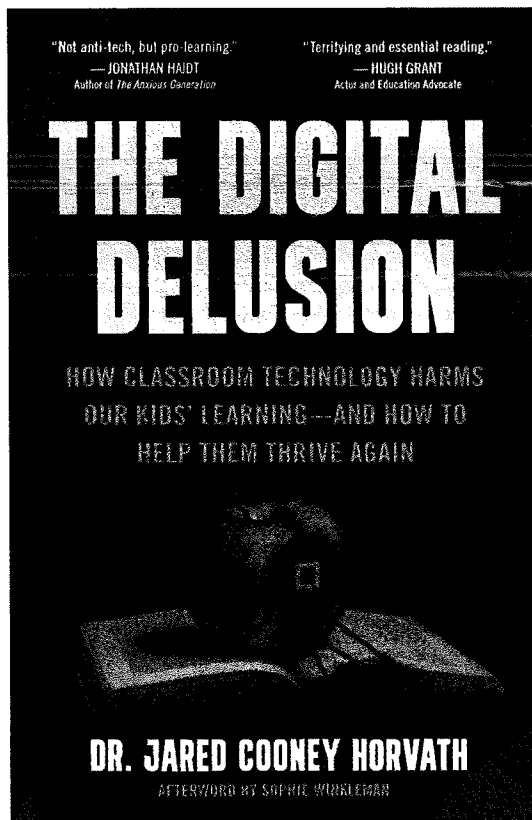


Context

- There are more than 25,000 companies in the U.S. K-12 EdTech industry
- The global EdTech industry is valued at more than \$250B and is projected to nearly triple by 2027.
- School districts use on average about 2,600 EdTech products.
- Nearly all EdTech apps share students' personal information.
- Schools and EdTech companies are prime targets for cybercriminals.
- In a national random sample of 2- to 17-year-old children and adolescents (Associations between screen time and lower psychological well-being among children and adolescents: Evidence from a population-based study) it was found that:
 - More hours of screen time are associated with lower well-being in ages 2 to 17.
 - High users show less curiosity, self-control, and emotional stability.
 - Twice as many high (vs. low) users of screens had an anxiety or depression diagnosis.
 - Non-users and low users did not differ in well-being.
 - Associations with well-being were larger for adolescents than for children.

Dr. Jared Cooney Horvath, author, educator, cognitive neuroscientist, and Maine DOE keynote speaker on **What has Changed**, testimony before the U.S. Senate on January 15th, 2026:



For most of the twentieth century, cognitive performance steadily improved across generations, driven largely by expanding access to formal education and improved instructional quality.

Beginning in the mid-2000s, this trend plateaued then reversed in many Western nations. Multiple indicators now show stagnation or decline in literacy, numeracy, problem solving, creativity, and general cognitive performance among adolescents.

At the same time, classroom environments underwent a rapid digital transformation. One-to-one device programs, cloud platforms, online assessments, adaptive software, and constant connectivity became standard practice in many districts - often without independent longitudinal validation.

Over half of our children now use a computer at school for one to four hours each day, and a full quarter spend more than four hours on screens during a typical seven-hour school day. Unfortunately, studies suggest that less than half of this time is spent actually learning, with students off-task for up to 38 minutes of every hour when on classroom devices.

Samples from the Field:

Technology in Education: A Tool on Whose Terms? - UNESCO report

"Good, impartial evidence on the impact of education technology is in short supply. There is little robust evidence on digital technology's added value in education. Technology evolves faster than it is possible to evaluate it: Education technology products change every 36 months, on average. Most evidence comes from the richest countries. In the United Kingdom, 7% of education technology companies had conducted randomized controlled trials, and 12% had used third-party certification. A survey of teachers and administrators in 17 US states showed that only 11% requested peer-reviewed evidence prior to adoption. A lot of the evidence comes from those trying to sell it. Pearson funded its own studies, contesting independent analysis that showed its products had no impact.

Privacy Inequity in Ed Tech: A Demographic Analysis of US K-12 Ed Tech -Internet Safety Labs

"As technology providers grapple with the repercussions of a surveillance advertising supported business model, exploring new monetization strategies, many of the experiments result in "pay for privacy" schemes. This is no more acceptable than the current models that monetize surveilled data to provide "free" services. Privacy must not be the price K-12 students pay to remain current and competitive with technology. That does indeed appear to be the case today."

Common Sense Media Recommends AI Companion Safety Standards: "Social AI companions pose unacceptable risks to teens and children under 18"

"Our Teens, Trust, and Trade Offs report shows that 72% of teens have used AI companions at least once, with over half (52%) using them regularly. This widespread usage makes the safety concerns identified in our testing even more urgent." - Common Sense Media

The Brookings Institute Global Task Force Report on AI in Education:

"At this point in its trajectory, the risks of utilizing generative AI in children's education overshadow its benefits."

Compare with:

this recent Maine headline:

'Building the plane as we're flying it': How Maine schools are using generative AI in the classroom