

Media's Influence on the Young

Never have there been more questions about the role of media in children's lives. New research shows that young people spend as much time engaged with media – seven hours – as they do sleeping. Hardly a week goes by without public debate about violent video games, educational TV, depressed computer-users, gender stereotypes in rap music, the technology gap between rich and poor, or the online dangers lurking just behind the computer screen. At the very same time, there has never been such a push to use media proactively to reach young people with information or positive messages. The world has seen peaceful revolutions spread through the deliberate use of the tools of digital media. It is clear that young people use media to connect, create, and innovate. Youth write, create art work and define political change online. International science projects on climate change assemble data from individuals around the world, organizations raise money for the victims of disaster, and human rights activists collect and distribute vital information. So what does it mean to grow up in a world that is so wired? What are the dangers? Where are the opportunities?