Just how tech-savvy are today's childminding grandparents?

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"The UK would shudder to a halt if all the grandparents who look after their grandchildren simultaneously downed tools", so says Annie Harrison, founder of **GoMunkee**. "Over 14 million people in this country are lifesavers for their own children, taking either an active or essential role in the care or raising of their grandchildren. From pre-schoolers, through to teens and beyond, these grandparents keep the wheels on the family bus going round and round, enabling their own grown children to work and play. And grandparents are taking the tablets (as well as iPads, laptops, smart phones and PCs) to help manage busy lives, connecting to everything and loving it (mostly)".

As a web app which helps parents and grandparents find things for their children to see and do, GoMunkee undertook a qualitative survey of grandparents (aged 55-83 and 91% female) each of whom is actively involved in the care/raising of their grandchildren, to find out the good and bad aspects of digital family life.

Soundbites and observations from **GoMunkee**'s chats with tech-savvy grandparents:

- Of the smartphone using grandparents, 42% had iPhones, and 29% Samsung devices. 2% owned a non-smart phone. 1% of those polled didn't have use of a mobile phone.
- 84% of grandparents questioned are on Facebook, using it regularly.
- 21% of grandparents questioned use Instagram to communicate with grandchildren
- 90% of grandparents questioned use email every day.
- 52% text regularly to their children and grandchildren.
- 86% of grandparents with smart phones take photos of their grandchildren.
- 79% of grandparents questioned engage with gransnet, grannynet (sadly closing down this week after 8 years) Proud Grandparents, Mumsnet, Netmums and other parenting, grandparenting and local networking sites.
- 62% of polled grandparents caring for pre-schoolers regularly use YouTube as a means of entertainment.
- 74% of grandparents questioned use BBC iPlayer to select programmes for their grandchildren, rather than let them loose with the channel changer.
- *"Where it all falls down is when it comes to sharing calendars digitally. Call me old fashioned, but I just want a plain and simple weekly planner to stick on the wall that I can write on and we can all see what's happening this week for all of us. What if your phone runs out of battery or you lose it? How am I going to remember football practice, nursery pick ups, birthday parties etc? There's so much going on in our family and I don't want to be at the mercy of technology malfunctions, or forgetting to pick up my granddaughter because my son-in-law forgot to share all his digital calendar appointments with me.* **The GoMunkee Weekly Planner 2017***, available on Amazon, fits the bill perfectly."* – Laura (58)
- "*It's great to interact with other grandparents and join in with discussions and forums, sharing opinions and experiences on networking sites. However, I rarely give or take advice on grandparenting itself. When you get to my age, having brought up four children and having five grandchildren, there's not that much anyone can tell me."* – Claire (70)
- *"Pinterest is a good place to get ideas of things to make and games to play with the children." - Helen (69)*
- *"I can't imagine life without Google. But it does worry me that children bypass good old advice and experience from Nan and look it up on Google as the font of all knowledge. Technology is good, but it's impersonal and it means we don't interact as well as we should."* – Celia (64)

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- *"Twitter has no relevance to us and our grandchildren, Noah (3) and Izzy (5). I do use it when watching sport and enter the discussion. But grandchildren? No."* - Ivan (59)
- *"The fastest way to get the attention of my teenage grandsons is to turn OFF the Wi-Fi. Sometimes I disconnect it altogether and hide the router." - Stella (56)*
- *"I communicate with my grandchildren on Instagram, by email and text (with emojis). But I won't allow the use of any digital devices at my house. We had ten children over in the summer and they sat around indoors in silence, gazing at screens, wasting their childhoods. Complete ban at my house."* - Ruth 61
- *"I'm staggered at the dexterity of my 3 year old granddaughter who can navigate my iPad at top speed. Her reading is excellent and I think all this technology has helped. But they don't seem to like books as much as my older grandchildren did, which is sad.'* – Lorna 78
- *"I took my first selfie with my grandson, but got my thumb in the way so his face was hidden. Stupid phone."* - Fiona (80)

GoMunkee interviewed 100 grandparents from Folkestone, Ashford and Canterbury in Kent between 2 November 2016 and 31 December 2016. The research is unscientific and was informally conducted, simply to obtain a snapshot of digital perspectives amongst grandparents involved in childcare. All participants were given a free copy of **The GoMunkee Weekly Planner 2017**, available from Amazon at £7.50. These discussions were not endorsed or sponsored by any digital organisations mentioned in the press release. **www.gomunkee.com**

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GoMunkee is a mobile first, web app available across all digital devices. It acts as a digital signpost, aimed at parents, grandparents and adults with responsibility for children. GoMunkee points to practically everything there is for children of all ages (0-16) to see and do (including free things), locally, regionally and nationally. It's free, fast and comprehensive. Centred around location, it searches, suggests and inspires, saving busy parents/grandparents' precious time. Everything can be sourced and filtered from one online location. GoMunkee is content-rich and fully integrated with social media platforms. Families can register the month and year of their child's birth, and GoMunkee grows up with the child, always imparting age-appropriate, personalised information on things to see and do. Importantly, its existence provides adults with an antidote to kids' screen-gazing Wi-Fi dependency – it gets them out.

GoMunkee also links event and activity organisers directly to their target audiences. Audiences come to them, rather than the other way around and it's free to list.

GoMunkee is currently in development and will be launched mid-2017. The GoMunkee Weekly Planner 2017 is currently available from Amazon, priced £7.50.

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