

Facts and Figures about our TV Habit

I. TV Undermines Family Life

- 1) Amount of television that the average American watches per day: over 4 hours
- 2) Percentage of US households with at least one television: 98
- 3) Percentage of US households with exactly two TV sets: 35
- 4) Percentage of US households with three or more TV sets: 41
- 5) Time per day that TV is on in an average US home: 7 hours, 40 minutes
- 6) Percentage of Americans who always or often watch television while eating dinner: 40
- 7) Chance that an American falls asleep with the TV on at least three nights a week: 1 in 4
- 8) Percentage of Americans who say they watch too much TV: 49
- 9) Percentage of US households with at least one VCR: 85
- 10) Number of videos rented daily in the US: 6 million
- 11) Number of public library items checked out daily: 3 million
- 12) Number of hours of media consumed daily by the average American in 1998: 11.8

II. TV Harms Children and Hampers Education

- 1) Average number of hours per week that American one year-old children watch television: 6
- 2) Number of hours recommended by the American Pediatric Association for children two and under: 0
- 3) Average time per week that the American child ages 2-17 spends watching television: 19 hours, 40 minutes
- 4) Time per week that parents spend in meaningful conversation with their children: 38.5 minutes
- 5) Hours of TV watching per week shown to negatively affect academic achievement: 10 or more
- 6) Percentage of children ages 8-16 who have a TV in their bedroom: 56
- 7) Percentage of those children who usually watch television in their bedroom: 30
- 8) Percentage of television-time that children ages 2-7 spend watching alone and unsupervised: 81
- 9) Percent of total television-time that children older than 7 spend without their parents: 95
- 10) Percentage of children ages 8 and up who have no rules about watching TV: 61
- 11) Percentage of parents who would like to limit their children's TV watching: 73
- 12) Percentage of day care centers that use TV during a typical day: 70
- 13) Hours per year the average American youth spends in school: 900
- 14) Hours per year the average American youth watches television: 1,023
- 15) Percentage of self-professed educational TV that has little or no educational value: 21
- 16) Chance that an American parent requires children to do their homework before watching TV: 1 in 12
- 17) Percentage of teenagers 13-17 who can name the city where the US Constitution was written (Philadelphia): 25
- 18) Percentage of teenagers 13-17 who know where you find the zip code 90210 (Beverly Hills): 75
- 19) Average time per day American children spend in front of a screen of some kind: 4 hours, 41 minutes
- 20) Percentage of 4-6 year-olds who, when asked, would rather watch TV than spend time with their fathers: 54
- 21) Percentage of young adults who admit to postponing their bedtime for the internet or TV: 55

III. TV Promotes Violence

- 1) Number of violent acts the average American child sees on TV by age 18: 200,000
- 2) Number of murders witnessed by children on television by the age 18: 16,000
- 3) Percentage of youth violence directly attributable to TV viewing: 10
- 4) Percentage of Hollywood executives who believe there is a link between TV violence and real violence: 80
- 5) Percentage of Americans who believe TV and movies are responsible for juvenile crime: 73
- 6) Percentage of children polled who said they felt "upset" or "scared" by violence on television: 91
- 7) Percent increase in network news coverage of homicide between 1993 and 1996: 721
- 8) Percent reduction in the American homicide rate between 1993 and 1996: 20
- 9) Percent increase in number of violent scenes per hour on 10 major channels from 1992 to 1994: 41
- 10) Percentage of programs that show the long-term consequences of violence: 16
- 11) Percentage of violent programs that emphasize an anti-violence theme: 4

IV. TV Promotes Excessive Commercialism and Sedentary Lifestyles

- 1) Number of TV commercials viewed by American children a year: 20,000
- 2) Age by which children can develop brand loyalty: 2
- 3) Number of TV commercials seen by the average American by age 65: 2 million
- 4) Percentage of toy advertising dollars spent on television commercials in 1997: 92
- 5) Percentage of local TV news broadcast time devoted to advertising: 30
- 6) Total amount of money spent in 1999 to advertise on broadcast television: \$40 billion
- 7) Net worth of the typical middle-class American household after accounting for debts: less than \$10,000
- 8) Number of ads aired for "junk-food" during four hours of Saturday morning cartoons: 202
- 9) Percentage of American children who were seriously overweight in 1964: 5; 1994: 13
- 10) Percentage of young people who report having had no recent physical activity: 14
- 11) Factor by which men who watch more than 21 hours of TV a week increase their risk of Type 2 diabetes: 2
- 12) Percentage of pediatric diabetes cases that are now Type 2, (adult-onset), not Type 1 (juvenile-onset): 30

RealVision, an initiative to raise awareness about television's impact on us, is a project of
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Facts and Figures, continued

V. TV Squelches Political Awareness

- 1) Money spent on ads for the major presidential candidates between June 1, 2000 and September 13: \$63 million
- 2) Money spent on issue ads between January 1, 1999 and August 30, 2000: over \$342 million
- 3) Percentage of those which were attack ads: 61
- 4) Amount of time broadcasters must provide to candidates free of charge under the 1996 Telecommunications Act: 0
- 5) Value of public airwaves allocated to broadcasters at no cost under the 1996 Telecommunications Act: \$70 billion
- 6) Amount spent on lobbying by TV broadcasters and the National Association of Broadcasters in 1996: \$4 million
- 7) Number of network news stories about the environment in 1990: 377; 1996: 113
- 8) Percentage of Americans who can name The Three Stooges: 59
- 9) Percentage of Americans who can name three Supreme Court Justices: 17

Source Key

I. Family Life

1) Nielsen Media Research, 2000. 2) *ibid.* 3) *ibid.* 4) *ibid.* 5) *ibid.* 6) National Institute on Media and the Family, 1999. 7) *Harper's* "Index," January 1996. 8) Fahey, Valery. "TV by the Numbers." *Health*. Dec/Jan, 1992: 35. 9) Nielsen. 10) Fahey, 1992: 35. 11) *ibid.* 12) *Mediaweek*. April 20, 1998: 8.

II. Children

1) Hofferth, Sandra L. "Healthy Environments, Healthy Children." A Report on the 1997 Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Child Development Supplement. University of Michigan, 1998. 2) American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement, August 1999. 3) Nielsen, 2000. 4) American Family Research Council. "Parents Fight 'Time Famine' as Economic Pressures Increase." 1990. 5) US Dept. of Education. "Strong Families, Strong Schools, Building Community Partnerships for Learning." 1994. 6) Annenberg Public Policy Center. *Media in the Home 2000*. 2000. 7) *ibid.* 8) Kaiser Family Foundation. "Kids and Media @ the New Millennium." 1999. 9) *ibid.* 10) *ibid.* 11) US Dept. of Ed., 1994 12) Tashman, Billy. "Sorry Ernie, TV Isn't Teaching." *New York Times*. Nov 12, 1994. 13) Barber, Benjamin. *Harper's*. Nov 1993: 41. 14) Nielsen, 2000. 15) Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2000. 16) *Harper's* "Index." Sept 1996. 17) National Constitution Center survey, 1998. 18) *ibid.* 19) Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2000. 20) Mango, Jack. "TV in America." *The Official Couch Potato Handbook*. Reprinted in *Wilson Quarterly*. Autumn 1993: 44. 21) National Sleep Foundation, Press Release, March 28, 2000.

III. Violence

1) Senate Judiciary Committee Staff Report. "Children, Violence, and the Media." 1999. 2) American Medical Association. "Physician Guide to Media Violence." 1996. 3) Senate Judiciary Committee Staff Report. 4) *US News and World Report*. Apr 8, 1997. 5) USA Today/CNN/Gallop poll, May 1999. 6) MTV national survey. *Chicago Tribune*. Aug 15, 1993. 7) Budd, Craig, and Steinman. *Consuming Environments*. Rutgers University Press, 1999. 8) *ibid.* 9) Senate Judiciary Committee Staff Report. 10) Mediascope. National Television Violence Study. Studio City, CA, 1999. 11) *ibid.*

IV. Commercialism and Sedentary Lifestyles

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V. Political Awareness

1) Brennan Center-Wisconsin Study. Political Television Advertising. 2000. 2) Annenberg Public Policy Institute. "Issue Ads @ APPC." 2000. 3) *ibid.* 4) Common Cause. *Channeling Influence*. Washington, DC, 1997. 5) *ibid.* 6) *ibid.* 7) Center for Media and Public Affairs Factoids. 8) Washington Post Poll, *Washington Post*, October, 12 1995. 9) *ibid.*