



IN Tech

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Helping kids with goals and their money

Whether you are systematizing chores, tracking them or an allowance or getting kids started on financial goal planning and spending there are tools for it

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Our publication and others keep talking about the massive transfer of wealth that's coming — but we and others fail to talk about the large transfer, in the form of monetary or financial gifts, that occurs about this time every single year.

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Several websites and tools have been introduced that I thought I would tell you about (or in some cases remind you of) for addressing this smaller annual transfer of wealth.

I thought they might come in handy for any last minute ideas you might intend to pass along to your clients and their families this week or as part of welcoming in the New Year.

Heck, according to a new survey of working Americans from TD Ameritrade Holding Corp. released today: “Members of Generation X and Y appear to have embraced the concept, and responsibilities, of self-directed investing more so than their Boomer and Mature parents and grandparents.”

“The younger generation of workers who are more diligently saving: 25 percent of Gen Y and 23 percent of Gen X are funding both their 401(k)/403(b) plans and their IRAs, compared to 16 percent of Boomers and 9 percent of Matures.”

With this in mind it is certainly not too early to start preparing the current generation. What follows are a few tools that could help including **Kidworth.com**, **HighScore House**, **Allowance Manager**, and **HelloWallet.com**.

KIDWORTH.COM

First, version 1.0 of Kidworth was launched a few weeks ago, meaning it is out of beta and into general availability for advisers to start sharing it with their clients.

The free application helps teach kids the concepts of saving, spending and sharing wealth.

“Money has fallen into one of those categories today of things we don't talk about within the family,” said founder and chief executive Rudy DeFelice.

“Kids are exposed to advertising and all these messages of consumption, there are really sophisticated industries out there trying to teach your kids to spend but not to save or plan for their goals and future with money,” he added.

The holidays are the perfect time for children to start learning about such concepts in a practical way he said, thanks to all the gift giving.

Impetus for the site came from an observation among his circle of friends during a 5-year-old's birthday party a few years ago.

DeFelice, who is the father of three, noted the excitement with which presents were opened and then tossed into a pile, probably only to be played with a few more times — a testament to our current consumer culture.

How about an application that could serve not only as an online ledger of gifts but one that could be used to host worthwhile communication ahead of time?

For example to post desired gifts or how gifted money would be spent for a particular item or purpose, to serve up invitations to a birthday party as well as perhaps more meaningful usages like plans for sharing.

The site is integrated with the major social media sites including Facebook, and additional modules are on the development roadmap including an allowance module.

“Saving has always been seen as the poor cousin to spending in our culture, probably because we associate saving with sacrifice,” Mr. DeFelice said.

But we really need to think of earning, saving and spending as one paradigm — thinking of it all more like conscientious spending he explained.

For more information visit Kidworth.com online.

HIGHSCOREHOUSE.COM

Another free site that remains in beta and has lots of potential is HighScore House. It basically turns household routines into a game for kids and parents. You set up a rewards system for your kid to win points towards things they want.

You are not dealing with real money or investments as you can with Kidworth.

There is both a side for the kids and a side for parents to manage and edit tasks and rewards and adjust settings.

Parents will set up their own pin number for access to this side, the entrance to which is a cartoon bank vault door.

The kid's side will appeal (at least right now) to smaller kids, my six-year-old found it appealing and I'd guess that those up to ten or so would be interested.

Like I said it is in beta and I'm sure the Silicon Valley startup will have a part of the site for an older crowd too.

They have a neat [blog too, with advice for parents on approaching these topics also](#). There is also a forum for discussions.

I set up tasks like “feed the dog,” “feed the turtles,” “brush teeth,” “put away cloths,” “read a book,” “clean room” that my daughter can redeem toward points for things like “30 minutes of TV Time,” “a day with no chores,” “a trip to the movies.”

The site will keep track of everything and the kids check off chores or tasks as they do them, to which the site replies briefly “checking with your parents.”

You, as parent, then log in yourself (again entering some simple-to-remember pin number that you have not shared with your offspring) and approve that they did in fact complete what they say they did (or not) with a simple mouse click on each claimed completion.

Then the child can go back and collect their rewards with the push of the “collect” button and see animated stars tumble down a chute.

For more information visit Highscorehouse.com online.

ALLOWANCE MANAGER

I already wrote about [Allowance Manager](#) back in February.

It is a free online tool to help kids (and parents for that matter) begin their lifetime wrestling match with money management and was founded by former software engineers and managers from Apple Inc. and Adobe Systems Inc.

The two main parts for now are an allowance tracker (think online spreadsheet) and printable chore charts.

For more information visit [Allowance Manager](#) online.

HELLOWALLET.COM

An inexpensive online tool that provides individualized financial guidance to consumers, [HelloWallet \(this will take you to the story I wrote on them in late Oct.\)](#) has been up and running since May, and applies proprietary analytics and behavioral research to help users boost savings and build wealth.

There is also now a HelloWallet for iPhone application, which the younger crowd will probably gravitate to — and might be more likely, to engage with since they will have it on them all the time.

See the [original story](#) for a couple of screenshots and a link to a slideshow from the site's creators.

Financial advisers should welcome this solution — not only because it will encourage your clients' kids to stay with you but because HelloWallet urges consumers to consult their financial advisers when it comes to making an investment or reviewing a financial product.

This is not a bad place to start teenagers down the road toward knowing what they are doing when it comes to their finances, budget and investments.

Pricing for individuals is \$8.95 a month, which will come out to just over \$100 a year.

Advisers might decide to purchase this service as a gift for a valued client or that client's children as a way to show that you care. Or at the very least you could suggest it as something for your clients to buy for their kids.

One clever aspect of Hellowallet where advisers are concerned is that for more sophisticated or advanced investment-related questions the site sends the user to an adviser and does not suggest alternatives to things client's are already using (things you might have recommended).

Whereas another favorite site of mine, Mint.com, makes a lot of its revenue from just that: Suggesting lower-cost alternatives to the services and investments you already have (those services pay Mint to let them do this). If you, as the adviser have no real interest or skin in the game so-to-speak, the site can still be a good way to get younger people thinking about their budgeting and spending habits (or lack of budgeting habits as the case may be) and it is free.

For more information visit [HelloWallet](#) online.

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