailed workings of the technology itself. It's how technology lets

them communicate, connect and be entertained that is salient to them.

In past generations, the medium was the message. For today's kids, the message is the organizing principle and the media the integrated delivery system. Remember, that's how they are being taught in school. Thanks to educational researchers like Howard Gardner, educators realized that using multimedia helped kids with all different learning styles feel more comfortable in the classroom and grasp more information on each subject.

When communicating with kids, it is also helpful to keep in mind the developmental motivators that stimulate them. Among these are the desires to learn, to create, to be seen as competent, to feel important, included, and accepted. Kids are aspirational. They yearn for and seek out increased responsibility and control.

Think about the many areas of kids' lives that are distinctly out of their control. For the most part, they do not decide what time they go to bed, whether or not they should go to school, or whether or not they will do their homework or brush their teeth. However, when it comes to media interactions, they are active participants, with a toolbox full of choices and technology, and are able to program media their way. Think how appealing and empowering that is to kids.

Because they personally direct these interactions, their satisfaction with the overall experience increases. And, education research has taught us that when kids are engaged and happy, they take in more information. (Willis, Jusy (2007) Educational Leadership, The Neuroscience of Joyful Education).

For more than a quarter century, Nickelodeon is and has been dedicated to better understanding and serving kids. By constantly learning about kids, we are able to continually evolve and grow our brand to better fit their lives. Kids gave us permission to create multiple entry points to invite them into our brand. Whether they enter through Nick Magazine, Nick Television, Nick.com, Nick VOD, Nick Mobile, Consumer Products, Hotels, Live Shows or any of the other Nick Manifestations cross platform, kids have the tools they need to build their own customized Nick-branded experience.

The Nick brand connotes something special to kids. They are as passionate about us as we are about them. In this symbiotic relationship, Nick motivates, inspires and moves the audience and they in turn do the same for us. **MRCC**

Donna Sabino is the VP of Strategic Development at Nickelodeon

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# The Online Life of Kids

Terence Burke  
[KidSay](#)

**W**hat do kids do online? An intriguing question; but an inadequate one. To ask a better question (and thus get a better answer), you've got to narrow your focus. You can begin by eliminating the huge swath of kids who infrequently use the Internet because it's too challenging. This lets you dismiss kids seven years old and younger. Then you can eliminate the kids whose online behavior mimics that of young adults. This lets you ignore kids sixteen and older.

That leaves you with the core of 'kid' Internet users - kids ages eight to fifteen. In order to achieve accurate and actionable insight into their online behavior, these kids should be segmented into a minimum of four markets. Unwieldy? Yes, but the biological and socialized differences that gender produces—combined with growing-up's physical, psychological, and emotional changes—creates entirely new beings. If you need confirmation of this, just ask the parents of any thirteen-year-old you know!

Equipped with this newfound understanding, you're ready to ask better questions. One might be, "What do girls 8-11 do online?" You might also be curious about their older sisters. If you're really inquisitive, you might ask what their brothers are doing online too.

[KidSay's Trend Tracker](#), one of America's leading kid-centered research tools, is fielded five times a year and asks 1000+ 8- to 15-year-olds open-ended questions about their attitudes and behaviors. What kids tell us is that age and gender have an enormous impact on what they do online. For example, almost 70% of 12- to 15-year-olds IM (Instant Message) their friends online. For the tweens (ages 8-11), that number drops to 36%.

When considering the sites they visit, age and gender have an even greater impact. For tweens, the primary driver to sites is games. Their favorites are the 'old media' sites ([nick.com](#), [cartoonnetwork.com](#), and especially for the girls, [disney.go.com](#)) that blend games with show information and/or clips. The independent game sites tweens prefer are [addictinggames.com](#) and [miniclip.com](#).

The focus for teens is elsewhere. Their online life is increasingly an extension of their offline life. Social networking sites like [Myspace](#), [Facebook](#), and the up-and-coming [Bebo](#) are often their first stop when connecting to the web. In fact, over 60% of teen girls list [Myspace](#) as their favorite site. (43% of teen boys agree.)

What's the next trend in online life? For tweens it's becoming part of a community-based avatar experience. Sites like [Webkinz](#) (girls), [Runescape](#) (boys), [Club Penguin](#), and [Neopets](#) (both genders) are gaining members. These sites offer a fun, safe, and age-appropriate version of the social networking sites their teenage siblings inhabit.

For teens, besides the continued strength of aforementioned social networking sites (look for [Mycrrib.com](#) to become a growing presence), [KidSay](#) sees an expansion of the content filtering role teens now play for their peers. This means MORE videos distributed virally on sites such as [YouTube](#) and [Yahoo](#).

These macro trends, avatar experiences for tweens, and content filtering for teens will be the dominant forces in online behavior in '08. **MRCC**

Terence Burke is Vice President & Trend Tracker Editor-in-Chief at KidSay. For additional information, please contact KidSay at 913-390-8110.

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*Tweens & Multiple Media Touchpoints, cont. from page 1*

Musical 2, being the most watched telecast ever on cable, has shown the power in which this platform can deliver.

Another top media choice among kids is the online space. Kids and teens have become more immersed in online and digital media as the penetration of home computers and speed of internet access in the home has increased exponentially in the past 5 years. 88% of tweens have been online in the past month. This group participates in instant messaging, emailing, playing games, and more than a quarter (28%) have memberships to virtual worlds. Another 17% have a profile on a social networking site.

Such sites and activities have given tweens the opportunity to share interests and explore different environments without leaving the comfort of their home. The market has shifted to accommodate them. In addition to sites like [MySpace](#) and [Facebook](#), [Bebo.com](#) has become a social networking destination geared specifically towards tweens and teens. [Club Penguin](#) is another online site targeting tweens where kids can create their

own avatars in a virtual world. This site is aware of parental concerns and welcomes them to set controls on the types of worlds their children can explore. Also, the widespread popularity of iPods and other digital music players have led to an increased rate of downloading music and programs, making it a common practice among the tween set (34%). The advancement of their online skills will continue to improve as this group looks for more opportunities to express themselves and connect with the outside world.

As digital music players have become more popular, it is assumed that radio listenership would drop. This pattern has been seen among the teen demographic due to the rise in usage of digital music players. However, this is not the case among tweens. According to a Bridge Report Ratings study, radio usage is ranked second only to television among media usage on a typical day with tweens, indicating radio's important place in their every day life.

Other digital distractions include the increased usage of cell phones among

tweens. Approximately one-third of 8-12 year olds have a cell phone and many kids can't imagine life without them. The influx of cell phone ownership among this group is also driven by parents who want an easy line of communication with their children, wherever they may be. More than three-quarters of these parents allow their kids to have a cell phone for emergencies or if they need to reach them. Texting has become a phenomenon in itself, with 44% of kids using it as the main form of communication with friends. The use of these functions will only increase as cell phones penetration increases in this marketplace.

Playing video games is an integral part of many tweens lives, especially tween boys. More than half of tweens own a hand-held gaming system (53%) or gaming system console (50%). Among boy tweens, time spent playing video games is second among all media only to television. Much of the appeal is due to the interactive elements and challenges this activity provides that can be played alone or with friends.

*continued on page 4*

Are all these media choices overloading tweens? Contrary to popular belief, kids who use new digital media do not necessarily watch less television. In fact, kids who are heavy users of these platforms tend to consume more television than the average person. Consumption of digital media is not cannibalizing television viewing, but rather is incremental media usage.

In actuality, 27% of the time kids are exposed to media, they are consuming two or even three different media simultaneously. These multi-taskers could be listening to music while using the computer or watching television and reading a magazine. This multifaceted group is only expected to grow as tweens become more immersed in the digital world. It is up to marketers to look

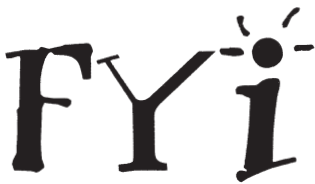
further than the traditional media touchpoints to deliver maximum exposure and effectiveness to tweens, and to embrace the new forms of communication available to this increasingly crucial demographic. **MRCC**

John Spadaro is Vice President of Research and Lisa Kim is Director, Research at Disney Media Sales and Marketing

Sources:

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**Scarborough** began delivery of its Release 2 2007 local market data in October and will finish at the end of December. Release 2 2007 marks our return to New Orleans and well as the addition of Harlingen as a syndicated market, bringing our total to 81 local markets.....

**IMS** would like to announce that Evan Clark has returned as Director, Global Media Data Management..... **SimmonsNEW MEDIA** Study offers the ability to combine extensive New Media information with Simmons' leading psychographic, lifestyle, media and brand data. The supplementary SimmonsNEW MEDIA data variables will be integrated into the most recent 12-month Simmons National Consumer Study.

For more info contact Mary Kay Petrella at [marykayp@smrb.com](mailto:marykayp@smrb.com)..... Beginning this October average commercial minute ratings, specifically Live + 3 days (C3) data will be available in Ad\*Views, the **Nielsen** Monitor-Plus flagship software. Nielsen Monitor-Plus is the leading provider of competitive advertising intelligence. The Nielsen Company released its average commercial minute ratings data in May of this year.

**FAX YOUR MRCC RESERVATION!**

**FAX TO: DANIELE MEGLEN**

If you would like to fax us your lunch reservation, please fill out the information below and fax it to the MRCC reservation line at 312-846-8277 by November 9 at noon.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Member (\$35)     Non-Member (\$45)

No shows will be billed — cancellations must be received 24 hours prior to meeting.

The *MRCC Review* is published 9 times a year.

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