

Facts and Figures about our TV Habit



Real Vision

I. TV Undermines Family Life

- 1) Time per day that TV is on in an average US home: 7 hours, 40 minutes
- 2) Amount of television that the average American watches per day: over 4 hours
- 3) Time spent daily with screen media for U.S. children age six and under: about 2 hours
- 4) Percentage of US families with children age 0-6 with at least one television: 99
- 5) Percentage of US households with 3 or more TVs (2003): 50
- 6) Percentage of parents who say that if they have something important to do, it is likely that they will use the TV to occupy their child: 45
- 7) Percentage of Americans who always or often watch television while eating dinner: 40
- 8) Percentage of Americans who say they watch too much TV: 49
- 9) Time per week that parents spend in meaningful conversation with their children: 38.5 minutes
- 10) Percentage of 4-6 year-olds who, when asked, would rather watch TV than spend time with their fathers: 54

II. TV Harms Children and Hampers Education

- 1) Average number of hours per week that American one year-old children watch television: 6
- 2) Number of hours recommended by the American Pediatric Association for children two and under: 0
- 3) Average daily time American children under age two will spend in front of a screen: 2 hours, 5 minutes
- 4) Average time per week that the American child ages 2-17 spends watching television: 19 hours, 40 minutes
- 5) Hours of TV watching per week shown to negatively affect academic achievement: 10 or more
- 6) Hours per week that non-African-American teens (12-17) spend watching primetime TV (8-11 p.m. daily): 5:26
- 7) Hours per week that African-American teens spend watching primetime TV: 7:37
- 8) Percentage difference (African Americans vs. non-African-Americans): 40.2
- 9) Percentage of children ages 8-16 who have a TV in their bedroom: 56
- 10) Percentage of children age 6 and under who have a TV in their bedroom: 36
- 11) Percentage of children age 6 and under with a VCR or DVD player in their bedroom: 27
- 12) Percentage of those children who usually watch television in their bedroom: 30
- 13) Percentage of television-time that children ages 2-7 spend watching alone and unsupervised: 81
- 14) Percent of total television-time that children older than 7 spend without their parents: 95
- 15) Percentage of parents who would like to limit their children's TV watching: 73
- 16) Percentage of day care centers that use TV during a typical day: 70
- 17) Hours per year the average American youth spends in school: 900
- 18) Hours per year the average American youth watches television: 1,023
- 19) Percentage of self-professed educational TV that has little or no educational value: 21
- 20) Chance that an American parent requires children to do their homework before watching TV: 1 in 12
- 21) Average time per day American children spend in front of a screen of some kind: 4 hours, 41 minutes
- 22) Percentage of young adults who admit to postponing their bedtime for the internet or TV: 55
- 23) Percentage of 4-6 year olds in homes where the TV is usually or always left on who can read: 34
- 24) Percentage of 4-6 year olds in homes where the TV is not usually or always on who can read: 56
- 25) Amount of time children age 4-6 and under spend daily, on average, with screen media: 2:10 hours
- 26) Amount of time children age 6 and under spend daily, on average, reading or being read to: 41 minutes

III. TV Promotes Obesity

- 1) Adults in US technically obese: 1 in 3, or 62 million
- 2) Percentage of American children who were seriously overweight in 1964: 5; 2003: more than 15
- 3) Amount of daily moderate physical activity recommended for children: 60 minutes
- 4) Percentage of young people who report having had no recent physical activity: 14
- 5) Factor by which men who watch more than 21 hours of TV a week increase their risk of Type 2 diabetes: 2
- 6) Percentage chance that an overweight adolescent will become an overweight or obese adult: 70%
- 7) Percentage higher health cost for Kaiser Permanente members with Body Mass Index of 35 or higher: 44
- 8) Percentage of dollars spent on clothing for men and women's plus sizes: 23
- 9) Economic cost of obesity in the United States in 2000: \$117 billion

IV. TV Promotes Violence

- 1) Number of violent acts the average American child sees on TV by age 18: 200,000
- 2) Number of murders witnessed by children on television by the age 18: 16,000
- 3) Percentage of youth violence directly attributable to TV viewing: 10
- 4) Percentage of Hollywood executives who believe there is a link between TV violence and real violence: 80
- 5) Percentage of children polled who said they felt "upset" or "scared" by violence on television: 91
- 6) Percent increase in network news coverage of homicide between 1993 and 1996: 721
- 7) Percent reduction in the American homicide rate between 1993 and 1996: 20
- 8) Percent increase in number of violent scenes per hour on 10 major channels from 1992 to 1994: 41
- 9) Percentage of programs that show the long-term consequences of violence: 16
- 10) Percentage of violent programs that emphasize an anti-violence theme: 4

RealVision, an initiative to raise awareness about television's impact on us, is a project of
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Facts and Figures, continued

V. TV Promotes Overconsumption

- 1) Number of TV commercials viewed by American children a year: 40,000
- 2) Age by which children can develop brand loyalty: 2
- 3) Number of TV commercials seen by the average American by age 65: 2 million
- 4) Percentage of toy advertising dollars spent on television commercials in 1997: 92
- 5) Amount spent on television advertisements directed at young children in 1997: \$1.3 billion
- 6) Percentage of local TV news broadcast time devoted to advertising: 30
- 7) Total amount of money spent in 1999 to advertise on broadcast television: \$40 billion
- 8) Net worth of the typical middle-class American household after accounting for debts: less than \$10,000
- 9) Percentage of American children age six and under who have products based on characters from TV shows or movies: 97

V. TV Squelches Political Awareness

- 1) Money spent on ads for the major presidential candidates between June 1, 2000 and September 13: \$63 million
- 2) Money spent on issue ads between January 1, 1999 and August 30, 2000: over \$342 million
- 3) Percentage of those which were attack ads: 61
- 4) Amount of time broadcasters must provide to candidates free of charge under the 1996 Telecommunications Act: 0
- 5) Value of public airwaves allocated to broadcasters at no cost under the 1996 Telecommunications Act: \$70 billion
- 6) Amount spent on lobbying by TV broadcasters and the National Association of Broadcasters in 1996: \$4 million
- 7) Number of network news stories about the environment in 1990: 377; 1996: 113
- 8) Percentage of Americans who can name The Three Stooges: 59
- 9) Percentage of Americans who can name three Supreme Court Justices: 17

Source Key

I. Family Life

- 1) Nielsen Media Research, 2000. 2) *ibid.* 3) "Zero to Six: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers," Kaiser Family Foundation, Fall 2003 4) *ibid.* 5) *ibid.* 6) *ibid.* 7) National Institute on Media and the Family, 1999. 8) Fahey, Valery. "TV by the Numbers." *Health*. Dec/Jan, 1992: 35. 9) American Family Research Council. "Parents Fight 'Time Famine' as Economic Pressures Increase." 1990. 10) Mango, Jack. "TV in America." *The Official Couch Potato Handbook*. Reprinted in *Wilson Quarterly*. Autumn 1993: 44.

II. Children

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III. Obesity

- 1) "America's Great Big Fat Challenge." *The Washington Post*, November 16, 2003 2) "A Not so Minor Risk," *The Washington Post*, December 2, 2003 p. F1 3) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity 2001," 2001. 4) *ibid.* 5) Harvard School of Public Health. Cited by Associated Press. June 20, 1999. 6) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 7) "America's Great Big Fat Challenge." *The Washington Post*, November 16, 2003 8) *ibid.* 9) Department of Health and Human Services, 2001

IV. Violence

- 1) Senate Judiciary Committee Staff Report. "Children, Violence, and the Media." 1999. 2) American Medical Association. "Physician Guide to Media Violence." 1996. 3) Senate Judiciary Committee Staff Report. 4) *US News and World Report*. Apr 8, 1997. 5) MTV national survey. *Chicago Tribune*. Aug 15, 1993. 6) Budd, Craig, and Steinman. *Consuming Environments*. Rutgers University Press, 1999. 7) *ibid.* 8) Senate Judiciary Committee Staff Report. 9) Mediascope. National Television Violence Study. Studio City, CA, 1999. 10) *ibid.*

V. Overconsumption

- 1) American Academy of Pediatrics. Cited by National Institute on Media and the Family. "Children and Advertising FactSheet." 2002. 2) McNeal, 1992. Cited by National Institute on Media and the Family, 2000. 3) Clark. "The Want Makers": 195. Cited in *Marketing Madness* by Michael Jacobsen and Laurie Mazur: 45. 4) Lamay, Craig, and Newton Minow. *Abandoned in the Wasteland: Children, Television and the First Amendment*. 1995. 5) Rocky Mountain Media Watch, Denver, 1995. 6) "Children and Advertising Fact Sheet," Natl. Institute on Media and the Family. 7) *Advertising Age*. "1999 U.S. Advertising Volume." Prepared by Robert J. Coen, McCann-Erickson Worldwide. 8) Schor, Juliet. *The Overspent American*. Basic Books, 1998. 9) "Zero to Six," Kaiser Family Foundation.

VI. Political Awareness

- 1) Brennan Center-Wisconsin Study. Political Television Advertising. 2000. 2) Annenberg Public Policy Institute. "Issue Ads @ APPC." 2000. 3) *ibid.* 4) Common Cause. *Channeling Influence*. Washington, DC, 1997. 5) *ibid.* 6) *ibid.* 7) Center for Media and Public Affairs Factoids. 8) Washington Post Poll, *Washington Post*, October, 12 1995. 9) *ibid.*