

Mommy's little cyborg: Meet Generation Alpha

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As Generation Z enters the workforce, Generation Alpha is starting out at play school. Generation Alpha, made up of children born from 2010 onwards, has already attracted the attention of marketers and start-ups around the world.



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This is not surprising when one considers that, according to the Cartoon Network New Generations study, children between the ages of 4-14 already control \$1.8bn in annual spending power. This spending power is made up of a combination of “pester power”, that is the uncanny ability small children have to nag their parents into making purchases they otherwise would not consider, and direct pocket money spend. In the UK, children under the age of five receive an average of £2 a week as pocket money. In South Africa, according to a Parent 24 survey, most kids under the age of ten ‘earn’ R20 a week. That adds up to a lot of money when you take into account that there are 2.5 million alphas born *each week*.



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Leigh Andrews 28 Apr 2017



So, what can we expect from this tiny target market?

Spoiled

If you thought millennials were spoiled by their parents, just wait until you see how those same millennials are raising their little alphas. Millennials want to give their offspring everything they had as children, plus everything they expected, and did not succeed in achieving for themselves as adults. Millennials are having children later in life than previous generations, and they are having less children per family when they do have them. This means that millennials have more time and more money to spend on their offspring than previous generations. Generation Alpha will have the highest standard of living in human history

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Super-smart

Alphas will be the most educated generation, ever. Not only are Alphas self-educating from the crib with tablet and mobile phone apps; their parents and schools are pushing them to succeed. The UK government wants formal schooling to start at age two. In South Africa, grade triple-zero is now nonnegotiable for admission into most private primary schools. In the US, places like Stanford University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are offering computer coding summer camps for kids as young as six years old. All this additional educational input indicates that alphas are set to be even more entrepreneurial and self-sufficient than their predecessors.

Screenagers

The alphas are true digital natives. They are hyper-connected to the internet. These tiny “screenagers” were given iPads and iPhones as pacifiers since they came home from the hospital. They learn to navigate YouTube before they say their first words. Common Sense Media reports that kids under the age of eight spend an average of 48 minutes staring at a mobile device screen a day. But watch out: Mobile devices have been dubbed “digital cocaine” for children, due to how addictive screen time is for small people. Phycologists and educators are still unsure of the nature and extent of the effects early internet exposure has on developing brains. We will have to wait and see how the results of our global tablet-nanny experiment will pan-out for the next generation.

Cyborgs

Generation Alpha is already the most quantified generation in history. Smart, wearable baby monitors like Sproutling and Hatch connect babies with the internet 24/7 and allow paranoid parents to monitor their offspring’s every vital sign and growth milestone. Now, as humans become more and more enmeshed with technology, the Alphas are on track to become the first human cyborg generation. Chaotic Moon Studios has already developed semi-permeant tech-tattoos which contain a microchip and circuit board which allows parents and health-care professionals to monitor children’s vital signs through an app. Looking further into the future, thought-leader Elon Musk, has proposed that we implant circuit boards into our brains to help us humans compete with increasingly intelligent artificial intelligence.

In short, these little cyborgs are set to be the healthiest, wealthiest, smartest humans ever. Are you ready for them?

Meet the parents

The greatest generation: Born between 1914 and 1928, this generation fought in the second world war and saved the world from the Nazis.

The silent generation: Born between 1928 and 1945, this unlucky generation was born during the Great Depression and the Second World War, and is known for being stoical, frugal and hard working.

The baby boomers: Born between 1946 and 1964, this large generation was born just after the Second World War – and just before the invention of The Pill – that's why there are so many of them. They grey up to be the hippies of the 1960s, and then became parents of the millennial hipster generation.

Generation X: Born between 1965 and 1980, this generation grew up alongside Aids, divorce and 1980's opulence. Ambitious and independent, they grew up to become yuppies of the 1990's, and then became the parents of Generation Z. They were also responsible for the perm.



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The millennial generation: Born between 1980 and 1995, the millennials were born into prosperity and brought up by indulgent, overprotective parents to have high expectations of their unique talents and future success. The internet hit them around the same time as puberty did. Then, the Great Recession of 2008 occurred, just as they began looking for a job. Most of them now work as freelancers for tech startups.

Generation Z: Born between 1995 and 2010, they are the first generation of digital natives. They have never not been connected to the internet. They are known to be self-directed, empathetic and worldly-wise. Many already earn more money than their parents do from posting Youtube videos about playing video games.

Generation Alpha: Born between 2010 and 2025, the children of the millennials, were weened on iPads and are our most digitally connected generation yet. There are 2.5 million of them born each week.

ABOUT BRONWYN WILLIAMS

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