

# Case Study

## Chapter 4

A child in Canada grows up in a middle-class family and has access to digital technology from an early age. As a toddler, she is playing computer games. As a teen, she has a smartphone and uses the computer for homework. As a young adult, she is active on social media with friends, family, classmates and co-workers from her part-time job. As a mature adult, she uses digital technology extensively at work and home, as does her entire family, including her children. In her old age, she interacts with others almost exclusively online due to health issues and limited mobility, yet she is not up-to-date with the latest technology and has therefore lost some acquaintances and networks.

- 1. How might digital technology impact a child's development?**
- 2. How might digital technology impact a teen's self-image?**
- 3. For a young adult, is social media important? What are the advantages and disadvantages?**
- 4. For a mature adult, how does digital technology both help and harm her?**
- 5. Is technology a benefit or hindrance for older adults?**

### Sample Answers:

1. While a child's socialization is still strongly influenced by the family unit, digital technology has become a powerful socialization agent. Primary and secondary socialization may be further apart and need to be reconciled by the child and family.
2. Teens, especially girls, are becoming increasingly self-conscious about their looks due to the images they see online. Instead of parents influencing the way a teen looks, social media is increasingly influencing teen girls regarding their clothes, make-up, hairstyles, cosmetic surgery, and body image. The text identifies that global images of beauty are very different, making it even harder for teens to achieve an "ideal" appearance. Gender roles and pornography can skew gender identity and sexuality for teens, creating unrealistic expectations.
3. Social media is important to young adults because this is how they interact with peers and build their identity, both personally and professionally. Advantages include larger social networks, both personal and professional, leading to more friendships and employment opportunities. Disadvantages include online bullying and harassment, as well as lack of privacy and the long-term ramifications of inappropriate material online.
4. Digital technology can help her with managing her work and home responsibilities; however, these technologies may interfere with her personal and professional life in terms of time drain and distractions. She will also have to set guidelines around digital technology for her children, and decide if and how to monitor their activities online.
5. As an older adult, she can communicate with others online; however, she may still feel lonely if she doesn't maintain face-to-face interactions. Keeping up with the latest technologies may also be difficult if she doesn't have the energy or financial resources to do so. As the text suggests, social media doesn't necessarily mitigate feelings of social isolation.