



Vol. 42 No. 9 ISSN 0736-6532

December 16, 2019

SCHOLASTIC

News

Edition
4

IS YOUR COMPUTER SPYING ON YOU?



Websites may be tracking every move we make online.
Find out how to keep your information safe.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Should schools have longer lunchtimes?



**2019:
The Year
in Review**



Don't forget
the sneakers in
your shopping
cart!

Do you want
to finish
watching that
dancing cat
video?

You searched
"How can I sing
like Ariana
Grande."

You live in
Chicago.
Bundle up
tomorrow.
It's going to
be cold.

What Does Your COMPUTER Know About You?

Lila Carroll loves YouTube. The 11-year-old watches a lot of videos about her favorite musical, *The Lion King*. Now ads to buy tickets to the show pop up on nearly every website she visits.

"It's creepy, like someone is watching me online," she says.

Lila isn't imagining things. Companies *are* following what she does online.

Getting to Know You

Websites and apps like Google and YouTube are always gathering data. But they are not supposed to gather information about *you*. There are laws to protect kids under 13 from being tracked online. The problem is that companies often don't know how old users are. Certain websites are supposed to **verify** users' ages,

but not all of them do. So companies could be tracking you as you search, watch videos, and play games online.

"Based on your behaviors, companies are able to figure out what things on the internet

WORDS TO KNOW

verify *verb.* to prove to be true or correct; to confirm

policy *noun.* an official set of rules or guidelines

Cover: Illustration by Tommaso Tempestini represented by Lemonade Illustration Agency; NASA (astronaut);

you will be most interested in," says Kalinda Raina. She's an expert on online privacy.

This can be a good thing. For example, YouTube recommends videos based on what you've already watched. That might lead you to discover something new that you like.

But websites mainly collect data about you to make money. They sell your information to advertisers, who use it to figure out what you're likely to buy. The advertisers then place ads for those items on other websites you visit. This practice is called ad targeting (see "How Targeted Ads Work").

Invasion of Privacy

Some experts say ad targeting is a major invasion of privacy. Most people don't realize their online activity is being tracked. Every website should have a privacy **policy** to explain what data it's gathering.

But that information is often confusing and hard to find.

Should you be worried? Many internet companies say no. They know they could be fined for tracking kids without their parents' permission.

But the laws work only if the website knows your age. What if you're on a site that hasn't verified how old you are? The site may track your activity as if you were an adult—and possibly show you ads that might not be appropriate for kids.

You're Not Alone

There are ways to limit what companies learn about you (see "You Have the Power"). Raina says it also helps to think of the internet as a public place where you're never truly alone.

Think twice about what you search for and the sites you visit. Someone may be watching you.

—by Jennifer Li Shotz

GO ONLINE!
Learn how to make smart decisions online.

HOW TARGETED ADS WORK

1 You visit a few sports websites to read about last night's basketball game and watch highlights.



2 Each website places bits of data, called cookies, on your computer. The cookies allow advertisers to see that you're interested in basketball.



3 Advertisers use that information to place ads for related products, such as sneakers or jerseys, on other websites you visit.



4 Each website makes money by charging advertisers to place the ads.



You Have the Power

Here are a few things you can do to control what companies learn about you online.

- ✓ Keep it to yourself.** Never share personal information online. That includes your name, birth date, location, and school.
- ✓ Resist the click!** Colorful ads and pop-up games may look fun. But when you click on them, you're giving companies more information about you.
- ✓ Think before you search.** Ask yourself: Do I want a company I've never heard of to know what I'm looking at online?

What do you think? Is it wrong for companies to track you online? Are there other ways you might prevent them from doing it?

Should LUNCHTIME Be Longer?

Lunchtime at Bowman Elementary School used to be stressful for Brianna Cohen. Last year, the 10-year-old in Lexington, Massachusetts, had a 20-minute lunch period. Brianna says kids would race to the front of the cafeteria line. Kids who didn't get there early enough had barely enough time to take a few bites of their lunch.

"I was rushed, and it made me feel sick," Brianna explains.

Brianna's experience isn't unusual. Many students across the U.S. have 20 minutes or less to wolf down their meals. Some people

say this may not be ideal, but schools have no choice. To make lunch longer, they'd have to lengthen the school day or shorten recess. Instead of adding time, some people argue, schools should find ways to get kids through the lunch line faster.

But some experts say 20 minutes is not enough time for lunch. Brianna's mom, nutrition researcher Juliana Cohen, is one of them. This year, Cohen convinced Bowman officials to extend the lunch period to 25 minutes. Brianna says she now has time to finish her food.

Here are more views about lunchtime.



In some schools, lunch period starts as early as **10 a.m.!**

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

How long is lunchtime at your school? Do you think it should be longer? Use evidence from the article to prepare for a class discussion. You can cast your vote at scholastic.com/sn4.

Illustration by Kimmberly Perpetua represented by iStockphoto.com; Menu Board Illustration by Megha Patel; Shutterstock.com (B&B) / Shutterstock.com (maki); Shutterstock.com (green bean); Shutterstock.com (Aria Studio); Shutterstock.com (The Art Room)

Source: Free-Style Playgrounds



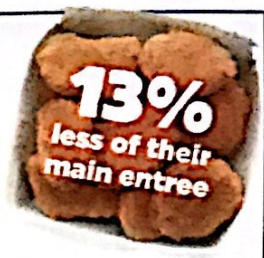
YES! Kids need more time to eat.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that students have at least 20 minutes to eat lunch *after* they're seated. Before they sit, kids also need to use the restroom, walk to the cafeteria, and wait in line for food. That leaves little time to actually eat.

In a 2015 study, Juliana Cohen found that students with less

BY THE NUMBERS

In Juliana Cohen's study, compared with kids who had 25 minutes or more for lunch, kids who had less than 20 minutes consumed:



Source: Harvard School of Public Health

than 20 minutes for lunch ate less of their meals. That leads to not only a lot of food waste but also poor nutrition. The kids in Cohen's study were less likely to choose healthy foods, such as fruit. And, Cohen points out, the

less kids eat, the hungrier they'll be later in the day. That makes it hard to concentrate.

"Kids need time to eat, talk to their friends, and relax so they can be better learners when they return to class," she says.

NO! Schools just need to rethink things.

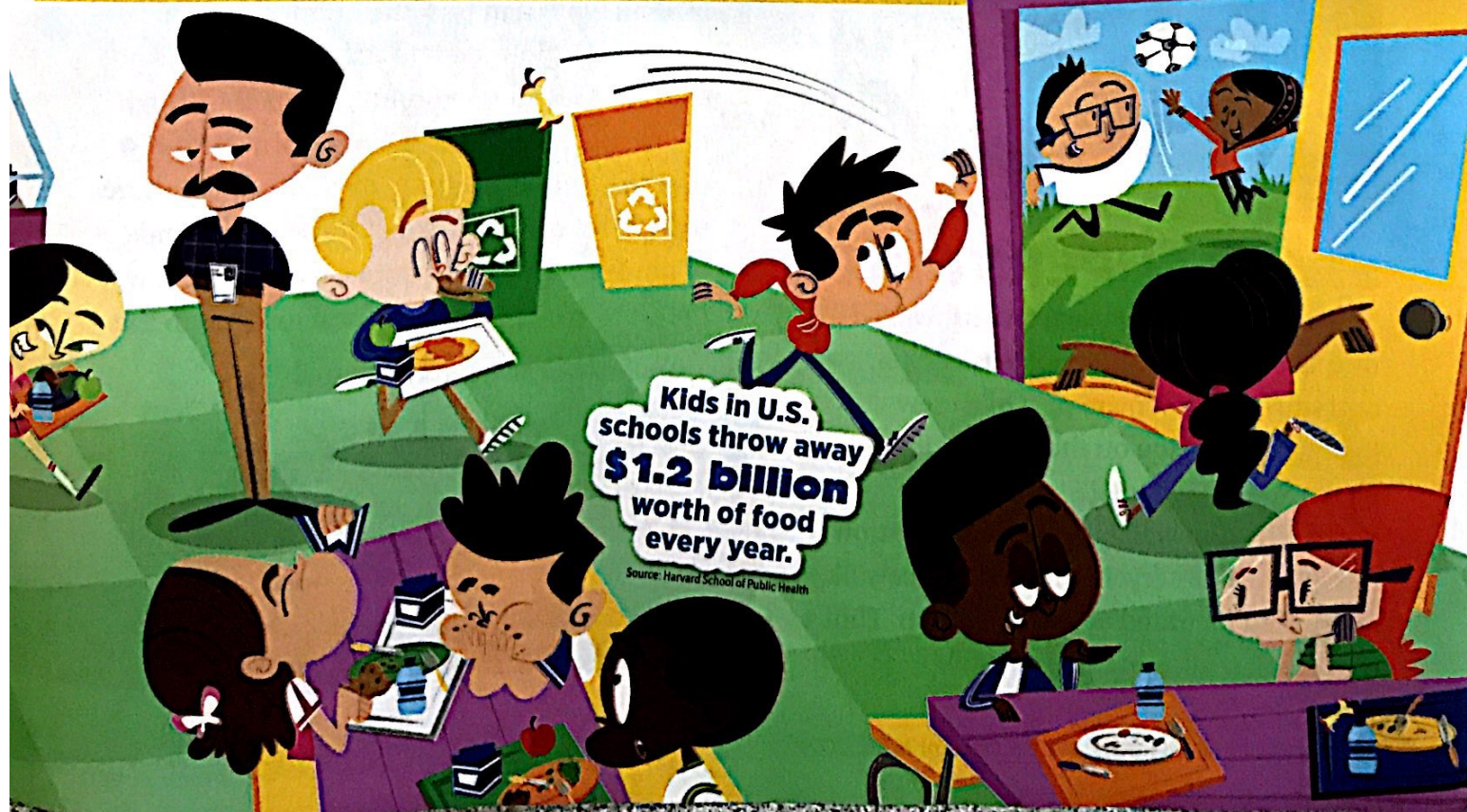
Many school officials say the only way to add time to lunch is to make the school day longer or cut class time or recess. But lunchtime doesn't need to be longer they argue, it just needs to be run better.

One suggestion is to switch the order of some periods. For example, studies have shown that kids eat more when they have recess before lunch.

Stoner Prairie Elementary in Fitchburg, Wisconsin, has recess before lunch. Plus, students there now have the option to leave recess early to extend their

20-minute lunch. The school also doubled the number of food lines in the cafeteria to cut down on wait times.

"The goal is for students to move into the cafeteria more quickly and have more time to eat," says principal Tammy Thompson Kapp.



Kids in U.S. schools throw away \$1.2 billion worth of food every year.

Source: Harvard School of Public Health

A Look Back at

HISTORY ON FIRE

In April, flames tore through one of the most famous churches in the world—Notre Dame Cathedral. In just over an hour, the entire attic of the 850-year-old building was on fire. Officials say the blaze was likely sparked by a construction project or a burning cigarette.

Experts say repairs should take about five years. For now, the cathedral is closed. That's bad news for the millions of tourists who visit Paris, France, each year to see the church's historic architecture and artwork.



SPACE SUPERSTARS

On October 18, two astronauts walked in space—and into history! Jessica Meir and Christina Koch are part of a crew living and working on the International Space Station, about 250 miles above Earth. The duo walked outside the station to replace a battery. In the past, spacewalk teams had included at least one man. This was the first all-female spacewalk!

A DEADLY STORM

On September 1, Hurricane Dorian made landfall in the Bahamas, a country made up of about 700 islands in the Atlantic Ocean. Heavy rains pounded down, and violent winds of up to 185 miles per hour whipped through the islands. The slow-moving storm **lingered** over the islands for three days, dumping more than 3 feet of rain and destroying thousands of homes. At least 61 people were killed. It was the worst and costliest natural disaster in the country's history.



2019

Here's a recap of some of the year's biggest news stories.



WORLD CHAMPS

Goooooal! In July, the United States won its fourth FIFA Women's World Cup soccer title, in France. But the team is still fighting for another victory. Last March, team co-captain Megan Rapinoe (left) and 27 other players sued the U.S. Soccer Federation for gender **discrimination**. Though they've won more championships than the players on the men's national team, the female players are paid less than the male players.



TOP MOVIES OF 2019 WORLDWIDE

1. *Avengers: Endgame*
2. *The Lion King*
3. *Spider-Man: Far From Home*
4. *Captain Marvel*
5. *Toy Story 4*



Source: Box Office Mojo

WORDS TO KNOW

lingered *verb, past tense.* stayed in a place longer than expected

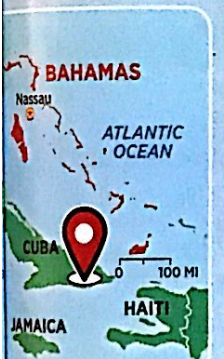
discrimination *noun.* the practice of unfairly treating a person or group differently from others



Chris Hemsworth as Thor in *Avengers: Endgame*

MOVIE MADNESS

Avengers, assemble! In May, *Avengers: Endgame* became this year's biggest U.S. movie (so far). It's also the biggest money-maker of all time worldwide. *Avatar* had held that record since 2009.

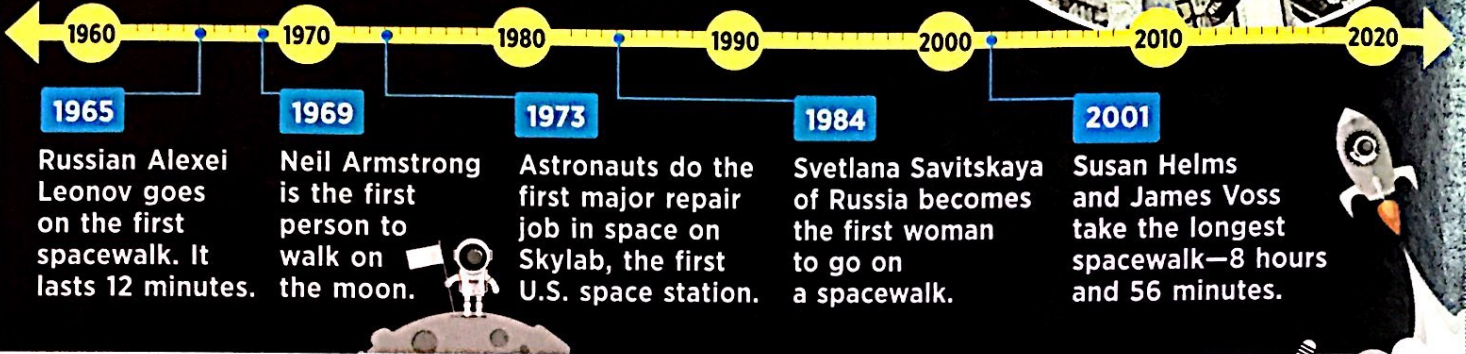
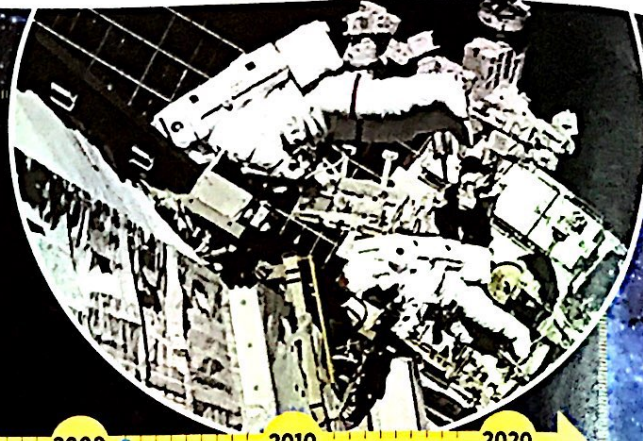


U.S. spacewalk: Thierry Mallet/AP Images (Notre Dame); Alejandro Granadillo/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images (Hurricane Dorian); Jim McMahon/Mapman (maps); Marc Atkins/Getty Images (Megan Rapinoe); Photo: Film Frame. ©Marvel Studios 2019 (Thor); iacostique/Shutterstock.com (Infinity Gauntlet); ©2019 Disney/Pixar. All Rights Reserved. (Toy Story 4)

TIMELINE

Out of This World

When an astronaut exits a spacecraft while in space to explore or to fix something, it is called a spacewalk. There have been 403 total spacewalks, including Christina Koch and Jessica Meir's repair mission (right). This timeline shows other important spacewalks.



- 1** Which of these events happened 46 years ago?
- A the longest spacewalk
 - B Skylab was repaired
 - C the first spacewalk
 - D the first moonwalk

- 2** Who is Susan Helms?
- _____
- _____
- _____

WRITE ABOUT IT! What do you want to know about walking in space? Pretend you're a news reporter. Write three questions you would ask an astronaut who has been on a spacewalk.

What Does Your Computer Know About You? pages 2-3

- 1** What is the article mainly about?
- A how online privacy laws protect children
 - B how YouTube knows what videos you'll like
 - C how websites track you to try to sell you things
 - D how online ads are created
- 2** When Kalinda Raina describes the Internet as a public place, she means it's ____.
- A a place to hang out with friends
 - B a place where others can see what you do
 - C like a shopping mall
 - D somewhere to learn new things
- 3** *Verify* means nearly the same as ____.
- A protect
 - B confirm
 - C gather
 - D find



A Look Back at 2019 pages 6-7

- 4** Which of the following events happened last?
- A *Avengers: Endgame* broke a world record.
 - B Hurricane Dorian hit the Bahamas.
 - C The U.S. women's national team won the 2019 FIFA World Cup.
 - D Notre Dame Cathedral caught fire.
- 5** Hurricane Dorian *lingered* over the Bahamas. That means the storm ____ there.
- A stayed
 - B raged
 - C started
 - D ended
- 6** How did Christina Koch make history?
- A She was the first woman to walk in space.
 - B She was the first female astronaut to work on the International Space Station.
 - C She was part of the first all-female spacewalk.
 - D She is suing the U.S. Soccer Federation.