

Should you allow your toddler online? The media sphere message to parents

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Parents of very young children are needing to create their own rules around allowing toddlers and pre-schoolers (0-5) access to internet-connected digital technologies. There are some older guidelines, many of which predate tap and swipe touch screens, and these often suggest very restricted access for these age groups. Given this policy void, parents are formulating their own rules and reasons for decisions in this area. There is little authoritative research available to support carers' decision making and this paper addresses the kinds of stories circulating in the media over a twelve month period that might have been used by parents. Stories, from newspapers, blogs etc., between the dates of March 2015 and March 2016, were collected and analysed to reveal the major themes of relevance to early years' digital parenting. This paper addresses the media's influence upon parents' decision-making around whether, when, for how long, and in what circumstances to allow very young children online.