How Communication Technologies Introduce Privacy Turbulence in Families During Late Adolescence

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Remember
Late Adolescence?

Flickr: Ceridwen

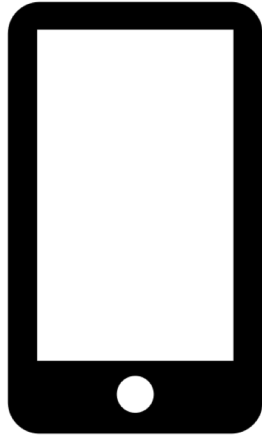# Data on Teens & Tech

2015 Pew data: 88% of teens own a mobile device; 92% go online every day.
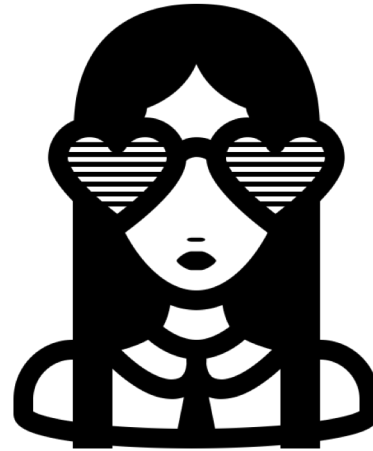
2015 Pew data: 71% of teens use multiple social media platforms

2017 CommonSense Media data: teens spend 7+ hours a day in front of screens

Images from the Noun Project: Smartphone by Pedro Santos; girl by Olesya Kozlova; texting by Luis Prado
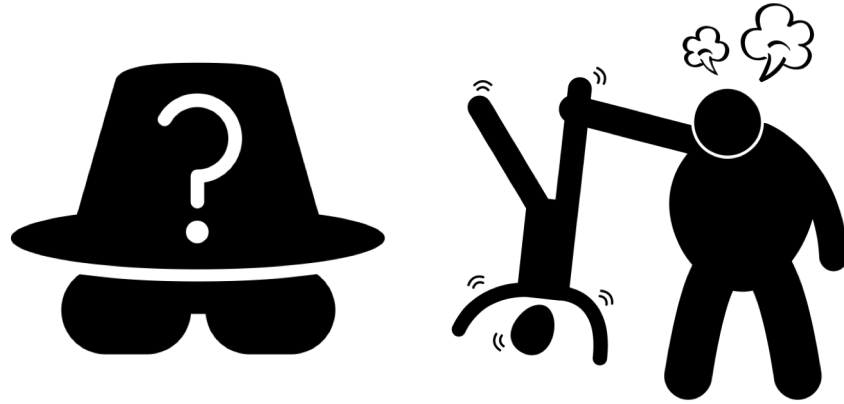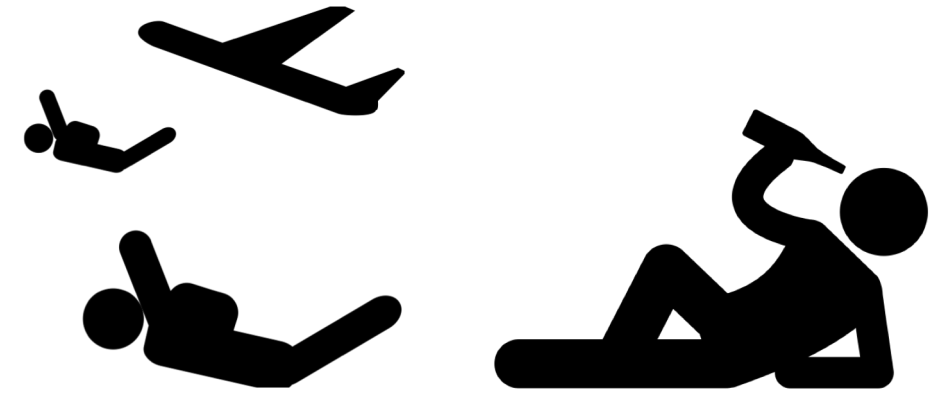
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Adolescence as a Transitional Period

Parents must balance their concerns about their child's safety with allowing more freedom & independence.

As children because more autonomous, they engage in more "risky" behaviors and are more influenced by their peers.

Images from Noun Project: stranger by Matt Wasser; Bully Weak Person by Gan Khoon Lay; Skydiving by Rohan Gupta; drinking by Gan Khoon Lay

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Theoretical Framework: CPM

Communication Privacy Management Theory (CPM):

1. Provides a framework for how parents and their teenage children negotiate rules around technology use, and

2. Considers how specific factors influence teens' strategies for managing their online identities.
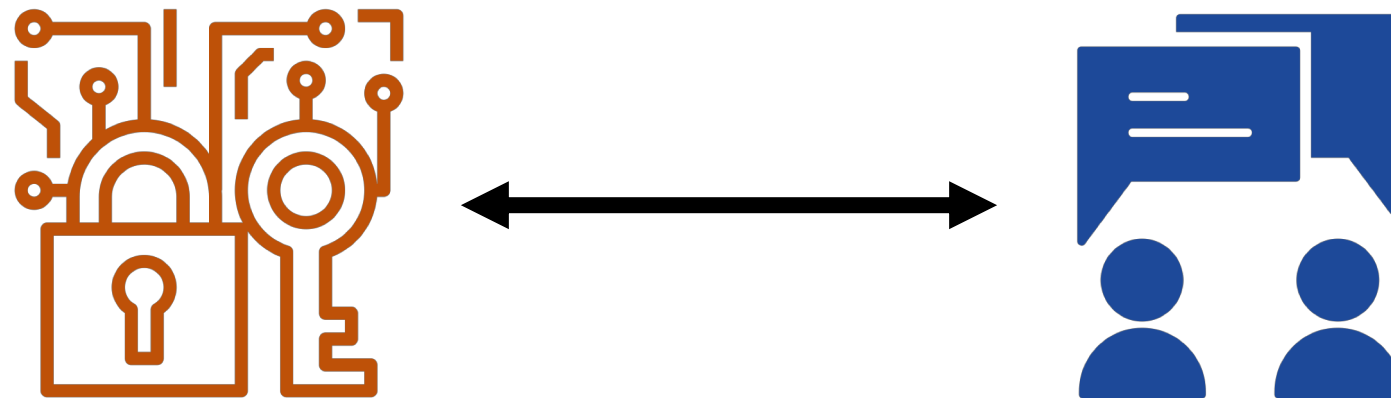
Images from Noun Project: Privacy by dDara; communicate by James

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Research Questions

RQ1: How do parents use communication technologies to keep connected with and/or monitor their teenage children?

RQ2: How well do parents' and their teenage children's accounting of their social media use align?

RQ3: What factors are associated with increased privacy turbulence between parents and their teenage children?

Method: Sampling

Worked with two local high schools (population=1400) to recruit high school students and their parents to participate in longitudinal study.

Breakdown of participants:
➢177 families submitted consent/assent documents
➢T1 (January 2017): 127 parent & 119 teen surveys (paired surveys N=96)
➢T2: (July 2017): 70 teen surveys

Method: Measures

Privacy Turbulence: First, we measured the level of agreement between parents and their children on:

(1) *privacy invasion* (requiring connection on social media, monitoring internet use, with or without child's knowledge)

(2) *alignment in parents' knowledge and teens' reports of social media use* (whether parents knew which social media platforms their child used)

(3) *alignment in knowledge between parents and teens regarding technology rules.*

Greater scores indicate higher likelihood of turbulence in parent-teen relationship emerging (*M*=12.69, median = 10, *SD*=3.45, range = 0-25).

Score calculation

5 points assigned for:

➢ Requiring social media connection
➢ Monitoring without knowledge
➢ Any false negative in social media use reporting
➢ Any false negative in technology rules reporting

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Method: Measures

Perceived parental restriction (M=3.70, SD=1,08, α=0.70). Note: seven semantic differential items measured on 7-point scale; lower score indicates a more open, relaxed set of rules.

Teens' internet privacy concerns (Vitak, 2016; *M=2.67, SD=0.19, α=0.95). Note: 12 items, 5-point scale.*

Parent's concerns regarding teens' technology use (adapted Vitak, 2016; *M=3.51, SD=1.06, α=0.92). Note: 12 items, 5-point scale.*

Teen emotional autonomy (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986; *M=3.07, SD=0.13, α=0.82). Note: 20 items, 5-point scale.*

RQ1: Strategies Parents Employ to Track Their Teens' Social Media Use

➢ 27.2% of parents said they have installed monitoring software or apps to track their child's internet/phone activities.

> ➢ 88% said their child was aware they were being monitored.

➢ 57% said they'd consider monitoring in future.

➢ Nearly half of parents (48%) said they were friends with their child on at least one site; of those, most (65%) said it was a mutual agreement.
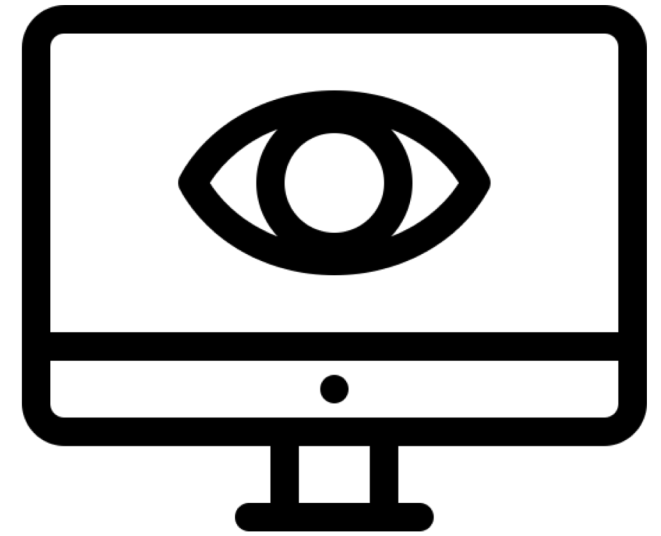
Image from Noun Project: eye monitor by unlimicon

RQ2: Evaluating Families' (Mis)Alignment on Use of Social Media and Technology Rules

➢ Parents and teens were aligned when it came to Instagram, Snapchat & Tumblr use.

➢ They were misaligned when it came to Twitter (false negative) and Facebook (false positive).

➢ There were significant differences between parents and teens when asked about rules about technology use.
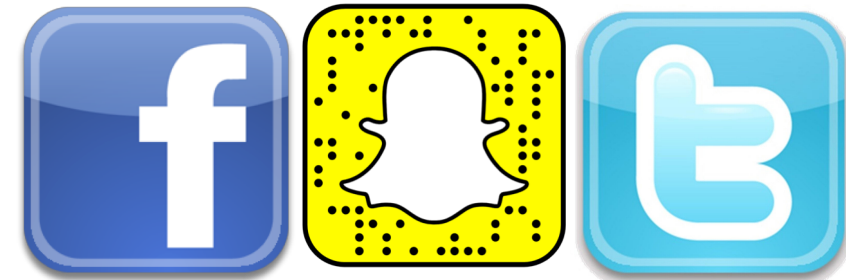
How We Coded Responses
Parent Yes/Child No: False Positive
Parent No/Child Yes: False Negative
Parent Yes/Child Yes: True Alignment
Parent No/Child No: True Alignment

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RQ3: Identifying Factors Associated With Increased Likelihood of Privacy Turbulence

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Perceived Parental Restriction	0.22	0.13	0.21*	0.05	0.14	0.04
Teen's Privacy Concerns	0.21	0.56	0.04	0.49	0.55	0.10
Teen's Perceived Emotional Autonomy	1.63	1.22	0.17	2.28	0.33	0.24*
Parent's Privacy Concerns for Child	-0.25	0.52	-0.06	-0.45	0.51	-0.1
Teen's Age (Upperclassman)	3.27	1.32	0.32*	8.49	4.80	0.83*
Interaction: Perceived Parental Restriction*Teen Age				0.81	0.32	1.15**
R^2	0.14**			0.21***		

RQ3: Identifying Factors Associated With Increased Likelihood of Privacy Turbulence
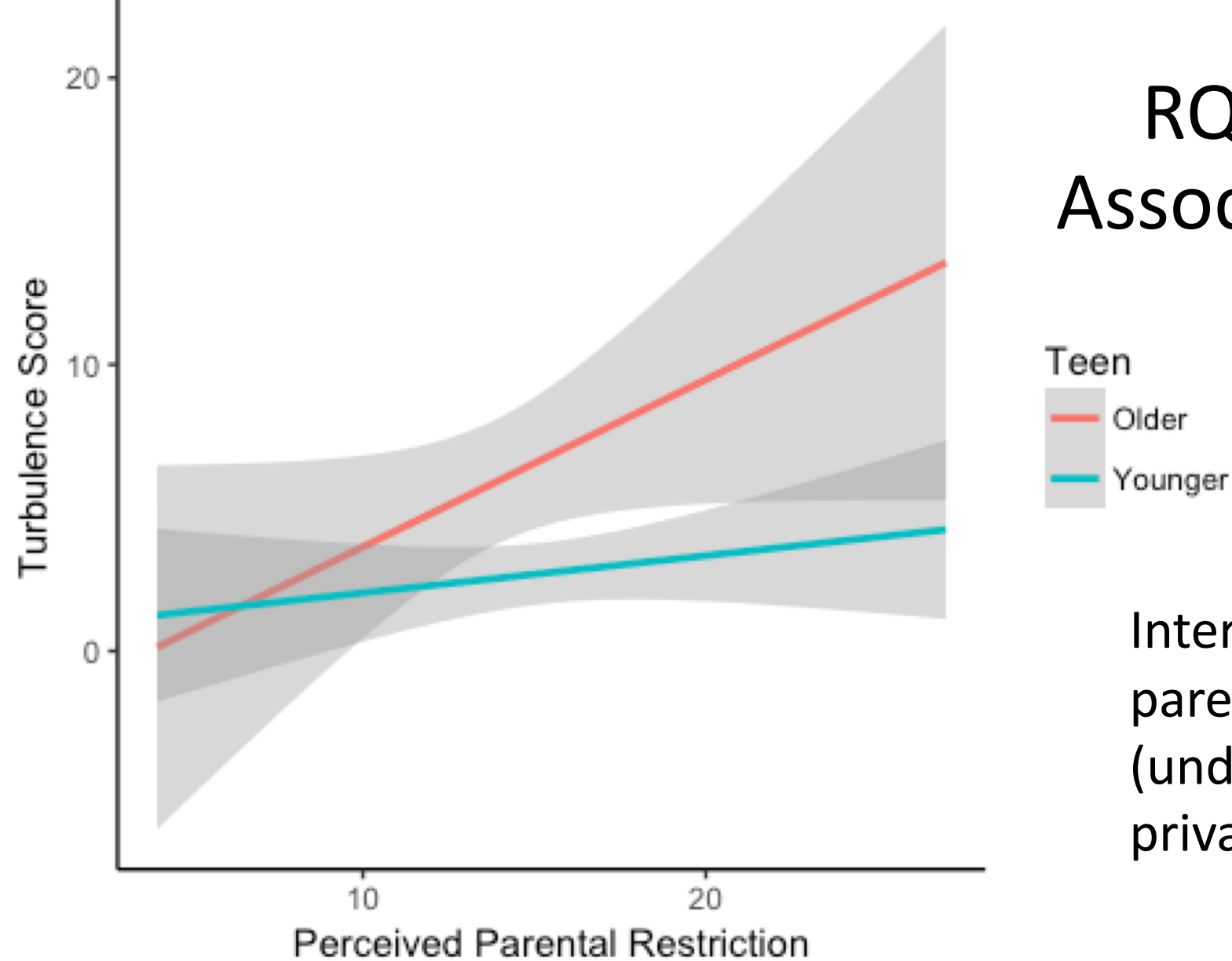
Interaction between teens' perceived parental restriction and their age (under- vs. upperclassman) on the privacy turbulence likelihood.

Thinking about parent-child turbulence in a digital world

We sought to measure turbulence by focusing on behaviors by both parents and their teenage children that could **violate norms**, be perceived as **overly restrictive** (as in the case of parents monitoring their child's online activities surreptitiously or requiring access to social media), or indicate a **lack of openness** in communicating about technology use.
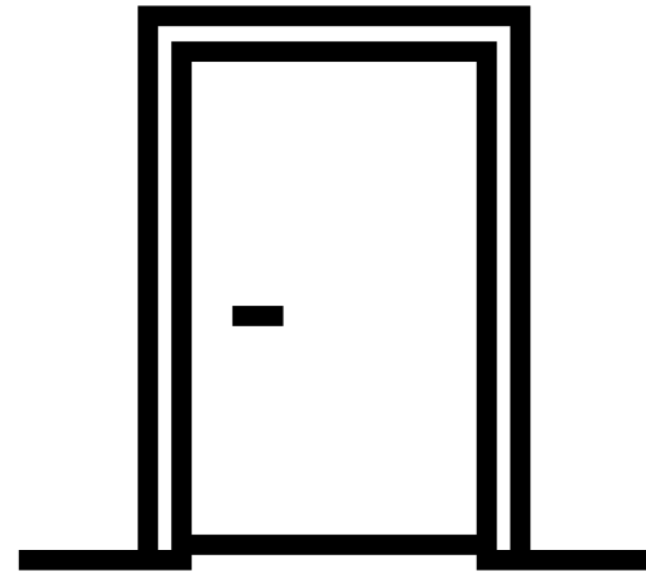
Image from Noun Project: closed door by Kokota

Thinking about parent-child turbulence in a digital world

Communication transparency is one of best ways to reduce turbulence between teens and parents.

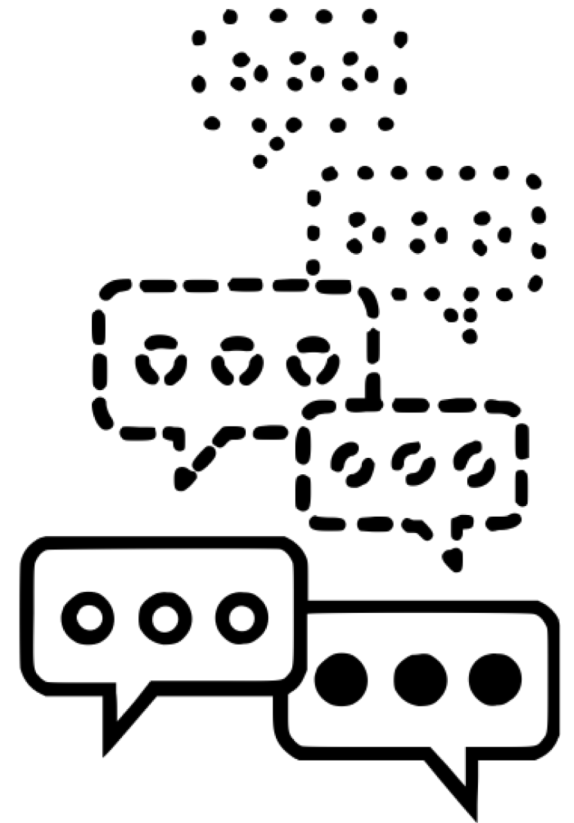Misalignments in understanding of rules or technology use lead to communication breakdowns.

Image from Noun Project: Communication by Lee Mette

Thinking about parent-child turbulence in a digital world

The data suggest that the best strategy to reduce turbulence related to technology use involves **clear rules and boundaries**, that are **clearly communicated**, and that can **evolve over time.**

Parents should create an environment that **rewards** their child for sharing their online activities, rather than punishing them for perceived rule violations.

Regular conversations about technology will **reduce general uncertainty** and increase likelihood that parents come to their parents with questions or problems.

Thanks!

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