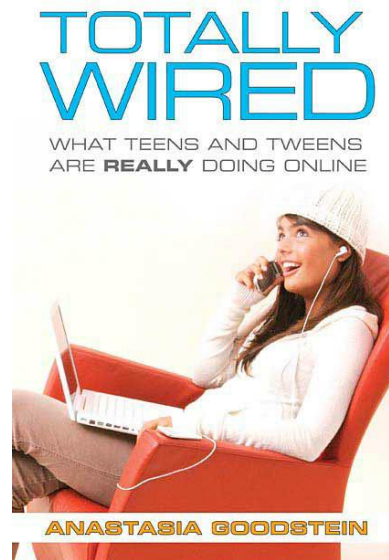# Totally Wired

By Anastasia Goodstein

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Totally Wired* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *Totally Wired*.

About the Book

With headlines like "Online Danger Zone" and "Are Teens Saying Too Much Online?" appearing in publications like *New York Times, Time,* and *Newsweek* everday adults are becoming increasingly worried about what kids are really doing on the internet and with technology today.

So what is MySpace, Facebook, Xanga, LiveJournal and what exactly are teens doing on them? *Totally Wired* is the first inside guide to what teens are really doing on the internet and with technology. Speaking with a cross section of industry professionals and teenagers, author Anastasia Goodstein gets to the bottom how teens are use technology as well as the benefits and draw backs of this use. Covering issues like:

*Social Networking
*Online journaling
*Cyber Bullying
*And much more

Totally Wired arms adults with the language and knowledge to address the real issues of raising tweens and teens in this new world of cyber connection. By providing adults with a greater understanding of the what their kids are really doing on the internet and how they are using technology, *Totally Wired* will give adults the to ability to set realistic boundries necessary to keep children safe.

About the Author

Anastasia Goodstein is the creator of Ypulse, a blog that provides daily news and commentary about Generation Y for media and marketing. As a journalist, Anastasia has worked with several leading consumer magazines, online sites and network television brands including *Teen People, Entertainment Weekly*, Cartoon Network, Oxygen TV, Current TV and AOL.

Discussion Questions

Chapter One: Meet Judy Jetson: Totally Wired Teen

1. Think back to when you were a teenager. What "technology" did you have growing up? How did you listen to music? Where did you hang out with friends? How did you stay in touch with friends?

2. Do you remember there being a moral panic over some form of media (music, television, movies) when you were growing up? What were your parents most afraid of [about your media experience] when it came to you? Did they put limits on how much TV you watched or time you spent on the phone?

3. What do you see as the biggest differences between your generation and the current generation of teenagers? How is your parenting style and approach different from your parents'?

4. Read through the timeline in chapter one detailing "The Birth of the Totally Wired Teen." At what point are you unfamiliar with the technology or companies being discussed?

5. Have you talked about the internet and cell phones with your teen? If so, what did you discuss? How did they react? Did you feel comfortable having the conversation? Why or why not?

Chapter Two: Diaries Go Digital

1. Did you keep a diary when you were a teen? If so, what sorts of entries did you write? What purpose did it serve in your life back then? Did you ever share your diary with anyone?

2. What was your view of privacy and how did your parents feel about it?

3. Many teens today maintain online diaries or blogs that anyone can read. Have you asked your teen if they have a blog, and if they are ok with you reading it? Would you search out your teen's blog without their permission and read it? Why or why not?

4. What information are you comfortable with your teen sharing on a public blog? What about on a blog that can only be read by their friends?

5. How would you react if another parent or teacher discovered inappropriate content on your teen's blog?

6. If you were a teen today, would you keep a public blog or a private blog just for your friends? Talk about the reasons behind your answer.

7. What would you do if you saw something inappropriate on the page or blog of one of your child's friends? Would you talk to the peer's parents?

Chapter Three: Finding Their Space on Social Networking Sites

1. Where did you hang out with your friends as a teen

2. Were there adults with you in those spaces? What were the pros and cons of spending unsupervised time with other teenagers? How did your parents' values or guidance help (or not) you make decisions when you were confronted with tough choices in those hang out situations?

3. Have you ever visited a social networking site like MySpace? If so, what about it do you think appeals to teenagers?

4. What kinds of discussions (if any) have you had with your teen about social networking sites like MySpace? Have you asked whether their profile is public (for the world to see) or private (just for their friends)? Since many of these sites include blogging as part of your profile, be sure to cover the same questions I listed for Chapter Two, but include a discussion about what types of images and video are appropriate to post.

5. What do you think it means to have an online "friend"? Have you asked about who your teen has accepted as "friends" on these sites and what criteria they use when deciding whether to accept or reject a potential friend? For any friends they list who they have not met in person offline, have you asked how they know them? You can also apply these questions to instant messaging "buddy lists."

6. What are healthy limits you could set regarding your teen's use of social networking sites (Whether they can keep their profile public or private? Meeting any "friends" they meet online in person? Allowing you to check in on their profile periodically or review their friends?)

Chapter Four: Bullying Goes Digital

1. Were you bullied as a child or teen? Who were your bullies? Describe the experience. If you were bullied, did you tell your parents? Why or why not?

2. With the internet it's much easier for teens to be bullied or to bully others. Has your teen ever talked to you about being cyberbullied or told you about a friend who was cyberbullied? Did they experience outing, flaming, impersonation, denigration, or harassment? How did you respond?

3. In the book, kids and teens say their biggest fear around reporting cyberbullying is that access to the internet will be taken away from them. How can parents address cyberbullying without cutting off access? What do you think is an appropriate punishment if your teen is caught bullying others online?

4. What do you think is an appropriate policy on cyberbullying for schools? Is it appropriate to expel students for defamation of other students or teachers?

5. What do you think should be covered in a preventative discussion about cyberbullying with teens? What should they look out for? What should they do when it happens? What is your definition of good netiquette (internet etiquette)?

Chapter Five: Parental Controls

1. Which parent did you identify more with, David (more restrictive) or Jan (more permissive)? How would you define your parenting approach when it comes to setting limits around technology use? Where is the family computer (or computers) located at home? Is this intentional? What types of limits, if any, do you set?

2. What have you found most effective when teaching teens to be media literate or to be critical of the media and marketing they consume? What kinds of discussions have you had with teens about sex and violence in media (TV, movies, music and video games), online pornography or about the advertising they are exposed to?

3. Do you use filtering software or GPS technology that allows you to track where your teens are when they have their phones on? How effective have these technologies been in preventing your teens from getting into trouble online and off? What do you see as the pros and cons of using technology to help you parent?

4. Have you downloaded illegal music yourself? If so, how has that influenced the kind of discussion you have with your teens about downloading "free" music and movies online? How important of an issue is illegal downloading to discuss with your teen?

5. Have you asked your teen to show you how to use the computer or to show you how they use the computer (what sites they visit, games they play)? What types of computer activities do you do together or could you do together as a family (take a class, laptop together, IM each other, play games together)?

Chapter Six: Teaching The Teachers

1. How does your teen use technology at school? (researching online, typing papers in Word, using blogs or creating websites, playing education video games). Would you characterize your teen's teachers as "trailblazers," "settlers" or "timid"?

2. What is the policy on cell phones at your teen's high school? Is it being enforced? Do you think it's fair? Why or why not?

3. How do you explain what plagiarism is to teens? Has your teen ever been caught cheating or plagiarizing? If so, how did you handle it?

4. Do you think multi-tasking helps or hurts your teen's study habits/homework? What kinds of limits (if any) do you attempt to set around multi-tasking when studying?

5. What is your biggest challenge when talking to teens about information literacy or how to critically evaluate sites they use for their homework (like Wikipedia) online? What websites do you encourage your teen(s) to use when researching for school?

6. Do you think students should be using social networking sites or blogs at school for educational purposes? Why or why not? What about when they have free time at school?

Chapter Seven: Power Shift

1. What kinds of social activism or community service were you involved in when you were a teen? How could today's technology have helped your cause?

2. What kinds of media does your teen create? Writing/blogging online? Shooting and uploading photos or videos? Designing websites or other graphics? Recording music and putting it online? Do they do this on their own, with friends or at an after school program? How can you encourage teens to use technology to be creative and express themselves?