

# Apps, Gaps and the Digital Divide

## What is iQ: smartparent?

*iQ: smartparent* is a multimedia television and web series designed for parents that will empower them with new knowledge, tools, and abilities to successfully guide their children through the changing landscape of digital media and technology. It is a growing community of caregivers, national experts, educators, and parent bloggers who want to understand the opportunities and challenges of media as it relates to the development of their children. *iQ: smartparent* was created by WQED Multimedia in 2012.

## About this Episode

This episode of *iQ: smartparent* explores the accessibility of broadband and mobile technology to different socioeconomic groups, and whether the digital divide also impacts access to educational content for children in the U.S. and globally.

## Discussion Questions

1. The terms 'digital divide' and 'app gap' are discussed frequently in this episode. How are the phrases used to describe access to technology and also use of *educational media*?
2. Should communities be concerned about the digital divide? How does it impact families of different socioeconomic status?
3. Why is it important to have access to technology?
4. What is digital literacy? Why is it important for children and adults to become digitally literate and to be strong digital learners?
5. What are some qualities that parents should consider when choosing apps for their children? Are all apps that are labeled "educational" actually teaching kids important skills?

## About the Guests



**Dr. Michael H. Levine** is the Founding Director of the [Joan Ganz Cooney Center](#), an independent non-profit organization based at Sesame Workshop. Prior to joining the Center, Michael served as Vice President for Asia Society, managing the global nonprofit's interactive media and educational initiatives to promote knowledge and understanding of other world regions and cultures. Michael previously oversaw Carnegie Corporation of New York's groundbreaking work in early childhood development, educational media, and primary grades reform and was a senior advisor to the New York City Schools Chancellor. Michael has been a frequent adviser to the U.S. Department of Education and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, writes for public affairs journals, and appears frequently in the media. Michael received his Ph.D. in Social Policy from Brandeis University's Florence Heller School and his B.S. from Cornell University.



**Derek Lomas** is a Ph.D. student in the [Human-Computer Interactions Institute](#) at Carnegie Mellon University, where he is researching the underpinnings of fun and learning within commercial video games and helping to develop new design processes for building effective computer-aided learning games. Lomas is a co-founder of the Playpower Foundation, which recently received support from the MacArthur Foundation to further its goals of building affordable, effective and fun learning games to improve education around the world. Lomas received his [Master of Fine Arts degree](#) in Visual Arts from UC San Diego and his BA in Cognitive Science from Yale University.



**Nicolas Jaramillo** is the Director of the Hilltop YMCA Computer Center in Pittsburgh, PA. While working on a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science, Nicolas developed an interest in working with youth. Upon graduation, still yearning for a global experience, Nicolas went to El Salvador as a Peace Corps volunteer where he worked with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, as well as leaders of provincial governments to help them utilize technology to solve real world problems. Nic returned from the Peace Corps with the belief that technological literacy is the greatest vehicle for social mobility. In an effort to combine his education with this belief, Nic set out to build a program from scratch, using the grassroots development concepts he learned in the Peace Corps. This program was started in November 2011 by the YMCA, in collaboration with Neighborhood Learning Alliance.

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## Online Resources

Best Apps, Games, and Websites for Learning

<https://www.common sense media.org/best-for-learning-lists>

Who's Not Online and Why

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/09/25/whos-not-online-and-why/>

Closing the App Gap

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lesli-rotenberg/closing-the-app-gap-\\_b\\_1327225.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lesli-rotenberg/closing-the-app-gap-_b_1327225.html)

Common Sense Media -- Best Apps, Games, and Websites for Learning

<https://www.common sense media.org/best-for-learning-lists>

Smartphone Access is Not Enough to Bridge the Digital Divide

[www.post-gazette.com/business/businessnews/2013/08/28/Smartphone-access-is-not-enough-to-bridge-the-digital-divide/stories/201308280120](http://www.post-gazette.com/business/businessnews/2013/08/28/Smartphone-access-is-not-enough-to-bridge-the-digital-divide/stories/201308280120)

Comcast and Khan Academy Announce Partnership to Help Close Digital and Educational Divide

<http://corporate.comcast.com/news-information/news-feed/comcast-and-khan-academy-announce-multi-year-multi-million-dollar-partnership-to-help-close-the-digital-and-educational-divide>

Comcast Internet Essentials Low-Cost Internet Service

<http://www.internetessentials.com/>

5 Ways to Get the Internet When You Can't Afford It

[www.common sense media.org/blog/5-ways-to-get-the-internet-when-you-cant-afford-it](http://www.common sense media.org/blog/5-ways-to-get-the-internet-when-you-cant-afford-it)

When to Introduce Your Child to a Smartphone or Tablet

[www.pbs.org/parents/childrenandmedia/article-when-introduce-child-smartphone-tablet.html](http://www.pbs.org/parents/childrenandmedia/article-when-introduce-child-smartphone-tablet.html)

Three Tips for Getting Funding for New EdTech in Your Classroom

[www.common sense.org/education/blog/three-tips-for-getting-funding-for-new-edtech-in-your-classroom](http://www.common sense.org/education/blog/three-tips-for-getting-funding-for-new-edtech-in-your-classroom)

Opportunity for All? Technology and Learning in Lower-Income Families

[www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/publication/opportunity-for-all-technology-and-learning-in-lower-income-families/](http://www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/publication/opportunity-for-all-technology-and-learning-in-lower-income-families/)



Pittsburgh Connect Hilltop Computer Center helps overcome the digital divide for youngsters

[www.post-gazette.com/businessnews/2013/03/31/Pittsburgh-Connect-Hilltop-Computer-Center-helps-overcome-the-digital-divide-for-youngsters/stories/201303310186](http://www.post-gazette.com/businessnews/2013/03/31/Pittsburgh-Connect-Hilltop-Computer-Center-helps-overcome-the-digital-divide-for-youngsters/stories/201303310186)

Videos:

- Learning at Home report with brief overview by Michael Levine  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqNaVJRdgd4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqNaVJRdgd4)
- Learning at Home report with brief overview by Vicky Rideout  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3868HLM\\_8o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3868HLM_8o)

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