



Written by [Lisa Shaw](#) on March 1, 2018

Kirk Cameron's "Connect" Exposes Dangers of Technology to Children, Offers Solutions

Protecting our children has been the natural inclination of parents throughout history. However, with each generation come different and sometimes more threatening obstacles in the struggle to keep them safe. As technology has become a fundamental part of our society, more children at younger ages are being introduced to it, frequently unassisted, and the results are often dangerous and disturbing.



The new educational documentary *Connect*, hosted by Kirk Cameron (shown), addresses this problem and attempts to balance an understanding of the dangers of technology with how we can benefit from it. It was shown in selected theaters on Tuesday and will be shown a second time on Thursday.

The film starts strong with interviews with those who have experienced first hand the threat of excessive or unsupervised Internet use. Tim Woda recounts discovering that his son had a Facebook account without permission, and that an unfamiliar middle-aged male had been contacting the boy. Woda immediately began researching the man and eventually discovered that he was, indeed, a predator and had many connections with young boys. Through Woda's research and action, the man was arrested and convicted.

Cameron also interviewed Dr. Kathy Koch, founder and president of Celebrate Kids, who discussed the issues she sees on a regular basis concerning behavioral problems with kids (and parents) who spend the majority of their time interacting on social media rather than with their families. She explained five cultural lies that young people have been programmed to believe as a result of the unnatural use of and connectivity to technology and why these falsehoods are critical — "I am the center of the universe," "I deserve happiness," and "I am my own authority" are three examples of these culture-altering lies.

One of the dangers the film addresses is the perception of reality that young people are developing as a result of the unhindered access to an unlimited source of information, good and bad. The movie likened it to allowing your child to enter another world completely alone and unprotected. While most parents would never send their young children into an unknown and potentially dangerous area in the physical world, these same parents will give their children, at very young ages, a smart phone or a tablet, and send them alone and unsupervised into the abyss of the Internet to see things their eyes should never see and take in information they aren't ready to comprehend.

Neurosurgeon Dr. Ian Armstrong reveals the inner workings of a young person's brain regarding technology use. Describing the pre-frontal lobe of the brain as what determines certain factors, including impulse control and understanding consequences, he explains that it doesn't develop fully in people until at least their mid 20s. He tells Cameron that this lack of impulse control and understanding of consequences increases the risks of youths who have access to the Internet at large. Armstrong concluded that the one thing that is needed for young people to safely navigate the Internet is something they don't have: maturity.



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More interviews were positioned throughout the film. These interviews were with people who had personally dealt with the harmful and debilitating effects of the Internet, especially those of social media. From already damaged self-images dependent on the rejection or acceptance of absolute strangers, to those who live vicariously through their social media with no tangible friends to interact with, they describe the degeneration of their real worlds. The ability to portray an image of who they wanted to be perpetuated the disdain of who they actually are.

Cameron addresses the natural fear that comes after hearing some of the horrors waiting on the Internet, and the instinct to take all technology from our children. He then points out the reality of living in a technological society and the necessity of raising children who are aware, responsible, and have a foundational faith in God.

At one point the film moves awkwardly from a sober and educational quality to a preposterous scene wherein Cameron imagines himself to be a husky, bald, bearded man who hunts down and fights the devil in order to protect his children from the devil's influences. Even though Cameron immediately followed up this scene by acknowledging that "maybe it was a little over the top," this reviewer still found this scene a little embarrassing. That said, this reviewer, like many other believers, agrees with Cameron that there is a spiritual world that is every bit as real as the physical world. And the documentary more than redeems itself with the information and wisdom it imparts, including ways to help protect your children from danger and your family from estrangement.

Although the Internet contains plenty of dangers from pornography to fallacies, clearly, not everything on the Internet is evil. The film explicitly acknowledges this, pointing out that technology is simply a tool that can be used for good or evil. Far from being anti-technology, the film promotes parental supervision, a healthy awareness, and a functioning family unit as powerful means for ensuring that your children benefit from technology rather than be victimized or corrupted by it. The film also notes that today's parents are "pioneer" parents for the simple reason that the new technology did not exist when our parents or grandparents were bringing up children. We are still trying to figure out how to provide good parenting in the age of smart phones and the Internet.

Connect is a film intended to help parents figure this out — and it does a good job of it. It is in selected theaters across the country for one more night only, March 1.

Photo: Kirk Cameron in "Connect"



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