



ARTICLE

From Compliance Monitoring to Homeschooling Monitoring

A Data-Driven Insight into COVID-19 Remote Learning

In June 2020, the U.S. Department of Justice issued updated guidance on the evaluation of corporate compliance programs.¹ One of the more significant updates related to the use of data resources, including using data for monitoring. In this article, we review various sources of data to monitor homeschool trends in the wake of COVID-related lockdowns.

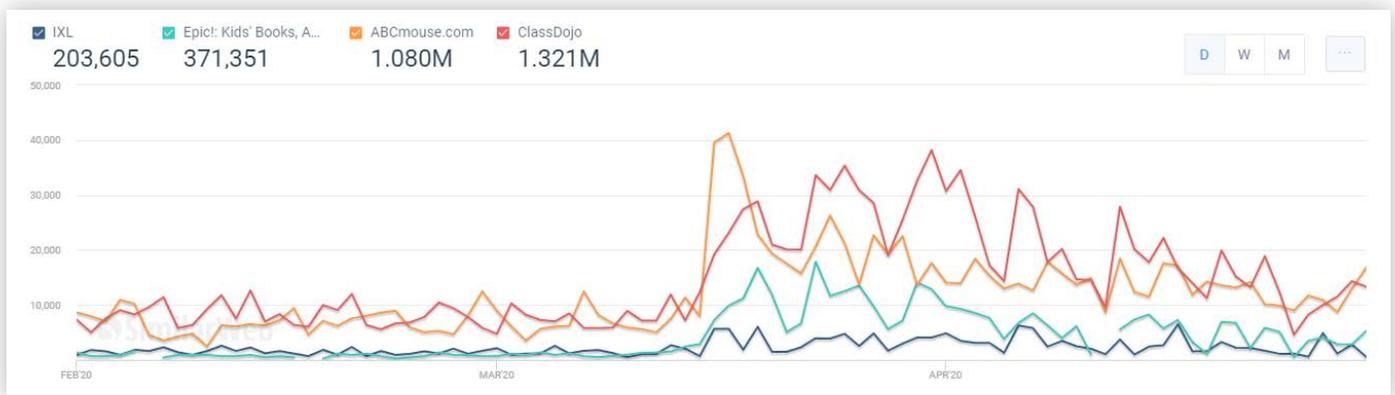
A source of stress and tension in families with children, many parents have struggled to include this new homeschooling challenge as part of their daily routine. Stay-at-home orders have turned households into both classrooms and playgrounds overnight. While our professionals have extensive experience in identifying compliance risks and assessing accountability in a corporate setting, maintaining structure and accountability for kids studying at home requires a different set of skills.

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/criminal-fraud/page/file/937501/download>



Digital Tools and Unexpected Consequences

Parents surveyed about their main digital resources used for homeschooling responded with Google Classroom (64 percent), Zoom (42 percent) and other enrichment platforms (36 percent).⁸ A look at the evolution of downloads for popular enrichment apps shows a sudden increase as soon as stay-at-home orders were put in place across the nation in March 2020. In particular, apps such as Class Dojo, ABCmouse.com or Epic Digital Library downloads surged from March 16-19, and ClassDojo again from March 21 to April 2.⁹ Some of our FTI colleagues have confirmed that they have indeed adopted these into their parenting homeschooling routines.



Source: SimilarWeb Traffic Analysis

With new trends come business opportunities. According to a recent report, programmatic mobile in-app ad spend dropped 14 percent in March. In the meantime, apps in the “Parenting” category on Android saw a 122 percent rise in programmatic ad spend in the month of March.¹⁰

While we don’t know for sure what ads were seen by these parents, we couldn’t help but notice the simultaneous rise in mental health app downloads like Headspace, Calm and Healow. It’s almost as if parents need ways to find some personal time after a day of “school away from school.”

⁸ <https://networkforpubliceducation.org/emergency-remote-learning-survey-results>

⁹ <https://pro.similarweb.com/#/apps/engagementoverview>

¹⁰ <https://info.pixalate.com/covid19-programmatic-ad-spend-connected-tv-ott-ctv>

Finding Parenting Breaking Points

According to 44 percent of parents who reported, their child(ren) spends 2.5-4 hours per day doing work assigned by teachers. Another 38 percent of parents said their child(ren) spends 1-2 hours per day on work assigned by teachers. Only 17 percent of parents responded more than four hours.¹¹ Insights from our FTI colleagues showed us that the older the child is, the more homework that is assigned, likely correlating to longer hours performing schoolwork.

As anticipated, a deeper look into specific app usage reveals that remote learning routine patterns for most households have changed from before the COVID-19 period.¹² Specifically, we analyzed how educational apps were used over the course of weekdays compared to recreational apps. We used Google Classroom and ClassDojo as benchmarks for educational apps and Disney+/DisneyNow and YouTubeKids for recreational apps. As you might expect, educational apps – in blue below – are increasingly used at the start of the day, whereas recreational app usage peaks between 5 pm to 9 pm. The “breaking point” happens around 4 pm to 5pm, at which time the use of recreational apps exceeds the use of educational apps.



Source: SimilarWeb Traffic Analysis

However, we found that the “breaking point” before COVID-19 in app usage was around 3 pm to 4 pm. This would indicate that parents are successfully maintaining the educational pressure longer than prior to COVID-19.



Source: SimilarWeb Traffic Analysis

Homeschooling fatigue might be a recurring feeling for most parents, but data seems to show that parents are performing better than expected in this changing environment.

11 <https://networkforpubliceducation.org/emergency-remote-learning-survey-results>

12 <https://pro.similarweb.com/#/apps/usage>



Conclusion

As school districts across the country wind down the most unusual school year in recent memory and start to plan for fall 2020, they are evaluating multiple scenarios, many of which involve some aspect of distance learning. Similar to the U.S. DOJ guidance on evaluating corporate compliance programs, school districts should review data on app usage and ask parents and students to evaluate the performance of the apps used for distance learning. Are there impediments that limit access to relevant sources of data and, if so, what can they do to address the impediments? By analyzing responses in depth, hopefully the fall semesters will start more smoothly than the spring

semesters stopped. Or at the very least, searches by parents for “homeschooling jokes” will be outweighed by more positive examples of homeschooling success.

Lindi Jarvis and Vincent Flores have collaborated for the past six years on anti-bribery matters, using their industry expertise and data analytics to detect fraud and violations of the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). In the series “Investigations of Life,” they are using their keen investigations skills to take a deep dive into the data behind ordinary life in these pandemic times.

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AUTHORS

LINDI JARVIS

Senior Managing Director
+1 206 689 4487
lindi.jarvis@fticonsulting.com

VINCENT FLORES

Senior Director
+1 212 651 7187
vincent.flores@fticonsulting.com



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