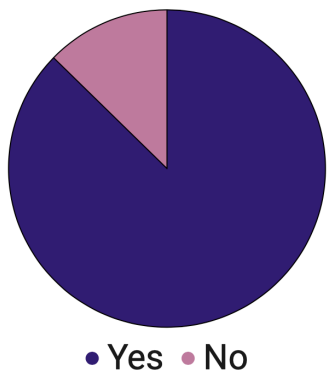


## What's Your Opinion?

Do you think social media has an overall negative impact on kids?

Out of 63 responses:  
 Yes -- 55  
 No -- 8



## Next Poll:

### POLITICS VS. NEW MEDIA

Is "new media" good for politics?

Students can answer the poll on The Herald's Instagram page, [@astateherald](https://www.instagram.com/astateherald). Instagram polls are posted on Mondays. Previous poll results can be found on [astatetheherald.com](https://www.astatetheherald.com). Have an idea for a poll? Send your ideas to [heraldopinion1921@gmail.com](mailto:heraldopinion1921@gmail.com).

These and future articles can be found on the Opinion section of The Herald's website.

# Stop buying dogs from backyard breeders

SHAILEY WOOLDRIDGE  
 NEWS EDITOR



Shailey Wooldridge is a senior multimedia journalism major from Caraway, Arkansas.

There are many ethical dog breeders who are doing great work at improving dog breeds, but your aunt breeding the family dogs to sell goldendoodle puppies is not one of them.

According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, roughly 6.3 million pets enter U.S. animal shelters nationwide every year.

One of the biggest issues that animal shelters face is an influx of dogs coming in from irresponsible breeders. These breeders are often referred to as "backyard breeders" and prioritize their own monetary gain over the health of the animals they are selling, breed

standards, temperament and making sure they are placed in good homes.

An ethical breeders main goal is to ensure the dogs they are selling are as healthy as they can be.

They will often have a waiting list, have both the mother and father of the litter pre-screened for potential health issues, let you meet the puppies on sight where the parents are kept and will screen adopters.

They will also require that the puppies be microchipped and brought back to the breeder if the home doesn't

**"An ethical breeders main goal is to ensure the dogs they are selling are as healthy as they can be."**

work out for any reason.

However, backyard breeders don't have this same moral code and will often tell you their puppies have been checked out by a vet, but ignore proper health screenings, genetic testing and proper medical care.

This increases the likelihood of passing on genetic disorders such as hip dysplasia, a predisposition to cancer and heart conditions.

Backyard breeders also rarely invest time into properly socializing their puppies and as a result they miss out on crucial early life experiences. This results in behavioral issues like reactivity, resource guarding, fearfulness and aggression because they weren't properly exposed to humans and other animals.

Behavioral issues like this can make a dog a nightmare to handle in a household setting.

There are many dogs who are in need of homes sitting in overcrowded shelters currently, including purebred animals people often buy from breeders. It is difficult to know what the

temperament and health background of both backyard-bred dogs and dogs from animal shelters will be.

A shelter is a much cheaper and ethical alternative to your cousin's weird friend selling merle pitbulls.

If you have your heart set on one specific breed that you've done your research on and you know will fit your lifestyle, an ethical breeder is the way to go.

Any other option, you don't deserve a dog. Also your goldendoodle is a mutt and no ethical breeder will produce mutts.



Photo depicting puppies being caged at a puppy mill.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PETA

# Children should not have phones

BENJAMIN MCDOWELL  
 STAFF WRITER



Benjamin McDowell is a sophomore multimedia journalism major from Wynne, Arkansas.

Kids should not have access to phones and other technology because it can stunt children's mental and physical development.

Social media has become heavily intertwined in people's daily lives. Because of its easy accessibility, kids are susceptible to cyberbullying, mental development delays, screen addiction and declining social skills.

Young children should not have access to phones or technology before they have the knowledge of internet safety and the dangers of excessive screen time.

Cyberbullying is a major danger of social media and is often a repeated

behavior aimed at scaring, angering or shaming people. Cyberbullying can lead to depression, low-self esteem, anxiety and even suicide.

Kids relying heavily on their phone can cause them to focus on technologies instead of on things like their education. Using technology negates kids from using their brains, prohibiting full development and causing screen addictions.

The more kids are on their screens, the less they interact with others and risk hurting their academic performance. Gen Alpha's reading and math scores are at an all time low since 1970 – declining at a rate it's never been before.

Screen addiction is a behavioral addiction involving the excessive use of digital devices that disrupt daily life. According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health, people between the ages of 8 to 28 spend about 44.5 hours per week in front of digital screens.

The more technology kids use, the more their social skills deteriorate.

Excessive technology use can negatively impact students' social skills.

It reduces opportunities for face-to-face interactions, hindering their ability to interpret non-verbal cues and potentially leading to difficulties with

empathy and communication.

The technology of today is distracting, and kids' attention spans are shorter than ever.

Keeping technology from the hands of children allows them to grow, develop and simply experience life without having their faces buried in a screen. Growing up, I never had a phone. Instead, I used a tablet with monitored internet access to play games.

My mom and dad would only allow me to play on my tablet on weekends, and they made me use a computer for schoolwork only.

We are at a point where kids are receiving phones at 3- to 4-years old because parents want their child to sit still. According to the National Library

of Medicine, in the 3 to 4 year age group, 19% used mobile phones for three hours or more. While 93.3% of parents felt they shouldn't give their child a phone, 71.4% children of these parents still used one.

I did not receive my first phone until 2020. Without a phone, I did not have to worry about the distractions online, and I did not download my first social media app till 2022. In hindsight, it was the best thing for me. This helped me to focus on school and fully develop into the person I am today.

Giving children a phone is like giving a kid a drug. They do not know the negative impact it will have on their childhood development and future.



Photo depicting children using mobile devices.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ADOBE STOCK

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