

Introduction

Teens today are growing up in a world vastly different from that in which their parents and elders were raised. Sixteen year olds were born in 1995, but what does this mean? Well, in 1995 Microsoft was putting out its fourth version of the Windows operating system, Javascript was first introduced and a brand new format for storing media was announced. Yes, 1995 was the year of the digital versatile disc, or DVD as we commonly refer to them. Speaking of media, 1995 was also the year that *Toy Story* was produced, the first movie ever to be made entirely from computer generated graphics (Pearson, 2004). In short adults witnessed the birth of digital technologies while teens were born into a world with this technology already present; what amazes and confounds many adults most teens take for granted.

Teens today are what we refer to as *Digital Natives*, people raised in a world of digital devices to whom the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet comes naturally. This is in contrast to the average adult who, regardless of inclination, cannot help but be a *Digital Immigrant*; someone who was not born into a sea of devices and who has had to learn and relearn

how to think, communicate and act in a world of digital standards (Prensky, 2001).

This means that being a YA services librarian requires knowledge of technology and the ability, or at least the willingness, to integrate digital media into everyday programming. In fact, even if you are not consciously using technology in your programs look around, it is already there! The majority of teens own cell phones; how many of them are texting in the library? How many of them have 3G devices on which they are constantly plugged into the internet? If librarians don't integrate the latest technology into libraries and youth oriented programming what impact will this have on voluntary attendance of teen patrons? Times are changing and every time a library program retreats into the comfortable familiarity of traditional programming another chance to prove the library's continuing relevance and importance in the modern world is lost. Librarians do not need to completely scrap traditional activities such as art events, game nights and open-mics, but they do need to adjust them to incorporate new media and digital technology.

This is the main impetus for producing an issue of the YA Hotline that specifically addresses teen use of technology. This issue contains a preliminary article on how teenagers use technology in their information seeking behavior. There are several articles that discuss how to integrate specific technologies into library programs

from eReaders and video games to social networking sites and other user generated social platforms. The concluding article details how the use of technology is more important than just informing and entertaining teens, it is crucial for the development of their potential and future careers as well.

References:

Pearson, S. (2004). *What Happened in 1995 inc. Pop Culture, Prices and Events*. Retrieved from <http://www.thepeoplehistory.com/1995.html>.

Prensky, M. (September 01, 2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1. *On the Horizon - the Strategic Planning Resource for Education Professionals*, 9, 5, 1-6.