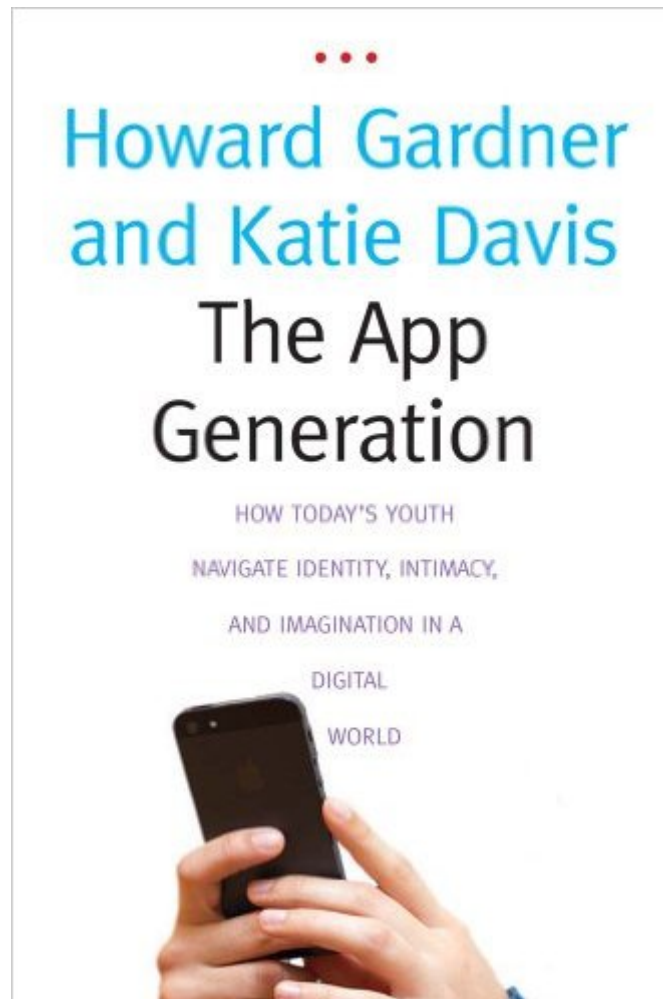


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The App Generation: How Today's Youth Navigate Identity, Intimacy, And Imagination In A Digital World



Synopsis

From the famed Harvard psychologist and an expert on the impact of digital media technologies, a riveting exploration of the power of apps to shape our young peopleâfor better or for worse No one has failed to notice that the current generation of youth is deeplyâsome would say totallyâinvolved with digital media. Professors Howard Gardner and Katie Davis name todayâs young people The App Generation, and in this spellbinding book they explore what it means to be âapp-dependentâ versus âapp-enabledâ and how life for this generation differs from life before the digital era.Â Gardner and Davis are concerned with three vital areas of adolescent life: identity, intimacy, and imagination. Through innovative research, including interviews of young people, focus groups of those who work with them, and a unique comparison ofÂ youthful artistic productions before and after the digital revolution, the authors uncover the drawbacks of apps: they may foreclose a sense of identity, encourage superficial relations with others, and stunt creative imagination. On the other hand, the benefits of apps are equally striking: they can promote a strong sense of identity, allow deep relationships, and stimulate creativity. The challenge is to venture beyond the ways that apps are designed to be used, Gardner and Davis conclude, and they suggest how the power of apps can be a springboard to greater creativity and higher aspirations.

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Customer Reviews

In a bygone era, parents and teachers provided the lessons and kids responded. With today's app generation, parents and teachers must take an entirely different approach. They are the ones who

must respond, because electronic media have completely changed the locus and flow of information. Does this book provide a recipe for what that response should be? No, but it does provide valuable insight into dealing with the app generation. Typically, a book addressing social issues has an agenda. The drawback there, of course, is the book is intended to be a proof of a thesis rather than an open-minded exploration of the issue. The former can easily be a blind leading the blind situation, and that's why an agenda-less book like this one is so valuable. However, the drawback of the agenda-less book is the reader isn't likely to walk away with a "correct answer" sort of conclusion. But if you need such a conclusion, you probably aren't ready to examine social issues because seldom do such simple conclusions reflect the complex reality. Things are more nuanced and layered than such conclusions permit. This book didn't hit us with dire warnings that apps are turning kids into zombies. Nor did it herald a new age, in which app-enabled kids will run circles around their app-avoiding parents. What the authors did was look at how different generations view the mobile app technology. They looked closely at the changes between the generations. It's a complex mosaic, and in that mosaic we find both good and bad effects. They provided some analysis of this also, without going very far down the opinion road. If a reader can sense any personal opinion in this book, it's basically along the lines of "We want to look at both sides."

I looked forward to what Howard Gardner, who brought the concept of multiple intelligences to the public, had to say about the "app generation". I was disappointed that the first 30 pages of this 200 page book were devoted to defining "generation". Ensuing pages sprawled. The authors explore the "3 I's" (Identity, Intimacy and Imagination) making connections and a few conclusions through anecdotes and brief summaries of research. The book read like a draft. I think the authors were not clear on whether they were presenting research to prove something about this topic or whether they were describing the navigation of the 3 I's as noted in the sub-title. Injecting the studies makes it seem like something will be proven/disproven. The book would rest better on the anecdotes and if the studies are used, there should be more clearly explained as well as their connections to the result. Here are three examples of the kind of dangling studies in this book: 1. After a number of anecdotes and the citation from a study that undergraduates/recent graduates and their parents are in contact 13.5 times a week, the conclusion is that technology weakens the ability to develop an autonomous self and that the app generation needs to seek reassurance outside the self. (p. 85) Since the study is not explained, the conclusion seems to be a leap. For instance, does it include those living with parents? Family business? What is the nature of the almost twice daily contact? 2. The "Bermuda Study" is cited in the methodologies and

mentioned (p. 11) as contributing to the book but unless the results are in the text unidentified or are buried in the footnotes (not indexed) we never get the results.³

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