

Jose Chang

Professor Jones

ENGL 1021-79

24 November 2019

Monitoring for All

Andrew Yang's Freedom Dividend, a \$1,000 monthly stipend for all citizens, stands behind the huge amounts of profit made from recent advancements in technology that have had major effects on how we Americans live. We live in an era where all the information in the world is available at the twiddling of thumbs, on a device small enough to carry everyday in our pockets. And alas, that small device has found its way in the thumbs and pockets of children. The world wide web provides children with unlimited access to images, videos, and people. In addition to smartphones, children may also own tablets or computers in which content may be viewed on varied-sized screens. The issue, however, is not with the devices themselves, but with the content that children may access through them. At school, content may serve educational purposes, but once they are out, kids are not glued on their devices reviewing English. The limitless possibilities to what they may be viewing and the amount of time spent doing so can have significant effects on that child's well-being. For that matter, parents, who are solely responsible for their children's well-being in a court of law, should be legally required to monitor their children's internet usage for the sake of their well-being, and should be provided with free monitoring services or equipment to do so.

Well-being includes the wellness of mind. We cannot allow our desensitization to media to become an excuse for not being able to determine what content may be detrimental to the

mental health and development of children, and should implement restrictions accordingly. The internet is a landmine filled with pornographic, violent, and other non-age-appropriate content. Without parental guidance on how to avoid these and how to respond when coming across them, a child is sure to suffer from the negative effects these may inflict on his or her psyche. All the content that children come across, as with any life experiences, their brains will form connections with that will stay with them in some form or another. And if left unmonitored, children are left vulnerable to negative encounters, and repeated encounters with age-inappropriate content may result in the development of behavioral problems. Monitoring children's internet usage will help prevent children from coming across inappropriate content and will deter children from seeking such content and visiting unwanted sites.

The other major aspect of a child's well-being is determined by physical health. Because children are likely to be spending much of their time in classrooms sitting down, the added hours of physical inactivity spent on the computer at home will take a toll on their health. Children should be encouraged to engage in activities that will benefit their physical health and begin forming habits that will stay with them into adulthood. Limiting their on-line time is important for enabling this. When kids might enjoy and desire to engage in sedentary activities, the freedom to do so without appropriate limitations might allow for the child to develop a severe harmful habit that the child may not be able to overcome on his or her own, especially with no parental motivation—through necessary and appropriate measures. Monitoring softwares have automatic log-out or shut off features that prevent a child from using their devices after a set time. Replacing the time spent online with a physical activity or hobby may be an important step

towards helping that child achieve physical wellness and fight against the obesity epidemic in America.

Some argue that children should not be snooped on by parents, but should instead be trained on how to safely navigate the internet. But if not snooped on by parents, they may be being snooped on by someone else. Neglected children are the most vulnerable to predators since the lack of parental monitoring makes them easy targets for these predators to approach—both in the real and virtual world. A parent that is knowledgeable of their child's internet footprints, however, will have the opportunity to intervene at signs of any potential dangers and prevent opportunities for their occurrence in the first place. Monitoring also allows for children to more effectively learn by trial-and-error what the expectations of internet safety are—of what is okay and not okay for them to do and see online. If they are trained on these during their childhood, as adults, they are more likely to practice healthy internet habits, and to possess a better understanding of how to safely navigate the internet.

The internet habits a child develops will likely follow him as an adult, therefore it's important that parents be legally required to monitor their child's internet use to help develop these healthy habits. By monitoring content and limiting on-line time, a parent will help the child both mentally and physically to develop into a more healthy adult. Making it a legal requirement for parents to monitor their child's internet usage is a move to make for a nation that cares for the well-being and future of citizens who do not yet have a voice of their own. Making this a law for all guardians gives all children a more equal opportunity to develop healthier lifestyles, and the free monitoring software and services to do so may be a more responsible redirection of taxes on technological advancements. As technological advancements continue to change the way we

live, it's important to continue implementing adjacent safety measures to ensure the well-being of citizens, so that we may benefit and not suffer from them.