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Generational Gap: Early 2000s to Late 2010s

Carter Haeme · Friday, February 24th, 2023

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I grew up in a Bland American Family where we had no big ethnic background or religion we'd follow. This didn't really even click in my head till I started thinking about writing this paper. I really thought to myself, *what's something that I could write about, how split custody changed my views growing up?* but I thought that isn't a fully fleshed out topic. But there was one thing that's really grown and evolved over time and that is internet and media culture. I want to talk about the clear gap and difference between the experiences of my generation and the generation coming after.

When I talk about a generational gap, what do i mean? It's obviously normal for children born at different times to grow up experiencing different things. But what I'm trying to say is these children almost experienced entirely different media that went through an overhaul then what I did growing up. This doesn't sound that abnormal at first, but I thought about it more and more and it started to click. I was the second child to be born in my family six years younger than my older brother. I also happen to be born six years before my younger sister. To this day me and my brother will talk about all the shows that we grew up with and just reminisce like normal. We shared pretty much the same shows, movies and games growing up. But when i look at my younger siblings, they watch entirely new shows and play completely different games besides a classic every now and then like Minecraft. Sure there's a lot of things you could make this out to be, stuff like censorship or technology or even just a change in children's humor over time. I think for myself what played a big role is censorship and accessibility. Growing up the internet wasn't necessarily new but it was rapidly growing and changing things where I had easy access to a lot of different uncensored content.

Growing up in a time of low censorship and easy access to the internet led to children knowing more than they naturally should. This led to a long span of more mature kids with a not heavily censored media. Having this be the case leads to more shows and games being a little more mature and maybe insensitive. For my older brother, growing up with this stuff worked since it was something that you could really enjoy more as time came due to its more mature humor. This means that when it was my time to grow up these shows and games were still around because they could stick with the older group and kids were still enjoying themselves as they were growing up. I think a great example of people also wondering why this gap was created is remakes of old shows consistently getting widespread hatred like *Teen Titans Go* and *Muppet Babies*. Well those shows are enjoyed by children, Many people complain that it is nothing like the originals and how they are now way too childish even though the originals were always for children. Even now at 18, I can go back and watch a lot of these shows and play these games and enjoy them. When I was getting older, I was watching my siblings grow and I find it hard to relate to them when they watch these hyper child focused cartoons and games. This is from many different things like technology, censorship, and even just evolution in parenting.

I want it to be clear that I am not against this change. I think it's good that it's shifting to more childish and younger focused content. I'm happy that children are getting to act more childish and experience this innocence. I think a big cause of this is that stuff like cartoons and youtube channels for children really are designed for them and that parents know what to look for and have access to this technology. Stuff like child-locks and screen time were around but much rarer and harder to apply. In the book *Family Relations* By John J. Davies and Douglas A. Gentile, the authors say "there is a study that shows children now consume over seven and a half hours of media every day" (p. 411). I think this plays a big role because my cartoons and games I had as a kid weren't handheld and close up. I think this is just a part of technology evolving over time but now the media kids have is so real and all over the place. It's just that culture evolves over time and media for children like cartoons and games and videos online have found their role. Especially with something like cartoons back then it was very difficult to animate leading to a need to hold a big audience to afford to keep them going. But when it comes to cartoons now animation technology has changed and they don't need to focus on a wider age group to keep afloat. This also

was helped by a change in censorship through better search browsing technology and through the accountability shows are held to now when it comes to airing something inappropriate for their target age group. Well I think childrens content shouldn't be so heavily monetized. There is a benefit that comes from it which is this censorship and focus on younger age groups.

Overall it's never one small thing that'll cause a shift in culture. My question was how can such a big shift happen between the six year age gap between me and my brother and the six year age gap between me and my sister. A huge role was the evolution of technology in the early two thousands. The internet had been rapidly changing, new groundbreaking websites and games were being made and a massive rate that wasn't heavily Influenced by huge triple A companies. This was also a big reason media as a whole was being heavily monetized from companies noticing the rapid growth of internet based media. Children now dont have such free access to the internet with no real control or filtering like me and my older brother did growing up. This is creating a time where children really are encouraged to be children again. I find it sad that it's not easy to share the internet culture I grew up with with my sister but I am happy to see her grow up in a new time. So well I grew up different from my siblings I can not wait to share this stuff with them as they grow.

(Featured image from PxHere; article image of Minecraft from DeviantArt user Zor0o)

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Work cited:

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