The click-through generation.
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The current generation is now being called the click-through generation because they had different means of technology and they have grown up having consoles, computers, tablets, smartphones, etc. This generation is more facilitated as compared to the previous generations. However, they have not utilized technology for what it was being introduced for them, and they blame others instead of blaming themselves for the problems which technology has created in their lives.

"The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." – (**Alvin Toffler, n.d)**

We believe it is time to present a new generation to the world, we have seen the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y, and the Millennial Generation. What we believe the generation teachers are beginning to see now is the Click-Through Generation.

A generation is based on the range of birth years of a group of people. Generations can span many years; since people are individuals, not all members of a generation exhibit the same traits (Jopling, n.d). It is important that we understand the generations and also embrace their uniqueness. Jopling suggests, by examining the values of different generations, we can better understand interpersonal relations and learn to cooperate with others (Jopling, n.d).

As a Professor I believe we are currently being faced with this new generation of students that are challenging the traditional teaching methods. “Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach” (Prensky, 2001). This generation was born with technology in their hands and they have absolutely no idea of what life was like without the ever present cell phone, laptop, or iPad. These click-through students’ technology expectations surpass any previous generational expectations in that everything can be accomplished on a computer; it is not uncommon to hear – there is an app for that or check out YouTube. If you ask a click-through how long they have been using the internet and a computer, their reply more likely will be “my whole life”. They embrace and use technology efficiently and effectively and they know what they want (Grudin, 2014).

Today’s students are the generation of instant everything from pudding to news. In a nutshell, they want it all and they want it now! This generation is by far the most confident generation and they want to be loved and valued by everyone. They have never had to wait for anything, they have always had what they needed to get by and often they had much more. Thus, their expectations are almost to the entitlement level; I want it, I get it.

Today’s students – K through college – represent the first generations to grow up with this new technology. They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age. Today’s average college grads have spent less than 5,000 hours of their lives reading, but over 10,000 hours playing video games (not to mention 20,000 hours watching TV). Computer games, email, the Internet, cell phones and instant messaging are integral parts of their lives (Prensky, 2001).

The result of this mentality is that they believe they can do no wrong; the rules apply to others and not to them. They have always had someone to pick them up and dust them off so they have little sense of accountability; it is always someone else’s fault when something does not work.

In school, and in particular in an online college or high school course, these click-through students no longer read instructions and they are not willing to take the time to go through a tutorial on how to use an online Learning Management System or Homework System. Rather the click-through generation simply attempts to click-through the homework and then they don’t understand when they get less of a grade than they expected. The excuses are many and they typically focus on how their technology failed them rather than the fact that they simply did not read the directions.

Even though this click-through generation is very well educated, like all young members of every generation they are quite naïve. They don’t think anyone will question their actions and when they are questioned or the evidence trail shows that they did not do as they said they did, they tend to turn a bit hostile and even blame the very technology that they demand. When, at the end of the term, they get a lower grade than they feel they deserve (of course it is an ‘A’) they naturally want to know why. When it is pointed out that they missed an assignment or exam which was listed in the course syllabus they claim that they never knew about it even though they clicked on the ‘I understand’ button on the syllabus, or sent an email stating they read and understood the syllabus. The click-through students are so used to seeing license agreements, terms and conditions, and other acknowledgements (that few people read), they just click the box and move on to the next page.

This new click-through generation will learn differently and we, as educators, will need to learn to teach differently. The authors of this article believe, although a challenge, this new generation will also enhance the way education will change to meet their needs. The need for textbook and lectures may become a thing of the past. The click-through generation will be the motivators of change over the next lustrum. Alvin Toffler was not so far off.

# References

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