So often we focus on the weaknesses in children and young people which adults need to defend. There's nothing wrong with that approach: it is the role of adults in a community to protect and nurture their young. It is also important, however, that we balance these approach with an acknowledgement and promotion of what children and young people have going for them.

It hasn't been that long since I was a teenager (longer than I would like, though!) yet I find myself looking back on those days with more than a hint of nostalgia. The world seems so different through the eyes of a young person and that can be a great benefit for navigating an increasingly connected world.

In this issue of the ThinkUKnow e-newsletter, we're going to look at some of the attributes and skills that young people have working in their favour when it comes to benefitting from technology.

**Creativity**
Children are often great at creating stories, activities and artwork as they don't feel the need to conform to rules or expectations. Add this creativity to the tools made possible by technology and you can see young people creating and sharing incredible works.

**Adaptive**
A young person is often able to easily adapt to changes and challenges and are often "less stuck in their ways" than many adults. This can be an attribute which helps them to respond to the dynamic environment that is the 21st century.

Whilst some people may mourn the loss of traditions or doing things "the way they've always been done", we must be mindful of preparing children and young people for their future, not our past.

**Growing**
Adolescence is the peak period of growth and development for the human brain. New pathways are being created and unused ones are being trimmed. There are some neuroscientists that suggest the use of various technologies and devices are creating more neural pathways in the adolescent brain than previous generations. Others, however, suggest that technology is rewiring the brain in negative ways that can resemble psychological disorders and damage future potential.

So what does that mean for children and young people? The jury is still out on what effect technology has on the human brain in the long term. It could, if we look on the optimistic side, prevent such diseases as Alzheimer's and dementia and mean that different parts of the brain are being utilised.

**Caring**
Children and young people will often show distress at others' distress and care deeply about suffering. The Internet now provides them with an opportunity to do something about the causes they care about.

Take for example Kony 2012. An online campaign to bring to justice a war criminal which was largely driven by young people using social media. A recent study by Pew Internet found that young adults were more likely to know a lot about the campaign and to have watched the video than older adults.

When a young person "likes" a cause or charity on Facebook, it is a public display of their alignment with that cause. It is more than just a cursory click on a website, it can be a form of lobbying, of attracting the attention of the media and government, a modern-day picket line.

**The future?**
It is the role of adults in the community to protect children and young people from wrongdoing, but also to nurture those qualities that children already possess to overcome future challenges.

Not everything about technology is beneficial for children and young people; but we cannot let our fears prevent us from encouraging the safe and responsible use of technology.