Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media

A transcript of

Global Researcher Roundtable at The Second Symposium on Gender in Media

This roundtable consisted of leading executives, researchers, and entertainment industry companies, sharing best practices and innovative approaches to improve gender equality and reduce stereotypes in children's media.

GLOBAL RESEARCHER ROUNDTABLE
at the Second Symposium on Gender in Media

Madeline Di Nonno

Madeline Di Nonno: Thank you so much for joining us today. I'm Madeline Di Nonno, executive producer for the institute and See Jane. Also, leading our discussion today is David Kleeman, president of the American Center for Children and Media. What we wanted to do this morning is to bring together some of the best minds in research who are engaged or interested in issues concerning girls—from the standpoint of gender in media, from the toy industry, and overall from social and cultural behaviors to have a dialogue and an exchange about best practices in research.

In terms of outcomes, we would like to start a research advisory council for the institute. And, we'd like to explore opportunities to do a global research project together.

David Kleeman: I'm David Kleeman. I'm the president of the American Center for Children and Media and a member of the advisory board for the Geena Davis Institute. I'll do a little bit of framing once we're done with this, but I think the best thing to do is to go around the table and just introduce ourselves quickly—what are the perspectives we bring to this, in large part because this is a really exceptional group of such a wide range of research backgrounds and interests, and who we're doing our work for.

David Kleeman

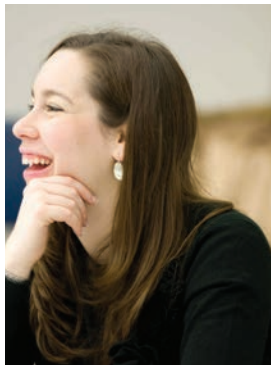
The American Center for Children and Media is two things: It's an executive roundtable for the US children's media industry, so working with senior executives from big distribution and production companies and medium and small ones as well, to keep them briefed on what's going on worldwide in business developments, creative developments, emerging research, and policy changes around the world.

Then there's a second side to it, which is a creative professional development center, putting on seminars, workshops, screenings, anything we can do to get people in a room to talk about what makes good children's media, to be introduced to new ideas, new writers, new researchers, anything that's going to send people back to their offices with new ways of looking at things. So that's the quick overview for me and I'll just turn to you and we'll go around.

Kimberly Salmond

Kimberlee Salmond: Hi, I'm Kimberlee Salmond. I'm with the Girls Scout Research Institute, which is housed within the Girls Scouts of the USA. We just turned ten earlier this year, and you all have the *Go Ask a Girl* compendium in front of you, and that's just sort of a snapshot of the research that we've done

over ten years. In general, we do research on all girls, not just Girl Scouts, so our studies are always nationally representative in terms of race, class, socioeconomic status, urbanicity, all of that good stuff. We study girls in the eight-to-seventeen age range, primarily on development issues, but also safety, health, leadership development. We just did a study on girls and body image vis-à-vis the fashion industry. We just did a study on social media and Facebook and how that impacts girls. We do a whole range of stuff and people are always surprised to learn what we do because I always get the question, "Oh, you must research the cookies," but we don't, though that would be fun. We do a lot of substantive research on girls, and actually Michael Cohen—we worked with your group and we cite that study all the time. We did a study with the Michael Cohen Group—girls and health—how girls are defining health and healthy living.


Clare Bresnahan

Clare Bresnahan: My name is Clare Bresnahan and I work with the Girl Scouts of the USA Public Policy and Advocacy office. My job is to make sure that we are taking research that the institute does, as well as all the other great research, like the Geena Davis Institute's [research], and put it into action, put it into policy work, and advocacy campaigns that are promoting healthy media for youth, but particularly on the topic of depictions of women and girls in the media. So I'm here to be able to talk about some actual items that you can take if you want to make sure that research is put to good use.

Richard Gottlieb: I'm Richard Gottlieb, I'm the CEO of USA Toy Experts, and the publisher of *Global Toy News*. I put on Girls and Toys conferences, in which we ask the question: "Do the toys that girls play with as children have an impact on the choices they make academically and professionally as adult women?" We are doing a conference in Nuremberg in February, and we are planning to do one out here in Los Angeles in the spring. It's still in the planning stages.

Richard Gottlieb

Rebecca Collins [also referred to as Becky]: I'm Rebecca Collins and I work at RAND Corporation, which is a social policy think tank. I work specifically in their health division, studying the influence of media on girls' and boys' sexuality and sexual behavior. My own research is best known—the best-known piece I've done is on how television media influences sexual initiation among girls and boys, as well as pregnancy and other sexual outcomes. I also served on the American Psychological Association's Task Force on the sexualization of girls, which looked at some of the same issues that you guys are talking about. As a matter of fact, we cite you guys all over the place.

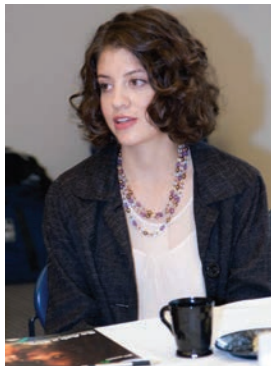
Rebecca Collins

Off-screen voice: We site you all the time. [*laughter*]

Rebecca: I'm looking at how both media and marketing and culture more broadly influences girls and their outcomes and their futures and their mental health, and in particular focusing on sexual objectification, or what we call sexualization of young girls.

Stacy Smith

Stacy Smith: Well if Becky studies sexualization, I'll take it one step further and say I study *hyper*sexualization, or what we've labeled it in working with Madeline and Geena at the Geena Davis Institute. I'm Stacy Smith. I study the social and psychological effects of the mass media on youth. For the last five years, I have taken a hiatus from my normal research trajectory and I've been doing work on gender portrayals and the hypersexualization of girls and women. Huge fan of Becky's work. Today we'll be overviewing a sample of industry leaders and their thoughts and beliefs about issues of gender balance in film. So it's a small convenience sample, but I think that the data are really interesting and compelling and perhaps something to think about as we move forward on issues pertaining to prevalence and hypersexualization of girls and women.


Amy Granados

Amy Granados: I'm Amy Granados. I'm a doctoral student at the Annenberg School. I've been working with Stacy, who is my advisor, on this research for the last five years. My own work is interested in acting, and the casting process in terms of issues of gender and sexualization and how that affects casting and production.

Dounia Turrill: Dounia Turrill with Nielsen Media Research. We provide analysis and trends on what teen girls and what young women are watching, both from the quantitative standpoint, and also some qualitative analysis on how they move from one outlet to the next—whether it's television or mobile devices—and how they're influenced in their lives by the media that is delivered to them.

Linda Simensky: Hi, I'm Linda Simensky. I'm the vice-president of Children's Programming, PBS. I oversee all of the development and current series production for PBS's kids' shows.

Nanette Braun: I'm Nanette Braun, I'm chief of Communications and Advocacy at UNIFEM, the women's rights organization of the UN that is, at the moment, in the process of being merged into a larger organization of women's rights at the UN, called UN Women. We become operational on the first of January, so this is an exciting time. We are, of course, very concerned about the image of gender in media, I mean very much in the work of the communications department, of course, but also beyond that. We've been fortunate to work with Madeline and Geena on several occasions on the issue. We've also supported the Global Media Monitoring Project, with which some of you may be familiar. Every five years, on an unannounced day, [they] look into what is the depiction of women and gender in the media, at who presents the news, and quite disturbing, the last Global Media Monitoring Project found that only 24% of people interviewed, seen, or heard in the media are women. The other 76% are still male. I'm thrilled to be here, also to see the Girls Scouts. We are discussing an exciting partnership with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts on an educational project on violence against women, so that's exciting to see them here too. I'm thrilled to be here and to hear from all of you.

Nanette Braun

> *"The last Global Media Monitoring Project found that only 24% of people interviewed, seen, or heard in the media are women. The other 76% are still male."*
>
> **— Nanette Braun**

Michael Cohen

Michael Cohen: My name is Michael Cohen. I direct a research group headquartered in New York. I'm a psychologist. I was a clinician before, but I've been doing research for about twenty-five years. And we work globally; we work in seventy countries. I'd say at this point, 90% of our work is focused on issues of children—boys and girls—ages, really prenatal at this point, through their lives as students, so up through college and graduate school. But the last five years, I've worked and focused primarily on younger children, ages two to eight, though we've done other work and we look at issues of—it's everything from market research, public opinion polling, and public policy, and the last five years, it's a lot of work on education and what are the issues involved in there. The optimal use of media in education for young children would be a big focus.

We did the work after 9/11 on the impact of terrorist bombings on the children of New York City. So we look at mental health and health issues, as well. I think I'll stop there. Thank you.

Mikaela Mathern: I'm Mikaela Mathern. I guess I would consider myself a student of the world. I work as a production assistant, but I'm here because of my mother who was invited and interviewed, but when I was in college, I did a lot of social action and V-Day work. I gave talks on sexual assault awareness in college, so I am engrossed in this, as well, and interested to learn.

Sandra Rabins: My name is Sandra Rabins. I participated in the study, and I'm really interested in gender issues. I'm mostly a producer of animation, probably best known for *Shrek* and *The Prince of Egypt*, and some movies at Sony. I'm really interested in how girls are perceived in the media and what we, as filmmakers can do to improve the way that women are perceived. I like the idea of doing it in animation because it reaches a big audience.

Everlyn Hunter: Hi, I'm Everlyn Hunter. I'm a board member of the Alliance of Women Directors. We recently utilized some of the research from the Geena Davis Institute in terms of trying to garner support for women directors. Seven percent of directors—working directors—are women. Only 7%. And we're trying to increase that number, so your research helps in terms of convincing.

> *"Seven percent of directors—working directors—are women."*
>
> **— Everlyn Hunter**

Gabrielle Burton: I'm Gabrielle Burton and my sister, Ursula Burton, and I are here, and another sister will be joining us later. We are five sisters who have a company, Five Sisters Productions, and we're filmmakers.

Carly Wasserman: Hi, I'm Carly. I work with a nonprofit called GlobalGirl Media and we work on girls' empowerment. We do that by training girls from underserved communities on how to be broadcast media journalists. One of our GlobalGirls from Los Angeles will be here soon to report on this event.

David: I think having gone around the table here, you get a sense of both the great strengths we have gathered here, and also the great challenge in front of us. You look at the mix of industry, academic, independent researchers, girls' organizations, social organizations, and trying to put together all of those different interests into something coherent can be a real challenge, but it's also very much what we need to do right now. It's a multi-dimensional puzzle; those aren't all the things we're dealing with. We have to figure out—when we talk about girls, when we talk about the research on girls and women, the research that the Geena Davis Institute will do, will promote, will gather—what age groups are we

talking about?

Clearly, we've heard, going around this table, that what young people see on adult television influences how they grow up, influences their beliefs about what the world looks like around them. What we might look at as an audience—younger girls—we have to consider the entire range of media that's out there. While I'm talking about the entire range of media that's out there, look at the world that young people are growing up in today. They are natural multiplatform, multitasking media consumers: they are watching television, they are playing games, they are using toys, they are reading books, just across the board. And I think that if any of you have had a chance to play with some of the new technologies that are just out this year, things like the Kinect, we have another revolutionary wave, and how we design for that revolutionary wave—the new range-of-motion-based games, where you're not even holding anything, it's watching you. We can design for that in ways that are going to be wonderfully appealing for all audiences, or we can turn them into a very narrow range of content again. So we're at the head end of a new technology and we have real chances here to do something with it.

> *"It's not just looking at the content on the screen; it's looking at what we know about how young people are using media and what media they're using."*
>
> **— David Kleeman**

With this broad range of people around the table, the Geena Davis Institute has really laid down a very strong foundation already of research that they've either commissioned or gathered. Stacy has said she'll present later today, but primarily so far on film and television—balance of roles, stereotypes, body image and such—I think that they've made a strong statement about where we stand right now with the representation and with the problems with that representation.

Today, given limited time, I think what I would love to do is look forward at where the gaps are right now in the research. What is most necessary to come up with a complete picture of what's going on right now? Find out more about what you know about what research is currently in progress that the institute may not be aware of yet, and look for the gaps that the institute might seek to fill. Part of that is also looking at the assumptions that we're making about the users. It's not just looking at the content on the screen; it's looking at what we know about how young people are using media and what media they're using. So we really have quite a complex puzzle to put together here.

Madeline has raised a couple things that she would love to come away from this with, including the idea of a research advisory council, a better flow through the institute of information that they can use for publishing through their SmartBrief and through the other means that they have of communicating. But then, also, as part of that—it's not just the outflow—it's creating vehicles for sharing. There is one-stop shopping for when you come up with a study that you think the institute needs to know about, and then more broadly, the audience needs to know about. I think that maybe towards the end, maybe we'll get around to more collaborative studies: what kinds of things people would love to be working on and where they need assistance with that, what kinds of organizational collaborations or personal collaborations we can put together in doing that.

Let's start with the idea of where we see the biggest gaps right now—what we feel we don't know—whether it's about the audiences and how they're using the media, or whether it's about the media that's being provided to them.

Madeline: One of the issues that I've talked to Kimberlee and to Stacy and to Becky is: we know media has an impact on children yet, there's no new or empirical data study that makes a strong correlation. Becky did a fabulous study that revealed that adolescents who are watching sex on TV, are the first to have sex, and the first to get

pregnant. I just want to make a stronger connection between media impact on self-esteem, cultural and social behaviors, and beliefs and even occupations or entrepreneurialism.

Vincent Bruzzese: Vincent Bruzzese, I'm president of OTX, which is a market research, marketing consulting company. We do work with the studios on screening all of their films, tracking them, testing the material, assessing all the scripts that come in, marketability, playability. In my former life, I was a professor of statistics and sociology in New York, a long time ago.

Lincoln Wallen

Lincoln Wallen: My name is Lincoln Wallen. I'm head of Research and Development at DreamWorks Animation. In my previous life, I was a professor at Oxford University. I actually ran the Access schema there, not to any great success, but—

Richard Gottlieb: Would you repeat the question again?

Madeline: One of the things that I'm interested in is that we know that media has an impact. The three areas that I'm most interested in learning are: What's the impact on self-esteem? What's the impact on social and cultural behaviors and beliefs? And what's the impact on occupations or even the sense of entrepreneurialism—because of the media, because of gender stereotypes—either negative or positive? There is no study, like that. With regard to Sex and TV, we have Becky's study, With regard to media and violence we have Stacy's study but this is a harder connection. Kimberlee and I have been discussing it for a year.

Kimberlee: You're looking at me. [*laughter*] First of all, I think there's a lot of great stuff that's already been done. I love the APA report. We've been taking to Deb Coleman a lot, and everybody involved in that—Monique Ward, etcetera. What seems to be missing is—and I don't know how possible it is, but—a lot of studies are smaller scale studies, so it's like 390 girls from this one Catholic school, because this is what researchers have access to, right? Or it's not a longitudinal study, or it's very specific on four different topics. One thing that I haven't seen, and I would love if it is out there definitely, is what you just said, which is the long-term impact on people over eighteen years of age.

We always say at Girl Scouts that when people turn eighteen, issues don't magically disappear. You just don't walk into that next part of your life where you don't have self-esteem issues or body image issues, and guess what? Those are the women who are modeling down for each new generation of girls, and all of research talks so profoundly about the mother-daughter connection in terms of all of this stuff. So I think a few things are missing. One is a national look at this, not just from a very population/population basis, but as much of a national sample as we could get. Secondly, I'd like to age it up a bit. I'd love to see the research aged into women in their forties and fifties, and if there was a way we can trace back to what they were watching—I'm not sure how possible that is, because we have to base it on memory, quite frankly. I'm sure that there are more sophisticated ways to do this, but I love all the small-scale studies. I think they're so great and I think there's so much rich data there, and the instruments are amazing. I think what you're looking for, Madeline, is that national snapshot, and I haven't seen it so far. I'd love to hear your thoughts on how possible something like that would be.

> *"What's the impact on self-esteem? What's the impact on social and cultural behaviors and beliefs? And what's the impact on occupations or even the sense of entrepreneurialism."*
>
> **— Madeline Di Nonno**

Madeline: Richard, any thought from the toy industry?

Richard: If I could, let me just set the stage for the toy industry for a moment. The toy industry,

in my experience, is highly introverted and not introspective. It doesn't really reach out, and it doesn't really do a lot of studies. And it's mostly defensive. If something comes up about a Barbie doll being sexualized, walls go up, etcetera.

I was attending the Toy and Game Inventor's banquet—and yes, there is a Toy and Game Inventor's banquet—and they were honoring, two years ago, a gentleman that had invented toys that had sold over a billion over his career. I'm sitting there and I'm thinking, "Wow, that's more books than *Harry Potter*, I think that's more albums than The Beatles, yet nobody's ever heard of this guy." I'm editing a book for a guy named Reuben Klamer, who invented The Game of Life, and he was also involved with the Hula-Hoop and the Pink Panther toys, and Reuben Klamer's got his fingerprints all over my life, my generation, and I'm thinking again, "Nobody seems to pay any attention to toys," and I'm thinking that the toys you play with are seminal in determining who you become in life. I had a toy printing press when I was a kid and I loved it. I write now. I don't know if there's a connection. I would bet you that if you talked to somebody who is an engineer or an architect, they probably played with Lego, played with blocks.

I spoke to a woman that was a doctor, and she said that instead of a doll, she dragged a microscope everywhere she went. She was five.

I became very interested in the impact of toys on adult life, particularly with girls, because a wonderful woman named Dr. Cynthia Breazeal who is a robotics professor at MIT, staked out a position that she felt that the toys that girls were given to play with were deleterious to girls in terms of their careers, because she felt it's a major reason they didn't go into science and math and careers of that nature. And God knows we haven't done the research, because nobody's ever done it. In just my work and looking around, if you look at a science toy on the cover, it's either a boy, or if it's a girl on the cover, she's watching the boy. If it's a car, and it's a girl and a boy in a car, the boy is driving. There are a lot of subtle and not-so-subtle messages, including—I have a picture here—the original Battleship game in which the father's playing with the son and the mom and the sister are in the kitchen washing the dishes. It's actually on the box cover. It's rather hard to believe, but that's the case.

So, yes, I think that we need to take a look at toys, and not just Barbie, which is rather obvious, but on the packaging, how it's presented, use of color, all these sorts of things in how they impact girls and they see themselves.

David: It's worth noting: the toy and media world, the toy and screen worlds are becoming ever closer. It's becoming more of a piece, rather than two separate things.

Richard: Yes, it's merging. One more thing, and I'm going to shut up, but it's really important. When I was at the conference, I was talking to one of our attendees who said that she remembered some of this talk thirty years ago. And I remembered Marlo Thomas, and I don't know if you can all remember Marlo Thomas did *Free to Be…You and Me*. One of the things she did was "William Wants a Doll." And it occurred to me that a number of the people at the table would have listened to *Free to Be…You and Me* when they were children, and maybe Marlo Thomas did have an impact with the record, and a lot of other people, too.

David: A quick question about this merging of things. How circular have things become between screen media and the toy industry? Every producer I hear talks about—especially preschool producers—the need to merchandise and license, so how much room is there out there for the independent toys?

Richard: It is a cycle. I'm not so sure where it starts

and stops anymore, because the toy industry is—we have the *Battleship* movie coming out. That's being created to sell toys.

Vincent Bruzzese

Vincent: We're doing work with Hasbro. We're being asked to evaluate, not only with current properties that make the best translation to the screen in terms of the movies, but in terms of properties that are in development. They're no longer thinking of making it restricted to just the toy that would be sold. In other words: *I would rather develop something that would have all this type of impact and that we can expand out.* So we're constantly evaluating for those clients. We're trying to say who it would translate for. How marketable is it in terms of on the screen and what the application would be?

David: In the questions that you're getting in doing that, what is the role of gender? How many questions are about gender?

Vincent: It's the same role that it always plays in media: if you're looking at adults, it's the quads. You know, is it going to younger males? Is it going to younger females, older males, older females? How are we going to sell the media that way?

Everyone talks about psychographics: What type of young male? What type of young female? At the end of the day, you don't buy media by psychographic yet, and so they're still going to look at the quads. They're going to say, "How am I going to buy media to this?" Until you find a way to target media psychographically, which, I'm sure we're getting closer to, they're going to, at the end of the day, look at: "We're gonna spend X number of dollars marketing this. I need to know: females, eight-to-twelve. I know how to reach them. I know where to reach them. I don't know how to reach females who like to play sports and who are ones that have more than five friends." They don't know how to reach that person. They can identify them, but they don't know how to buy media to them.

I think the benefit of research that we could do is we could reach a large number of people on a quantitative level, a quantitative study. But I think a lot of the questions we're talking about is a sort of qualitative, deeper-dive look, but I think it would be a two-phase process. I think you would have to do a national study to identify a lot of the issues. I'm sure we could sit around the table and probably identify 75% of the issues, but it's always the other 25% that we don't know. You get those, and then you do a second phase. You do sort of a deep dive with ten or fifteen in a room and you talk to them.

I just want to comment on what you're saying [*referring to Richard*]. I think it's also, more on the toy side, to look at both perspectives because it's interesting that young girls have a wider range of toys, culturally, that they can play with than young boys do. Young boys have a very narrow set of toys that they can play with. Young boys playing with a doll or a Barbie doll, they're usually immediately told, "What are you doing?" A young girl playing with Matchbox cars or something like that isn't going to be admonished for doing it. So there are marketing messages, and then there's sort of a cultural impact. How much range can they have in their option of what they're doing?

I think it's interesting to think about and to focus our conversations on the role of social media right now. We all know that it's more and more important now—what's cool, or the importance of what's cool is actually much younger and younger. We're now at where a seven-year-old will care**:** *Oh, I can't wear that*, or *I can't bring that into school*. Now, a Facebook page, everyone knows what you like.

And so how much are people's likes and dislikes and use of media now guided by: *if everyone sees that I like that, then I'm gonna face the repercussions of it. So I have to like what other people are liking*. There could be a homogeneity that's occurring where everyone will find out that—fine, when I was in second grade, I loved Anne Murray. You know, not many kids like Anne Murray. I found out when I went to high school, Anne Murray wasn't very cool. [*laughter*] But, if it was today's day, that would have been on Facebook. That would have been a problem for me.

David: It will be now, actually. [*laughter*]

Vincent: Now I could probably say, "Yeah, 'You Needed Me.' It's a great song. Leave it alone." But if it's on Facebook, I think that extra X factor now, that everyone will now know what you like—there are no more guilty pleasures and everyone knows them—is impacting how people consume media and using what the message and the content that's out there to say something about themselves. If it's not a very good message, it's going to still spread quickly and everyone's going to use it because it's cool, or it identifies what everyone likes.

Madeline: Michael, I want you to jump in.

Michael: I think one of the challenges in answering your question, I'm hearing in the conversation is: *what's media?* The language hasn't kept up with the nature of reality, so—I'm making this up—"My brother-in-law who works in television left his keys on the television set for the car as he was watching television on his cell phone." So, it's the platform, it's the industry you work in, and it's the context. Here we're talking about: you're buying media, you're buying advertising. It's very different between the wonderful stuff Linda makes for children on PBS than the six-year-old who is watching *True Warrior* or something else. So we can't just say, "What's the effect of television on children?" What television? How much? What's the effect of video games on children? Well, all video games aren't equal. What video game? How much are they playing? And in what context? Then there's an idea of the ten-year-old girl [saying], "I want to work in the media industry." Well, if [she wants] to be a journalist, an actress, or a video game designer, that's all the media industry. Those are all very, very different careers.

So if we could come up with terminology that could be used, that would be a fantastic contribution right there, because I think we're all using the words, in some ways, accurately, but quite differently. I don't know if that made sense.

Rebecca: I am completely in agreement with Kimberlee, that what we really need—and you said it first, Madeline—is we need a national longitudinal study of *something*. [*laughter*]

Because that's what I do, so I always think that's what we need. When we did the APA Task Force Report, we had absolutely no dearth of small qualitative studies. We had more than we could contend with to review and there were ten of us, maybe, reading and reading and writing and writing and then we had to cut the report by fifty percent to even get it to the thing it was. So there was lots out there, but we didn't even have one study we

could point to on any single aspect of sexualization that had a clear outcome. Actually the problem was young girls, because that was our mission. We didn't know how old or how young, but we knew it was supposed to be younger. We know a lot about women, because most of the work is on college student populations, so we got, actually, a lot of the over-eighteen, although they're all college students, so there's already something going on career-wise there.

> *"It was the nine- and ten-year-old boys that were seeing advertisements for beer who could tell you every line of every ad and acted them out for us in our focus groups."*
>
> **— Rebecca Collins**

Anyway, we just don't have any data on these younger kids. Some of my work is on alcohol advertising, and trying to look at its influence on kids' drinking. And I don't know for sure that this would generalize to the question of sexualization, but we found that the pre-teens were the more vulnerable kids, that it was the nine- and ten-year-old boys that were seeing advertisements for beer who could tell you every line of every ad and acted them out for us in our focus groups. Then when we did the quantitative analysis, we found the same thing, that those were the boys who were most affected by the advertising that they saw. The problem is getting that all the way down the line to careers. You need to study the ten-year-olds and then nine-year-olds and then you need to follow them until they're twenty-three and they start their first job. That is not only difficult, but wildly expensive.

I think the other issue related to expense is the one, Michael and Vincent, that you were talking about. We did a study of TV. We did it, thank God, in 2000. [It] was our baseline data collection, when TV was smaller than it is now but still pretty big. But we could, at least, get from Nielsen, "OK, what are the shows that kids are watching, and we'll focus there." Now, you can't pick a medium; there's so much diversity within every media, and you've got the toys, which are part of it. The marketing and the media are all one. It's tough from a measurement standpoint, because you can't just ask, "Do you watch TV? Do you play with toys? Do you go to films?" You can't even ask them what rating they get, because it turns out the ratings aren't that discriminating.

I think the key thing is to figure out what we can measure that's important, and try to tackle that. I think that's the crux: is there something we could ask kids about that would tap into their exposure to sexualizing media and marketing? And, is there any way that we can target something that we can get our hands around and follow? And then come up with the few million dollars that it would take to follow those kids over time and get a national sample. You know it's hard—Stacy and I were talking about this—to recruit those national samples for research, it's hard to retain them. But I think you could do it if you have enough money to really put the effort into it, you can convince them what you're doing is important and get them onboard. And then they'll stay onboard. We actually had people calling us for our study and saying, "Nobody's called me for the follow-up. When is the follow-up going to happen?"

David: The interesting question that we need to be mindful of here is: if you're doing a long-term study like that and the platform environment underneath the media environment is changing so fast, what can we study that, when we look back, ten years down the line, is still going to be germane?

Rebecca: Relevant. Although, I think if we can capture a snapshot now, that's okay. Then it may not be relevant later, but we can say, "They were exposed to that in 2010 and now look where they are later, even though the whole world's changed." I mean, we could look at *Free to Be…You and Me* and it's relevant to the people who are adults.

David: It comes down to fairly specific questions about content. But, I just want to see if I can bring Linda in for a moment to talk about PBS's emerging approach to transmedia, because I think that's one of the growing things that's happening across all

these platforms and presents some opportunities just in terms of what we're talking about of trying to make a coherent picture of multiple platforms.

Linda: What, specifically, would you like me to tell you?

Madeline: What do you think, based on the kind of insights and research that PBS does in terms of the emotional impact on children from media versus, do they like the show, or do they not like the show?

Linda Simensky

Linda: Just to touch on what David was saying first—the whole question of transmedia, and when you [*referring to Stacy*] were saying how hard it is to do research now, everything is sort of blending together. We did something fairly radical, it turns out. It doesn't seem radical to me, but we brought our interactive team into our development process and we said, "From now on, if you pitch a property, don't pitch it as just a show and these other things. Pitch it as a property and it's got a show and it's got a website and it's got the various apps and various places. Then explain to us what all these things are, and explain to us about what a kid gets out of watching the show, what a kid gets out of each thing that they're doing, and how they all act together."

It's the same property on every platform, it's just there are a lot of different platforms that are involved. We said, "Do not, under any circumstances, slap the word transmedia on the cover of your pitch and say, 'We're good!' because you're not. It's bigger than that." So some people understood exactly what we were asking for, and some people really don't, and they'd say, "Well, *it's the show*."

The really interesting thing, and I think this connects to the research in a weird, tangential way, as we've talked to reporters and they say, "Tell us about your show," and you go off immediately on a whole [explanation], "It's not just a show; it's all these things and what a kid gets out of the show is this one thing and what they get out of doing on the website is a thing that reinforces this particular thing, and the apps would reinforce this, and the apps are good because kids who couldn't really work the web—can't type—can certainly slide their finger and learn letter awareness." And we go into the whole thing and they say, "Not interesting. Just, what's the show and what's it up against?"

And, wow, it's sort of a funny approach. It feels like the media's reporting about it, and reporting about it, but they don't really want to report about it. Or at least, the TV reporters don't want to report about how it's turning into this other thing—but it's how kids are thinking.

Rebecca: Right, they don't get it because they're adults, but I think kids would totally understand your presentation.

Linda: Right, but the bottom line is, in my mind, there's no such thing as a show that lives on its own anymore. Especially if it's educational, because I think—this is going to sound like blasphemy—but it's almost like the show is the commercial for all the other things. In my mind, you learn a little more from all the other things, because you can interact with them. Even toys. If you see something on TV, you know, you're watching *Wild Kratts* or something—that is a show that we have coming out next month—and it takes place a lot outside, and it's a lot of things. In my mind, you're watching the show and it's like, "Wow, I want to go outside now. I want to go do these things." So, we're thinking about it in what's turning out to be this really futuristic

approach, but I really think it's the way kids think now. It's the way my own kids think.

Getting back to the research question and all that work, it's sort of like everything unfolds exponentially as opposed to doubling. When someone says to us, "We're going to take this out and research it now," my mind just starts to think of all the things we have to check on now. It's not just, "Do you like the show?" Those days were so easy. I don't know what I ever complained about before now because it all seems so easy now as I look back to just the simplicity of, "Do you like the show and what are you getting out of it?" Because even now, as we test something in development, we start to look at it.

We just recently said, "Why would we just do a pilot? Let's do a pilot and a game to test, and then see does the game reinforce what they're teaching in the pilot?" So everything is complicating to the *n*th degree, so I almost don't know what direction it's going in. Then, on top of it—as Madeline said—we are testing for the social/emotional impact of everything. Interestingly, if you sit down with moms and you put a show in front of them, they're much more interested in the social/emotional lessons and school readiness that kids are getting out of just about anything. They're relieved to see that the kids are going to learn about science or whatever. They are the most happy if there's a message about: *this kid's different and that's okay*. Buddy the Dinosaur was adopted by a pteranodon family and everyone's cool about it. It's very interesting.

Rebecca: My adopted daughter does not understand that Buddy is adopted. She does not get it.

Linda: It makes sense to her, right?

Vincent: The core of what Michael said before and hitting what you said about all the lines blurring—the most effective research is focused research and if we identify what it is we're looking at. If you look at media and you say, "Well, what is media?" We can break it down: there's content, there's marketing and there are platforms. That's it. The delivery of it, and then you have some content and platforms. You bring content down to user-generated content, and content that's delivered to consumers, and you can break that down further, and see what's having an impact.

I'd argue that maybe Don Draper causes more eight-to-twelve-year-olds to experiment with alcohol than maybe any single alcohol ad could. And that could be the messaging that's coming completely latently, inadvertently through content delivered to an audience that it's not even intended for. Now, how do you measure for that? Unless you're focusing on it: *Okay, I'm going to focus our research on the impact of content delivered to a consumer and the impact it has on viewers that may not be in that target audience, and therefore the messaging has this negative impact*. The more focused that research becomes, the more likely we are to get real, actionable information and answers.

Did you do a large-scale landscape study? You could even think about doing three of them in an ideal world: one of content, one on platform, one on marketing. Then you start breaking it down further, because all of the real findings and research are those little nuggets of information—those little *ahas* that come right down and you say, "Oh, look at that; it doesn't make sense." Then you connect it and you go, "There it is!" And that's really on a granular level and it's a focus level.

Defining what it is that we're talking about—what that impact is—is it a social impact? Is it a personal, emotional impact? We all talk about *buzz*. Now there's so much buzz. That's the point of marketing. It's not like in 1975, there was rotary phone buzz, but things still sold. More people still bought tickets and saw films than they do today. It's identifying

the reality of the situation and what's going on, and what we want to look at, that at the end of the day, is going to give the best result.

Madeline: Our focus is really on eleven and under, and we know there's a dividing line from preschool, to six-to-eleven. When we look at TV-G, it is doing the best job in in terms of gender equality. But then programming for 6-11 is dramatically unbalanced in television and film. We've focused on the mass consumption, which is still film, and television for young children.

> *"Eleven and under are exposed to media upwards of twenty to thirty hours a week."*
>
> **— Dounia Turrill**

Dounia Turrill

Dounia: I'll touch upon something you're saying, especially if you're looking at eleven and under. Eleven and under are exposed to media upwards of twenty to thirty hours a week. Most of it is consumed on television. You do have mobile elements, you have buzz, you have word of mouth. You have all these other elements that are somewhat new to us in the research space, that we have to deal with, and we have to bring them into any research that we do—internet. But it's still a very small portion, so you're looking at 98%-99% of consumption on television. And you look at six-to-eleven-year-olds and two-to-five-year-olds and you look at their media consumption across a day and it starts at 6 a.m. and goes until midnight.

Now much of that is co-viewing with a parent. And there's a bigger peak with younger kids in that 7 a.m.-to-12 p.m. day part, which is good, that's good news, because that's probably where most of their programming is targeted, but at the same time you have this huge mix of programs that are not just kids' programs that they're being exposed to.

Listening to the conversation, as we focus on what's happening with kids and where are they—but it's so much broader. It's in *Mad Men*, it's in *Grey's Anatomy*, it's in *Glee*. I think there's a lot that can be done and certainly from a national standpoint, there are very robust ways to capture viewing behaviors and then you narrow it down. Of course, you're going to get your finest points once you've gotten to that narrow point, but you've got to start at the top. What is being consumed by this cross-section? What are they watching on television? What are they doing online? How are the two connected? Do they move from one screen to the next? Are they finding the same content and the same quality—or lack thereof—from one screen to the next? That part would be fairly easy to conduct, and then you move into a longitudinal study design that would really take you ten years plus to conduct with updates where you see the impact.

Rebecca: I think when I was saying it's really hard, I left out an important piece which is that you actually can't move straight from there to longitudinal. Everything you said is exactly right, I agree, except that what we were able to do in our study that I think was critical was that we had a content analysis that we linked to our survey. We knew which programs they watched on TV and then we had a bunch of coders who sat in a room who watched every TV show that we were asking about and coded all of the content, so we didn't just say, were they watching *Sex and the City?* We said they were watching a program that had an average of thirteen scenes depicting sexual behavior and sexual talk. We actually had the number of scenes each kid saw, to link to our outcomes. The problem with the diverse platforms—I agree, you can figure out what they're watching, especially with the little ones—but then you need to code the big universe which is now so much larger, and that's where I think the difficulty lies, when there are so many things. But you [Dounia] know, you've seen the data, and maybe there are enough narrow points where so

many kids see only a certain number of programs, that you'd be okay and you could actually code all of those programs.

Dounia: Certainly at Nielsen, we have a fairly large research on the television side, and some of what I'm doing is augmenting some of the television research with what's happening with computer usage within those same homes. So already, we're starting to look at a single source, and that helps with coding, because you say, "Okay, here's their content consumption on television, as measured. Here's their content consumption on the PC, as measured." And whether it's streamed content or surfing.

A lot of the research is nascent in these other delivery systems—mobile, tablets, and smartphones—where it's much harder to have that real, true, measured data, but we're all getting that, as researchers in the media space. You put those together and then you can start coding, as you said.

Rebecca: Stacy could start coding. I don't do that. [*laughter*]

Kimberlee: Could I actually ask a quick follow-up? I know it's early, but I always have an issue with whether it's the content or the delivery mechanism—what is different or not different? Is it your sense that they're actually watching different content via different mechanisms? Or is it the same content and the same kinds of things that are just being watched in different ways? Does that make sense?

Dounia: Yes. That's what I'm starting to look at is how much of what is viewed on television is then getting pushed to the internet, and we're just starting to look at that. But whatever findings any of us can put together, I think it's still safe to say that at least 98% of what is consumed is consumed on the television, to the extent that you have this 2%. And the thing is that you can have that 2% be incredibly influential. We know that influences are a strong minority when it comes to any demographic, and they will be beneficial or hazardous, depending on what they're influencing. So that 2% can have—it's buzz, it's a big impact. But kids typically watch a lot of the same shows over and over again and they seek the same type of content. They're very loyal, which is very positive, except when the content that is provided and fed to them is negative and can be challenging.

Vincent: There's a lot less monitoring of that too, because now you have a channel that plays nothing but kids' content and so you put the child in the living room, you put them on the couch, you turn on the TV, and you know that you can come back two hours later and it's still going to be playing kids' content. Whereas way back when, you put them on, and there's going to be the kids' show that comes on, but then after that, the kids' show is over and you have to go in and say, "Okay, now we have to do something else." You can literally keep them there all day. It's just going to play nothing but content that's unmonitored, that's just continuing.

Dounia: The interesting thing about looking at DVR, which is the recording devices, Among adults, they're widely used, and it's about 40% of all households in the US have DVRs. If you look at kids and how they view television, they're still viewing TV live, which actually is important to note, because you're getting messages in this content—and I'm going to use *Mad Men* again—because that's not necessarily the best content to be delivered to kids, but probably some of them are seeing it. But also, they're watching the commercials interspersed within that content, live, which is less than what an adult would do, because if you've recorded something, you're more likely to skip through some of those commercials. So their exposure is aggregate, greater to all the messages that are coming to them.

Kristen Simmons [Ipsos OTX]: There are two things as well. There's the rating system for TV and movies and there's an inherence to that. The research we've done has shown that basically kids under the age of thirteen go with family members or parents or some adults to see R-rated movies. A good portion of them do. And I think that's where that shift comes. When they go to see those types of movies, the ratings system doesn't really work. They're going to be exposed to things that they're really not supposed to be exposed to. I think it's that, and I agree that when kids are younger, that you can put them in front of the television and you pretty much have the content going all day long and you don't have an interruption. But I think that as they get older and they're looking at content on different platforms—mobile, computer—there's less of a chance to monitor that in the way that you can with TV. So they have more of an opportunity to see things that their parents don't know that they're seeing.

Rebecca: I think that little kids are starting to become kind of tech-savvy and they know how to change the channel. If you walk away and leave them, suddenly, they might be watching something else that you didn't intend at all.

Kristen: Or go to a different web page.

Michael: That starts about age six, once they're in school. Before that, the parent is the gatekeeper for both quantity and quality, how much and what. After age six, we find that very quickly, the kid is left to their own devices as to what, and the parent is controlling quantity.

Not complete freedom at six, but increasingly.

Madeline: Everybody? Yes?

Michael: The other phenomenon we see is this: I was interviewing a nine-year-old, and what the parent will allow for television is completely different than for video games and for films. They're going to the movies, a theatrical release: *Come with me. We're going to see this R-rated film*. The kid will see things that their parent would freak out if they were showing on television. So each platform has its own set of evaluative criteria from the parents' perspective as to what's okay.

David: Because they're accompanying them?

Michael: They're blowing people up in a video game, but you don't want your kids to see this violence on television, and in the movies. It's fine to see all kinds of things. It's just different cultural parameters for what's permissible.

Linda: There's also the question of siblings. I assure you, my ten-year-old had a very different media diet than my five-year-old does. Just for an example, my ten-year-old started watching *The Simpsons* at age eight. My five-year-old started watching at age three when he [the older sibling] started watching. I didn't stop it because I was sitting there watching it with them. I think that if you looked at first-borns and then second-borns, you'd see a very big difference. We have a joke at PBS that our entire audience is first-borns—and maybe second-borns if there's a year difference. After that, it's really hard to know. I think a lot of kids get exposed to things from older

siblings or friends' older siblings.

Richard: We talk about the schoolyard social network which is still very powerful. Silly Bandz—I don't know if you're familiar with Silly Bandz—It was not television that launched that product. It started someplace—I think it was Arkansas and moved geographically. I think the West Coast was the last place it came in the United States, and then it moved to Canada, and now it's moving around in Europe. Now that's all because of schoolyard influencers. I would imagine there was somebody in an older grade that probably liked it that caused younger kids—

Linda: It's kind of great that that can still happen—that it can have nothing to do with TV.

Richard: But I think it does still happen. I think that when you talk about television shows, what is going on in the schoolyard that is happening is influencing a lot of what they're doing.

Rebecca: When you [Dounia] were talking about the 2% that's important, I think sometimes the kid is sitting in front of the TV and that leads them to buy the toy, but I also thinks there's a big influence of the toy or the buzz on the schoolyard that leads them to the show. My daughter will swear that she has watched *Spiderman*. She's never seen *Spiderman* in her life, but the boys on the playground play Spiderman and then she walks past a television set somewhere and she sees Spiderman's image on a commercial. She also likes Disney princesses; she's never seen a Disney princess movie in her life. [*group reaction*] I know, it's amazing. But from the toys— My daughter is afraid of TV and movies, so it's great. But I think the toys are a huge driver the other way, too.

Richard: If I could do a national study, the simple question I would ask adults is—two questions: what was your favorite toy when you were a kid? And by the way, if you ask any adult this, they just melt. Then the second one is: was there a toy as a child that you think had an influence on who you became in life? I've had everything from people who—I had one young woman who was actually a rock and roll singer, and she realized that the whole look of her band was based on My Little Pony. [*laughter*] She had never thought about it. They did it with sparkles and hair. So that would be the question I would love to see answered, because I think it would tell me a lot, at least on a very macro level, about influencers.

Clare: To piggyback on what you're talking about: we've been talking about the whole media spectrum of how much quantity and coding and all that smart stuff I don't focus on in the policy world. I work for the Girl Scouts' Public Policy office, for those who came in later. What we really need in the policy world is: what are the effects? So if you're going up on the Hill, and you're trying to talk about depictions of women and girls, it's great to talk about quantity, but what are the actual effects? We still need so much more public health information. People were talking to it: what is the effect on their social, emotional and physical health?

Michael: In the face of *what*?

Clare: Exactly, but I think you need this combination. We need to also focus on—there's a whole spectrum of what you're saying is the *what*, and then what are you studying it *for*? What are the exact effects? And that's one reason why we worked with you [Kimberlee] to develop the Healthy Media for Youth Act where one-third of the bill is focused on facilitating research through NIH, who has the resources to do these large studies that we were just talking about that can focus on the *what*, but also on the effects and the *what for* and so forth.

Rebecca: I think they're interested in certain outcomes and they're not always the outcomes that we're talking about here. They are NIH, and so they care about health, but they might not necessarily

care as much about girls' conceptions of what they could be when they grow up, as much as they care about depression, self-esteem—

Clare: Yes. Right. But the great thing about this bill is that it facilitates research like that. It would be the first kind where it's focusing more on what we all need to know more. We can talk about it more afterwards.

> *"In all of our work, not when it comes specifically to media, but in all of our work: how do you increase the voice for women and girls?"*
>
> — Nanette Braun

David: [to Nanette] I'd love to bring you in here and hear if what you're hearing sounds like a fairly American perspective or if it's a global perspective, [and] what the different issues are that we maybe haven't been considering from the perspective of women around the world.

Nanette: Thanks so much. It's really very interesting to listen to all of you, and I see my role very much really as listening. It's daunting to hear a group of people here—researchers in their field—talk about the difficulty of doing research in the US mainly, which is, of course, a country where you have many more resources and everything, and then to look at it from a global perspective. What we can say from our perspective, of course, when you look globally, you look at a vast range of different cultures and different cultural attitudes. It would be fair to say that in many regions and in many cultures, women and girls have by far not the same voice as they do have here in the US, even though that voice may not be reflected properly here, and that is why all of you are sitting here. It's very important.

I think for us a very important question always is—in all of our work, not when it comes specifically to media, but in all of our work: how do you increase the voice for women and girls? Of course, that starts at an early age. Therefore, it goes: how do you increase the spaces for women and girls in public, cultural reflections? That of course mainly is through the media. I don't know if any of you has looked into that specifically in your research. If any research has been done in that respect, I think that would be very interesting for us. And without knowing—Vincent, you mentioned social media, and we may have to look more at social media—my sense is from our work that social media can be in many countries an equalizer also in that respect, because it gives access to everybody. It gives access to media. It gives access to public discussions in societies that may be much more closed. For example, in Saudi Arabia, I was very interested to learn social media is huge amongst young women and girls. So I think these are questions that would be very interesting from our perspective, and I would be very interested to hear if there are studies out there that look specifically into these issues.

And last but not least, another point that we are—again, across our work—always very concerned about is: where are women in decision-making positions? When a discussion comes about women and leadership and decision making, people look at politicians and look at the political sphere and overlook how important it is to have a critical mass of women in decision-making positions, really, at all levels. Not only at the top levels, top political levels, or not only at the CEO level, but really throughout social sectors. Also the other question, if you have looked into that more, and you've got factors, I would presume, in your work.

Richard: One of the questions we considered at our Girls and Toys conference was the fact that most of the toy industry is dominated by males in the top management positions and what impact that had on the toys that were chosen to come to market, how they were marketed and how they were merchandised. The consensus—it was mostly women at the conference—but their consensus was that men really got boys, but they really didn't get girls. They really didn't understand what drove girls and what play patterns they look for. So it's not just a matter of the importance of women having a voice, but the impact it has on the product that's

developed for girls. So it's a cycle, males designing for—

Kristen: I think there's a strong link there too, between the toy manufacturers and the toys that they make, and the movies. It's very much driven by the movies that are being released. You look at the blockbusters from the last five years and they're all very much male-driven, and those toys are being manufactured to be for boys, and those are the cool toys to have on the playground.

David: Seems like a very opportune time to bring DreamWorks into this.

Lincoln Wallen: Yes, it's very interesting listening to this. I'm not quite sure how best to contribute. I come primarily from the means of production and the organizations that actually produce media, as well as the corporations that are thinking about how to continue to produce media going forward. A number of observations:

Just a little bit of background—I was involved in establishing Electronic Arts' mobile business, for example, so taking media parts to that stage game, some of which were related to film and some of which were not. So the way we thought about what we were doing was primarily that we saw some time ago that the form of consumption for consumers was going to change, and that the form of the consumption was going to affect the nature of the media. You could no longer think of the media as a sort of product that somehow was consumed, but now the consumer had a very direct hand in the experience that was generated based on that data.

When you look at something like *The Sims*, there's explicit thought put into the different ways in which different types of people—including girls of different ages, boys of different ages—could construct experiences using the material that we put in front of them. So you could think of that media product as a

game, but actually, it's far more of a sandbox. The sort of innovation, or the goal, was really to create a product that allowed consumers to construct media experiences that actually suited them.

Moving on to social media, our approach—or the approach now from a children's movie company, because we're not thinking solely or primarily about movies—is we're thinking about all these different ways in which our target demographic, which is six-to-eleven essentially, is seeking to manufacture an experience. So the role that our characters play in those experiences, the way we introduce those characters to consumers, gives them opportunities to then have experiences. The idea of taking a character out of a movie and putting them into a situation that is not necessarily representative of that movie—taking a character out of *Madagascar*, a character out of *How to Train Your Dragon*, putting them in the same experience—all of that is on the table. I think movies for us still establish a palette, but they are no longer necessarily the primary means by which we see the consumers actually building their experiences.

So now when you come back and ask, "How do you study that?" it seems very difficult to use traditional statistical aggregation forms of study to get what's going on. You could end up moving, it seems to

me, toward more anthropological forms of study, behavioral forms of study. We're looking for sort of stable patterns in people's consumption rather than aggregate statistics over what "impact" is. Because now you're down to that individual consuming, or putting media together in a particular way.

I'd offer comments on TV: TV is probably the last delivery platform to transition to a form in which it's easy for a four-, five- or six-year-old to construct their experience. And that may be why the young children, you're finding, are consuming it more as people did back in the seventies—as linear streams of media, whereas teenagers, either with DVRs or internet TV, are far more active in selecting their consumption patterns. Whether that's part of experiences, sequences, or particular shots within films, still images, flipping between channels—that's the sort of simple bit—but when we are thinking of delivering content channels to consumers involving our movies, our games, our interactive social content, it's a mashup—very much a mashup—for the consumer to basically go and construct an experience. They're not going to be linearly consuming even only our content at any given time. They're going to be creating a little bit of relaxation while they watch something, but then they're going to be taking that and actually taking it into a much more active form. So to study that, you've got to be studying the individual.

Vincent: Thankfully, today's research can now do what used to be unethical, which is to create a lab—a human lab, in a sense. You can create a social space, and you can invite people online into a social space and you can observe their behavior, right? Whereas before, you couldn't really trap a small town of people and then just watch. They used to: Oh, nuclear attack or something. *Let's see how they all react*, right? And people would say, "Oh, that's not nice. You can't do that; it's unethical." Well now we can, in a sense. Milgram be damned, we can have a social space and we can put them all in there and we can introduce content into it and we can introduce messages and we can see their response in terms of their behaviors. You're right, at that, you're doing an attitudinal study, and each one will get some information but truly, it's the dynamic nature.

Rebecca: It's not just an attitudinal. I don't think it's right to say that you can't study individuals this big, or that you can't even get this stuff.

Lincoln: No, it's more the question of how do you draw the conclusions from the information? Because we—we is DreamWorks, but actually in a previous life it was Electronic Arts—we set up these spaces in a very personalized way. We're actually doing the studies on a minute-by-minute basis in terms of what individuals are doing with the media, and we're changing the media in order to change the experience and follow the trends that the consumers are actually creating. So you've actually got a feedback loop in the actual experience itself, driven by the media provider—or enabler, if you like—that is changing the experience based on what the consumers are doing with it, and how they're aggregating it is the playground, in a sense. So when you're studying that sort of situation, you're actually studying a moving target, or your studying a target that may be reflecting prior aspirations or prior capabilities of the consumer group that's actually engaged in that media. So again, that's the complication in terms of how you read out—

David: Can I just ask very quickly if gender is one of the things that you're tracking in that?

Lincoln: It is, in terms of how different groups of people respond to different parts of the media, and then—generally, from a commercial point of view—to try to maximize engagement. They're looking for churn, and people who actually engage in that media and then disappear, and why they're disappearing, and what it takes to get them back in,

and what it takes to keep them, and then trying to orient the content to those types of behaviors and balance it, obviously across the—

Michael: How do we get to questions of impact? What you're doing is great, but what I'm having a hard time with is having issues of how exposure to X type of media makes a young girl feel vulnerable, or that she's afraid that when she gets to be a teenager, she's going to be the victim of a sexual attack. Exposure to X kind of media makes her feel good or bad in a certain way. Or exposure—it's the impact where behavior can't be— I think we would make a mistake and we should be cautioned to equate behavior with impact. I'm struggling with—I don't know how to do that, other than to ask qualitative questions about one's internal subjective experience with this. You'd have to see it over time.

Rebecca: Well it depends again on the slice you cut out, but I don't see why you could not use some of the kinds of methods that you're talking about and map them onto a national longitudinal study that has concrete impact. An example is some work that Ralph DiClemente is doing on internet pornography. What he got kids to do was to agree—*Okay, I've got software on my computer that's going to track every single website I'm going to visit*. So he's going to know exactly what they were exposed to, how they got there, if they chose to go from one place to another, why they did that. He's probably got too much data there and he's going to have to narrow the slices. Then he can connect that to these later outcomes.

I think you could do the same thing for almost anything. What's interesting is that you could both track concretely what they are exposed to—if you pick a medium like it happens on the computer screen. You can see what they're exposed to and have exactly all the details. You could also look at whether they created it or not, whether it was passive, whether they selected it, and see if that makes a difference. Because I do think that we're going to probably learn that when kids create something—when they decide what experience is, like in *The Sims*—that that's going to have a much stronger impact than what's passively received. So if we have girls creating sexualized avatars for themselves, then that's probably going to have a bigger influence on them later. Of course, you've got to tease apart is it that they created it because they're already in trouble? That's going to be the tough part, but again, if you follow them over time and get enough data, you could start teasing those things out statistically, and then you could kind of get at some of this stuff. Let them construct the experience and then map what they create and what they're exposed to onto these outcomes.

David: It's actually really too bad that Kevin Clark from George Mason University, who was supposed to be here, couldn't be here today, because those are very much the kinds of things he's looking at. He's looking at how young people, in creating games and spaces, design their characters and why. He's able to, in a fairly constrained space with a small group of kids, interview them about why they're making those choices and what they would like to change.

I'm mindful of the time, I want to make sure Madeline gets one more piece of advice, and that is about putting together an advisory board for the Geena Davis Institute around research. I would just love any quick reactions about what kinds of people need to be on that advisory board, and I think we got some very good information about how to start the process. It's going to be quite a challenge to focus it, but if we could talk about what kinds of people and how that board might work, both internally to the institute and helping to find the right people out there to conduct research. I know that we're very short on time, but any quick reaction?

Vincent: I think it would be useful to understand

what the tasks ahead for that board would be. I mean you say, "move the needle," but one thing we haven't talked about, for example, is *what*, exactly. We keep talking about what's right and what's wrong and impact. We're obviously subjectively saying *this* is right and you bring up other cultures. Here, if you blow someone up it's great and [someplace else] it's not; other cultures it's the opposite, right? So what's right and what's wrong, and what's the disconnect between that and what other people have? What's the challenge ahead? How big of a disconnect is there that needs to be changed? And what methods are going to be used to change it? What's going to happen after the research comes out? What stages does the research have to go through? How do you identify that? Who are you going to get?

I think to ask of this board to linearly go about: *This is where we want to wind up. This is what we want to do*, it would help understanding who should be on it. An ethicist should be, an anthropologist could be. There are different kinds of people, depending on the tasks.

Michael: I couldn't agree more. We want to move the needle from where to where? Without clarifying that—

Stacy: I think too, Madeline, you need a multi-method approach. I think Becky's exactly right with a longitudinal investigation, so a nationally representative sample, but you have to start young. Three-to-five-year-olds are learning body ideals. We know across animation, whether it's digitized games, television content or film, animated figures are far more hypersexualized, and the adult discount says they're not important. But we don't know what kids are gleaning. We don't know what types of messages they're extracting from these very hypersexualized ideals. The one Barbie study suggests that it has a negative impact in terms of right after exposure, the same type of idea. But it would be great to set an agenda, saying, "Does this affect body-esteem the way in which kids are exposed to representations of girls and women?"

I think you need both a series of experiments that are going on, so you're testing specific messages in the laboratory, and then developmental differences in how kids are making sense of this content if they're three-to-six versus seven-to-twelve, because those are very different groups of kids. Then within those groups, there are lots of different moderators that you're going to have to control for and whatnot.

I think it's about thinking long-term. I completely agree with you [Kimberlee]. What's going on at eighteen? What's going on at twenty-five? The earlier you can start these longitudinal investigations and tracking kids over time—they're still spending a lot of time with TV, so a lot of these ideals, a lot of the cognitive templates that they're taking with them throughout elementary school are being established very early. I think you need multi-method, multi-expert. Get RAND, get Ellen Wartella, get Barb Wilson, get Kristen Harrison, get Mary Gordon, so that you have the best people in the country doing surveys, longitudinals, qualitative investigation. Get Jane Brown involved. Have people tackling different questions around your outcome variables of interest. So then, you have a lot of different folks participating in a broader effort to try to tackle what are the effects, positive and negative. Because some of these women in these movies are going to be aspirational, so there might

be very mixed messages that kids are getting. On one hand, entrepreneurialism, aspirations, ideals will be fantastic. On another hand, there could be some other potentially damaging effects.

So, I think you need a broader approach, in getting more voices and then saying, "Let's pull people together, put together a review of literature, and then stake out what our next five-year plan actually is." Seek funding and if it's around self-esteem, this would be great, because you could make a huge dent, I think, in the empirical literature in this respect, with media, because—Becky, correct me if I'm wrong—this isn't a place where we know as much of things like violent content and its negative effects. If we start really early, and think particularly about animation—

Rebecca: I think self-esteem, but maybe more broadly defined than just self-worth: sort of *self-concept*—what you think you could be, who you think you are, and what you think a girl or a woman is. It's important, I think, not to leave boys out. We didn't leave them out, but just to state that what they think about women is clearly important in terms of domestic violence and interpersonal violence. So we need to know what boys are taking away as well as what girls are taking away and come up with some things to measure around that too, so that might not be self-esteem, but again this image of women and girls and how you treat them and what can they and can't they do? Because self-esteem, while I think it's probably influenced, is a tough nut to crack because so much of it is going to be just temperament. But some of these broader beliefs, I think, are critical and are related to self-esteem.

Michael: One of my colleagues was interviewing a girl in third grade, and we had them write something in part of the interview, and she kept writing, "Her self of steam." She thought, when you feel good, you're all full of steam. So I can't hear it now without thinking of "self of steam." [*laughter*]

Kimberlee: I also think there's a whole body of research out there that needs to be more connected, which is their adherence to stereotypes about gender expectations or not, right? So when they watch a show, not only what are they consuming, but how are they consuming it? On a very easy scale from, "this feels okay," to "this feels weird." In terms of boys and girls, in terms of what boys' expectations are about what girls should be, what girls should look like, in terms of violence, but also in terms of future gender/family expectations, etcetera. But also girls, in terms of mapping those girls who even at five and six were already feeling like this might not be okay that women are already portrayed like this, but they can't really identify it, and then mapping them in the future. So not only looking at the content, but how they're absorbing it.

My gut is that girls aren't—*we* aren't—looking at media and TV and then we're going to watch something totally different when we're on our BlackBerrys. I think it's the same content, so we code the content no matter what medium they're watching. And if it is different, why is it different? Is it because the parent is not there, they can watch it underneath the bed at home? What's going on there with that whole landscape?

Vincent: Have some non-researchers and non-academics on that board. I found, living in both worlds, that nobody can write a strongly worded letter that's never sent more so than a researcher or academic. Jane Buckingham, for example, is someone who is doing trends among young girls and she's writing. I think we need to put aside whether or not we agree with what they're doing, but are they in touch with what's authentic and what kids today are doing? Because we can all assume, particularly as academics or researchers, "Oh, this is what the numbers say," but you need some people on the board that are actually out there John Hughes-style, sitting in the classroom, watching them, because you don't want to get too

far removed. So I think some non-academics and non-researchers on the board would be great.

Kimberlee: And some journalists—I know Peggy Orenstein, who many of you are familiar with. Her book is coming out. It's called, *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*, and it's this exact phenomenon, how all of a sudden she was noticing her daughter, even though she had never taken her to a Disney [movie]. Why does she love the Disney princesses? She never thought she'd been exposed to that. What happens, even as a parent kind of clued in to these issues?

Richard: The *Sim City* guys, Will Wright

Richard: Right. He would be phenomenal because he's really gotten into toys now. So he really kind of studies both arenas. And he's really big into the impact that toys have on development in intersections with non-traditional play.

Michael: If done correctly, a kid advisory group could be very powerful. It could be a mess, but it could really be done well. It would be great to have some twelve-year-olds telling us what the hell's going on.

Madeline: I'd also love to be able to have a global purview, because we all know that most of the content consumed overseas is produced in the USA. So, we're exporting those negative gender stereotypes.

Dounia: One thing I will say for an advisory board and the work you're doing now is—and we're talking five-year plans and ten-year plans—you can look at media with the tools we have now and see what is being delivered, how it's being consumed, who is being reached. And you can code it, in terms of the content. So if you have X number of prime-time shows that have been viewed by so many kids two-to-five or six-to-eleven that are not appropriate, and some of those shows are tagged TV-14, and they still have a large younger audience, these are things that on a monthly, quarterly basis, you can take with you as you're building an advisory mechanism to say, "We have to do something. We have to create different content, and we have to try and flow that audience into new content and develop new content for that audience. Because we know that, for the moment, they are being reached here, so let's work to redirect it." You don't want to take anybody's audience away, but help them create different types of content. I think *that* you can do right now. I think there's that two-prong approach.

Lincoln: I think it's primarily awareness, and then secondarily it's about who is actually involved in making the media, both writing scripts and producing the media. One other comment is that the media has moved from physical to digital, and in so doing, it's become intensely technical. And in becoming intensely technical, it's like we've moved back into the nineteenth century where it's predominantly the people that can engage with that level of software, coding, writing, toolsets, networks and so on. Actually, this is fundamental to the creation of media right now. So in going that direction, you're hitting another issue, which is how many and what different types of people, whether it's gender-based or ethnically based. What sorts of people are getting involved in the creation of media? That, as we know, is a big problem anyway.

Kristen: I think a big part of that as well is that it's awareness of the issues, and it's education of the issues, and then it's content to support that awareness and education. Because you can create content that goes against archetypes and things that we traditionally see that support these messages that we want to convey, but people won't see it. Because if you look at blockbusters and you look at the movies that people see, the traditional stereotypes are in there. That's what they like to see, that's what they're comfortable with.

Vincent: That's like people saying, "No, you can't do that. That's doesn't work." So it doesn't get made. [*laughing*]

Kristen: It's like casting a non-Angelina Jolie in an action flick; it doesn't work. So it's doing that education and awareness so you're changing the mindset of consumers so that then that content will then be accepted. Then it goes from there.

Vincent: To clear my conscience, I'll offer up your millions of dollars of your research over the five years. I'll offer up your sample. I'll offer up—we'll work out a plan where we'll figure it out where you won't have to spend time looking for money to get it done. I'll offer that up to you.

Nanette: I think it's always very interesting to look into things that have worked and maybe to look into where media has been used very specifically with a view to social change. And not so much where we look at what's happening in the world of children's media, but I'm sure you're all familiar with soaps like *Soul City*. The *Soul City* project. Also Latin America, there are similar projects, which are extremely successful by using the popular media format in driving issues. Maybe it would be useful to have some people from endeavors like that on the advisory board, as well.

Richard: The message I'm giving to the toy industry is that if it doesn't change in its perspectives of gender, it's going to find itself becoming increasingly irrelevant, because the toy industry—most of retailing—was established by a few department store owners in the late nineteenth century. They're the ones really who laid out how departments are set up. You have a girls' department and a boys' department, and this goes here and this goes there, and we're still doing that. So we have a nineteenth-century construct for twenty-first century consumers. So my whole point is—and I keep arguing this—that if you continue to merchandise by gender, then you're missing out on phenomenal opportunities to create new product. Because if you do—as I've said before—put girls' and boys' dolls and action figures in the same department, and you start running dolls from the right and action figures from the left, you have to ask the question, "What goes in the middle?" The minute you've asked that question, you've changed the game, because all of a sudden, you're creating products you never would have created before. I think as you approach this, the message to anybody you're approaching is why this will make a difference for them in terms of their business model, and how they'll make money, and how much money they'll make.

> *"If you continue to merchandise by gender, then you're missing out on phenomenal opportunities to create new product."*
>
> **— Richard Gottlieb**

Rebecca: They can't just target market shares that they've identified. They want to try to expand those, and they have to think what's on the cusp.

Richard: Right. They have to question the entire basis for what it's all about.

Kristen: I kind of think of things always in movie terms, but if you think of that as a four-quadrant movie, you want a very successful movie, so you make a movie that appeals to all people across gender, across ages. If you take that aspect, or that thinking, and you apply that to toys, then you open yourself up to boys and girls of all ages that can interact with this product, and that just seems way more successful than targeting just girls or just boys.

Richard: We have actual situations where people create toys that never go to market because there's no place for them. There's no place to put them. It doesn't exist.

David: I know Madeline's got another event to produce, so we need to wrap this up, but I really want to thank you for bringing together such an exceptional group. I think we've got a lot to work with in here. I think we've identified a key age group—that transition from parental control over media to self-control—where we can really show what the changes and what the impacts are. I think we've got some great ideas about how to make it global and how to make it not academic, not industry, but everyone.

Thank all of you for all of your great contributions and for coming together.

Madeline: I want to say thank you and I hope you enjoy our Symposium today!