



Presents

A film by **Beeban Kidron**

# InRealLife



UK / 2013 / HD

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**Short Synopsis (50 Words):**

[www.InRealLifeFilm.com](http://www.InRealLifeFilm.com)

Most of us remember a time before the internet, there's now a generation of teens who've never known social interaction before Facebook. InRealLife is an in-depth examination of the effects of the internet on the social lives of teens, casting a spotlight on how corporations influence the online lives of our children for profit.

### **Mid-length Synopsis (90 Words):**

InRealLife takes us on a journey from the bedrooms of British teenagers to the world of Silicon Valley, to find out what exactly the internet is doing to our children? Filmmaker Beeban Kidron suggests that rather than the promise of free and open connectivity, young people are increasingly ensnared in a commercial world. Beguiling and glittering on the outside, it can be alienating and addictive.

InRealLife asks if we can afford to stand by while our children, trapped in their 24/7 connectivity, are being outsourced to the net?

### **Long Synopsis:**

Whilst newspapers alternately praise and panic about the glittering world of the Internet, there is a generation of children who have grown up with a smart phone in their hand, connected to the world 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Public discourse seems to revolve around 'grooming' and 'privacy', two issues that embody the fears and concerns of adults. What is less discussed is what it really means to always be on, never alone and increasingly bombarded by a world that has something to sell you and appears to know you better than yourself. A world that is so ubiquitous that it is the first and the last thing you see as you wake and go to sleep – and, at last estimate, you interact with at least 200 times a day.

For adults there was a 'before' the net. But for the current generation, at the time of their most rapid development they have no other experience and few tools with which to negotiate the overwhelming parade of opportunity and cost that the internet delivers directly into their hands.

From the bedrooms of five disparate teenagers and across the ocean to meet those who both invent and observe the net, InRealLife takes a closer look at some of the behavioural outcomes that come from living in a commercially driven interruption culture – and asks if we are conscious enough of what the internet is and what its values are. Have we outsourced our kids to the net?

Following the physical journey of the internet, from fibre optic cables through the sewers of London, under the ocean to NY, Oregon and finally Silicon Valley, the film gently develops its thesis – that what is often thought of as a world that is 'open, democratic and free' is in fact a small group of players addicted to windfall profits. Meanwhile our kids - merely pawns in the game – are adapting to this new world – along with their expectation of friendship, their cognition and their sexuality.

### **Director's Statement:**

About a year ago I got a call from a friend - incandescent because she had just been at a funeral where a young girl had pulled out a smartphone and scrolled through checking updates and answering her messages - just as the eulogy was being given and all around wept. I was still thinking

about it when I walked into my kitchen to find 4 teenagers sitting on the sofa in absolute silence - each one engaged with a private screen.

I was one of those who believed in the promise of the Internet and its power to deliver previously unimaginable ways of communicating; thrilled by its potential to help independent voices find large audiences; excited at the absence of gate keepers and the implicit understanding that it would democratize access to the airwaves. I was, and still am, awestruck by its ability to invent.

I thought the cultural shake up was something to embrace not fear – but all around me were young people attached to their phones like a third limb. Their social rules were different, their behaviour was different and they seemed to think nothing of the fact that everything they ever did, thought, listened to or googled was sitting in a cloud ....somewhere.

Standing in my kitchen looking at those kids I realized that I was living in a society that had adopted the net as its brain and I had never really thought about what that meant. I had two questions; what actually is the Internet? And what does its constant presence mean to a generation who have never known anything else?

InRealLife tries to answer those questions. It took more than a year and several trips from London to the States. It is graced with the voices of brilliant observers who shocked me with the clarity of their vision and by some wonderful young people who opened up their devices and their lives to give an intimate account of how it feels to be on the front line of the 24/7 connected world.

Hundreds of teenagers and adults contributed to the film, both on and off screen, but not one of the top tech companies agreed to answer my questions directly. Their absence speaks volumes; because if we raise our eyes from our own smartphones - for just a moment - we would notice a few very disturbing things...



## CONTRIBUTORS:

**Page** is 15 years old, from South London. Page talks frankly and sensitively about her relationship with social media and reveals the uncomfortable lengths she was willing to go to in order not lose her Blackberry.

**Tobin** is 19 years old, from a privileged background and privately educated. He studies Maths at Oxford University, but worries that his gaming habits are getting in the way of his real life.

**Adzie** is one of the hundreds of UK teens who dream of meeting Toby, or Tobuscus as he's known to his fans, one of the internet's biggest sensations. He rates as the world's 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest Vlogger with 2 billion video views. In InRealLife, Toby pays a visit to London and has a 'meet up' with thousands of his British fans in Hyde Park.

**Ryan** is 15 and believes he might be addicted to online porn. As confronting as he finds his use of porn to be – he earnestly expresses his worries that the real relationship he seeks will never live up to expectation.

**Tom** is 15, lives in Morcambe with his family and has a rich online life, with many friends on twitter. For the past few months he's been dating Dan, a boy he met online – InRealLife follows their relationship as they prepare to meet in person for the very first time.



## CONTRIBUTORS Continued:



**Maggie Jackson** is the award-winning author of *'Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age'* and former Boston Globe columnist, known for her penetrating coverage of social issues, especially technology's impact on humanity.

**Danah Boyd** is a Senior Researcher at Microsoft and one of the world's experts on youth culture surrounding technology and social media. She co-authored *"Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media."* Her new book *'It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens'* will be released early 2014.



**Nicholas Carr** writes about technology, culture, and economics. He is the Pulitzer-prize nominated author of *'The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains'*. His widely acknowledged blog "Rough Type" is an on-going criticism of technological utopianism.

**Sherry Turkle** is a Professor of Social science at MIT. Her research focuses on psychoanalysis and the human-technology relationship. In her most recent book, *'Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other'* and her 2012 TED talk *'Connected, But Alone?'* Turkle explores the authenticity of intimacy and connection through the internet.



**Luis Von Ahn** is a professor of Computer Sciences at Carnegie Mellon and an internet entrepreneur. He is one of the pioneers of crowdsourcing, inventing CAPTCHA and reCAPTCHA (later sold to Google) which earned him international recognition and numerous honors.

**Joi Ito** is a Japanese-American activist and entrepreneur. He is the Director of the MIT Media Lab and a venture capitalist, investing in the early developments of Twitter, Flickr, Last.fm, and Kickstarter.



**Clay Shirky** is a NYU professor and writer on the social and economic effects

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of Internet technologies. He has published two books on the subject; *'Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations'* and *'Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age'*. He is recognised as an Internet icon.

**Andrew Blum** is a writer for *Newsweek* and previously for *Wired*. He authored *'Tubes; A Journey to the Center of the Internet'*, an in-depth analysis of the physical infrastructure of the internet and dispels the image of 'clouds' and ethereal connections.



**Norman Doidge** is a neuroscientist and author of *'The Brain that Changes itself'*. He has written over 150 articles on plasticity, human limitations and notions of perfectibility.



**Jimmy Wales** is internet entrepreneur, free speech activist and co-founder of Wikipedia and Wikia.



**Nick Negroponte** is the Founder of the Media Lab and the 'One Laptop per Child' non-profit association. He was one of the first funders for *Wired* magazine and an early contributor, later publishing the book *'Being Digital'*.



**Cory Doctorow** is a science-fiction author, activist and journalist, with articles published in *The Guardian* and *Wired*. He is the co-editor of the popular weblog Boing Boing.



**Julian Assange** is the founder and editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks, publishing classified media from whistle-blowers. He is a public speaker on the topic of freedom of the press, censorship, and investigative journalism.

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**Researcher**

Oliver Roy

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Steve Robinson

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Fluid Pictures

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Tim Waller

**Online Editor**

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**Assistant to Ms Kidron**

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Hugh O'Kane Electric Company, Inc.

Telecity

Telegeography

Telx

The BeatBullying Group

The Cookie Collective

The Young Advisors

“Waiting All Night”

Performed by Rudimental

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“Down with the Trumpets”

Performed by Rizzle Kicks

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“Teenage Dirtbag”

Performed by Wheatus

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“Little Lion Man”

Performed by Mumford & Sons

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“Wishin’ and Hopin’”

Performed by Dusty Springfield

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For advice about internet safety

[www.InRealLifeFilm.com](http://www.InRealLifeFilm.com)



[www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org)  
<http://www.getsafeonline.org>  
<http://www.childline.org.uk>

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“InRealLife”

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