

GET TO
KNOW

Adam Holz

Director of Plugged In for Focus on the Family, Adam Holz takes the baton passed from radio veteran Bob Waliszewski as a host of the popular feature and overseer of PluggedIn.com. Get to know Adam!

You're the new Director of Plugged In, but not new to the team. Tell us how you came to Focus.

I did my first stint at both Focus and Plugged In in 1996 and 1997. I'd just spent a couple of years at The Navigators, and I was looking for writing and editorial work. Providentially, I bumped into a friend whose sister was leaving a position at Plugged In, and I eventually got that job. I ended up back at The Navigators as an associate editor for *Discipleship Journal* fairly soon after that. Following a layoff in 2004, I returned to Plugged In where I have been ever since.

What did you learn from your predecessor Bob Waliszewski?

I think more than anything, Bob was a man of character and deep faith. He cared about the mission of Plugged In, certainly. But that passion was fueled by a deeper one, his desire to know Jesus and for others to know Him and grow deeper in relationship as well.

How do you define the current mission of Plugged In?

Plugged In's purpose is to help families grow in discernment with regard to their interaction with popular culture and technology. We strive to give families everything they need to make wise decisions in these areas, as well as understanding how entertainment and technology shape our hearts and minds.

What are the current media challenges facing families today?

The average tween spends about six hours a day engaged with technology and entertainment, and the average teen about eight hours. It's an enormous amount of time spent with shows, movies, music, games and social media that gradually mold a young person's worldview and perspective

on reality. So we want to help equip parents not only to set appropriate boundaries, but to give them confidence to enter into discussions with their kids.

What makes Plugged In an invaluable part of the ministry of Focus on the Family?

Each month, our website reaches about 700,000 to 800,000 unique visitors—a number that's no doubt strengthened by our short radio review features, which run five days a week on many Christian radio stations across the country.

Tell us about the new format and team approach for the radio feature.

We've been recording our *Plugged In Movie Review* for nearly 20 years now. A few years ago, we decided to augment that feature with four other daily radio features that focus on different aspects of pop culture. With Bob Waliszewski's departure earlier this year, we decided it was time to rethink some of what we're doing with those features. Bob's voice has been replaced with a team approach consisting of myself, Plugged In team member Kristin Smith and Focus on the Family Associate Jonathan McKee. Kristin Smith has been with Plugged In almost 3 years. She's a young mom of two, and she brings a young, energized perspective to the table with regard to these issues. Meanwhile, Jonathan brings years of youth ministry, speaking, and writing experience to the table, especially with regard to the area of technology.

How is the new format addressing the current needs of today's parents?

We've added a piece focusing on technology as well as entertainment reviews. Jonathan is doing a weekly feature called "The Screen in Your Teen's Pocket" that seeks to address the ever-expanding ways that teens (and adults, for that matter) interact with their

smartphones.

What are you most excited about going forward with Plugged In?

I'm most excited about continuing to adapt as we pivot to focus on new areas in entertainment and technology that are influencing our children. For example, we know that YouTube is the No. 1 screen destination for tween boys. So we've just started reviewing YouTube Channels, to help parents know who some of the trendsetters are. And when we were recently on stay-at-home orders, we all began to learn together how to navigate the sea of streaming content that's out there. We plan on expanding that coverage (especially streaming TV shows).

You weekly talk about the newest films in theaters. What's a recent and all-time favorite?

Well, I have to confess that either *Star Wars* or *Raiders of the Lost Ark* are probably my all-time favorites. A more recent film that's surprisingly moving despite its premise is *Paddington 2*. Yes, it's a kid's film. But it really illustrates the power of kindness to melt even the hardest of hearts.

What do you and your family do for fun?

Well, we watch movies. :) We're especially fans of the *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings* franchises. My son and I both play electric guitar, and we enjoy rocking out together. We frequently walk and bike together when the weather's nice. Before the Coronavirus threw everything for a loop, all three were quite active, with my oldest daughter being on a swim team, my youngest in a children's choir, and my son enjoying a variety of extracurricular activities.

More from the team: Next month we'll share the top ten books from Plugged In's Jonathan McKee!