YOUNG & CREATIVE

Digital Technologies
Empowering Children in Everyday Life

Ilana Eleá &
Lothar Mikos (eds.)

The International Clearinghouse on
CHILDREN, YOUTH & MEDIA

A UNESCO Initiative 1997

In 1997, the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom), University of Gothenburg, Sweden, began establishment of the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. The overall point of departure for the Clearinghouse's efforts with respect to children, youth and media is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The aim of the Clearinghouse is to increase awareness and knowledge about children, youth and media, thereby providing a basis for relevant policy-making, contributing to a constructive public debate, and enhancing children's and young people's media literacy and media competence. Moreover, it is hoped that the Clearinghouse's work will stimulate further research on children, youth and media.

The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media informs various groups of users – researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, voluntary organisations, teachers, students and interested individuals – about

- research on children, young people and media, with special attention to media violence,

- research and practices regarding media education and children's/young people's participation in the media, and

- measures, activities and research concerning children's and young people's media environment.

Fundamental to the work of the Clearinghouse is the creation of a global *network.* The Clearinghouse publishes a *yearbook* and *reports.* Several *bibliographies* and a worldwide *register of organisations* concerned with children and media have been compiled. This and other information is available on the Clearinghouse's *web site*:

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The Clearinghouse is located at Nordicom

Nordicom is an organ of co-operation between the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The overriding goal and purpose is to make the media and communication efforts undertaken in the Nordic countries known, both throughout and far beyond our part of the world.

Nordicom uses a variety of chan-nels – newsletters, journals, books, databases – to reach researchers, students, decision-makers, media practitioners, journalists, teachers and interested members of the general public.

Nordicom works to establish and strengthen links between the Nordic research community and colleagues in all parts of the world, both by means of unilateral flows and by linking individ-ual researchers, research groups and institutions.

Nordicom also documents media trends in the Nordic countries. The joint Nordic information addresses users in Europe and further afield. The production of comparative media statistics forms the core of this service.

Nordicom is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

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CONTENT

COLLECTING AND SHARING CREATIVITY

TRAINING TEACHERS TO SPARK YOUNG PEOPLE'S CREATIVITY

Preface

Today´s digital technology provides opportunities to create and reach out to a wide range of users. Different platforms, in particular online platforms, has enabled anyone with access to the tools not only to be a consumer of media content, but also a producer. This opportunity is something many young people have grasped in order to express themselves and to share their own creativity.

All books published by the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media aim to shed light on different themes concerning children, youth and media, hopefully raising knowledge and awareness on current aspects of young people's media use and consumption and hopefully serve as inspiration to further research and exploration.

The point of departure for the Clearinghouse's efforts is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, among other stating the child's right to freedom of expression. Thus, a publication on creativity with digital media where this freedom can be exercised is well within the aim of the Clearinghouse. And considering the vast popularity among young people to watch, share and find inspiration in peer produced content we found it highly relevant to address this theme.

We are deeply grateful to the editors of this book, Ilana Eleá and Lothar Mikos, who have managed to gather a diversity of examples from scholars and practitioners in how young people's creativity can be expressed in different ways and in different parts of the world.

Göteborg, December 2017

Catharina Bucht *Ingela Wadbring*
Information co-ordinator Director, Nordicom

Introduction
Young and Creative

Creativity in Everyday Practices

The 21st century saw the rise of digital media technologies which have influenced nearly every aspect of our lives. Digital media is part of the everyday life of many children and young people, as they use digital technologies to communicate, consume, learn, interact, and to create. This book, *Young and Creative – Digital Technologies Empowering Children in Everyday Life,* aims to identify a variety of examples where children and youths have been active and creative by using their own initiative, and by being driven by intrinsic motivation, personal interests, and peer relations. How to theorise, display, and initiate creativity is also included in the book.

We want to examine the opportunities of digital technologies for the creative processes of children and young people. Access to digital technology and its growing convergence (Jenkins, 2006a; Jenkins et al., 2009) has allowed young people to experience active roles as cultural producers. Participation becomes a keyword when "consumers take media into their own hands" (Jenkins, 2006b:132).

Since in *participation culture* people are seen both as consumers and producers, *Young and Creative* presents cases of children and young people being actively involved when creating, sharing, and responding to media. But what are they doing when they engage with media as DIY (Do-It-Yourself) creators and producers? A diversity of content-creating platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, DeviantArt, Fanfiction.net, Tumblr, Figment, Wordpress, and Scratch can be seen as "affinity spaces" (Lammers, Curwood & Magnifico, 2012), which are digital and informal spheres where there is a passion for creating and sharing.

In order to explore young people's affinity spaces and new literacies or transmedia literacies and creativity, (see the interview with Carlos Scolari in this book), *Young and Creative* primarily, but not exclusively, focuses on what children and young people are doing in out-of-school or out-of-institutional spaces, showing how they are engaging in participatory and collaborative social contexts. The reader will also find examples of creative experiences in the classroom, from daycare to elementary school and international projects and festivals.

The tone and sections of the book

The 18 articles in *Young and Creative* are divided into five sections. The first section, *On creativity,* opens with an article written by Shakuntala Banaji and offers a conceptualisation of creativity. Her rhetorical approach navigates questions such as "does creativity reside in everyday aspects of human life or is it something special?", inviting the reader to analyse youth practices with digital media through historical and theoretical lenses. Danah Henriksen and Megan Hoelting´s article focuses on the creative aspects of YouTube and the impulses of the learner that YouTube as a channel allows. The interview with Sonia Livingstone touches upon issues that are important to reflect on: YouTube's popularity does not imply homogeneity in meaning or use. In her research project 'The Class' carried out with Julian Sefton-Green, they observed that among 28 teens in a class in the UK, 28 different patterns of use were found, and only six were used to upload contents.

However, YouTube is the favourite online destination for many children around the world. The second section of *Young and Creative* is titled *The Creative YouTubers and* Margaret Holland´s article further investigates common factors shared by YouTube celebrities, describing the behind the scenes of the phenomenon of user-generated content. Two other texts consider Brazilian children as actors. Lidia Marôpo, Inês Vitorino Sampaio, and Nut Pereira de Miranda focus on colours to analyse the success of young female YouTubers in the country. Paulo Guimarães and Maria Inês de C. Delorme further contribute by shedding light on the details of Rachel, a 14 year old YouTuber, who talks about her practices, fears, and dreams.

In the section *Expressions of creativity among children and youth*, we present Kyounghwa Yonnie Kim's research on the possibility of writing

novels on mobile phones. The genre of *keitai* novels is also presented in this book. Literature also appears in another title of *Young and Creative* where Alejandra Ravettino Destefani´s article informs us that young people are using the YouTube platform to create videos, and share their passion about fictional books, incentivising new readers to get involved with stories.

We believe that it is fundamental to be curious and aware of the stories that children and young people are sharing on social media. Seok-Kyeong Hong and Sojeong Park's article on the *mukbang* phenomenon, in South Korea, can serve perhaps as an unusual example. The interview with Carlos Scolari centres around the concepts of transmedia storytelling and its place within informal learnings spaces such as YouTube, social media and blogs, which bring forwards what he calls a narrative expansion.

Carmilla Floyd, a journalist with experience in interviewing children around the globe, was challenged to have an open online dialogue with young Instagram users from Sweden, China, South Africa, USA, and Vietnam. The photos that these young people took and shared while reading their motivations and aspirations are published here.

Collecting and sharing creativity is a section that focuses on different platforms facilitating creative communication, the sharing of knowledge and giving opportunity to exercise freedom of expression. It includes peer-teaching and learning among two five-year olds. In order to shed light on new possibilities for teaching and learning, local examples using e-portfolios (see Anna Keune, Naomi Thompson, Kylie Peppler & Stephanie Chang's article); DIY media platforms (Deborah A. Fields & Sara M. Grimes' article); and Minecraft (Sara Sintonen, Maj-Britt Kentz & Lasse Liponen's article), give us some innovative ideas. The interview with Margret Albers highlights the main scenes from a German Children's Media Festival, where children have been producing films (and more recently television programmes) for competition since 1996.

Children and young people are immersed in digital spaces, experiencing their creativity online, feeling driven to learn and share more of their ideas, but what can schools learn from their stories, YouTube videos, and e-artefacts? In the final section, *Training teachers to spark young people's creativity,* readers can find information about how the

European project AMORES (Geoff Walton, Mark Childs, Janet Hetherington & Gordana Jugo's article) suggests ways to fill in the gaps between children's media use and school. It is an international aim invested in teacher training and joint initiatives to increase involvement with reading literacies. Play, toy hacking, and filmmaking in early literacy is explored in Jill Scott and Karen Wohlwend's article, where stages of character development, storyboarding and filming, video editing and sharing, are included in a five-year study on literacy play. An interview with Kirsten Drotner closes the book with a strong appeal: how may we guide children's freedom to express themselves online? "We need to turn the tables", she says.

Some final words

The articles and examples in this book indicate an interesting fact: even though digital technologies have a global appeal, the creative activities of children and young people are deeply rooted in their social and cultural environment and show cultural specialties.

Young and Creative is a mix of research articles, interviews, and case studies with contributions from Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. The target audience of this book is students, professionals, and researchers working in the field of education, communication, children and youth studies, new literacy studies and media and information literacy.

We would like to thank Ingela Wadbring and Catharina Bucht for the fruitful ideas and Per Nilsson for the creative book cover and graphic art.

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Ilana Eleá and *Lothar Mikos*

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On Creativity

The first section of this anthology revolves around discussions on what creativity is. The reader will meet different rhetorics of creativity, what is written and said about it, and how new media technology can meet the impulses of learning and thus enable youth (and others) in creative expressions.

1
The Rhetorics of Creativity

Shakuntala Banaji

This article introduces understandings of creativity in relation to social relations, play and pedagogy in policy and practice: where these understandings come from in terms of their theoretical heritage, what functions they serve, how they are used, and in whose interest. The focus is on discourses about creativity circulating in the public domain. The aim here is not to investigate creativity itself, but rather what is written and said about it. Creativity is thus presented as something *constructed through discourse* and how we might choose to locate ourselves in relation to claims being made about it. In the critical review of literature from which this article originates (Banaji & Burn, 2006), the rhetorics of creativity are given names which broadly correspond to the main theoretical underpinnings or the ideological beliefs of those who deploy them. Thus, the rhetorics referred to in this article are as follows:

- Creative Genius
- Democratic Creativity and Cultural Re/Production
- Ubiquitous Creativity
- Creativity for Social Good
- Creativity as Economic Imperative
- Play and Creativity
- Creativity and Cognition
- The Creative Affordances of Technology
- The Creative Classroom and Creative Arts and Political Challenge

The rhetorics have complex histories; in the following sections, brief indications of these histories are sketched. Following these historical descriptions, the rhetorics are traced through in academic and policy discourses.

The discussion of individual rhetorics raises a series of questions that cut across and connect several rhetorics to each other. For instance, two questions running through the rhetorics of Genius, Democratic and Ubiquitous creativity are: Does creativity reside in everyday aspects of human life or is it something special? And what are the differences between 'cultural learning' and 'creative learning'? Similarly, the issue of whether there is, in fact, any difference between 'good' and 'creative' pedagogy is the focus of attention in a number of the rhetorics. Writing on creativity in education distinguishes between creative teaching and creative learning, but often fails to establish precisely how such processes and the practices they entail differ from 'good' or 'effective' teaching and 'engaged' or 'enthusiastic' learning. So, is there good teaching that is not creative? Meanwhile, the questions of how significant play and individual socialization are remain central to several rhetorics.

Creativity: Unique or democratic?

The rhetoric which could be said to have the oldest provenance and to have remained resilient, albeit in more subtle guises, within educational pedagogies in the 20th and 21st centuries is that of *Creative Genius*. This romantic and post-romantic rhetoric (Simonton, 1999; Scruton 2000) dismisses modernity and popular culture as vulgar, and argues for creativity as a special quality of a few highly educated and disciplined individuals (who possess genius) and of a few cultural products. In this rhetoric, culture is defined by a particular discourse about aesthetic judgment and value, manners, civilization and the attempt to establish literary, artistic and musical canons. It can be traced back through certain phases of the Romantic period to aspects of European Enlightenment thought. Perhaps the most influential Enlightenment definition of genius is in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, which presents it as the 'mental aptitude' necessary for the production of fine art, a capacity characterized by originality, and opposed to imitation. Frequently, for its proponents, 'novelty' is viewed as a negative – almost dangerous – attribute when proposed by those who do not possess the

requisite skill and inspiration to maintain a link with what is regarded as the best in the past.

Significantly for the rhetorics *Play and Creativity and The Creative Classroom*, some commentators write as if there are two different 'categories' of creativity, which have been dubbed, variously, 'high' and 'common' (Cropley, 2001), or 'historical' and 'psychological' (Boden, 1990) (or 'special' and 'everyday'). The former comprises the work and powers of those who are considered 'geniuses', and is pursued via studies of the work and lives of 'great' creative individuals (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) and regarded as 'absolute', while the latter is far less well defined but clearly relative and can be fostered, increased and measured. The latter can also, broadly, be split into two traditions: one grounded in culture or subculture and the other based on notions of 'possibility thinking' and dubbed 'little-c' creativity (Craft, 1999) in ordinary situations.

The rhetoric of *Democratic Creativity and Cultural Re/Production* provides an explicitly anti-elitist conceptualization of creativity. Most familiar in the academic discipline of Cultural Studies, it sees everyday cultural practices in relation to the cultural politics of identity construction, focusing particularly on the meanings made from and with popular cultural products. This rhetoric provides a theory derived from the Gramscian perspective on youth subcultures developed by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. It constitutes practices of cultural consumption (especially of films, magazines, fashion and popular music) as forms of production through activities such as music sampling, subcultural clothing and fan activity (Cunningham, 1998), and thus belongs to an influential strand of cultural studies which attributes considerable creative agency to those social groups traditionally perceived as audiences and consumers or even as excluded from creative work by virtue of their social status (Willis, 1990).

Similarly egalitarian, but without the basis in cultural politics, is the rhetoric of *Ubiquitous Creativity*. Here, creativity does not only entail the consumption and production of artistic products, whether popular or elite, but involves a skill in terms of responding to the demands of everyday life. In this discourse, being more creative involves having the flexibility to respond to problems and changes in the modern world and in one's personal life (Craft 1999, 2003). While much of the writing in this rhetoric is targeted at early years' education with

the aim of giving young children the ability to deal reflexively and ethically with problems encountered during learning and family life, examples used to illustrate 'everyday creativity' include attempts by working-class individuals or immigrants to find jobs against the odds without becoming discouraged. This too is a highly resilient strand in commentaries on this subject and has a strong appeal for educators (Jeffrey 2005; Cohen 2000).

Clearly for those even nominally in favour of retaining a *particular* link between creativity and the arts and culture (Negus & Pickering, 2004), who see creativity as something 'special' (or indeed who see it as being about challenge and social critique rather than conformity to rules), this approach raises the question: Is this view of creativity as an ability to be *flexible in meeting the demands of life* incompatible with the notion of creativity as something that adds a *special quality* to life? It seems that there remain tensions between activities, ideas and creations that are dubbed 'creative' in particular social contexts or historical moments and those that are rejected for fear of their playful, disruptive or anarchic potential.

Creative socialization and 'successful' societies?

The rhetoric of *Creativity for Social Good* is characterized by its emphasis on the importance for educational policy of the arts as tools for personal empowerment and ultimately for social regeneration (Robinson et al. 1999). It stresses the integration of communities and individuals who have become 'socially excluded' (for example by virtue of race, location or poverty) and generally invokes educational and, tangentially, economic concerns as the basis for generating policy interest in creativity. This rhetoric emerges largely from contemporary social democratic discourses of inclusion and multiculturalism. In this view, a further rationale for encouraging creativity in education focuses on the social and personal development of young people in communities and other social settings. In this view, 'creative and cultural programmes' are seen to be twofold mechanisms of social cohesion, 'powerful ways of revitalising the sense of community in a school and engaging the whole school with the wider community' (Ibid, 26). Although Robinson's NACCCE[1] committee team accept that exceptionally gifted creative individuals do exist, their report favours a 'democratic' definition of creativity over an

'elite' one: 'Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value' (1999: 29). Here, culture and other cultures are things to be 'dealt with' and 'understood'. While this somewhat reductive view has been criticised (Marshall, 2001; Buckingham & Jones, 2001), it has a broad appeal amongst those who see creativity as a tool in the project of engineering a strong national society.

In an allied rhetoric much in evidence since dot.coms came on the scene and in an era of flexible digital labour, *Creativity as Economic Imperative*, the future of a competitive national economy is seen to depend on the knowledge, flexibility, personal responsibility and problem-solving skills of workers and their managers (Scholtz & Livingstone, 2005). These are, apparently, fostered and encouraged by creative methods in business, education and industry (Seltzer & Bentley, 1999). There is a particular focus here on the contribution of the 'creative industries', although the argument is often applied to the commercial world. Again, this rhetoric annexes the concept of creativity in the service of a neoliberal economic programme and discourse (Landry, 2000). Instead of being about imagination or the motivation to learn and create, the imperative here is the requirement to assist the modern national capitalist economy in its quest for global expansion. But, realistically, we must ask questions about the variety of arenas and domains in which those who buy into this 'new' vision of creativity would be allowed to function. Would time for the playful testing of ideas be built into the working days of 'knowledge workers'? Or perhaps they would have to accommodate such necessary but peripheral business in their own personal time by giving up leisure. In what way might different skills lead to creative production? It seems unlikely that the mere acquisition of skills would be sufficient as a contribution to a greater collective or corporate endeavour. Clearly, while the newly flexible workforce – or student body – might be encouraged to manage themselves and their departments or sections, their control over the overall structures and practices of their organizations might remain as limited as ever (Pope, 2005). A final problem that arises with the use of the term creativity in this context is a definitional one. As with the generalized application of creativity to all teaching and learning in all subjects, the danger is that it simply becomes a more glamorous and appealing synonym for 'effectiveness', thereby losing its distinctive sense.

Serious or playful stuff?

The rhetoric of *Creativity and Cognition* can be seen as incorporating two quite different traditions. One includes theories of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) and the development of models to document and increase people's problem-solving capacity (for instance, Osborn-Parnes 1941 CPS model) as well as explorations of the potential of artificial intelligence (Boden, 1990). This latter work attempts to demonstrate the links made during, and the conditions for, creative thought and production. The emphasis of all strands in this tradition is on the *internal* production of creativity by the mind, rather than on external contexts and cultures. The other tradition consists of more intra-cognitive and culturally situated notions of creative learning expounded by Vygotsky (1994), who asserts that 'If a person "cannot do something that is not directly motivated by an actual situation" then they are neither free nor using imagination or creativity' (1994: 267). The importance attributed to 'freedom' of thought and action and to non-goal-orientated playful activity in Vygotsky's writing about adolescent learning remains controversial in educational or work environments, where the ability to plan a project and execute it, solve a problem, or pass a test are markers of effectiveness. More flexible indicators of creativity, such as the various 'intelligences' described by Gardner, have been used on occasion in a positive manner to soften the harshness of traditional literacy and numeracy-based academic assessment. Sadly, however, Vygotsky's far more critical and unusual theorizing has been largely ignored.

A persistent strand in writing about creativity, the rhetoric of *Play and Creativity* turns on the notion that childhood play models, and perhaps scaffolds, adult problem-solving and creative thought. It explores the functions of play in relation to both creative production and cultural consumption. Some cognitivist approaches to play do share the emphasis of the 'Creative Classroom' rhetoric on the importance of divergent thinking. Sandra Russ (2003), for instance, argues that the ways in which children use language, toys, roleplay and objects to represent different things in play are habitual ways of practising divergent thinking skills.

But not all those who champion play do so in ways that are conducive to the freedom of thought, creative action, or divergent and critical

thinking. Dixon and Webber (2007) point to links between adults' nostalgia for a remembered context of play in their own childhoods and emerging, ingrained and often naturalized social rhetorics about play in modern children's lives. Taking to task those who mourn the 'death' of an era when play was outdoors, safe, free and unmediated, they note that '[i]n response to both panic and nostalgia, adults are increasingly organizing and regulating their children's play' (2007: 25). This discussion can be seen to mirror discourses that have emerged with regard to creativity, technology and (new) media. Cordes and Miller, for instance, assert that 'a heavy diet of ready-made computer images and programmed toys appear to stunt imaginative thinking' (2000: 4). But the fact that certain commentators, possibly with nostalgic memories of socially privileged childhoods and an exaggerated paranoia about 'modern' media, might overstate the case *against* digital playtime does not mean that all technology-based play and learning are either harmful or necessarily beneficial to children's creativity.

A digital 'creativity pill' or a damaging potion?

If creativity is not inherent in human mental powers and is, in fact, social and situational, then technological developments may well be linked to advances in the creativity of individual users. The rhetoric constructed around *The Creative Affordances of Technology* covers a range of positions, from those who applaud all technology as inherently creative to those who welcome it cautiously and see creativity as residing in an as yet under-theorized relationship between users and applications. But it is worth asking how democratic notions of creativity are linked to technological change in this rhetoric. Is the use of technology itself inherently creative? And how do concerns raised by opponents of new technology affect arguments about creative production?

For Avril Loveless (2002), thanks to a complex set of features of ICT (provisionality, interactivity, capacity, range, speed and automatic functions), digital technologies open up new and authentic ways of being creative 'in ways which have not been as accessible or immediate without new technologies' (2002: 2). Loveless (1999) argues that technology, which is being used in schools in varieties of ways, can enhance creative learning, but only if children's expectations and teachers' anxieties are handled sensitively. Challenging those who champion digital technol-

ogies as *inherently* creative, Scanlon et al. (2005) and Seiter (2005) also note that many computer programmes designed to increase children's knowledge and skills are not in the least bit creative, relying on rote learning, repetition and drill exercises. Thus, they argue that digital technology can – but does not necessarily – support the expression and development of creativity. In a society where technology is *not equally available to all*, children may well be enthusiastic and confident users of digital technologies when offered the opportunities for playful production, but they are still divided by inequalities of access outside school and across the school system. Ultimately, the social contexts of the use of digital technology may help or hinder its creative potential.

Evaluation, learning and pedagogy

Pertinently for those interested in creativity and communication, placing itself squarely at the heart of educational practice, *The Creative Classroom* rhetoric investigates questions about the connections between knowledge, skills, literacy, teaching and learning, and the place creativity occupies in an increasingly regulated and monitored curriculum (cf. Beetlestone 1998; Starko 2005; Jeffrey 2005). This rhetoric locates itself in pragmatic accounts of 'the craft of the classroom', rather than in academic theories of mind or culture. Creative learning is *interactive*, incorporating discussion, social context, sensitivity to others, the acquisition and improvement of literacy skills; it is *contextual*, and has a sense of *purpose* and thus cannot be based around small units of testable knowledge; however, it can also be thematic and highly specific, as it often arises out of stories or close observation, which engage the imagination and the emotions as well as learners' curiosity about concepts and situations. The Creative Classroom rhetoric is consistent in identifying holistic teaching and learning – which link playful processes to different types and domains of knowledge and methods of communication – as more compatible with and conducive to creative thought and production than the increasingly splintered, decontextualized, top-down and monitored content and skills which are favoured as being academically 'effective'.

There is, however, a tension in this work between what could be broadly defined as a rather romantic wish to view creativity as something that enhances the human soul and helps young people blossom,

and the need to give practical advice to trainee teachers, thus fitting them for the fairly chaotic but restricted milieu they will soon enter. At points this tension is productive, or at the very least practical, in the sense that it prevents the educational perspective on creativity from sidestepping issues, such as assessment and time management, that are of very real significance for practitioners in both formal educational and more unorthodox settings. Many educators have to walk a tightrope between institutional constraints and the fragility of their constructed 'creative' environment. However, at times the tension also appears to lead to contradiction or even paradox: risk-taking is to be encouraged, but it is also to be kept within easily controllable bounds; time is required for playful engagement with ideas and materials, but this time has stringent external parameters in terms of the school day. Work by Banaji, Cranmer & Perotta (2013) provides evidence that interventions by governments in education have created a culture of vocationalization, standardization and competition which is a barrier to creative pedagogy, playful exploration and creative work in the classroom. While it is clear that a number of students continue to work in imaginative and divergent ways, and that some teachers still encourage them to do so by valuing playful or subversive discussion and creative production with new or traditional technologies, the literature on creativity in contemporary classroom settings suggest that this is despite, rather than because of, most current education policies.

Although not considered in detail here, in response to such institutional realities, and setting a challenge to aspects of foregoing rhetorics, *Creative Arts and Political Challenge* sees art and participation in creative education as necessarily politically challenging, and potentially transformative of the consciousness of those who engage in it. It describes the processes of institutional pressure that militate against positive and challenging experiences of creativity by young people, regardless of the efforts of teachers and practitioners (Thomson, Hall & Russell, 2006). In previous work on this topic (Banaji & Burn, 2006; Banaji & Burn, 2007) this rhetoric is pursued further, with an emphasis on the questions it raises about creative partnerships, social contexts and political or philosophical presuppositions. If one wishes to retain the idea of cultural creativity as having an oppositional rather than a merely socializing force, it is important not to lose sight of the

ways in which broader inflections of discourses of creativity relate to the micro-politics of particular social settings. The very fluidity and confusion in talk about creativity in the classroom can mean that the term is used as window dressing to appease educators who are interested in child-centred learning, without actually being incorporated into the substantive work of the classroom.

Conclusion

In discussions of creativity, it is crucial that we understand and respond to the relationship between the *cultural politics* of talk about creativity or play and a *wider politics*. While there is evidence from numerous studies (Balshaw, 2004; Starko, 2005) that creative ways of teaching and learning, and creative projects in the arts, humanities and the sciences, offer a wider range of learners a more enjoyable, flexible and independent experience of education than some traditional methods, there is no evidence that simply giving young people or workers brief opportunities for creative play or work substantially alters social in-equalities, exclusions and injustices. Creativity is not a substitute for social justice. There is a complex, and not always clearly identifiable, *cultural politics* behind many rhetorics of creativity, as there is behind educational rhetorics and the rhetorics of play. This is the case not only within discourses which explicitly address questions about power, and about whose culture is seen as legitimate and whose is not; it is also the case in discourses where constructions of power remain implicit, such as those which celebrate 'high art' as 'civilizing' and child art as being about an 'expression of the soul', or which see the development of workers' creativity as being 'for the good of the national economy' and the constant testing and attribution of levels of ability to children as a way of raising 'standards'. Some discourses explicitly legitimize certain forms of cultural expression and certain goals, and implicitly delegitimize others. Increasingly, such discourses aid gatekeepers within educational institutions by stigmatizing particular pedagogies and parenting choices. Talk about creativity is, then, always political, even when it appears not to be.

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Note

1. National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, UK.

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2
Creativity on YouTube

Considering New Media and the Impulses of the Learner

Danah Henriksen & Megan Hoelting

In today's globalized media, a new type of individual has emerged as a celebrity. Such individuals work creatively with a range of media, often converging on one particular platform: YouTube. One of the oldest examples of this type of celebrity is Smosh[1], a duo, Anthony Padilla and Ian Hecox, who established their comedic channel in 2005, which went on to generate a number of spin-offs. The two young millionaires represent a wave of creative artists who are flexible and aware of the creative power of this medium.

Smosh began in 2005; today, there are more examples of YouTube stars and popular channels than most traditional media can keep up with. For example, Joey Graceffa[2] is just such an adaptable YouTube star. His early creative work on his YouTube channel garnered him a large multimedia contract and a place in the arena of popular culture. Spawned by his success in YouTube media, he has found opportunities to collaborate with other artists, write for a web series, and bring his ideas into multiple arenas. Most recently, Graceffa made headlines with his memoir, *In Real Life: My Journey to a Pixelated World*, in which he came out as homosexual.

This announcement is revolutionary compared to coming-out announcements from more traditional stars, such as Ellen DeGeneres, Lance Bass, Clay Aiken, and Adam Lambert – who all provided exclusive interviews in traditional media. Though this new medium,

Image 1. The Smosh duo

Image 2. Joey Graceffa on his book cover

Graceffa had the creative power to use YouTube to decide how he wanted to communicate and share with others. This is just one example of a phenomenon in which youths are gaining creative power in new media, to exercise their voices, create and share content, and participate in creative communities globally.

New technologies have opened up such possibilities for young creative artists, like Graceffa, to showcase their talents and ideas online. YouTube has been the prime example and source of the global phenomenon of video creation and sharing. Accelerating technological growth has caused our society to reconsider how we work, think, and act (Mishra, Koehler, & Henriksen, 2011; Mokyr, Vickers, & Ziebarth, 2015), and we find ourselves in a world where knowledge, entertainment, and content can be created, communicated, and obtained more quickly and easily than ever (Zhao, 2012). New digital tools, from smartphones to free online image, audio, or video editors (such as the YouTube Video Editor, WeVideo, Audacity, or Pixlr), have put new media technology for content creation and sharing in the hands of more

people than ever – particularly young people. With the power of these tools, society has seen a rise in what has been termed "content creation." This means that anyone, with the right tools, has the ability to create video or audio content and share it via avenues like YouTube (Burgess & Green, 2013). The growth and magnitude of the medium, across a range of video content, topics, and genres, is rooted in what new media allow people to do – create, communicate, collaborate and share – in powerful and global ways (Lange, 2007; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009).

In this article, we suggest that the affordances of YouTube have put significant creativity in the hands of more youths than ever. This has revolutionized how systems of creativity operate, and has allowed for the phenomenon of YouTube stars. Avenues like YouTube allow people to sidestep traditional gatekeepers within a field, to become successful content creators, sharing their work directly with an audience. This has implications for society, culture, and education in the opportunities it offers to create and share.

We suggest that this connects with Dewey's (1943) and Bruce & Levin's (1997) framework for viewing media and technology as a way to address "the four impulses" of the learner. As described by Dewey, these impulses are: to inquire, to communicate, to construct, and to express (Dewey, 1943; Bruce & Levin, 1997). New media offer affordances for creating and sharing, which opens up possibilities to explore all these learning impulses. The culturally pervasive popularity of YouTube and other new media may lie in the way they address these needs and impulses. As educational contexts seek to meet the creative needs of youth, we suggest revisiting the educational foundations of Dewey – in speaking to these four impulses as a framework for educational technology. But first, we consider how new media like YouTube reveal a change in systems of creativity, with greater participation by students and youth.

The changing landscape of content creators

YouTube has remodeled how culture, art, and knowledge emerge in the online medium (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009). It is one of the more impactful global phenomena that media and culture have experienced. YouTube statistics note that the platform has over a billion users – about a third of all people on the Internet. Daily, hundreds of millions

of hours of YouTube videos are watched, generating billions of views. Beyond this, YouTube has local versions in over 88 countries, with more than 76 different navigational languages (covering 95% of the Internet population) (YouTube Press Statistics, n.d.).

Across the medium there are examples of people enjoying tremendous success and popularity (i.e. "YouTube stars") in genres ranging across comedy, music, the arts, science, fashion, makeup and beauty, general interest, and countless specialized topics (Henriksen, Hoelting, & the Deep-Play Research Group, 2016). The majority of major YouTube artists predominantly describe themselves as "content creators." This term defines these artists not simply as entertainers or informers, but rather as creators of ideas, of actions, of *content* (Susarla, Oh & Tan, 2012).

We propose that the artists who find great success on YouTube are becoming a new form of expert. These experts are content creators who can now bypass the standard gatekeepers of genres before distributing their work. Bereiter & Scardamalia's (1993) definition of expertise notes that it is not only determined by knowledge or tenure in an area, but by how the knowledge is adapted to unique contexts and new challenges. There are still experts in traditional domains that may pose valid questions about these new creative displays, and communities of practice still have gatekeepers to success. However, emerging and popular artists on YouTube are reframing their domain and its context of how creative systems operate and the communities that participate in them.

In a recent study (conducted in 2014 and replicated in 2015), researchers asked youths aged 13–18 to compare the influence and popularity of YouTube stars to that of mainstream traditional stars (Dredge, 2016). They found that YouTube stars such as Smosh, the Fine Bros, KSI and Ryan Higa were considered more influential than mainstream celebrities like Paul Walker, Jennifer Lawrence, Katy Perry and Bruno Mars. This represents a transformation in youth culture, whereby more young people have the tools and access to produce content, and even more youths globally can find, connect, and communicate about it. In the past, the tools and platforms for such creation and connection did not exist in ways that would allow such youth participation, but their recent advent is generating a shift in creative systems.

New media redefines systems of creativity

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) discusses how in traditional systems, creativity emerges from a dynamic interaction between the *individual*, the *domain*, and the *field*. In this, *individuals* (or groups/teams) make creative works, ideas, art, or discoveries. Creativity is also impacted at the level of the *domain*, or an area of specific knowledge (e.g. mathematics, biology, physics, art, law, and more), where people use domain ideas, information, tools and symbols to create new works. Then, through the *field*, creative works may be shared with an audience or disseminated. The field involves people who act as gatekeepers to decide what is important and what will be distributed into broader culture or disciplines. The field has typically reflected the communal organization of "experts," in communities of practice – people with the knowledge and clout to decide what would be shared to influence the domain, socially and culturally (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Who the gatekeepers are depends on context. It might entail a Nobel Prize committee, journal editors or reviewers, music or movie industry executives, Olympic judges, and so on (Henriksen Hoelting, & the Deep-Play Research Group, 2016). In the past, the field was the only entity that determined which creative works would be shared for social and cultural impact (Sawyer, 2006). This model is visualized in the image shown below.
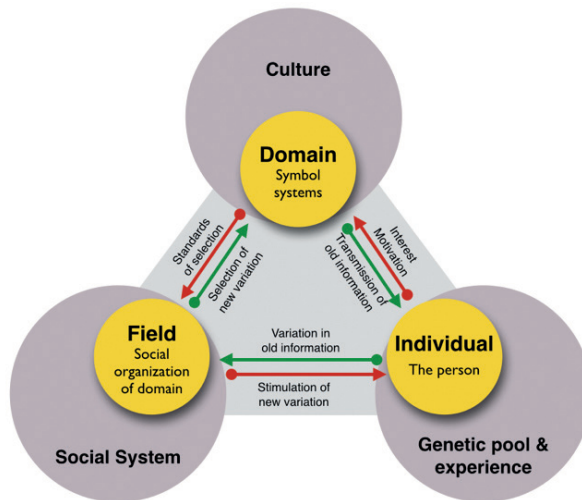

Figure 1. Csikszentmihalyi's model of traditional creativity systems

Examples like Smosh and Joey Graceffa are not anomalies in new media (Berg, 2015). They represent a fast growing phenomenon, in which individuals can use new media to sidestep the traditional gatekeepers of creativity (the field), and propel themselves to creative success. In altering this gatekeeping aspect of creative systems, new media allow for creation and sharing in powerful ways, and youths have been among the first to recognize and harness these capabilities (Harlan, Bruce, & Lupton, 2012). Video, audio, and other creative media tools have affordances that allow a young audience to explore, create, and share. We suggest that these impulses for exploration, creation and sharing are human and innate. They have always been present, but now there are avenues to pursue them and participate through media as a means of creativity.

Understanding new media through a Deweyan lens

Foundational ideas described by Dewey (1943) may inform what motivates young people to learn with media. These foundations are visible in the social phenomenon of YouTube as a means of creating and sharing work. The future of education may be well served to consider this framework as a lens for creative teaching and learning with media.

Dewey (1943) identified a natural basis for learning as the greatest educational resource or psychological reserve that society might tap into. This includes what he described as the four natural impulses of the child. These innate, or natural, interests revolve around following the impulses of learners: 1) *to inquire (to ask and explore questions, or to find things out);* 2) *to communicate (to connect and share ideas with others, to communicate and enter into the social world);* 3) *to construct (to build or make things);* and 4) *to express (to engage in personal expression of one's self, feelings, and ideas).* Dewey asserted that education should build curricula around these instinctive impulses rather than separating learning into the traditional disciplines. From a Deweyan perspective, the greatest imperative for education is to nurture these impulses, building a trajectory for lifelong learning.

These four impulses may clue us in to motivations underlying the phenomenon of how YouTube and new media are shaping our world. Consider what new creative media allow youths to do, as they engage with video, images, sound, text, and more, through technologies that

indulge these four impulses. The affordances offered by the YouTube platform, and other media for creation and sharing, suggest that new technologies may be motivational and exciting based on how they allow people to inquire, communicate, construct, and express.

Twenty years ago, as digital technologies were on the cusp of becoming more widespread in society and schools, Bruce & Levin (1997) proposed using Dewey's framework of the four impulses to view media for learning. They argued that most approaches to educational technology, like schooling, were organized around traditional perspectives. Instead of a technology-tool-centered focus, they suggested that education consider the kinds of motivations, interests, and inspirations that media could allow people to engage with. They noted that classifying educational technologies by how they allow for Dewey's (1943) natural learning impulses may be a productive and exciting approach to learning.

When Bruce & Levin (1997) proposed this idea 20 years ago, the available technologies were more limited in power, capabilities, and affordances than today. Yet the core constructs of Dewey's foundations contained strength and value for thinking about media. Despite these strengths, however, many schools in many contexts (both then and now) operate with a more tool-centered focus rather than building learning around media as a venue for inquiry, communication, construction, and expression. We suggest that 21st-century education might consider how the YouTube phenomenon has swept up the interests of youth, as both producers and consumers of content. This may offer a model of thinking about how classrooms could focus less on the rigid boundaries of traditional curricula and subjects, and instead work with media to stimulate and develop inquiry, communication, construction, and expression. In this, students and teachers can view themselves as creative individuals and creators of content.

Exploiting the potential for creative education

The popularity of YouTube may lie in what it allows people to do, in the power to create and also connect to the larger world. YouTube offers ways to inquire (to ask questions and create or find videos that explore ideas in the world around us); to communicate (to hear and share ideas from others, through the viewing and sharing of content); to construct

(to build or make content, in ways that let people participate, rather than accepting prepackaged content); and to express (to share our own views, feelings, or identity). We do not suggest that everything on YouTube is important or useful content, as this is clearly not the case. But it is important to consider how it allows for a new creative reality among young people. It is a motivational approach to media that inspires youths to join and explore, create, and share – via the prospect of engaging their natural impulses to inquire, communicate, construct, and express. This takeaway is a powerful one for education, in terms of classroom content and new media for creativity.

Since its inception, YouTube has been a site for artists to upload their original or remixed works. The balance between consumers and producers initially leaned heavily toward consumers (YouTube Press Statistics, n.d.); however, while the site still has more consumers than producers, the ratio is becoming increasingly more balanced. This has two possible interpretations: more creators are discovering the site; or consumers are realizing their creative potential and adding their own content to the site. In either (or both) cases, it signifies a shift in how people are interacting with media. We are entering the age of the *creative consumer*, one who is hungry for new media but also capable of creating their own when they find the status quo lacking. This has repercussions for the potential of youths to participate in creative communities, and for diverse voices that have been lost in the past. Noticing gaps in representation can become a catalyst for creation (Kaitlyn Alexander interview, Piccoli, 2015), and an opportunity to connect youths to the wider world and a greater diversity of voice.

Furthermore, content creators are not confined to one form of media; they feel comfortable enough in their expertise to make creative attempts with other modalities or a range of topics and subjects. The "content" these creators distribute is not limited by mode or discipline. For example, some of the most popular content creators (Grace Helbig, Mamrie Hart, Tyler Oakley, etc.) have expanded their artistry to other platforms, which often necessitates a new mode of communication. In a classroom, such a perspective would alter the rigid structure of course content. To encourage students to become boundary-crossing content creators, we might readjust our worldview to one that "demands new pedagogical structures that respect nonconformity and the urge to

explore for the sake of exploration, to value risk-taking and learning from failure and error" (de Oliveira et al., 2015, p. 20).

Image 3. The elements of content creation

What might learning in schools look like if education offered more constructivist opportunities, through new media, for students to try their hand at being "content creators" of their own learning? Many are already engaging in this informally, outside the school context; so, we ask, how might education consider the "content creator" model for learning in schools? There are also implications involved in asking what it might mean for teachers to view themselves as content creators, given the autonomy and flexibility to creatively design opportunities and environments for their students. What if we organized teaching and learning not around the typical structures of schooling, but rather in opportunities to use media for inquiry, communication, construction, and expression? We do not offer immediate answers to such questions, but as digital technologies and 21st-century learning move forward, it may be time for education to seriously consider them.

We have noted that creative systems are evolving, based on YouTube and other new media, to allow for greater creative participation in certain contexts and genres. People often operate online as either consumers or producers of content, and there are now more producers than in the past – certainly among youth. It is also interesting to note that more educational channels are arriving on the scene, such as Minute Physics and ASAP Science (Welbourne & Grant, 2015). This suggests

that content creation can intersect with big ideas and school content, in ways that can be compelling for teaching and learning.

We have proposed ideas and questions for consideration, suggesting that the YouTube model of a content creator might be valuable for teaching and learning in the classroom. We have noted that Dewey (1943) and Bruce & Levin (1997) established ideas about media as a way to connect with the four impulses of the learner, which seems prevalent for the world we live in and for education broadly. Currently, these are still ideas and questions; but in noting them, we point to their potential for youth creativity in school settings. As most of the questions in this new arena may not be fully known or articulated yet, we propose that the field consider these emergent issues and bring them into the broader discourse. All of this points to the overarching issue of how the power of new media for creation can be harnessed to promote a creative and expansive mindset in students. Perhaps appropriately for the shifting terrain of new media, we conclude with more questions than answers – offering these as emergent and vital possibilities and considerations for creativity and education.

Notes

1. https://www.youtube.com/smosh
2. https://www.youtube.com/JoeyGraceffa

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3
The Class: Living and Learning in the Digital Age

Interview with Sonia Livingstone

Sonia Livingstone is Professor of Social Psychology in the Department of Media and Communications at London School of Economics. Taking a comparative, critical and contextualised approach, Sonia's research asks why and how the changing conditions of mediation are reshaping everyday practices and possibilities for action, identity and communication rights. Her empirical work examines the opportunities and risks afforded by digital and online technologies, including for children and young people at home and school, for developments in media and digital literacies, and for audiences, publics and the public sphere more generally, with a recent focus on children's rights in the digital age. She leads the project, Preparing for a Digital Future, which follows the recently-completed project, The Class, both part of the MacArthur Foundation-funded Connected Learning Research Network. She directed the 33-country network, EU Kids Online, funded by the EC's Better Internet for Kids programme, with impacts in the UK and Europe.[1]

You and Julian Sefton-Green recently launched the book The Class: Living and Learning in the Digital Age. Could you tell us about the project?

Our book is about a class of 13- to 14-year-olds at an ordinary urban secondary school in London. This is a famously tricky age for parents and teachers, and for young people themselves. We were curious about what young people want, how they see the world, and how they find a path through the opportunities and constraints they face. Our

**Sonia Livingstone
and Julian Sefton-Green**

The Class Living
and Learning in the
Digital Age

media [are becoming] more digital, convergent, commercialised and intensely networked, but is it useful to take a step further and describe our lives as 'digital lives' – as in the now-commonplace terms 'digital parenting'…'digital natives'…'digital learning' or 'digital creativity'?

We did not expect simple answers, but rather we hoped to provoke a contemplation of the uncertainties and ambiguities associated with the evolving interrelations between technological and social change. And while we certainly did not assume that teenagers' lives today bear no relation to those of previous generations, we did want to explore the ways they think about and try to manage socio-technical change, including how they cope with the personal risks associated with changes often beyond their control.

When researching The Class, you said the most important thing was to focus on ordinary rather than exceptional uses of media among 13-year-olds. Did you find that they do explore creativity through learning, creating and sharing, and can you give some examples?

Our work is part of the MacArthur Foundation-funded Connected Learning Research Network, where we were inspired by the possibility that '*connected learning taps the opportunities provided by digital media to more easily link home, school, community and peer contexts of learning; support peer and intergenerational connections based on shared interests; and create more connections with nondominant youth, drawing from capacities of diverse communities' (Ito et al., 2013).* But, having heard from our colleagues about the adventurous achievements of pioneering young people forging exceptional pathways to creativity, we decided instead to inquire into the experiences of an ordinary class of children from a fairly typical London suburb. Could we identify what makes some stand out while others do not? Could we, even, pinpoint some advice for parents, teachers and policy makers to support more young people in harnessing digital media for creative and civic purposes?

I'll answer your question by focusing on how the class used YouTube, now the most popular app among UK teenagers. Its popularity doesn't imply homogeneity in meaning or use, however, for the 28 teens in the class revealed 28 different patterns of use. But only six of them had ever uploaded anything, raising important questions about how young people's digital interests can be supported and sustained.

Could you give us some examples?

Abby and Salma, for instance, had spent a happy day setting up a YouTube channel and posting 8-10 episodes of 'The Abby and Salma Show' before retreating in mortification when their history teacher got wind of their efforts and showed everyone. Megan had a period of making videos and uploading them to YouTube too, describing herself as 'obsessed' with searching YouTube, going to meet-ups and so forth. But for her, too, this had become embarrassing, and she turned her attention to a private exploration of identity in Tumblr. Nick was more persistent, having paired up with a friend with editing skills to make videos of his Xbox game play and upload them as tutorials for others. Giselle, perhaps the most creative girl in the class, had created her own YouTube channel for stop-frame animation – like the others, she collaborated with a friend in this creative practice, gaining several hundred views before she, too, gave it up.

What is the price for young learners if schools do not incorporate youth self-expression and creativity in their curriculum spaces and practices?

As these examples show, youthful creativity in the class benefited little from the input of teachers or, indeed, parents. Both tend to dismiss these creative activities as kids wasting their time watching silly videos about people falling off walls or cute kittens. This is partly because even the most attentive parents spend relatively little time with their children online, instead watching at a distance with half an eye on the time, worrying about homework or exercise, or judging the quality of the results rather than asking if their child is progressing in a creative or critical direction.

As you can see, I see huge missed opportunities here. Parents have invested considerable sums in equipping their home with digital technology but they invest rather less time in sharing the experience with their child so as to scaffold their learning in productive directions. Meanwhile, teachers are pressured to deliver the curriculum within the walls of the school but are often sceptical about children's chances of interest-driven, self-managed learning at home.

As I said, 28 children make for 28 stories, so our conclusions must be nuanced. Joel was something of a sad case. In an unusually forthcoming

interview for this shy and seemingly unhappy boy on the edge of the social scene, he talked with enthusiasm about using YouTube tutorials combined with music-making software and mixing decks to record his own music on the computer. And yet the interview unravelled when I pushed a little further – for it turned out that such activities were not practically possible at home (or indeed in the rather standardised music technology lessons I witnessed at school). Rather, his account was aspirational; these are things he has heard about and hopes to follow up in the future.

Image 1. Parents have equipped their home with digital technology

While Joel seems to be missing out on opportunities he would relish, Alice represents a contrary case. She didn't really bother with YouTube much – but it would be wrong to characterise her as apathetic or uncreative. For Alice turned out to be incredibly active in her local community – with babysitting, Girl Guides, community events – and she also did singing, trampolining, netball and ice-skating out of school, and arts and crafts, DIY and photography at home. Is it really necessary, one wonders, for a 13-year-old girl to also get creative in uploading stuff to YouTube for society to celebrate her achievements?

Meanwhile, Gideon was something of a paradox. At school, and online, he stood right at the centre of the social network – the boy who cracked jokes, played football and computer games with the boys, had twice as many friends on Facebook as anyone else. Yet at home, when we got to know him better, he was quieter, revealing some past difficulties requiring 'anger management' classes and, now, a quiet reliance on the succour of his immediate family. Interestingly, his use of YouTube was fairly edgy – 'America's hardest prisons', 'Angry Scottish guy kicks

and snatches', 'Jamaican gangs.' Perhaps he was working through some residual anger? Or perhaps he was gathering the material to impress his classmates the next day to maintain his edgy reputation?

Even when they are creative online, it's hard to be sure if this brings long-term benefits. In an interview with Giselle a few years later, I discovered that she is, indeed, pursuing an artistic career. Was the early experimentation with YouTube a valuable stepping stone? Perhaps, though this was surely outweighed by the significant help she received throughout her childhood from her professionally artistic parents.

This diversity depends on home resources – financial, parental, cultural – and on each young person's particular bent and interests. On the one hand, several of these stories invite the question: with more support, could the kids have taken their creative first steps much further, gaining vital skills for the digital age? On the other hand, their stories invite the observation that, given everything else that's going on in their lives, engaging with YouTube may not be their top priority.

If you could send a message to parents and teachers about children's and youth's media creative production based in a 'bedroom culture' what would you say? What do they need to be aware of and/or inspired by?

The Class shows that, while parents and teachers often have young people's best interests at heart, they do not always agree on what these best interests are, leaving young people let down by the broken pathways offered to them yet not sustained across home and school. Meanwhile, young people are trying to find their own way, not necessarily seeing eye to eye with their parents or teachers and even avoiding beneficial opportunities so as to maintain 'positive disconnections' — offline and online spaces to pursue their own meanings and experiences away from the gaze of parents and teachers.

Given the inevitable tensions between children and adults about the values and practices, often based on the fact that children and young people focus on the here-and-now while parents and teachers tend to interpret everything through the lens of 'the future' – and a highly competitive future at that (future 'success', 'keeping up', 'getting ahead') – what message would I offer?

A year with 28 young people was, first and foremost, heartening as an experience of youthful optimism, enthusiasm and, for the most part, resilience. But the same year with their parents was more chequered – sometimes affirming but often anxious, with anxieties centring disproportionately on digital media rather than the many other things parents have to worry about (quality of relationships, financial security, health, community tensions, their children's growing independence, etc.). Of course, in reality, parents worried about all these things, but the very fact that these endemic concerns are, somehow, crystallised by the digital, with the digital acting as a lightning rod for so many parental uncertainties means that, ironically, parents find it difficult to support the potential benefits of digital media.

For teachers, under ever greater pressure in our competitive and standardised school systems, it is the promise of digital media for alternative, non-standardised activities, and for collaborative rather than individually-assessed outcomes, blurring the boundary between home and school, that appears so challenging. As a result, they too struggle to support children's creative digital activities.

My message should, by now, be obvious. Attribute problems where they rightfully occur and don't target the media as an easy object of blame. Ask children what they enjoy about digital media and find ways to help them deepen and develop their skills. Judge their activities by the child's level of enthusiasm and sense of progressing rather than with an adult or competitive eye to the outcomes. And, last, recognise that digital media represent an opportunity for many children to explore private emotions and interests in a world that is increasingly surveilled and constrained by anxious adults. So maybe just leave them be.

Note

1. http://www.lse.ac.uk/media%40lse/WhosWho/AcademicStaff/SoniaLivingstone.aspx

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The Creative YouTubers

Somewhere around 300-400 hours of video is uploaded every minute on the immensely popular platform of You-Tube. In this section, authors present examples of video-blogging, otherwise known as vlogging, a common feature among viewers. Some vloggers have become world famous through their presence on the screen, some of them are still mostly known among their friends and family.

4

How YouTube Developed into a Successful Platform for User-Generated Content

Margaret Holland

On October 2, 2010, Felix Kjellberg uploaded a 2-minute YouTube video of himself speaking on camera while playing a video game. Today, Kjellberg, better known by his YouTube alias, "PewDiePie,"[1] uploads to an online audience of over 40 million subscribers.

At just 24, Kjellberg has developed his online persona into a brand name that pulls in an estimated $4 million in ad sales a year (Kain, 2014). Kjellberg is not alone. An astonishing number of individuals have made YouTube their career. With consistent viewing from cable's most sought-after age demographic, ages 18 to 49, YouTubers like Kjellberg have formed a virtual yet powerful relationship with their viewers (Luscombe, 2015). User participation helps in creating the stability of loyal audiences. The wide variety of content makes YouTube a place where just about anyone can find a video that interests them, whether they are looking for Kjellberg's gaming commentary or a makeup routine. Of the 3.2 billion people who have Internet access, more than one billion are accessing YouTube videos (Luscombe, 2015). Founded in 2005 as a platform where amateur users could upload their videos online, YouTube has established itself as a part of the entertainment industry.

Since its development, YouTube has transformed from a video-sharing site into a career opportunity for content creators. In this article

three influential YouTubers' channels – Felix Kjellberg (PewDiePie) from Sweden, Zoe Sugg (Zoella)[2] from England, and Grace Helbig (its-grace)[3] from America –were studied. The author tried to identify what makes a YouTube channel successful through examining the qualities of three YouTubers who represent one of the site's most popular content categories.

Literature review

YouTube started as a site to distribute user-generated content and later has developed into a platform where an individual can turn their personal brand into a career.

Before analysing the rise and success of Felix Kjellberg, Zoe Sugg, and Grace Helbig, it is important to understand how YouTube has grown as a content-sharing platform. Founded by Chad Hurley, Steven Chen, and Jawed Karim, YouTube launched with little fanfare in June 2005. As Burgess and Green (2009:I) explain:

> YouTube was one of a number of competing services aiming to remove the technical barriers to the widespread sharing of video online. The website provided a very simple, integrated interface within which users could upload, publish, and view streaming videos without high levels of technical knowledge.

YouTube was comparable to other video start-ups at the time until Google acquired the site for $1.65 billion in October 2006 (Burgess & Green, 2009:I). The site has steadily gained popularity, and since 2008 it has consistently been in the top ten most visited sites globally (Morreale, 2014). Almost a decade later it is the world's third most popular online destination with availability in 61 languages and a million advertisers (Luscombe, 2015).

Since being purchased by Google, YouTube has evolved from a site where amateur and ad-free videos were posted to an online destination consumed by commercialised videos. But there is another side according to Morreale (2014:114), "Its tagline 'Broadcast Yourself' invites ordinary users to take an active part in creating the material they consume. At the same time, less obvious is that YouTube is a business whose purpose is to generate profit". About this institutionalisation of YouTube, Kim (2012:56) wrote:

If the pre-Google era of YouTube is characterized by amateur-pro-
duced videos in an ad-free environment, the post-Google purchase
stage is characterized by professionally generated videos in an
ad-friendly environment. Because of YouTube's popularity, industries
have shown a deep interest in monetizing it.

This interest in monetising content has allowed channels that started
as a hobby to develop into a source of income for content creators.
Lavaveshkul (2012:378) describes this development from hobby to
job: , "Their beginnings were simple and they produced their videos
from beginning to end: they wrote the script (if there was one), acted,
did the camera work (oftentimes using an inexpensive camera on a
tripod), and did the post production". To a viewer, the lack of a script
or set made the experience of watching a YouTube video more relat-
able. Kjellberg further elaborated on this experience in an interview
when he said:

Unlike many professionally produced shows, I think I've established a
much closer contact with my viewers, breaking the wall between the
viewer and what's behind the screen ... What I and other YouTubers
do is a very different thing ... My fans care in a different way about
what they are watching (Grundberg & Hansegard, 2014).

Sugg also recognised the importance of creating an environment re-
latable to viewers when she explained:

You want to make it a cozy environment and put in your own per-
sonal touches. I just sit on the edge of my bed because for me your
bed is the coziest place to be, and you want people watching to feel
as comfortable as you are filming (Tan, 2015: 98).

Sugg's and Kjellberg's approach to YouTube has helped them attract not
only brands that want to work with them, but also loyal viewership.
YouTube has more American viewers between the ages 18-49 than
any cable network, helping increase its revenue by an estimated $1 bil-
lion over the last year (Luscombe, 2015). YouTubers have the attention
advertisers and cable networks desire, as explained by Burling (2015:22):
"book publishers are starting to pay more attention to a form of expres-
sion that has exploded over the past decade: fictional web series and
vlogging, or video blogging, found mostly on YouTube. Why? That's

where the kids are". YouTube is now the ultimate destination for kids logging on to the Internet. Luscombe (2015:72) points out, mentioning an anecdote: "*Variety* asked a bunch of teens to choose their favorite stars among 20 names, the top five were all from YouTube".

With consistent views from a critical mass of audience, YouTube has created an opportunity for the average person to build his or her personal brand. According to Kozinets and Cerone (2014:21): "Social branding has been creating grassroots 'micro-celebrities' with increasing frequency. For personal branders, being storytellers who are capable, yet fascinating and even fantastic is a sound strategy". The influence of a YouTuber's personal brand is demonstrated through the success of brands collaborating with content creators.

Method

In this study the author points at particular elements within the videos of three prominent YouTubers and the structure of their channels. The YouTubers were selected based on Lavaveshkul's (2012) study, which analysed the top 10 most subscribed to YouTube channels of 2012. These 10 channels could be divided into three categories of gaming, comedy, or how-to. The current study selected one channel from each category based on their popularity on YouTube. The three YouTubers were Felix Kjellberg (gaming), Grace Helbig (comedy), and Zoe Sugg (how-to).

For the study the author developed questions, based on the studies of Lavaveshkul (2012) and Biel and Gatica-Perez (2011). Some answers were found by examining the videos of the three YouTubers on November 9 and 10, 2015. Others were found from Social Blade, a statistics website that tracks growth across social media platforms including YouTube ("Track YouTube", 2015).

The channel´s common characteristics: Layout, location, upload schedule and profit

The current author analysed the layout of the three YouTubers' landing pages. Both Sugg and Kjellberg featured logos on their channel. Helbig instead displayed her uploading schedule and a slogan stating, "What a Charming Idiot" on her banner. Only Kjellberg displayed advertising on the landing page of his channel. For example, his banner advertised his book, *This Book Loves You*, which was released in October 2015. Instead

of a commercial playing, a banner advertisement was displayed at the bottom of Kjellberg's video. Sugg and Helbig displayed an advertisement in their most recent videos before the clip began.

At the time of examination the three YouTubers shared similarities, like their filming location, which is primarily inside their homes. Sugg sat at the end of her bed while Helbig and Kjellberg usually sat at a desk. Kjellberg (gaming), Sugg (how-to), and Helbig (comedy) represented different categories, and all three YouTubers talked about objects within their videos. Kjellberg made commentary while playing a video game. Sugg's content involved baking, hauling items from a store, or talking about her favourite items throughout the month. Helbig used objects the least among the three, but she posted a variety of comedic reviews or how-to videos. Each YouTuber linked their various social media sites to the landing page of their YouTube channel.

They all began posting content more than five years ago. Kjellberg, Sugg, and Helbig each has their own individual uploading schedule. Kjellberg uploads content most often, with at least one daily video.

The three YouTubers earn income through advertisements placed on their videos, brand deals, and additional projects that generated profit. Data collected about their subscribers, overall channel views, views per month and estimated yearly income as of October 2015 was outlined in the following diagramme.

YouTubers outside their channels

Following their fame the three YouTubers have also appeared in TV-shows, magazines and even been portrayed in wax at Madame Tussauds in London (Sugg). Outside of her channel, Sugg has launched a cosmetic product range and written two novels, *Girl Online* and *Girl Online: On*

Table 1. Some characteristics of three influential YouTubers

YouTuber	Subscribers	Channel Views	Views per Month	Estimated Yearly Income
Kjellberg	40,315,481	10,341,904,335	29.6 million	$1M-$16.5M
Sugg	9,458,481	586,711,156	22.95 million	$64.6k-$1M
Helbig	2,781,292	156,687,601	7.51 million	$22.6K – $361.1K

Source: SocialBlade.com and YouTube.com on November 15, 2015

Tour. She has appeared on *TV-shows* and the cover of *Seventeen Maga-zine*. In 2013 and 2014 Sugg won "Best British Vlogger" at the Radio 1 Teen Awards among several other awards.

In addition to uploading YouTube videos, Helbig host a podcast, and has appeared in TV-shows, commercials as well as published books. Kjellberg has also involved in outside projects such as releasing a book and a video game.

Discussion

YouTube's transformation from video sharing to profitability

All three YouTubers began posting videos over five years ago. Helbig began posting content in October 2006, just one year after the site was developed and around the same time Google purchased YouTube. According to Kim (2012:57):

> Since being purchased by Google, YouTube has adopted a new e-commerce model; it puts banner ads in videos or in YouTube pages and shares the revenue with the copyright holders of the videos. The basic idea of selling banner advertisements is to play commercials during the streaming of videos.

All three featured advertisements in their videos. Over the past decade, YouTube has become a launching pad for careers (Luscombe, 2015). Based on the videos watched throughout this study, Kjellberg, Sugg, and Helbig all mention that they use their videos as a source of income.

At the time of examination (November 9-10, 2015) Kjellberg was the most subscribed user on YouTube, with over 40 million subscribers and 10 billion overall views on his channel ("Track YouTube", 2015). His videos generated more views than the world's population, which was then a little over seven billion ("Worldometers", 2015). According to Grundberg, "The 24-year-old Mr. Kjellberg, who created PewDiePie five years ago, had parlayed his persona into a brand name that pulls in the equivalent of $4 million in ad sales a year, most of it pure prof-it" (2014). As reported by *Business Insider,* most YouTubers get paid through advertisements, previews, and sponsored videos. Side projects, such as book deals, also add to their income (Kosoff, 2015). Kjellberg, Helbig, and Sugg all had advertisements display throughout their videos in addition to book deals. Sugg's book, *Girl Online*, "broke the record

for highest first-week sales for a debut author in the U.K., selling 78,109 copies-besting J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* titles and E.L. James' *Fifty Shades of Grey*" (Burling, 2015:24). What began as a place for Sugg, Helbig, and Kjellberg to upload videos as a hobby is now their career.

Appeal to viewers

It is presumably the YouTubers' authencity that appeal to their viewers. Strangelove (2010:113) explain, "There is no one authoritative YouTube identity, but there is one dominant YouTube community-the community of amateur videographers. Their numbers will most likely always exceed those of participating celebrities and media corporations". Each YouTuber analysed in this study began as an everyday person posting videos online, filmed inside their homes, having conversations with a camera through vlogging (video blogging). In keeping with Burgess and Green (2009:54):

The vlog reminds us of the residual character of interpersonal face-to-face communication ... it is a form whose persistent direct address to the viewer inherently invites feedback ... Traditional media content doesn't explicitly invite conversational and inter-creative participation.

According to Sörman, founder of a YouTuber network in Sweden, "PewDiePie is like a cool friend you have and subscribing to him is almost like Skyping with him-that's why viewers are such dedicated fans" (Grundberg & Hansegard, 2014).

All three link their other social media accounts to their YouTube channel to interact with viewers. Kjellberg's fans, or "bros" as he calls them, are engaged because he takes the time to talk about them in videos or answer their questions (Kosoff, 2015). Helbig and Sugg do the same and create an online community for their fans. Strangelove (2010:105) explains, "Participation in online groups leads to a psychological sense of community. People can be deeply engaged in online communities … On YouTube we find groups of individuals who interact around shared interests". Sugg's advice for creating content on YouTube is "to be yourself and have fun. If you're not having fun, no one is going to have fun watching your videos" (Tan, 2015:98). Creating an enjoyable, personable environment distinguishes these YouTubers. They are being themselves and establishing an environment where the viewer feels as though they are listening to their friend. Within this environment viewers are able to engage with an online community that enjoys similar content.

Qualities of successful YouTubers

On the qualities that these three influential YouTubers share, the study found the following: Helbig, Sugg, and Kjellberg invited viewers into their personal space by filming in their homes. According to Biel and Gatica-Perez, "Although conversational vlogging is obviously not exclusive of YouTube, the forms of social engagement inherent in vlogging are key features that distinguish YouTube as a platform for creativity and participation around video, rather than just a repository and distribution system" (Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2011). This allows for diverse content within each YouTuber's category. Each YouTuber in this study used two elements, background music and objects, throughout their videos. Instrumental background music was specific to each YouTuber and helped to move along the dialogue. Although objects varied for each YouTuber, all three were talking about something specific in their videos.

The videos uploaded by each YouTuber in this study varied in length; however, the average video length did not exceed 20 minutes. Although Sugg's content is about twice as long as Helbig's and Kjellberg's, it is still significantly shorter than a traditional 30-minute television programme. According to Kim (2012:53), "YouTube has come to represent what video on the web looks like: short, mostly humorous, and easily accessible". Uploading schedules for each YouTuber varied; however, each individual posts at least once a week. Each YouTuber has developed their own schedule so their viewers know when to expect content. Their viewers consist of a younger demographic, as "YouTube is the ultimate destination for kids logging on the Internet. It pretty much owns kids' eyeballs at this point. One of its core demographics is 8 to 17 years old" (Luscombe, 2015).

Personal branding through traditional media

Regarding YouTubers' reliance on traditional media, this study found their personal brand became even more influential by collaborating with traditional media. Helbig's YouTube channel included segments from her television show, *The Grace Helbig Show.* A traditional network broadcasting her show (E! Entertainment) utilised user-generated content to gain younger viewers.

Although YouTube draws in more viewers, traditional media is not going anywhere. According to Strangelove (2010:168-169):

> Amateur video's proliferation of quick thrills and brief clips also feeds into an attention-deficit generation ... Fragmentation in itself does not spell doom for television. In the end, even though contemporary audience is highly fragmented, it is still watching commercially produced entertainment.

YouTubers are not trying to end professionally generated media with their user-generated content. Sugg, Helbig, and Kjellberg are not exclusive to YouTube. They are on television, winning Teen Choice Awards, and each have a published book. To build their personal brand and audience, they have taken advantage of traditional media in addition to their YouTube channel.

Summary

In conclusion, YouTube has evolved from a website where users simply upload content to a platform where an individual can build their career. An analysis of popular YouTubers explains why viewers find videos from Helbig, Sugg, and Kjellberg entertaining. Regardless of their category, they all shared similar video elements. YouTube is the world's third most popular online destination because viewers, especially those of a younger demographic, can relate to the authenticity of user-generated content. Once established, in addition to their own content, popular YouTubers are utilising traditional media to build their personal brand. They can be found on bookshelves, on the television screen, and even in a wax museum.

With jobs that rely on viewers, it is easy to question the longevity of online careers. YouTube has transformed in 10 years from a site where content was shared to a place where user-generated content thrives. According to Luscombe (2015:75), "Not only must the company contend with youth-savvy tech firms – your Snapchats, your Spotifys, your Vines – but established media companies are onto the fact that kids are just future users". As their young viewers grow older,

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each YouTuber is faced with the problem of appealing to older loyal fans while still attracting new viewers. Strangelove (2010:107) explain, "Above all, what the moment of YouTube highlights is the uncertainty surrounding the future of participatory culture, and the complexity arising from the intersection of various changing and competing ideas about what digital media are, or could be, for".

Notes

1. https://www.youtube.com/user/PewDiePie
2. https://www.youtube.com/user/zoella280390
3. https://www.youtube.com/user/graciehinabox

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Appendix

Coding Sheet General information

1. Name of YouTuber:
2. Date Retrieved:
3. Location while Filming:
4. Does the person have a logo?
5. Is there advertising on the page?

Questions

1. What is their most popular video?
2. What is their total subscriber amount on the day the information is retrieved?
3. When did they begin posting videos?
4. How do they describe themselves in their 'about' section?
5. What is the total amount of channel views?
6. What is the total view per month as of October 2015?
7. What other forms of social media do they promote on their landing page?
8. What is the overall "theme" of their channel?
9. How many videos do they have uploaded?
10. What are their estimated yearly earnings?
11. Does this person have an uploading schedule?
12. Based on their last 10 videos, what is the average length of one of their videos?
13. What are some of their brand deals or projects outside of their channel?

5
Top Girls on YouTube

Identity, Participation, and Consumption

Lidia Marôpo, Inês Vitorino Sampaio & Nut Pereira de Miranda

Bel Cerer (8 years old), Juliana Baltar (9 years old), Manoela Antelo (10 years old) and Júlia Silva (11 years old)[1] are prominent representatives of a phenomenon that has recently become widespread in the Brazilian context as well as internationally: child YouTube stars. Besides the fact that they author original content, these girls share characteristics that distinguish them from millions of other "video author" children (Yarosh et al., 2016) on YouTube – the second most visited website in the world after Google (Alexa, 2016). The four girls have their own YouTube channels, are very popular among peers, challenge the boundaries between amateurishness and professionalism, and make a profit from the videos they star in.

In December 2016, Júlia and Manoela exceeded a million subscribers to their YouTube channels, while Juliana had more than two million and Bel nearly three million. They became popular by posting similar content in which marketing communication is often present – toys and children's product reviews, unboxing, challenges among peers and adults, and web series. Today, they are also the most popular among hundreds of YouTuber girls who have attained public recognition. The four of them are seen as celebrities in Brazil, attract thousands of fans at meetings organized by sponsor companies, and appear on lists (disclosed by the media) of the most influential children in the nation.

What kinds of content do these children author and share on You-Tube? What are the specific characteristics of their online performances? What are their similarities and differences? What identities do they re-produce and/or re-signify about what it means to be a child and a girl? In what ways is marketing communication present in their YouTube videos?

Taking into account the fast expansion of the Internet as a "space" for children to "learn, participate, play and socialise" (Livingstone & Bulger, 2014), we will discuss these questions based on an exploratory study. The corpus analyzed consists of the channels maintained by the four YouTuber girls with higher numbers of subscribers in Brazil, considering only those aged under 12, according to data available on YouTube in 2016. Forty-eight videos posted in 2016 were selected, chosen through the method of random sampling, in alternate weeks. Observation of their formats and content was employed. Among these videos, the four most viewed from each YouTuber in each trimester – which totals 16 videos – was examined in more detail. The analysis focused on the following aspects: formats, themes, performances, communication strategies (types, forms of address, interactivity, etc.) and modes of participation.

Children on YouTube: Uses and participation

In 2015, eight in ten children and adolescents (aged 9 to 17) were Internet users in Brazil (CGI, 2016). On average, they were connected 4 hours and 59 minutes a day during the course of a week, an amount that surpasses the time spent watching television (Secom, 2015). On YouTube, specifically, the engagement of children and teenagers is highly significant, as either authors or audiences. The results from a survey conducted by the American investment bank Piper Jaffray in 2016 with more than ten thousand teenagers in the US indicate that teens spend more time watching YouTube videos than cable television (Ferreras, 2016). Another recent survey on YouTube's young Brazilian audience (aged 0 to 12) shows that, among the 230 channels analyzed in the survey, the majority of views are of YouTube's own videos – 44,266 billion versus 7.898 billion views of YouTube channels originating in television programming (Silva, 2016).

These channels were classified into seven categories indicating the types of content consumed (and authored) by children on YouTube: Mi-

necraft and others (games and vlogs of games); TV (from broadcast and cable television); Non-TV (created for YouTube); Unboxing (children or adults opening boxes or toys' wrapping papers); Teen YouTubers (people over 12 years of age); Child YouTubers (0-12 years old); and Educational. *Minecraft and others* is the most popular category with 52 per cent of total views, whereas *Child YouTubers* was the second most popular, but had more audience growth between 2015 and 2016 (564 per cent) – the first in this category being *Unboxing*, with 975 per cent growth.

In this context of intense connectivity (Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2014), answering questions like "who am I?", "what could I be?", "who do I want to be?" is strongly influenced by media pervasiveness (Woodward, 1997:14). The digital media, especially social networking sites, is seen as a powerful tool for the youngest to express themselves, to interact, and to negotiate collective and individual identities (Drotner, 1992; Buckingham, 2008; Buckingham & Willett, 2006; Livingstone & Bulger, 2014).

From this perspective, the YouTuber girls' channels may be seen as a means of self-representation and dissemination of their points of view, ideas and creativity in the public space. Conducting ethnographic research on the uses of YouTube by children and teenagers (aged 10-18) in America, Lange (2014:68) noted several ways that girls participate in the production of videos for this platform. Video blogging, sketch comedy, lip-synching, personal event videos, and hanging-out-at-home videos are the most popular. The participants in the study discussed numerous themes, such as reflections about their school, challenges they face, music, pets, and so forth. For the author, video-blogs promote the expression of girls' voices, and often allow the disclosure of issues relevant for their lives.

On the other hand, Dantas and Godoy (2016:98) assert that in some cases, children's channels might be considered a (semi) professional activity conditioned to the marketing interests of the brands that sponsor them. From this perspective, they raise problematic issues for the young video authors, such as exploitation of child labor. The activity, according to Dantas and Godoy (2016:98), "demands a schedule of appointments, a duty to be regular with their video-posting, an obligation to disclose the products received from the brands, among other responsibilities". Furthermore, it might expose the child audience to improper marketing content and stimulate consumerism, among other problems (Postman, 1994).

Rebekah Willett (2008) asserts that children and teenagers are not being encouraged to exercise self-expression; rather, they are constructing identities aligned with a consumer culture. Nonetheless, she recognizes that children and teenagers play an active role in their engagement with the Internet, even in such an intense commercial context. The author then launches a challenge: to analyze the online content authored by children, taking into account the power and influence of the market, but without neglecting children's agency. Willet (2008:53) brings in the concept of "bricolage", from Lévi-Strauss, to analyze how child YouTubers use varied resources while transforming and re-contextualizing different cultural products to create a new self-image or identity.

The child YouTubers have their own "channels" on YouTube, similar to an online profile on other social networking sites, containing a list of subscribers, information such as the number of "thumbs up" and "thumbs down" they have received, and statistics on views. Some of them reach significant popularity as video authors by broadcasting information about their identities, crafting videos with appealing content, and publicly and intensively promoting and disseminating their videos (Lange, 2008).

According to Félix (2016: 02), "being a YouTuber is more than simply sitting in front of a camera once a week to record a 15-minute video with apparently improvised content". This task, according to the author, demands strategies such as finding a target audience, mastering technological tools to monitor competitors, interpreting *Google Trends* to identify keywords to describe the video and facilitate its delivery to the target audience, and possessing skills in the production and post-production of audiovisual language. Besides interacting with the audience on YouTube and other social media, their investment also includes participating in offline activities, such as book-launching parties and advertising campaign events. The YouTubers' strategies also include knowing which mechanisms generate more advertising revenue. The channels' owners must join the YouTube Partner Program and sign a contract that enables brand advertisement on their videos and thus the monetization of their content.

Omar Ricón (as cited in Félix 2016:02) highlights six common YouTuber strategies for achieving popularity: Narrative – talking directly to the camera, aiming to break the formality of television; Aesthetic –

using irony, cynicism, and irreverence to make people laugh; Language – using slang, seeking grotesque and emotional appeal through swear words; Youthfulness - taking youths' attitudes and manners seriously, which are also the basis for their comments on life; Pop savvy – their references are rooted on pop music, best-sellers and fast food; and Adult world – regarding it as corrupt and inept (politicians), incompetent (parents), or outdated (teachers). The youths use their witty humor as a tactic to express disappointment with adults.

In her ethnographic study, Lange (2014:16) defines YouTube as a "personally expressive media", i.e., "any mediated artifact or set of media that enables a creator to communicate aspects of the self". According to her, regular YouTube video authors perform technical affiliations while showing through words or actions their beliefs, values or practices, which connect them with particular technical-cultural groups. In this sense they form communities of practice, which include routines, conventions, and shared histories. The researcher also highlights the diverse interests between child YouTubers, who have different "mediated centers of gravity" (Lange, 2014:41); i.e., their preferences manifest themselves in visible inclinations to certain content, abilities and media tools.

Although she criticizes the lack of transparency in YouTube's advertising policy, Lange (2014: 134) maintains that commercialization is not incompatible with either genuine family affection – present in many YouTube videos – or learning processes among those who author content. In her research, children and young adults assert that they have developed technical knowledge for making videos and have improved their self-confidence and capability for self-presentation to a wider audience. On the other hand, some of them reveal feelings of social exclusion due to the time they dedicate to the activity, which distances them from their peers.

Top girls on YouTube:
Identity negotiations in the network

We can look at the four girls under analysis as a "community of practice" (Lange, 2014) that shares numerous common features. Bel, Juliana, Manoela and Júlia maintain their YouTube channel pages on a regular basis, posting videos daily (Bel), three times a week (Júlia) or once a week (Manoela and Juliana). All of them are present on various social

networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and/or Twitter), which they use intensively to promote not only their YouTube channels but also their activities in many offline spaces such as meetings with fans, book-launching events, and television programs.

The YouTubers' performances on the Internet show a careful management of their public images. The opening logos in their YouTube videos and the profile pictures on their social media sites indicate an attentive production aimed at creating a visual identity. Júlia Silva's page on Facebook, for instance, is managed by an advertising agency, which is also responsible for the social media sites of numerous Brazilian television and Internet celebrities.

The popularity of these four YouTuber girls on the Internet also means visibility in traditional media. All of them have been interviewed on news programs and participated in other popular television programs. This legitimates their roles as opinion makers among their peers.

Their families receive revenue from the ads broadcasted on YouTube. Moreover, the girls earn toys and other products merchandised in the videos, not to mention the indirect gains through trips and hotel stays. In this sense, we call attention to the considerable time the girls dedicate to YouTuber activities and the demands related to the popularity they have achieved and want to promote.

The analysis demonstrates a limited variety of formats in the videos made by the four YouTubers, which include "vlogs", "fiction", "commercial", "challenges" and "tutorials". Among these, the most common and with the most views is "fiction". This is comprised of "web series", in many cases revealing creativity in improvised scenarios and stories (such videos are apparently elaborated by the YouTubers themselves, except for Bel, who explicitly has her mother's help). On the other hand, some of the videos give rise to a questioning of gender or social class stereotypes, as well as ways of dealing with environmental issues.

The "challenges" are another popular format among the YouTubers. Manoela Antelo and her Uncle Bibi (Luan Novit, also a YouTuber), for example, propose to each other mutual challenges which may include dancing in the street, taking selfies with strangers, eating a garlic clove, or performing kick-ups with a ball. The competition seems to be less important than having fun. The games appear to reproduce television formats without including any intellectual challenge.

Shopping, reviews or unboxing toys, included in the "commercial" category, are also popular formats among the YouTubers. Here, the marketing communication appears in explicit ways.

In "tutorial" videos, the YouTubers give instructions for building toys or playing games, whereas in the "vlog" format they record different life experiences, either alone or with friends and family, such as hanging out or taking trips. References to brands are also common in the aforementioned two formats.

The concept of "community of practice" (Lange, 2014) is also useful for describing the similarities between their online performances. All four girls have a role model with whom they regularly perform – mother (Bel), sister (Juliana), uncle (Manoela), and father (Júlia); they all use particular forms of greetings (e.g. "hello everyone") and farewells (e.g. "strawberry/chocolate sweet little kisses") to communicate with the audience; they continuously ask for the public's approval and attention (by asking for "thumbs up" and subscriptions); and they use their own home spaces as scenarios for most of their videos.

We can also identify the adaptation of some of the strategies mentioned earlier (Rincón cited in Félix, 2016:02) that the YouTubers use to become popular. The four girls talk directly to the camera and, sometimes, make use of irony and irreverence to provoke laughter; in some cases, they appeal to the grotesque (especially in fictional content or challenges); they cultivate pop-culture savvy (with references to music and celebrities); and they are attentive to peers' attitudes and behaviors.

However, if we think of YouTube as a "personally expressive media" (Lange, 2014), through a more careful analysis of the girls' performances we can identify different forms of communication that reveal diverse "mediated centers of gravity" (Lange, 2014: 41).

Bel is the youngest and the one who shows the least autonomy, almost always appearing accompanied by her mother, Fran Cerer. Fran, for the most part, assumes the protagonist role in the videos, performing, playing, and guiding her daughter in a cooperative manner, and also, sometimes, in a professorial way toward the audience. Their most popular videos have six million views. Most of these are web series with the format of "cautionary tales" (on themes such as jealousy between siblings, disliking bath time, loss of baby teeth, bullying, first day of school, tantrums, etc.). Mother and daughter also propose challenges

to each other and switch roles. The marketing communication appears in some content, such as when Fran publicized the work of a tourism agency that organizes trips to Disney.

Juliana Baltar is the protagonist of the two most viewed videos among the four YouTubers, namely "Baby Alive has an accident in the Tyrolean traverse" and "Baby Alive is admitted to the Hospital!" (translations from Portuguese). The videos have 53 million and 48 million views, respectively (February 2016), and both privilege fictional narratives in improvised and creative scenarios, in which the doll is the protagonist. As a common strategy among the child YouTube stars, the commercial names of the dolls are identified in the titles of the videos, a tactic that seems to have strongly contributed to this impressive popularity. Besides exploring formats such as "challenges" and "life experiences", Juliana uses the tag #jujuresponde (#jujuanswers) to talk to the audience in a confessional manner about varied aspects of her life (her relationship with her parents and sister Rafaella Baltar, also a YouTuber, with whom she frequently performs in the videos; her dream of being a YouTuber, etc.). The marketing communication arises mainly in the videos tagged as "shopping" and "received", in which she shows objects she has bought or received.

Manoela Antelo often performs with her Uncle Bibi in videos in which challenges, humor, and mockery are common. They have fun and play together in equal positions while interacting with each other. Manoela also makes regular videos about her daily life, in which familial relationships are exposed in apparently spontaneous contexts. The marketing communication appears mainly in her videos about hanging out and taking sponsored trips.

Júlia Silva has a more moderate style, and distinguishes herself through refined scenarios; better quality of image, edition and audiovisual effects; life experiences connected to a higher level of income (such as international trips and expensive brands); and access to celebrities from television, whom she interviews on her channel. She mainly performs with her "Dad Silva" in challenges and games. She also makes web series and tutorials about handicraft, makeup, recipes, and fashion tips. The marketing communication is present in toy reviews, games and apps, as well as in sponsored trips and hanging out. It also appears in her vlogs, such as in the video "Getting braces put on! Does it hurt??? Julia Silva" (translated from Portuguese), in which she dis-

closes the name of the dental clinic she attended. Besides this channel she also maintains another, "Júlia Silva TV", dedicated exclusively to the "commercial" format.

Discussion and conclusion

Considering the set of elements presented up to this point, we can say that the identities created by the four YouTubers, as a "narrative of the self" (Giddens, 2002), become immediately singular in relation to other numerous anonymous children. Their identities are not only being redefined in their spontaneous relationships with their relatives and friends, but are managed with the aim of achieving public recognition measured by the number of views, comments, and "thumbs up".

We are facing a game of forces, in which the YouTubers' participation, creativity and spontaneity are juxtaposed with the pressures of a planned professional management of their public images, in which the goal is obtaining popularity and financial profit.

On the one hand the channels are a potential space for the expression of children's identities and cultures, in which the girls play and talk about subjects of common interest among their peers (toys, hanging out, relationship with family and friends, school, and relevant experiences in the child universe, such as the first day of school, loss of baby teeth, arrival of a new sibling, etc.). Through this content, they achieve great visibility for their points of view.

From this perspective, it is important to highlight the children's creative potential, which manifests itself in narratives, improvisation of scenarios, re-signification of objects, etc. The protagonist role they play in the videos and the more egalitarian position they assume in relation to the adults with whom they perform might be understood as possibilities of empowerment, which distance them from the role of fragile and helpless children. In addition, their participation in videos and other numerous online and offline activities may be seen as an opportunity to improve their skills of self-presentation and help them develop technical capabilities for audiovisual production. Their public activities also provide them with life experience and access to places they likely would not have visited otherwise.

On the other hand, the analyzed YouTubers show a strong influence from marketing communication and mainstream media formats,

evidenced in the exaltation of consumer habits connected to brands, seen in formats (challenges and series); in the "making of" at the end of some videos; in sound and visual professional effects; in the use of jargon and standardized gestures to demonstrate affection; and in appeals to build a loyal audience.

The act of playing, in this context of intense commodification of the content they author, is easily transformed into an "obligation" due to the demands for frequency in video-sharing, commitments to sponsors, and a busy schedule. The time they apparently dedicate to the activity, the financial profit generated from different marketing communication strategies, and the professionalism in the management of their actions indicate that this activity could be characterized as child labor. There are also signs that the child and female identity they promote builds strong connections to a consumer culture, related not only to toys and children's products but also to beauty products and other adult-related manufactured goods. Moreover, having popularity as one of their main goals in authoring content (as demonstrated in their insistent appeals to their audiences) might make them overestimate fame and success as their goal for the present and future, promoting a narcissist identity.

Our analysis reveals a confluence of the YouTubers' singular and individual characteristics with performances collectively originated and managed as a community of practice (Lange, 2014), which are translated into formats, content, and common strategies, in a process of bricolage (Willet, 2008) profoundly influenced by a consumer culture. The four channels can also be seen as spaces broadcasting models of thinking and acting to the wider public of children and teenagers who accompany them regularly.

Note

1. Ages in December 2016.

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6
The YouTube Channel RAK TV

A Narrative Interview with Rachel Cócaro, 14 Years Old

Paulo Guimarães & Maria Inês de C. Delorme

The initial proposal for this chapter was to talk to young people from Rio de Janeiro aged ten to 14, in order to learn about the creative universe of young YouTubers from Rio. We did not look for YouTubers who were considered "celebrities" or "exceptional" in their use of media, but practices and meanings built by "ordinary" young people who were considered creative based on their productions in the digital sphere. We made a Facebook call among our contacts requesting the names of young producers of media who were active in social networks. Through this network of contacts, ten young people agreed to participate in the interview.

Rachel Cócaro was one of the interviewees. As a practice among researchers of Human Sciences, the meetings were based on the precepts of "narrative interviews" (Delorme, 2008: 34), since this type of methodology favors knowing the person as a whole subject, the protagonist of his/her stories, and as a producer and permanent consumer of culture, with emphasis on his/her media creations. As narrative interviews differ from questionnaires, we do not present questions and answers here but rather blocks of opinions and ideas organized by the researchers, once they have been validated by each of the interviewees.

From this point, we came to know Rachel through her media creations presented in various videos, with content of different themes, formats, and lengths, shared on a YouTube channel called RAK TV[1].

She stood out through her critical thinking and the ability of seeing herself sometimes within and sometimes outside the universe of You-Tubers of her age. In eight of our ten interviews with the young people, there emerged certain recurring themes which we used as categories: autonomy, creativity, YouTube quality, and celebrity/success. These categories were stressed throughout the interview in Rachel's ideas about the theoretical fragments to which her ideas refer.

Who she is

Rachel Cócaro Gouvêa Veiga is a fourteen-year-old girl who lives with her mother and two sisters: fifteen-year-old Rebecca and Rachel's twin sister Raphaela who, when very young, suffered a mechanical asphyxiation that left her with cognitive side-effects: "A mental age of six, seven years." This sister has not yet learned some things, and her mother "will only let her have a computer when she can read and write. That's ok, right? It's not only cool things that are on the Internet".

To quickly understand who Rachel is, just watch the video "TAG: Twin Sister"[2] where she introduces herself and Raphaela, answering fun questions with agility and speed. Rachel's thinking is fast; it is fun and has the timing of spontaneous joking. On Instagram, Twitter and YouTube her productions are designated as Rak TV in the case of videos on the channel of the same name. This channel name originated from her name which, ending with the letter K, would sound the way she wanted it to [RAK], which would not be the case if she had used the literal abbreviation for it, and [TV] because she is visually exposed and "can be seen on a screen: from a cell phone, from computers or from SMART TVs."

Rachel and her sisters live with their mother, who is a doctor, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, in the city of Niterói. Their parents are separated, and the daughters live alternately with both of them.

She attends high school, considers herself good in the Portuguese language, and wishes, whenever possible, to "escape from mathematics". The three sisters study at a well-known school in Niterói, which is considered an avant-garde school in several aspects, stressing the encouragement of the arts in general as well as sports. Everyone knows Rachel is a YouTuber; her family supports her and encourages her initia-

Image 1. Opening photo of the "Twin Sister" video

tive. Her schoolmates are very dear to her, and she believes she is more valued in the school space for liking sports than for being a YouTuber.

Rachel enjoys watching TV series, usually on Netflix. She does not like playing on the Internet but claims to have "a competitive spirit", which justifies "watching and liking Big Brother Brazil, because I'm interested in knowing who will stay and who will leave." She uses Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat; she also has Facebook but does not like it, and thus does not use it.

Her computer, her bedroom
and the recordings she makes at home

Rachel has her own computer in her bedroom. In this space she improvises a kind of studio, where she records using two lamps attached to a ladder and a Canon T51 camera. She edits her videos on the computer, using the software "Final Cut". When she is producing her videos she feels "tense, worried that her house noises will leak into the recording" and, because of this, believes that "everyone who lives with her knows when she is posting some new video. It's stressful". By researching on the Internet she learned how to use the resources for her recordings, as well as how to edit them and make them good enough for her fans: "There's nothing Google and YouTube don't teach today, about anything, and for all people".

RAK TV, her channel on YouTube

Rachel's channel, which she started in the first months of 2016, is called RAK TV and offers around 90 videos of varying duration and format. More than a thousand people have already accessed the channel, including 340 people who have subscribed, although she "doesn't know, even today, exactly what can leverage success on the Internet". She once made a video she considered weak, bad, from which she "didn't expect anything; about cellphone cases. I thought it was a silly one but, to my surprise, it got more than 3,000 likes. Videos where I just talk, with my face showing, have to have challenges to not be boring". She seeks to always be fun, and this is a personal value she tries to impart in all her videos.

In fact, the Rachel we see in the videos is the same young woman who makes herself known in the interview: funny, good-humored, educated, and spontaneous when dancing and talking to her audience. Still, she considers herself very impatient and talks about this in a video called "Impatience", where she complains about the time she wastes in stores waiting for salespeople to do their sums and give her the change (she is quick with figures, although she hates mathematics). She also complains about the salespeople who do not quickly find the products she asks for in the shops, as well as advertisements. Her complaints always contain certain "emphatic verbs", such as "I *hate* and *detest*".

In the video "Somebody Help Me?" made from Musical.ly[3], a mobile dubbing app, she dubs her favorite songs while dancing; and in another video she presents her playlist to her fans.

In reference to vlogs, she has formed an opinion: "I think it's unnecessary. A 14 or 15-year-old girl telling her story? Isn't it strange?"

She made a successful video called "Types of Teachers", presenting five types of teachers in a theatrical and funny way: 1. The bipolar one (confused and contradictory); 2. The one who cannot explain anything (repeating the students' question); 3. The one who acts like the students' friend (everyone wants him/her, things proceed in a loose way); 4. The "Out of the room! " teacher (without a reason, she/he asks the student to leave the room); and 5. The one who is rude to the students for nothing (nasty, does not understand anything, coarse).

Rachel studies English in *English Culture Class* since, for her, speaking English is a prerequisite for being a YouTuber. She uses many words in English during the interview, with a British accent and in correct

Image 2. Opening photo of the video "Types of Teachers"

context, such as *challenge*, *playlist*, *games*, *download*, *upload*, *choice*, *free media*, *version*, *winner*, *turn* and many others.

In media, she always appears smiling and wearing lipstick "but only that, and always the same one, because I don't wear makeup". In the video "Somebody Help Me?" she answers her fans' questions about her lipstick: "My lipstick is from the collection Pause for Feminine Time, and its color name is Titânia", and keeps changing voices, dubbing characters, and playing different roles as if it were a question-and answer session, as if she were two different people. She dances, quotes other videos, asks for comments, and throws kisses to her fans. She never forgets to thank all the people who post comments on her videos, "even when they call it trash, as one of them has done. One might think it's bad, but I wouldn't post trash."

YouTube quality

"A quality video, in my opinion, must have several things. It has to be well lit, well edited, and have good sound. It has to be fun; that's very important. The person must have charisma, because it's horrible when someone wants to be funny but isn't. I think you also have to present the content of your age. I don't like writing about subjects I don't know very well. I don't need to have formed an opinion about everything, and if I don't know the subject I won't talk about, for example, Nazis on my videos. I like to watch some channels, like "After Eleven o'clock"[4] by two Brazilians, which is very funny. I also like Taciele Alcolea[5], who

doesn't have a channel on YouTube but is funny on Snapchat. There's also the Taynara OG[6], who posts ten-second videos. "

About convergence of media

Rachel refers to Kéfera[7], a successful YouTuber who, "from that success, recorded a film – a feature film – and it seems like she even wrote a book. Horrible. Being a good YouTuber doesn't mean you're a good writer or actress. It was a crappy movie. There's also JAPA, a well-known YouTuber who suddenly turned up with a book written by a ghostwriter. Do you know what that is? Well, he didn't even write his book, called *Diary of a Japa*" (Japa= diminutive of Japanese).

At this point, Rachel's statements bring us closer to what we call media convergence. Jenkins (2009) points out: "YouTube has emerged as a key site for the production and distribution of alternative media – the ground zero, so to speak – of the rupture in commercial mass media operations, caused by the emergence of new forms of participatory culture" (p. 348). In other words, beyond the commercial interests that generate expectations of financial gain, today it is no longer possible to speak of producers and consumers of media as if they had dissociated roles; they must rather be seen "as participants interacting according to a new set of rules, which none of us fully understand"(p. 30).

In this sense, what Rachel says not only highlights YouTube and the participation in it that "occurs at three different levels, in this case: production, selection and distribution" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 349), but also points to new paths by raising both the research on and analysis of each media in a more specific way, and questioning the ways in which subjects interact with them.

Creativity

Rachel feels she has been creative in many moments in her life, for instance at school when using paintbrushes and paint, developing her artistic pursuits, but says, "you just want to be creative but sometimes you're not. When you strive, sometimes you're not and, besides that, creativity can be found in the simplest things. At times, and most often, chatting leisurely with friends at school gives you a different idea that generates a good video. Never at home, only with friends from school".

Therefore, for her, being creative is not something that can be translated or even channeled simply as an action. The elements (themes) of the production of content for the network are identified in her everyday relationships and in interaction with others. At the same time, she does not refer to creativity when talking about her clothes, saying she likes to customize, give them a unique and personal touch, and doing the same thing with her cellphone covers. She is also creative and unique in the way she dresses.

Image 3. Clothes customized by Rachel

On YouTube, she feels she is creative when she "has an idea no one has had yet," or when posting something that already exists "but in a very different, original way. Original? Yes, when I defend my own opinions"!

She posts her videos "when it's possible, when I can. All it takes is for me to mark a day and time and I get tense; for me it doesn't work"; i.e., for her there is no creativity in having a pre-established day and time. In general, she posts three videos a month and, sometimes, more than this.

"Not everything can be done or played": Ethics on the Internet

Rachel always appreciates those who have their own opinion about things. She feels free to post what she wants "but there are certain things I would never do, such as posting nude scenes on the Internet, or an

offensive video about someone; I would never curse anyone. I would never be a hacker, ever. "

We point out that her concern about what should and should not be shared online can be regarded as a nuance of what we understand as "quality on the Internet", since she seeks a relationship of legitimacy with what she considers not only relevant, but also simultaneously correct, to share on the network. On this point, it is worth underlining the complexity of building this kind of "digital regulation"[8] and the dimension of this issue in media, in contemporaneity.

I produce and post because...

Rachel posts videos aiming "to teach everyone what a good channel is. To amuse people and for me, too, to have fun". She hopes to meet the expectations of her fans, become known, and get more and more fans. "The more people watching me, the better. I don't think there are a million people giving "likes"; I imagine there are a million people following me because they like me, they understand me, they recognize themselves in me and that's good".

She does not know how her life will be in the future, but would like to be an actress, working with art – always away from mathematics. She likes to perform, cook sweets and decorate cakes (she talks about becoming a cake maker), and stresses that she "thinks about studying to be an actress someday."

Image 4. Opening photo of the "RAK Cooks" video

At the same time, she does not hide her desire to be identified on the streets and to have social visibility as a YouTuber, claiming: "making money is always good, but that's not exactly what I seek as a YouTuber". This happens to most creative people, "but it's not the hope of getting fame or fortune that guides them; rather, it's the opportunity to do a job they like" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 107).

In this field, we still need to establish a discussion about "succeeding and being a celebrity", since this reflection was identified in Rachel's comments and indeed those of all the young people we spoke with. One of the essential reasons for producing and sharing content is a desire for recognition by their peers, viewers, friends, fans, and everyone who interacts with their productions.

Therefore, despite her worries about the quality of what she produces and conveys, she likes to assume that her products can have an even greater reach. She does not produce to meet the interests of whoever her audience is. In fact, she produces to be happy, to be as she is, and to expose her thoughts in order to legitimize herself as a fun YouTuber who "has her own opinions, without there necessarily being a goal to attain". Her speeches are vehement and coherent, and her videos confirm what Jorge (2012) points out: "The power of celebrities has a discursive root. In fact, contemporary celebrities are built in the interaction and circulation by the media" (p. 79). In a consecutive way, it is possible to say that the construction of this kind of relation between "one who does/says/indicates/" and "one who assists/consumes/enjoys/" is also cyclical, as it suggests its growth and expansion in the light of complicity between these two parties. In addition, it can be said that the potential presented by media and its scope suggests the need for a more in-depth investigation of the role of leadership and power relations in this universe.

It is also necessary to reflect on the fact that "youth cultures are thus very marked precisely by the connection to the media culture, the cultural and entertainment industries in complex ways of which celebrities are an essential part" (ibid, p. 120).

In relation to the YouTuber videos, they address issues in Rachel's life that are important to her and that stress her identity (it is not only her audio, but also she herself who acts and talks to the audience), among other factors that narrow the relationship between her and her

public. This implies that if on the one hand there is a desire to promote a legitimate approach between her, as a celebrity, and her fans, on the other hand there is a concern about the clear construction of limits that she plainly establishes and shapes.

It can be said that Rachel's speeches, in relation to studies on celebrities, allow us to consider that "the credibility of a celebrity between his/her public and professional life, on the one hand, and personal and private, on the other, is fundamental for activation and reiteration of cultural visibility and the effective functioning of the endorsement, whether political or commercial" (ibid p. 94, 95). However, such a nuance becomes much more sensitive in the sphere of YouTubers who still have a small number of productions and some level of control over their audience – compared to the examples offered by the interviewee herself – mainly due to her non-professionalization in the area of production and placement of videos.

Therefore, to conclude, it can be said that Rachel is aware, and takes care to ensure that her life as a YouTuber does not mix with her personal life in issues related mainly to her safety and integrity. In addition, on this dichotomy between public and private life, she concludes: "Yes, I would like to be a celebrity, to be recognized on the street; but without exaggeration, without persecution like what happened to John Lennon, who was killed by a fan".

Notes

1. RAK TV channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCr083JAJfAsYhtDz589ltjQ
2. "Tag: Twin Sister" video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwxW2OSa14Y
3. The Musical.Ly app: www.musical.ly . Available for download and video creation and sharing.
4. After de Eleven o'clock channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/depoisdas11
5. Instagram of Taciele Alcolea: https://www.instagram.com/tacielealcolea/?hl=pt-br and her Snapchat:@Tacialcolea
6. Instagram Thaynara OG: https://www.instagram.com/thainaraog/?hl=pt-br and her Snapchat:@thaynaraog

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7. Kéfera Buchmann de Mattos Johnson Pereira (Curitiba, January 25, 1993), better known as simply Kéfera, is a Brazilian actress, vlogger, voice actress, presenter, and writer. She became better known through the YouTube channel "5ive Minutes", one of the first channels in Brazil to reach a million subscribers. In 2016 she was named by Forbes magazine as one of the most promising young women in Brazil. Her channel can be accessed at the following address: https://www.youtube.com/user/5iveminutes

8. Law 12.965/14, known as the "Civil Internet Framework", addresses issues related to the responsibility and attribution of rights and duties related to the use of the Internet in national territory. Available at: http://culturadigital.br/marcocivil/

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Expressions of Creativity among Children and Youth

In different parts of the world we find different cultural expressions through media. The widely spread access to Internet and digital media makes it possible to share and experience this, learn from each other, get new impulses and find inspiration for new creations. This section provides some examples.

7
"Exclusively for *Keitai*"

Literary Creativity of Japanese Media Youths

Kyounghwa Yonnie Kim

Mobile technology and wireless Internet were adopted early in Japan and created a unique opportunity for Japanese people to experience ubiquitous networking from the late 1990s. The role of Japan as a powerful test-bed for mobile technology has been acknowledged (Rheingold, 2002; Ito et al. 2005; Tomita, 2016), suggesting the presence of a unique cultural milieu of mobile media use in the region. The term *keitai* (the Japanese word for mobile phone, literally meaning 'portable' or 'carry-with') has been being favorably used by cultural scholars as a way to emphasize the unique context of the mobile technologies in Japanese everyday lives. While the interest in cultural contexts occasionally leads to the exaggeration of its Japaneseness, it may be important to note that the rise of *keitai* culture is to be understood as a part of the global mobile society (Castells et al. 2007) *keitai* culture should be explored as a way to disclose the socio-cultural dynamism of the everyday practices in different contexts such as generations, genders, locations, economic situation, etc., rather than focusing on its use tendency.

Keitai shôsetsu and young creators in Japan

Despite continuing anxieties and widespread skepticism surrounding excessive use of mobile media among youths (Matsuda, 2010), the activeness of the young generation in the formation of *keitai* culture has been prominent in Japan. For instance, Tomita et al. (1997) paid at-

tention to the youths' entertaining and creative interpretation of pagers (a nascent mobile medium capable only of sending a call signal) in the mid-1990s as a social background to generate a desire for new types of peer communication through the mobile network. More recently, it seems obvious that young users' overwhelming preference for mobile social media such as Twitter, Facebook and LINE[1] has been creating a new trend for social networking and digital culture. It is undeniable that Japanese youths have played a crucial role as a cultural pathfinder of new media at every turning point, taking the lead in repositioning new technology into one's everyday life.

In this article, I put the spotlight on a phenomenon called *keitai shôsetsu*, a form of user-created literature written and read exclusively on the mobile platform, in order to demonstrate young females' role in initiating mobile literary creativity in Japan. Similar to other inter-active literature, the *keitai shôsetsu* (as shôsetsu means "novel", *keitai shôsetsu* literally means "mobile novel" or "portable novel") is usually written by voluntary amateur writers, shared on a specialized website, and read by audiences as it is being created. It has been particularly popular among young females, explaining its feminine tastes in plots such as love stories, soft school fiction, and romantic science fiction. One of the key characteristics of *keitai shôsetsu* is that its writing and reading practices take place on mobile media at the individual's own convenience, to explain its unique naming. It got its start in 2000, when *Maho-No-Airando*, an online community service provider, launched a *keitai*-specialized blog platform featuring a "story writing" channel. It may be noteworthy that this was far before the global rise of the smartphone, while in other regions wireless Internet service did not exist or, if it did, was struggling to attract consumers.

In spite of the increasing popularity of this new channel, *keitai shôsetsu* was hardly noticed by the mass media until the commer-cial success of the work titled *Koizora* (Love Sky) in 2005. The story, originally created and uploaded by the amateur writer Mika, gained popularity on Maho No Airando's website, and was transformed into a printed book to phenomenal success. Its commercial breakthrough is partly related to its distributional structure, in that the interactive authorship of *keitai shôsetsu* often brings forth loyal readers who are willing to not only subscribe in cyberspace, but also purchase a paper

book due to a desire to own it as a physical medium. The content sold more than a million copies as a printed book, and was reproduced in other media forms such as manga, TV drama, and a movie, yielding impressive results here as well. Eventually, the social achievement of *Koizora* brought to the forefront the fact that millions of young female users were actively participating in media production and consumption in cyberspace. It was also remarkable that the creativity and marketing power of this phenomenon were entirely grounded in mobile media.

The success of this Internet-originated interactive literature was not the first case. For instance, a few years before the rise of *Koizora*, an Internet-oriented story titled *Densha Otoko* (Train Boy) — an interactive literature work originally uploaded to 2ch (ni-channeru), a well-known anonymous BBS[2] forum in Japan — enjoyed great success through multimedia marketing, appearing as a printed book, manga, a movie, TV drama, and a play. The story features an introverted *otaku* (technology geek) seeking a way to ask a gorgeous girl to go out with him, presenting the typical male tastes in cyberspace.

The image of otaku certainly stereotypes an introvert and unstylish male who reversely becomes active and aggressive in the anonymous cyberspace. In fact, there is a firmly rooted dichotomous thinking in Japan that, while males are loyal and active users of new technology, females are less enthusiastic and are thus slow to adopt new devices. As a creative force on the online platform, women had been regarded as lagging behind technological trends, unless they were related to the so-called feminine genres such as fashion and cosmetics. However, the phenomenal success of *keitai shôsetsu* worked as counter-evidence of this prejudice, to prove the power of females as a creative drive and savvy consumers of new technology. Hjorth (2009) accurately noted that the mobile platform has provided a niche for Japanese female users to exert their creativity to reflect their own tastes.

Meanwhile, *keitai shôsetsu* found itself the subject of social criticism and public anxiety. Because its story often deals with such sensational issues as teenage sex, group bullying in school, rape, teen pregnancy, and abortion, it cannot escape the denunciation of lacking reality in the Japanese teen's context. The writing style of *keitai shôsetsu* also became the target of severe criticism, as the stories tend to contain grammatically incorrect or misspelled words. While the young amateur writers of

keitai shôsetsu often use unskilled and juvenile expressions, the frequent grammatical errors are partly due to its colloquial writing styles, often centered on a series of conversations or short expressions for readers' emotional immersion and enjoyment. Because of the combination of unrealistic story composition and poor expression, professional writers and critics alike despised *keitai shôsetsu* as a sort of "false literature", supported only by immature youngsters.

In the aftermath of the runaway success of Koizora, only a handful of the *keitai shôsetsu* sold well in paper book form, and the amount of social attention paid to *keitai shôsetsu* has declined amidst sluggish sales. When the website *Maho-No-Airando*, the largest *keitai shôsetsu* distributor, was sold to a giant publishing company in 2011, social discourses started mentioning *keitai shôsetsu* as a transient phenomenon that had run its course. Although the phenomenon itself disappeared from public attention, a survey released in 2011[3] showed that the reading public of *keitai shôsetsu* is growing in line with the increase in smartphone use. Furthermore, dozens of commercial *keitai shôsetsu* websites are still operating with a profitable business model, transforming interactive literature into printed books for sale (Figure 1). In other words, *keitai shôsetsu* succeeded in making inroads into the privileged position of Japanese literary circles, to prove the emergence of new creativity on the mobile platform by young generations.

Image 1. Maho No Airando is actively running its *keitai shôsetsu* channel. Accessed December 2, 2016.

Exclusively for *keitai:* From insiders' voices

As *keitai shôsetsu* involves a wide range of literary communication, such as reading, writing, or sharing comments on mobile phones, one key question is how to approach literary creativity on the most up-to-

date technological platform. This has hitherto been a relatively ignored issue, overwhelmed by discourses on the novelty of mobile technology as well as the strong stereotype of traditional literature. In this regard, in my ethnographic research on authors and loyal readers of *keitai shôsetsu* in urban areas of Japan since 2009 (Kim, 2012), I focused more on a subjective and voluntary aspect of their creativity rather than an objective and social interpretation of mobile media and literature itself.

Although the specific circumstances of experiences differ from person to person, in many cases the presence of *keitai* seemed an overwhelming and critical element of "doing *keitai shôsetsu*". The majority of *keitai shôsetsu* consumers exclusively chose mobile media as their favorite platform for both writing and reading. In fact, most consumers opposed the argument that they were forced to read the literature on their mobile platforms because they had no access to other media, such as a PC. Many instead insisted that the mobile media was the best interface for maximizing their enjoyment, and that other media would not allow them to savor the content to its full extent:

> I've read the same *keitai shôsetsu* on both the *keitai* and PC since I liked the story very much. I even read it in paperback form. But only reading on *keitai* moved me to tears. *Keitai shôsetsu* has its own expression, one that's best delivered through *keitai*. [S, female, 21, college student]

This can be understood in relation to the material characteristics of the dominant *keitai* models in Japan at the time, which were mostly the flip-close types with vertically rectangular and smaller screens (compared to those of early smartphone models). As most *keitai shôsetsu* websites provided a best-viewed interface for these domestic models, the genre's production required not only the plotting of a story, but also an integration and interspersion of expressions painstakingly tailored for, or highly restricted by, the mobile interface of *keitai* (Figure 2). An author of *keitai shôsetsu* explained that:

> The story and characters are of course very important, but it's also critical to imagine what it will look like on *keitai* screens when you write a story. For example, I'm paying the closest attention to the line spacing of the text. I enter some blank lines intentionally when I want readers to take a few minutes to scroll down before going to

Image 2. The reading and writing of *keitai shôsetsu* was most favorably performed with the dominant models in Japan at the time. Photographed in June, 2009.

the next sentence. That way, I can control how they dwell on the emotions of characters. [Y, female, 23, office worker]

Some authors tried to maintain a more strategic attitude, saying they even paid close attention to managing technological conditions so as to reach more readers and make them stick to their stories. As one respondent stated:

I pay particular attention to what time I should update new content. I usually post a new text during the day. I know some readers set a notice function so that they'll be immediately notified that new content has been posted. Once I put up a new text late at night, when everyone was in all likelihood sleeping, and not many people accessed this new content the next day. [T, female, 21, college student]

As a form of creative practice, *keitai shôsetsu* is not a simple presentation of fictional literature but rather an integrated expression exclusively designed for the material characteristics of mobile media. This raises the possibility that the phenomenon might be situated and better described within the framework of creative affordance to mobile media, rather than general discourses on interactive literature and digital content.

While the material conditions of the interface of mobile media seemed to be a crucial aspect for *keitai shôsetsu* enthusiasts, their choices were not only based on functional and practical reasons but were also

underpinned by the commitment to the specific environment of using mobile media. Many interviewees stated that their reading experiences tended to exclusively take place at a designated time and place. For example, a respondent described her emotional encounter with *keitai shôsetsu* as follows:

> I started reading *keitai shôsetsu* because I was suffering from insomnia. I had trouble falling asleep so I wanted to make my eyes tired by reading something before sleeping. My first *keitai shôsetsu* was *Koizora*; it was a hot topic then. I actually stayed up all night so I could finish it. The story was so touching that I cried all night. From that point on I was totally hooked on *keitai shôsetsu*. I read them almost every night; that is, as long as I'm not so tired that I have to zonk out. It's ironic that it has now become another obstacle to sleep. [S, female, 20, college student]

This case is not at all extraordinary, as a significant number of respondents identified "in bed before sleeping" as the ideal situation for reading *keitai shôsetsu*. Playing with one's mobile media in bed before sleeping was a widespread practice among youngsters, being a place they experienced complete privacy and were the most likely to be able to relax (Figure 3).

Affective attachment and mobile intimacy seemed to serve as another pivot for creative activity, as many respondents mentioned their emotional moments and intimate sensitivity in writing and reading

Image 3. *Keitai shôsetsu* often delivers intimate and emotional messages, sometimes with erotic fantasy, suggesting readers' taste of reading alone before sleeping.

stories. A significant number of respondents related the experience of writing and reading *keitai shôsetsu* to that of exchanging *keitai* emails with close friends. They claimed that *keitai shôsetsu* was by no means a new or fresh experience, as they were already accustomed to *keitai* emails:

> *Keitai shôsetsu* are more akin to personal messages than serious literature. I became accustomed to *keitai shôsetsu* so quickly, because it doesn't feel that new. [Y, female, 26, office worker]

From the standpoint of how insiders actually understand and translate this phenomenon, cultural patterns of *keitai shôsetsu* – namely, how to coordinate writing, reading, and commenting on the literature on mobile broadband – should be positioned as the "remediation" (Bolter & Grusin, 1999) of email rather than literature. By exploring the insider's voice around *keitai shôsetsu*, we can begin to understand the technological context of young creators in Japan, as well as the emotional and intimate texture of creative labors with mobile media.

Literary creativity and a historical link

The preference for literary communication in Japanese mobile media use was reported in a recent survey in Japan (Matsuda et al., 2014), showing email (88%) rather than voice calls to be the preferred feature of mobile media as a communication tool. According to the results, this tendency was even prominent among the younger demographic and female users, suggesting that this most up-to-date technology is deliberately devoted to old-fashioned communications; that is, writing and reading rather than richer visual expression. The prosperity of literary expression and diverse creativity might be one of the distinct characteristics of Japanese cyberspace, especially when the early adaptation of wireless Internet with low bandwidth encouraged users to develop mobile communication strategies whereby one consumed less network capacity but could convey rich contexts. Certainly, *keitai shôsetsu*, as an emerging type of literary creativity, can be understood as an inheritor of this tendency.

Furthermore, as a creative use of a new device (*keitai*) within a contemporary social context (urban environment), the practical prototype of *keitai shôsetsu* can be found the early stage of postal media in Japan

during the Meiji era (Kim, 2014). Today, postal media, such as a letter or a postcard, may be suitably understood as parts of social system rather than as communication technology. However, in the early era of the postal system, sending and receiving a postal medium across geographical spaces was a novel way to create feelings of telepresence (Milne, 2010). When postcards first emerged as a medium for this new attraction, ordinary people used them to write short fictional stories, called *hagaki-shôsetsu* (hagaki means "postcard"; thus, "postcard novel").

It is not difficult to find the similarity between *keitai shôsetsu* and *hagaki-shôsetsu*, in the link of both the literary genre and the new medium of the day. It is interesting to note that, in other countries such as Mainland China and South Korea, there were attempts to build online mobile novel platforms, mainly prompted by the mega-hit of *Koizora* in Japan. However, neither of these countries achieved recognizable success. In this sense, *keitai shôsetsu* certainly provides a concrete example of the social appropriation and cultural customization of mobile technologies in Japan, revealing how new technology (mobile media) resonates with existing cultural prototypes (literature) to generate new creativity.

Conclusion: Mobile media as a creative platform

This article has sought to delineate *keitai shôsetsu* as an emerging creativity by the Japanese younger generation, by looking into a cultural mechanism that allows to build and handle their creativity in everyday experiences with mobile media. While *keitai shôsetsu* shares many of the cultural displays of interactive literature in cyberspace, this phenomenon cannot be fully understood without the consideration of *keitai* as a medium, or the gendered socio-historical context of Japanese society. In terms of the refashioning of email rather than literature, *keitai shôsetsu* is rather a cultural practice for relocating mobile media into one's everyday experiences, revealing its possibility as a new creative platform.

Many aspects of mobile media have been praised; however, the focus has been on its technological novelty and social role as a communication tool. With the convincing case of *keitai shôsetsu*, we can begin to understand how creative dynamism has been deployed around mobile media, and how new creativity is being evolved and modified by an

outsider group: young Japanese females. We need to understand this emerging issue surrounding new media in youngsters' creative activism in cyberspace, and to grasp diverse cultural moments in the midst of everyday practices. This new form of creativity revealed tensions between social innovation and harmful effect, both old and new, and in different social groups. The question of mobile media as a creative tool for both society and individuals could be a starting point in reflecting its path as a socio-cultural artefact.

Notes

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Line_(software)
2. BBS is an acronym for Bulletin Board System, commonly used in Japan to describe an online content platform mainly for reading and writing.
3. http://internetcom.jp/research/20110708/1.html

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8
A Shared Literary Experience

Youth Reading, Creativity and Virtual Performances

Alejandra Ravettino Destefanis

With the consumption of young adult (YA) literature by young adults position in git within the novelties of the publishing world, we must consider that this phenomenon is associated with other practices involving young people. In this regard, we need to recognize that an important part of this literature's success coincides with the emergence of spaces on the Web where young people around the globe write and create videos to give their opinion on recent releases. YA literature also has its own broadcasting means, redesigned from traditional marketing strategies. Books for young people circulate on virtual spaces which spread literary novelties: literary blogs, YouTube channels dedicated to recommending new book releases, communities, closed Facebook groups, and other social media like Twitter and Instagram.

For some years, on the YouTube platform, a group of book lovers have been occupying a space; they are what are known as *booktubers*, and they present and review books for young people to their peers.

So, who are these booktubers? They constitute a virtual global community which shares the pleasure of reading fictional works. They record videos, discussing literature and the actions related to the book: from the desires and expectations around a new release, to ways of acquiring, collecting and storing books. They complain about the lack of money, time and space, poor editions, and the excess of novelties. They feel confident enough to recommend books or

authors. They do not follow professional critics or specialist opinions. Besides reviewing the books, they show their personal libraries and offer recommendations as to how future booktubers should become initiated in booktubing.

Like the age group targeted by YA literature, this is a large social collective which brings together adolescents and young people – both male and female– aged between 11 and 30 years; and although the booktuber phenomenon is originally an Anglo-Saxon movement it has moved to different territories, firmly taking root in Spain, Mexico, Colombia and Argentina. In Argentina in particular, the *Feria del Libro* (book fair) presents a novelty every year, and each edition increasingly targets young readers. In fact, for its 42nd edition, the *Feria* hosted the First International Booktuber Meeting, with participating young readers from Chile, Peru, Colombia, Argentina and other Spanish-speaking countries.[1]

Other activities that are gathering supporters among the younger public, compatible with the YouTube platform, are booktalks (debates about books involving different readers) and book hauls (presentations of new publications and the most recent purchases made by booktubers themselves).

Literature consumption by youngsters

In recent years, the literature choice for the younger audience has undergone a marked transformation. Simultaneously with classic authors –Charlotte Brontë (1847), Jane Austen (1813), Mark Twain (1876), Jules Verne (1865) and Daniel Defoe (1719), to mention only a few– a new wave of dystopian, romantic, fantastic and mythological works has emerged. This type of literature, which is experiencing huge growth in terms of publication numbers, is referred to as YA (Young Adult), a term coined by the media and the readers themselves.[2]

For their part, publishers, aware of how this growth drives the production of the book market, tend to have a label or a specialist in youth literature with which they release at least one or two copies per month.[3]

What subject do they tackle? These fictional works nearly always have adolescents or young people as the protagonists and are presented in the saga format, thus ensuring continuity in the story. The stories tend to portray interpersonal relations –friendship, companionship,

sentimental relationships– in a "positive light", and some even address more complex themes like illness, bullying, unwanted pregnancy and sexual abuse.[4]

Which youth literature classics, if published today for the first time, would fit into YA literature? Possibly *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger (1951), *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (1813), *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (1960), *The Outsiders* by Susan Hinton (1967), or *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding (1954).

Who are the readers? From the age of 12, young people consume these books, and although some believe the upper limit of the age range is 17 –given the subjects discussed, the characters and the narrative core– many adults also enjoy the books. In particular, in a study conducted among young Argentinians aged over18 years old, a large proportion of those surveyed had recently read titles within this genre (Ravettino Destefanis, 2016).

It is a niche market made up of a loyal and socially active audience, keen to discover new experiences. Evidently, these YA book readers constitute a coveted group in the publishing industry. According to a study by Bowler (2012), these young people are:"the first to adopt", for example e-book reading; "committed", since if the book they are seeking is not available in electronic format they buy it in print; "loyal", because they tend to read a favourite author's previous books; and "socially active", as although more than half of those surveyed admitted to not taking part in a reading group, they are active on social networks and often receive recommendations from friends.[5]

Some believe that it is sufficient to regard *literature* as a creative reading offer; that it is an art form without adjectives. That is to say that there is no need, except for the commercial aspect, to categorize it into an age group. Although literature aimed at younger readers has its idiosyncratic marks, "literature" is a whole, and this young group should not need reading material marked by a transition from childhood to adulthood.

Two factors define the YA genre. One is the commercial aspect seeking to renew its image and stop being labelled "juvenile", which is deemed antiquated, to announce a novelty in the market which offers something different. The other defining factor of YA literature is the need to segment a group of young readers, 18-year-olds and over, to a

product defined by the themes of love, sex and suspense in romantic novels, epic sagas and vampirism (Perriconi, 2015).

What success do these books have? To answer this question, the scope of young people's expectations should be broadened to a space where images, hopes, wishes and experiences converge; in essence, we must *decipher young people's imaginary world*. Reconstructing the act of reading implies understanding how each community has genre classification systems which differentiate between fiction and truth, but also between the metaphorical and ironic discourse (Chartier, 1999); an imaginary group which works on plots, themes and characters, and simultaneously constitutes them.

Booktubers as acting readers

Can booktubers be considered "acting readers"? Yes, insofar as they *interpret their reading*: they enthusiastically prepare their performances, resorting to words, gestures, images and sounds. They construct eloquent stories. Their representations have become more sophisticated over time, as one can tell by looking at their trajectory, seeing how they have bettered themselves in terms of creativity and effort. They have turned their practice into a trade, and in some cases their efforts yield results every month. Their progress is greatly owed to their charisma, ingenuity, wit and histrionics. Several of these young people read the book they recommend in its original language; reading in both English and Spanish allows them to offer even more sophisticated literary critiques. They create stories from the ones they read. They turn a book into an audio-visual performance. Nevertheless, in their representations, a personal style emerges that ends up resembling someone else's style. Booktubers share their similar tastes for literature, but also share the style they use to represent their critiques: looking at the performances alone, one will notice that although they are original, the style is shared throughout the community.[6]

The multiplicity of virtual resources to which they have access means that their confessional practices rapidly spread and become well-known on the Web. As a sociological phenomenon, we need to consider how young people, by becoming involved in the sphere of digital communication, make the *digitalized social context* the centre of their life experience. As a result, a new youth identity appears, constituted by the

pleasure of reading and the virtual community experience. In short, new *ways of being and acting in the world of young people* emerge as a result of the *literary and cultural consumption* that is shared and broadcasted.

The previously set ways of communicating reading material have changed. We could go so far as to state that booktubers operate as real *reading facilitators*. Likewise, they have opened a direct communication channel between writers, publishers and readers. As such, the dynamic imposed by these active readers has enabled publishers to approach them with a sales strategy for their books, leaving the traditional broadcasting channels to the side and teaming up with these young readers, sending them copies to review and inviting them to specific literary events such as book presentations and signings.

Another contemporary example uniting readers and producers is the fanfiction phenomenon. For example, fans of the *Twilight* series wrote a blog which gave rise to *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E.L. James[7] –which young people from the survey themselves mentioned having read, but to a lesser extent (Ravettino Destefanis, 2016).

Another contemporary practice which gives an account of the alliance between young readers and publishers is the recent initiative by the producers of the *Twilight* saga to encourage the spread of stories in order to continue it.[8] Could this modus operandi not be considered the modern version of the participation of 18th-century novel readers who sent letters to authors? Even the blog novel phenomenon, which has already been in the virtual literary circle for several years, is characterized by the active –and at times, collaborative– participation of its readers and by the immediacy between the writing and the publication as it is made up of releases. In this regard, if until the 20thcentury, newspapers were a first step towards the publishing of novels in a book format, from the 21st century onwards, Internet publications could be fulfilling that same role.[9]In short, readers' participation in the creative process and the periodic release of literature appear to go back a long time.

New information and communication technologies favour the emergence of the autobiographical story of the booktuber. Since the very start, the media have modified the way in which information circulates, demanding a redefinition of *the discursivity and the appropriation of contents*. While in the past, newspapers, radio and television provided

a space for the reinterpretation of old discourses and reports, today it is the Internet which has that role. In the same way that a self-report –the creation of the I reader– emerges in the booktubers' performances, an *interpretative community* (De Certeau, 1996) appears, which keeps a reduced space for traditional individual and silent reading, and revolves more around participative and collaborative reading. In this regard, digital technology does not only refer to the novelty of mobile devices and appliances, but also to new ways of perceiving and of language, to new sensitivities and writing which gradually alter the experience of reading (Martin Barbero 2005).

In short, the booktuber phenomenon embodies the willingness to create a community that is looking for common attributes with other users/readers, to establish a conversational dynamic and present the act of reading as a fundamental social act of its own accord. That is to say, the identity-related axis in the self-report discourse is produced in the performative practice itself and in the creation of bonds which generate common, virtual and global narratives whereby books and reading operate as a connection with "the other".

Notes

1. The cultural eventgeared towards adolescent readers (which brought together booktubers, bloggers and bookstagrammers) was boosted by the international presence of young writers for several days at the fair. <http://www.el-libro.org.ar/internacional/propuestas-culturales> [Accessed 31 January 2016].
2. Literature for Young Adults, abbreviated as YA or Ya-Lit, is gaining knowledge all over the world and can be defined as literature for young people (12 to 17 years old), despite having many readers from other age groups (over 18 years). It separates itself from children's literature by leaving aside the ingenuity of the protagonists and concentrating on more adult themes.
3. According to the publishing company V&REditoras, James Dashner, author of the *The Maze Runner* series, had sold 6,500,000 copies worldwide by last year. The first two books of the trilogy already have a film version, and the adaptation of the next book into a film is underway. The best-selling saga-film version dynamic is being repeated in other YA titles around the world, for instance *Twilight*, *The Hunger Games* and *The 5th Wave*. For its part, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J. K. Rowling, first published nearly 20 years ago, set the standard for this new youth trend. SOURCE: Oliva, Lorena. (2016). Literatura Young Adults: ¿negocio o pasión por leer? *La Nación*, 08 mayo 2016 [online]. Available at <https://goo.gl/lxwTrO>. [Accessed 31 January 2016].

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4. Oliva, Lorena. (2016). Literatura Young Adults: ¿negocio o pasiónpor leer? *La Nación*, 08 May 2016 [online]. Available at <https://goo.gl/lxwTrO>. [Accessed 31 January 2016].

5. Bowker Market Research. (2012). Young Adult Books Attract Growing Numbers of Adult Fans. Bowker, 13 September 2012 [online]. Available at <https://goo.gl/NUglmH>. [Accessed 31 January 2016].

6. As an example of renowned booktubers and pioneers in the trade, we can mention Christine from PolandBananasBooks, with over a hundred thousand followers, and JesseTheReader, who has exceeded 50thousand subscribers. At the following link, a blogger recommends Argentinian booktubers <http://goo.gl/aeOcNG>. [Accessed 31 January 2016].

7. The idea came about between 2009 and 2011 as a fanfiction piece written by *Twilight* followers, one of whom was E.L. James. Access to these texts was free and could be gained through fanfiction.net. The British writer, who based her story on the protagonists of Meyer's novel, shared the chapters she wrote, which eventually became the trilogy *Fifty Shades of Grey*. At the beginning, the compendium of chapters was called *Master of the Universe*, until the publisher acquired the publishing rights and the stories were removed from the Web. Eventually, both author and publisher decided to readapt the original texts and remove any references to the *Twilight* saga. SOURCE: Melty (2013). Cincuenta sombras de Grey: 5 cosas que deberías saber. *Melty.es*, 14 April 2013 [online]. Available at <https://goo.gl/QP4C6a>. [Accessed 31 January 2016].

8. Stephenie Meyer, the author of *Twilight*, and Lionsgate Entertainment, the production company in charge of its cinematographic adaptation, reached an agreement with Facebook that during 2015, the social network would release five short films. Through the competition "The Storytellers: New Creative Voices of The Twilight Saga", five directors would be chosen to write the new stories. The winners were selected by public vote as well as a panel of experts –made up exclusively of women– including the writer herself, actresses Kate Winslet, Julie Bowen and Octavia Spencer, the protagonist and the president of the association Women In Film, Cathy Schulman. SOURCE: Bishop, Brian. (2014). New 'Twilight' Short Films Are Coming to Facebook. *The Hollywood Reporter,* 30 September 2014 [online]. Available at <https://goo.gl/y9lTpp>. [Accessed 31 January 2016].

9. Furthermore, the blognovel has a format in which the posts replace what was initially organized into chapters. Both saga and blognovel readers can access the text through any release and can therefore "pick up the already commenced novel"; this is why each of the releases is updated with the progression of the story, which characters are acting at the time, and what has happened in the immediate past. The difference between the saga and the blognovel lies in how it is updated. While the saga presents an analysis summary of the facts and descriptions of the characters, blognovels provide this information through hyperlinks on the names of the characters (Ravettino Destefanis 2011).

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9

Internet *Mukbang* (Foodcasting) in South Korea

Seok-Kyeong Hong & Sojeong Park

As the saying goes, "We are what we eat"; food is closely related to one's identity. Recently in Korea, Internet users have shed new light on eating through online content called *mukbang*[1]. *Mukbang* is primarily known as an online broadcast genre of Afreeca TV[2], the largest MCN (Multi-Channel Network) in Korea. Individuals called BJs (Broadcasting Jockeys) can broadcast whatever content they want, and viewers can tune in to any channel and enjoy watching them while chatting with the BJs. At the time of writing (2016), about 3,500 channels are on air every day and typically 150-300 thousand users access the live broadcasts. Afreeca TV provides a virtual space for people to communicate whatever they want.

After Afreeca TV began service in 2006, it gained sudden popularity during the anti-US beef import protest of 2008.[3] *Mukbang* appeared on Afreeca TV the same year, and has since then expanded dramatically in numbers and formats. Today, 10-15 per cent of all the channels offer the *mukbang* genre, with many BJs displaying their own styles of eating and broadcasting.

The fact that BJs earn a great deal of money by eating on screen surprised the media. They covered this new phenomenon with great attention, especially its economy system: Afreeca TV has a unique profit system entailing the "star balloon", a type of currency within Afreeca TV. Viewers send star balloons to BJs as a sign of appreciation. One star

160622 먹방 거대 대형 빅사이즈 초밥 (Big size sushi 巨大醋—)

657,399 views   👍 2K   👎 487   ➡ SHARE   ≡+   •••

balloon costs 10 cents, and viewers can send them to BJs as much as they want while watching a program. Afreeca TV usually gets 30-40 per cent of the profit, while the BJs get 60-70 per cent. Through this process, popular *mukbang* BJs can earn as much as thousands of dollars a night.

As *mukbang* has gained in popularity, television programs have adopted its terms and ideas, and new programs appropriating features of *mukbang* have been successful. This phenomenon provides an interesting case of Internet subculture transforming the legitimate discourse produced by conventional media.

This article examines *mukbang*, as provided by Afreeca TV, and analyzes its implications on contemporary Korean society. Defining *mukbang* as a new and unique phenomenon developed in a specific socio-historical context of Korea, we will discuss its aesthetics and ethics, which break the norms of traditional food culture and challenge the social norms governing the body and subjectivity. Furthermore, this

study addresses the question of how cultural practices on the Internet have challenged the legitimate food culture on TV programs.

Eating in the wonderland of *mukbang*

BJs, the eaters

"The Diva", an attractive young woman with a perfect body, is one of the most famous *mukbang* BJs. Nearly every day she eats in front of the camera, live broadcasting this for about three hours. Her meals usually consist of multiple courses with abnormally large portions. For example, she eats five portions of noodles and a kilo of chicken in two hours, or four different kinds of large pizzas. Sometimes she stimulates her viewers' senses via sounds sizzling of meat, chewing, or the dripping of sauce. This usually accompanies her description of the food's taste.

Besides the Diva, over 1,000 BJs provide *mukbang*. We observed 30 *mukbang* BJs who are currently active, and tried to clarify some of their typologies. The first type can be called the "big food fighter". BJs of this type have a large, over-sized physique. They frequently launch food challenges: one of them once attempted to finish five bowls of Chinese-style Korean noodles in a very short time. Another has finished ten bowls of this noodle dish in ten minutes, which is a record no other BJ has yet broken. Another has eaten a hundred pieces of sushi at one sitting. And so it goes.

The second type is the "calm eater". Calm eaters rarely make a fuss, instead only focusing on eating. They do not attempt any extreme challenges, but they do eat quite large portions of foods neatly and with great delight. They provide information about the food and kindly answer viewer questions. Some give detailed information about a new brand or new food on the market, as well as a highly analytical explanation of the food. Others show unique layouts on the screen in order to stimulate viewers' visual and auditory senses.

The third type is the "weirdo", who broadcasts eccentric behaviors. An overweight person displaying a grotesque and tough eating style is considered so hilarious that it is even known among foreigners. A man wearing strange makeup demonstrates odd *mukbang*, such as wrestling with a large octopus while cooking or popping corn in a frying pan, causing it to pop all around the room, which appeals a great deal to viewers.

The fourth type is the "cook". Cook BJs actually cook and eat the foods they make, explaining the recipes to the viewers. Some have previously worked as cooks at hotels or other institutions. Making use of their experience, they provide both *cookbang*, and *mukbang*.

The fifth type is the "pretty boy/girl". BJs of this type usually focus on their looks and communicate with their fans. *Mukbang* seems to be a subordinate theme here, since they do not eat much and talk very little about food. They set up the lighting to make their facial complexion look fair. Female BJs wear heavy makeup and sexy outfits, and some male BJs show their pretty faces and slim bodies as well.

Fried chicken and convenience stores:
The social implications of food in mukbang

Fried chicken appears the most frequently on *mukbang*. In Korea, fried chicken is popular as a late-night snack and is usually delivered. There are two crucial moments that have formed people's particular perception of fried chicken. The first was in 1997, when the economic crisis struck Korea. Many of those who lost their jobs at the time opened fried chicken stores with their severance pay; otherwise, a great number of these people would have been ruined. Since then, there is a perception in Korea that fried chicken stores are one of the last solutions for those who have been fired or retire from their careers. Furthermore, during the 2002 World Cup, the demand for fried chicken increased dramatically as Koreans consume it, along with beer, while watching football matches on TV. As a result, the number of fried chicken stores soared from 10,000 to 25,000, creating the conception of fried chicken as the most popular delivery food.

Many BJs also consume foods from convenience stores, buying instant foods, and even ingredients such as eggs and onions, there. According to Jeon (2013), the convenience store is an emblem of the "McDonaldization of society" and is a new urban infrastructure in the highly individualized contemporary society. Korean cities, especially Seoul, are full of so-called "homo nomads", students and workers living apart from their families. To these people, convenience stores provide food efficiently and comfortably, since they are stocked with all kinds of items. In another sense, the convenience store is an impersonalized space that economizes one's efforts.

Besides fried chicken, a variety of delivery foods are consumed in *mukbang* – not only pizza and Chinese food, but virtually everything, is deliverable in Korea, from hamburgers to sukiyaki. Recently, the term "nation of delivery' was coined for Koreans, portraying the country's excellent food delivery system. According to Choi (2013), Korea's delivery system reflects the society's exhaustion, whereby people are obsessed with finishing things as quickly as possible.

In sum, what BJs eat contains multidimensional meanings that reflect the current history of Korean society. The prevalence of impersonal relationships and individualization are materialized in their menus. Even though they are consuming junk food, eating this food appeals to many viewers and elicits empathy.

The aesthetics and ethics of *mukbang*

Mukbang exhibits unique aesthetics and ethics, which transgress the conventional norms of the food culture in Korea. First of all, it detaches itself from traditional values regarding meals, such as healthiness and sincerity. Before 2008, all Korean TV food programs concentrated on healthiness: they usually introduced high-quality foods provided by legitimate restaurants, regional foods with a long history, healthy recipes for homemade meals, and information about healthy ingredients. The foods presented by the media were attractively prepared and served in a pleasant atmosphere with many people gathered around. These are fundamentally important aspects of the Korean traditional table, and the media did their best to support them.

However, *mukbang* values neither the good nutrition nor the cozy sentiment that comes from whole-hearted food. It encourages viewers to enjoy instant meals, frozen foods, and junk foods that are easily affordable at convenience stores. Also, BJs mostly eat spicy or greasy foods with a high caloric content. Therefore, the *mukbang* menus are far from what conventional food programs would portray. A few BJs do cook the food themselves, but they still lack the cozy sentiment of the traditional table and the common sense of cooking. For example, a BJ called Mr. Jaw makes popcorn in a frying pan, enjoying the corn popping all over the place, and BJ Pooh makes onigiri that is as big as his head.

Secondly, *mukbang* reverses table manners by showing people grabbing or shoveling food, and devouring it sloppily. Since BJs con-

tinuously communicate with their viewers, they frequently talk with their mouths full. They do not hide the sounds of their eating, but rather emphasize them to deliver a liveliness and stimulate viewers' senses. Some BJs moan, cough, and curse while they eat spicy foods. They don't mind blowing their noses, burping, or even spitting. While some viewers express disgust at these behaviors, most accept them as natural and authentic reactions of the BJs. These rude table manners are typically detected among male BJs. This strengthens the gender stereotype of eating, in which men are allowed to eat wildly but women are expected to maintain their grace. Even though some female BJs are known to eat large portions of food and shovel it in their mouths, they still manage to look pleasant.

Thirdly, BJs repetitively challenge themselves to eat extremely spicy food, which looks quite sadistic. They moan, cry out, cough, and have a runny nose while eating these foods. Many viewers find this funny, and

칠리새우 쟁반짬뽕 군만두 공기밥 먹방 Mukbang eating show 170903

801,537 views

ask them to eat other, new spicy foods or add more capsaicin powder to increase the spiciness. This aspect is interesting, as it also shows a gender difference: it is usually male BJs who challenge themselves to eat foods in a sadistic way. They continue adding spiciness for fun, or in desire of conquest: the more spiciness they endure, the more viewers will like them and the more manly they believe they look. A few female BJs enjoy eating spicy foods, but they hold back their pain or express it in a calmer way. Sometimes they look erotic while eating this type of food, breathing heavily and moaning, thereby exciting some viewers and earning balloons from them.

Lastly, *mukbang* portrays BJs swallowing masses of calories of food, neglecting the social pressure to have a slender body. In other words, BJs explicitly show themselves abusing their own bodies. In contemporary Korean society great attention is paid to body size, but *mukbang* BJs do not seem to care about this tacit social requirement on body. Many of them consume tens of thousands of calories at a time, usually at night. Yet most female BJs are slimmer than the average Korean woman. Many viewers find this surprising, and frequently ask about their weight. This transgresses the universal law that the more one eats, the more weight one gains.

The social context of *mukbang*

Single-person households

One of the most noticeable changes in Korea's social structure is the increase in single-person households. According to 2015 population statistics, there are about 5.2 million single-person households; this accounts for 27 per cent of all households and is the first household type to surpass the traditional four- or three-person household. It is predicted that this figure will rise continuously, to reach 34 per cent in 2035. This change is partly attributed to the increase in senior citizens living alone due to aging, but also to the increase in young people in their twenties and thirties living alone, reluctant to marry due to their unstable careers. These young single-person households have affected the industry and consumption structure to such a degree that the term "single economy" has appeared.

This change serves as an important background to the advent of *mukbang*. It is not pleasurable for single-person households to prepare

Table 1. Number and percentage of single-person households in Korea

Year	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Number	382,743	660,941	1,021,481	1,642,406	2,224,433	3,170,675	4,142,165	5,203,440
Percentage	4.8	6.9	9.0	12.7	15.5	20.0	24.9	27.2

Source: Statistics Korea (2015). Demographic Trend Census

food only for themselves and eat alone in silence, as this lacks the cozy atmosphere of a family gathering. So they tend to face the TV or a computer monitor while eating, with *mukbang* serving as their "meal mate", soothing their loneliness during mealtime. People usually access *mukbang* around mealtime or late-night snack time.

The particularity of the Asian table culture can be a complementary explanation for the advent of *mukbang*.[4] Since the staple food of Asian countries is rice, a culture of side dishes has developed. Therefore, unlike Western countries, Koreans serve several kinds of side dishes and consume them together. So regardless of whether one lives with family or not, one has to set a table consisting of several dishes; this is a great burden to single-person households, most of which contain people in their twenties to early thirties, who lack the knowledge, ability and time for cooking.

Mukbang fulfills both the physical and sentimental hunger of single-person households. First, it fulfills viewers' physical hunger by providing simple recipes or tips for eating alone. BJs introduce newly released small-portion foods that can be prepared easily. Also, while people living alone often cannot order diverse menus at one time, many BJs are gourmands who eat a great deal of diverse foods in one sitting, thereby offering viewers a vicarious satisfaction.

As Georg Simmel said, "the shared meal…lifts an event of physiological primitivity and inescapable commonality into the sphere of social interaction" (Probyn, 1999), while eating alone lacks social interaction. Food definitely plays a social role that creates bonds between people.[5] Many single-person households are in want of this bond, but are sufficiently individualized to have given up finding someone to share a meal with. Instead, they try to overcome their sentimental hunger through the interactive nature of *mukbang*. They soothe their loneliness by eating in front of a computer and communicating via the keyboard.

Therefore, *mukbang* is a channel that somewhat drags people out toward social communication. Still, the question remains as to whether this can create a sincere bond and serve a communal function.

Internet, the surplusage generation, and media culture

As Korea entered an information-intensive society within a very short period, the Internet became a very powerful media tool that influenced society in general. The collective power formed in cyberspace satirizes the mainstream culture; and people strengthen their online networking with the object in which they can be immersed, weakening offline networking (Lee, 2010). These characteristics are backgrounds to the Korean Internet culture that began appearing in the 2000s.

Korea's Internet culture accompanied the recent phenomenon of "surplusage culture". "Surplusage" ("(잉여; Ying-Yeo) is a neologism indicating a person wandering around cyberspace, creating parodies, compounds, and distorted expressions, investing their abundant time capital. These activities that seem tedious and useless make up a great cultural stream on the Internet. Surplusage culture is characterized as useless, extreme, trivial, stupid, reckless, and immature.[6] Kim (2011) defines the activity of surplusage as something that is done with a great self-satisfying passion but is not given any value at all in a social sense.

Mukbang is definitely an activity of surplusage in the sense that Kim explains. *Mukbang* BJs consider themselves surplusage. Their food challenges and eating in front of strangers are completely useless things, except for a few BJs who earn enough money to allow them not to have to hold other jobs. Most BJs start their broadcasts solely for their own satisfaction and fun. *Mukbang* viewers consider themselves surplusage as well. They are conscious that they have nothing to do except watch the dumb behavior of other surplusages and sneer at themselves.

In contemporary Korean society, the young generation is suffering from severe competition and high unemployment rates. Many young people find themselves without a job or affiliation after a long education, and feel lost. Officially, most of them can be classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The number of NEET in Korea has increased to 1.63 million, which accounts for 17 per cent of youth aged 15 to 29 years. Some 42 per cent of these young NEET
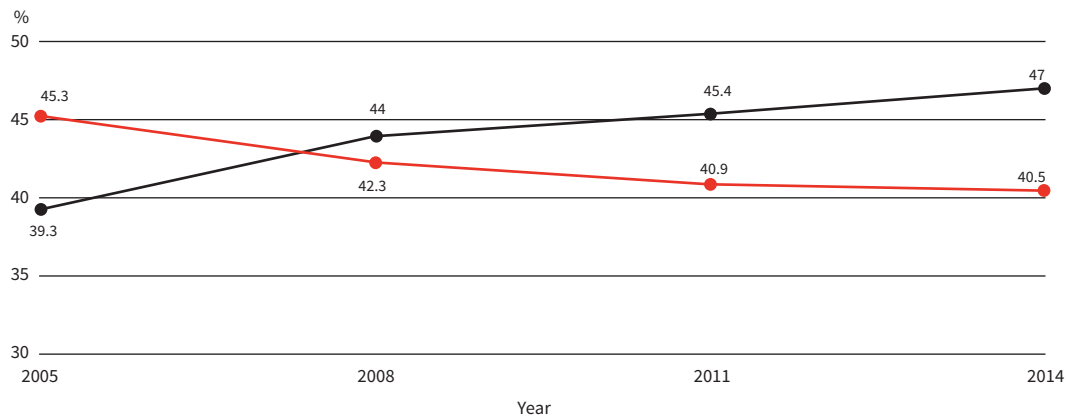
Figure 1.   Rate of students and employed among non-NEET, aged 15 to 29 (per cent)

Source: Hyundai Research Institute (2015). Characteristics and Implications of Young NEET.

are without a job for more than a year. Graph 1 indicates the rate of students and employed among the population aged 15 to 29, and shows that the rate of students is rising while that of those who are employed is decreasing. This implies that a growing number of students in their twenties postpone graduation, failing to find a decent job. Since their student status gives them a feeling of belonging or stability, they tend to remain students. Thus, the percentage of the NEET could be more than statistics indicators, and the fear of NEET being their near future is a shared sentiment among the young population.

The parent generation of the NEET had to survive the post-economic crisis of 1997, with many opening fried chicken or convenience stores as their last resort, as mentioned. The NEET, who are in the aftermath of the economic crisis of the late 2000s, do not even dare start a business. The prevalent sense of "social loser" among young people and their socioeconomic status as NEET sustain the online surplusage culture. Consuming fried chicken and convenience store foods on camera, and watching it, might be one of the ways of enduring this time of defeatism.

Conclusion:
Subcultural power and the hegemonic process

As *mukbang* gained in popularity, a hegemonic process taken on by conventional TV is observed: new TV food programs have recently appropriated the culinary aesthetics and ethical attitudes developed by Internet *mukbang* (Hong & Park, 2016). Conventional food programs have typically introduced fancy foods cooked by professional chefs, or exotic foods that are not available in everyday life. Also, they have always emphasized the healthiness of foods and recipes. But, as they embrace the ethics of *mukbang*, they have started portraying junk food such as instant, frozen, and high-calorie foods. The standard of excellence concerning food has been altered as well. Its excellence was originally evaluated based on taste, presentation, the elaborateness of recipes, and the professionalism of chefs. But after *mukbang's* influence on TV, it is judged only by the eater's satisfaction. If the eater is content with the food, it does not matter how much fat or spice is used to prepare it. Thus, the hegemony of judgement for cooking and food has shifted from top-class chefs to ordinary eaters.

TV programs do not exactly copy the formats of Internet *mukbang*, but rather adapt them to the television platform by negotiating with the norms of conventional food programs: they are either aired on a cable channel (which requires less public responsibility than terrestrial channels) or aired late at night on terrestrial channels; and they omit, dilute or rework the components of Internet *mukbang*.

Also, TV appropriates Internet *mukbang*, rearticulating the dominant differential system of gender into a new format. In traditional food culture it is the woman who cooks for the family, with the exception that the man does the cooking when it comes to "creation".[7] This role division between the sexes seemed nullified in Internet *mukbang*, with women and men eating on both sides of the screen and the cooking diminished to an instant boiling or replaced with delivery foods. But in the *mukbang*-influenced TV programs most cooking guests are men, and professional male chefs are considered sexy; on the other hand, men as everyday cooks and nurturers are portrayed as effeminate. This representation still holds onto the dominant ideology of the sexual labor division between the creator/producer and the re-creator/reproducer.

However, we can still say that it is a remarkable phenomenon that *mukbang* is imposing negotiations for TV to deal with a new system of value regarding the food culture, even though it is contrary to the justified and consensual values of good nutrition. This proves how powerful the influence of the Internet media culture on contemporary Korean society is. *Mukbang*, marked by its special expressivity, resonates with the social and communicational needs of the surplusage generation, the majority of them living alone and eating alone. The generational dimension of Internet *mukbang* and its anti-conventional aesthetics and ethics toward the body and the diet permit us to interpret it as a unique subcultural practice. The self-consciousness of viewers' NEET situation and of the nature of the time-consuming "useless" activities they are practicing through *mukbang* creates a subcultural potential for the youth.

Notes

1. Abbreviation for food broadcasting in Korean, which can be translated to 'food-casting'. It includes all kinds of programs on TV and the Internet showing scenes of eating as an important part of the content.
2. Abbreviation for 'Any Free Casting' TV.
3. During the protest, thousands of people occupied the streets and police took action to control the demonstrators. People who were angry at the police brutality started filming with their portable recording devices to deliver lively scenes and expose the violence. In the process, Afreeca TV was mobilized as a main platform for these recordings.
4. The high rate of single-person households alone cannot explain the advent of *mukbang*, since Western countries also have a great deal of single-person households. In Northern European countries such as Denmark, Norway and Finland, the share of single-person households reached 40per cent in the 2000s. (URL: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People_in_the_EU_%E2%80%93_statistics_on_household_and_family_structures)
5. The word "companion" originates from the meaning "person who eats bread with someone else". In Korea as well, there are some words that indicate the importance of food in human relationship, such as "*bapjung*, an attachment that grows between people who share meals for a long time.
6. For example, some count the number of strawberry seeds in a strawberry yogurt pot, collect all the bones after eating chicken, or hack a certain Internet server for no reason.
7. The extreme majority of professional chefs are male.

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10

"Transmedia Storytelling as a Narrative Expansion"

Interview with Carlos Scolari

Carlos A. Scolari has a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics and Communication Languages (Catholic University of Milan, Italy) and a Degree in Social Communication (University of Rosario, Argentina). He is Associate Professor (tenure) at the Department of Communication of the University Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona, Spain). Researcher specialized in transmedia storytelling, collaborative culture, user-generated contents, narratology, and semiotics of new media. Professor in different master and PhD courses in Europe and Latin America[1].

Could you give us an introduction about the concepts of Transmedia Literacy and Transmedia Storytelling?

As Henry Jenkins put it, at the most basic level transmedia stories "are stories told across multiple media". Transmedia Storytelling is not just an adaptation from one media to another: it is a narrative expansion. This textual dispersion is one of the most important sources of complexity in contemporary popular culture. This narrative expansion is one of the basic properties of transmedia storytelling; the second one is the participation of users in that narrative expansion. How? Producing new contents, for example parodies, new stories, trailers, mashups, or recapitulations. Only in Fancfiction.net Harry Potter's fans have shared more than 730,000 new stories! This is the territory of participatory cultures, one of the most interesting phenomena emerging from contemporary media ecology. In this context, we are working around a

new concept: transmedia literacy. From our perspective, transmedia literacy could be understood as a set of skills, practices, values, priorities, sensibilities, and learning/sharing strategies developed and applied in the context of the new participatory cultures. If traditional literacy was book-centred or, in the case of media literacy, mostly television-centred, then multimodal literacy places digital networks and interactive media experiences at the centre of its analytical and practical experience. Traditional forms of literacy generally treated the subject as illiterate, while media literacy focused on the consumer as a passive spectator; transmedia literacy, however, considers the subject to be a prosumer (producer + consumer). Another essential element of transmedia literacy is the learning space. The institutional learning environment for traditional forms of literacy is the school, but new generations are now developing their transmedia literacy skills outside the school (from YouTube to online forums, social media, and blogs). These informal learning spaces will be a key component of transmedia literacy research.

You are the researcher leader of Transmedia Literacy project funded by European Union. What can you tell us about it?

We want to introduce new questions and challenges to traditional media literacy. If traditional media literacy was about how to teach youths to deal with (broadcast) media, in this case we are proposing different questions: What are teens doing with media? What do they know? How did they learn to do it? Teens are doing many things with media! They play videogames, share pictures, learn to solve problems, create new contents, and manage their online life. Where did they learn to do that? Outside the school. These are the main research questions of the Transmedia Literacy H2020 research project. The research started in April 2015 and will finish in March 2018. We are developing the research in eight countries.

Why is it important to focus on non-formal educational settings when investigating teens uses of media?

Because most of their knowledge about new interactive media comes from non-formal and informal environments. When a child or a teen
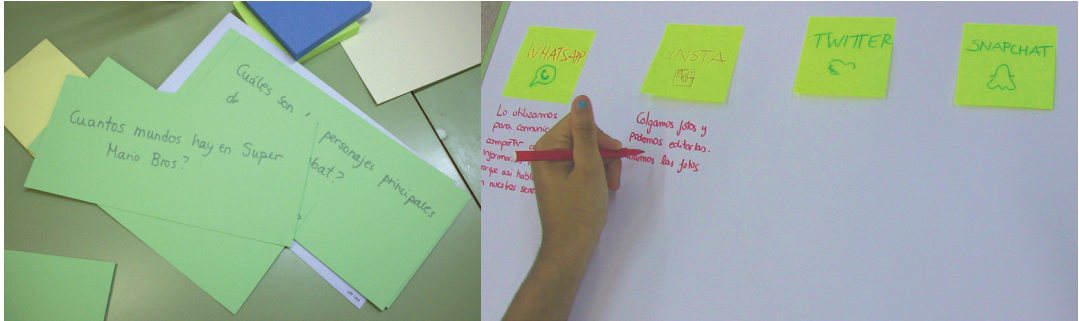
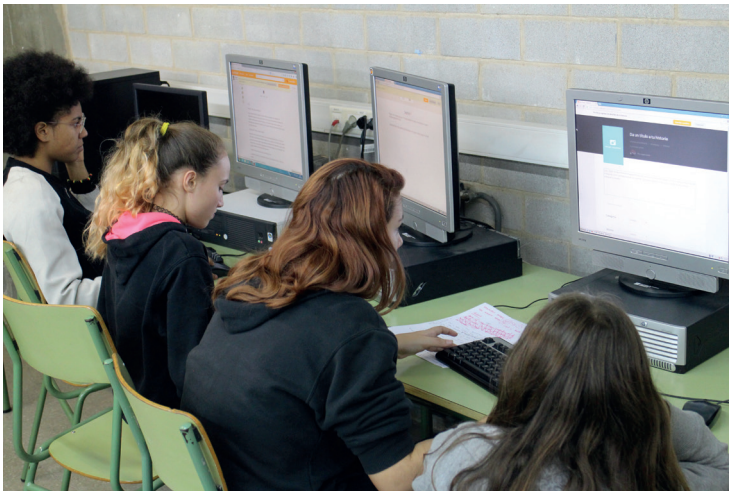**Image 1 & 2.** Students analyse and reflect on social media and transmedia narrative worlds

Image 3. Students during the narrative workshop (fanfiction production / narrative expansions)

has a problem to solve (How to move to next level in this videogame? How to manipulate an Instagram filter?), they do not ask their parents or the teachers: they check their favourite YouTube channels, ask their friends or consult an online community. We should be able to map this territory, identify the 'transmedia skills' they are developing outside the school and be able to exploit these skills inside the classroom. In this context, at the end of the Transmedia Literacy project we will produce a Professor's Kit so any teacher can download didactic activities to exploit the transmedia skills inside the school.

What is the project status until now and expected outcomes?

Right now (November 2016) we are finishing the fieldwork in the different countries and starting the data processing. Even if we use nVivo for Teams, this is a very slow process, we have so many inputs (data from surveys, workshops, interviews, media consume diaries, researchers' notes, videos, pictures, etc.). In 2017, we will conclude the data processing and final analysis, and we will work on the creation of the Professor's Kit. We will organise a couple of international events in Europe and Latin America to disseminate the scientific outcomes and present the kit.

In 2008, you co-edited the book "Colabor_arte. Medios y artes en la era de la producción colaborativa" (Media and arts in the era of collaborative production). Is there any need to distinguish between creative and collaborative media production by youth from what is considered art? How to delimit it?

That book presents different experiences of user-generated contents in media and art. The editors – Mario Carlón, from the Universidad of Buenos Aires, and I – consider there is a 'continuum' between art and media practices. In that context, the user-generated contents move from one side to the other. Many users produce content (like the parodies of Hitler in Downfall) that follow the same logic of artists: they 'intervene' mainstream contents to generate new interpretations. Duchamp did something similar when he drew a moustache and beard on a postcard of Mona Lisa! The production of new contents by youth, both inspired by media or art, is an unexplored territory. This could be one of the next challenges of Transmedia Literacy research.

You have been doing research about transmedia storytelling, user-generated content, and participatory culture for many years. What are the most fascinating findings about your studies on digital content creation by young people?

The creative of user-generated contents is incredible. Fans have a lot of time, they know how to deal with the most advanced software and, the most important thing, they have much passion. It is not easy to separate between youth and adult fanfiction or user-generated contents (sometimes the creators just use a nickname). However, fans know how to organise themselves and generate emerging complex projects that

may involve hundreds of people. For example, fans have created movies with professional-level special effects inspired by Star Trek, Halo, or The Lord of the Rings. In our research, we have found teens that organise international teams to play online videogames like Counterstrike, or girls writing and sharing fanfiction in collaborative platforms like Wattpad. Even if we do not believe in the mythology of the 'digital natives' (like adults, not all teens are geeks or digital experts), in every class it was not difficult for the research team to identify advanced videogame players or media content creators.

And the most intriguing dilemmas?

As the research is developing in different countries, we only stay with the teens for about a month, sometimes a month and a half. We are thinking about staying more time with them in future projects. In their last book (The Class), Sonia Livingstone and Julian Sefton-Green describe an interesting research experience: they stayed for almost one year in the same school. That is possible if you only work in a single country. In our case, it would be impossible to do something like that in eight countries. However, we have obtained much data about transmedia skills, media practices, and informal learning strategies.

From a general point of view, the big challenge is to redesign the relationship between schools, teens, families, and media. The school is an interface between kids and knowledge. That interface is in crisis. Both ecologies, the media ecology and the educational ecology, are going through deep mutations and we must learn how to deal with them.

If you could send a message to parents and to teachers about children and youth media creative production, what would you say? What do they need to be aware or inspired by?

Listen to the teens. When we tested our methodology in a school at Barcelona, one of the kids said: "I can finally talk about the things that interest me".

Note

1. https://transmedialiteracy.org/the-people/

11
Conversations on Creativity and Communication

Carmilla Floyd

How do children and young people use social media as a creative outlet? As a journalist specialising in children and youth culture, I have travelled extensively in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the United States, collecting stories about children and young people's lives.

For this book, I decided to reach out through my network to a select number of youngsters who have sparked my curiosity through their social media feeds. From teenagers to young adults, they all seem to master the media in the sense that they have taken control of their digital identities. Using visual imagery and words, they decide how they want to be perceived by others, not the other way around.

The conversations took place online and some asked me not to publish their real names or @handles.

- In my home country Sweden, I spoke to Alex, DJ, law student Valeria and high school student Xuan, who posts aesthetically about everything from lipstick to kpop and xenophobia.

- In Shanghai, China, I chatted with Tony, who uses his social media skills both privately and for profit, promoting luxury brands online.

- Ayanda "Yaya" Nhlapo, TV host and fashion designer, shared her ideas from her home in Johannesburg, South Africa, for example about 'making her dreams a reality one sequin at a time'.

- In Los Angeles, United States, Xicana[1] activist and DJ Roseli explained why she thinks that people of colour should use social media to 'carve out their own culture'. In LA, I also chatted to Erik, student and gay/queer activist who shared his feelings about being creative but also stalked and threatened online.

- Finally, Phuong, from Hanoi in Vietnam, communicated from her temporary home in Berlin, Germany, where she studies photography.

  Below, read some excerpts.

Tell us a little bit about why and how you use social media

Erik: I use all of them relatively differently but also use them all together. So there are things that I will post on Instagram that will always show up on my Facebook and my Twitter. These will range from selfies to places where I've been, but mostly selfies. I use a lot of # so that people can look it up. Snapchat is more of a tool I use to send pics and chat with people safely without giving my number out.

Phuong: I like to share both my photos and my opinions about world politics, the environment, and social affairs, especially relating to children and women, culture, and entertainment. I share stuff like breaking news but also interesting stories, videos and photo essays that have inspired me and that I think can inspire others.

Yaya: I use a wide range of social media platforms and each platform has its own use, although many are similar. I go according to the use of each one, feel and vibe, as well as the audience and reach. For example, on Instagram and Facebook I share what I do in fashion and other areas while I use Pinterest to be inspired, Snapchat for fun and Twitter for information and news.

Alex: I use both Facebook and Instagram to promote when I am going to DJ somewhere. For inspiration and ideas, I go on Instagram and Youtube.

Roseli: For me, as a Xicana, social media is definitely an important way to communicate with other people of colour, a way for us to 'carve out our own culture' instead of being interpreted and appropriated by others. It is via these social networks I have met many of the people that I've

collaborated with on creative projects, as a model, an artist, DJ and more. Social media is also usually the platform where we release the projects we work on together. Social media is also my news outlet, where I find out about issues in real time, often before they break in the established news channels. I used to be active on more platforms but currently I only use Twitter and Instagram, where I publish events related to activism, my personal life – mainly my dog – and music. I also promote events, hosted by friends, or that I am part of in any way. I used to have a Tumblr and that definitely was an inspiration because of the amount of images I was seeing being posted by the like-minded people I followed. Most of them were also Xicanxs, queer and gender non-conforming people of colour. It made me feel like I wasn't alone and became a sort of lifeline.

Xicana activist and DJ Roseli uses social media to carve out her own culture
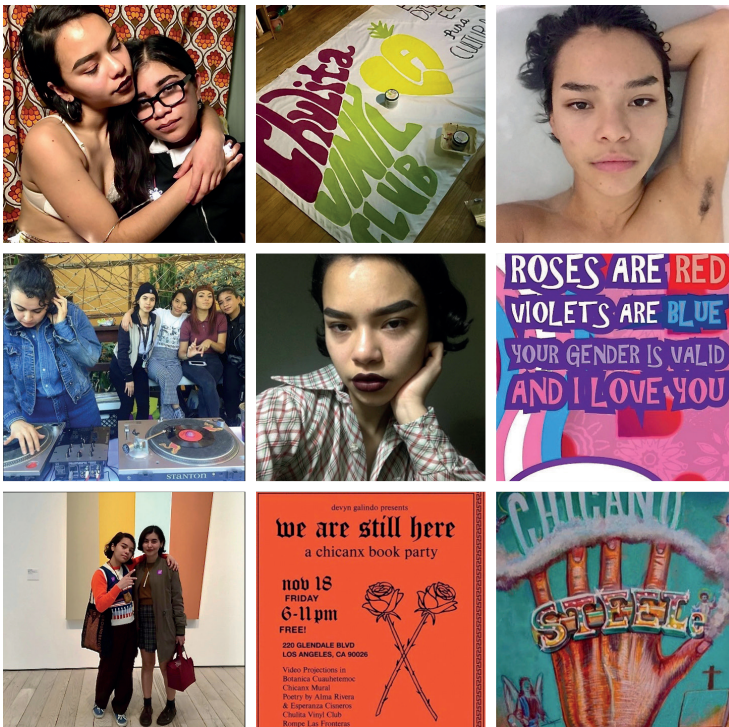

Image 1. Roseli's images

Valeria: I use Instagram to express myself, and to desperately try to stay a tiny little bit creative while trying to stay alive in the world of academics. I mainly use Facebook and Snapchat for communication with friends, and for collaborating with people in different projects. With my Chinese friends, I have to use WeChat, due to censorship and the 'great fire wall of China'. I post and chat there to make sure my friends remember me and don't think I'm dead. I actually think WeChat and its multitude of cute smileys are way more creative for chatting than the stuff offered on Facebook.

Tony: I use only WeChat, I see it as a self-marketing tool. Not to further my career, but as a way to show my personality and myself in the way I want. When like-minded people see what I post, it gives me a chance to meet interesting people and to build relationships. From a marketing perspective, they are my 'target audiences' that consume my content. But I don't want them to buy a product, only to get to know me. Of course, I also use social media for information and inspiration in general.

Xuan: I use social media for creative expression, to connect with friends and new people, to promote my interests, and get inspiration, information, and news. Facebook is mostly to communicate with friends, others, and to call out racism, homophobia, and xenophobia. If I experience racism or prejudices IRL (In Real Life), I will sometimes share that story on Facebook, to let people know how they should not act. Snapchat is for spontaneous fun and communication. I also use Tumblr to be inspired and inspire others.

What type of content do you post?

Valeria: Instagram is the only creative outlet I have online where I post stuff that I create myself. I post more personal content there, though my followers might not realize that, as I rarely explain what a particular picture means to me. It might be a photo taken when meeting someone I love, when doing something I hate, or from when I'm feeling down and sick and tired of everything and everyone.

Alex: I use my Instagram as a photo-diary so I can post pretty much anything there. Facebook is a little more private so I don't want too much weird stuff there. I post things about my life that I think are interesting

to my friends. Cute stuff or selfies gets the most reactions and likes. A photo of homemade food does well too.

Yaya: I post to inspire people and to influence them for the better. I also post content that people can relate to, which affects the reactions on my posts.

Phuong, from Hanoi in Vietnam, studies photography in Berlin, Germany and uses social media to communicate and share her images and ideas.

Image 2. This is Phuong, in Hanoi, **Image 3.** Berlin Wall, **Image 4.** Berlin Street

Phuong: I post mostly my own documentary and street photos. I also raise arguments, give my point of view about social problems, especially on environmental issues and stories relating to journalistic ethics. And I share my feelings about places, cities I live in or travel to.

What don't you share on social media?

Alex: I don't like to advocate for issues I feel strongly about on social media. It feels too private.

Phuong: I mostly try to be objective and I prefer a well-organised and minimalist look. I rarely share private stuff, personal information, or photos of family, publicly.

Valeria: On Facebook I never share anything private anymore. No feelings, good or bad, no anxieties, no life happenings, nothing. Facebook is overloaded with information, why would my information be more important than others?

Does your social media activity reflect who you really are?

Tony: I never share content that I feel doesn't relate to me or reflect myself. I like to be spontaneous, the moment I feel like it, I share and post.

Xuan: It reflects the person I want to be on that account. Who I want to be can change over time. I often change my handles to reflect that change, and I have a lot of different accounts on, for example, Instagram. Some are private, some public or semi-private. I allow my mother on some but not on all! I often erase accounts, or my whole feed, and start fresh with a new style.

Erik: What I put out there is really I. All my social media without a shadow of a doubt screams I am a Queer, POC[2], Native American and more.

Valeria: My Instagram reflects who I am way more than Facebook does. I feel like I mainly use Instagram for myself. Sometimes when I wonder, "wth am I doing with my life?" I look through my feed over these last two years or so, and I feel better. My Instagram is a storyteller, maybe not to my followers, but to me, about myself.

Do you put in a lot of work when creating your content?

Tony: No, I don't think it is creative to do too [much] stuff on social media on purpose.

Yaya: I do both planned content that is well thought of, and spontaneous content as a channel of self-expression, which I post with a little less structure and thought, and more freedom. I always stick to high quality, visually stimulating images and videos. My captions are also of a high standard, in the sense that I write to express myself and share my story. That's what primarily gets me the most reactions or likes too.

Ayanda "Yaya" Nhlapo, TV host and fashion designer in South Africa, shares glimpses of her life and work on her SM accounts, and tries to inspire and influence her followers for the better.

Image 5. "Yaya"

Xuan: I do mostly, but sometimes I just get lucky with a shot. Angles, location, and lighting is vital. I take a lot of selfies in the restroom in my high school restroom, because I like the clean look of fluorescent lights and white tiles. I always work with the images, picking filters and colours that go with the tone and look of my different feeds.

Xuan uses social media for creative expression, and always works with the images, picking filters and colors that go with the tone and look of her different SM feeds.

Image 6. Xuan showing of her nails and a new bag, **Image 7.** Xuan showing off her brand new velvet shoes, **Images 8 & 9.** These two photos were taken at an exhibition by Doug Aitken at MOMA in Los Angeles

What do you like and dislike most about social media?

Alex: I like that I can connect with people, and that I can brag about stuff if I want.

Erik: The thing I dislike most is being too exposed. I have had death threats, stalkers, and unwelcome attention, but there was not much I was able to do other than change some privacy settings. The other thing is the social shame that is connected to some of the content that I provide, because it is considered taboo. I find it disgusting that employers check Facebook to see if people are 'employable' by their social media appropriateness. Also, it is unfortunate that people are driven

by likes and sometimes to disconnect from life in order to connect to the Internet. I don't like sacrificing real life myself.

Erik, student and personality, brands himself online as #gay #gayinked #queer #poc #indigenous and more.

Image 10. Erik hanging out doing homework, **Image 11.** Erik posing with the lamp post exhibit at the LACMA museum in Los Angeles, **Image 12.** Caption on Instagram: "When I bathe my dogs always hang out right next me. The company of my pups are the best. Sometimes Appa insists that I wash behind my ears and if I don't he will.", **Image 13.** Caption on Instagram: "Just hanging out like a Leather Mary. Rocking my leather jacket".

Xuan: I love having access the world at my fingertips. I hate the ignorance, racism, exotism, and sexism. Stupid comments and questions from narrow minded people or douche guys (that I immediately block). Followers asking: 'Are you from Japan or Korea', because stereotypes tell them that cool Asians must be from there? But I like that social media offer me and other young people a platform and safe spaces where we can talk about our feelings, norms, and discrimination. Some of the accounts I follow forbid white people to comment, although they can read the posts and comments that POC and WOC[3] make. I think that's really good, because social media is so full of hate and stupid comments, sometimes we want to say stuff without worrying about being attacked.

Rosie: Just the fact that it is available, I like. I believe that the reason why young folks create and share via social media is because the reality of our present and future is so overwhelming. We need any outlet to express ourselves, support others, and unwind with memes.

Alex: Sometimes I get annoyed when people close to me write stupid stuff.

Valeria: I like that social media lets people express themselves freely, and can connect with other people they've never met before. I like that it can be used for activism, for sharing knowledge, and for questioning the status quo. I also dislike when people are too private. Some of my friends, classmates and family members love to spill everything on Facebook – even their arguments with other people. It's embarrassing and annoying.

Do you ever get tired of the digital life?

Xuan: Nope, although I just got an Instax camera that uses really expensive film. It's weird because I can take endless shots with my phone and fix them in different apps. But with this camera I have to be careful. I click and out comes a tiny photograph that I can't change! But it gives me a good feeling! All my friends want that camera too.

Law student Valeria uses Instagram to express herself and stay a tiny bit creative as opposed to what she can be in the academic world.

Images 14 & 15. Valeria´s pictures

Roseli: Well, I do have a lot of vinyls, and I DJ together with the Chulita Vinyl Club in LA. A lot of my friends make artwork that is physical and three dimensional. But then we share promote our stuff online, so it works out well.

Valeria: Sometimes. I think it comes from the overload of information we receive online all day, every hour, every minute and second. Then I turn to something analogue, like a DVD or a vinyl record. Analogue creativity takes us back to the roots, in a sense. It lets me relax for a minute, and disconnect from the world. When I listen to my vinyl records I live in the moment, not through the screen of my phone. I can't switch from one artist to the next in a second. I have the albums I have, the songs I have, and that's enough. But only until I pick up my phone and have access to *everything* and nothing is ever enough. And that's great too! There's always something new to learn and discover.

Carmilla Floyd, Journalist and Communications specialist, Walkie Talkie, Sweden, carmilla@walkie-talkie.com

Notes

1. Xicana: a female Mexican-American.
2. POC: abbreviation for *people of color*, as in everybody except caucasians.
3. WOC: abbreviation for *women of color.*

Collecting and Sharing Creativity

Display, share and communicate creative work, share knowledge and exercise freedom of expression – in the following section different platforms facilitating this are in focus. We will also eavesdrop on creative peer teaching and learning among two five-year-olds.

12
"My Portfolio Helps My Making"

Motivations and Mechanisms for Documenting Creative Projects

Anna Keune, Naomi Thompson, Kylie Peppler & Stephanie Chang

Within the growing world of makerspaces with youth-oriented educational programs, where youth make anything from robots to costumes to digital games, much of the value of making lies in the process of creating personally and communally meaningful projects (Peppler, Halverson, & Kafai, 2016). By sharing their projects and processes, makers invite constructive feedback, communicate their maker journeys, share their efforts and struggles, and learn through planning and reflection (Tseng, 2015a). In fact, the documentation of making regained interest as makers' portfolios became vital parts of job application and college admissions processes (Byrne & Davidson, 2015). Emerging from the arts (Gardner, 1989), portfolios serve as a response to the increased pressures of accountability, a hopeful alternative for standardized testing, and a way to provide a richer picture of student learning (Niguidula, 1993). Portfolios become valuable learning and community-building tools when they inform overall classroom community learning and allow students to take ownership over their learning (Riconscente, 2000). In makerspaces, the overwhelming majority of educators recognize both the importance of portfolios as learning tools and the difficulty of capturing making as it happens without disrupting or taking time away from the making

(Keune, Peppler, Chang, & Regalla, 2015). This can lead to portfolios becoming an afterthought that does not evoke the excitement often connected with making.

Organizers of out-of-school spaces (e.g., after-school clubs, libraries, museums) particularly find it challenging to meaningfully integrate the documentation of hands-on projects; despite its perceived importance, documenting is tricky to implement, especially in out-of-school settings without attendance requirements. Portfolio creation to bolster college and job applications may not be sufficiently motivational for youth, as this does not directly serve their immediate project needs. It is unclear how to support the capturing and sharing of hands-on creative work in out-of-school makerspaces in a way that is purposeful and meaningful for youth. Educators need examples of youth capturing their projects on their own terms, in their own ways, and on their own time to inform out-of-school portfolio processes. This knowledge gap prompted us to ask: what are the mechanisms and motivators that make the documentation of creative projects immediately purposeful and meaningful for youth?

To answer this question, we examined the youth portfolios of an urban, out-of-school, and youth-serving makerspace in the eastern United States through a year-long qualitative study. The makerspace we worked with had a space-wide process whereby every youth had their own online portfolio. In this article, we focus on three youth who captured and shared their creative out-of-school work beyond the adult-initiated process. The three cases concretize different ways of documenting and allowed us to extract specific motivators and mechanisms that could frame portfolio creation in other out-of-school settings as immediately purposeful and meaningful for youth.

The maker movement and portfolios

Internationally, educators have created informal networks of people interested in and supportive of learning through personally meaningful projects within workshops for exploratory tinkering with tools from looms to laser-cutters (Peppler & Bender, 2013). What many educators and researchers aligned with the maker movement agree on is the importance of the *process* of making, the possibility to run into challenges and untangle them into personally meaningful projects that

can be shared to enrich a community of makers (Peppler, Halverson, & Kafai, 2016). By sharing projects online, whether puppet shows or programmed animations, makers call for others to comment on their work; represent their processes, challenges, and approaches; and iterate on their work (Tseng, 2015a).

The maker movement is closely aligned with the arts, from which portfolios emerged in the 1990s (Gardner, 1989). Since then, portfolios, and particularly electronic portfolios, have been talked about as promising ways to capture rich learning, improve instruction, and foster learning communities (Lamme & Hysmith, 1991). Through tight coupling between standards and classroom practices, portfolios have been praised as assessment tools that might expand flattened test scores (Love, McKean, & Gathercoal, 2004). Beyond the K-12 education[1], colleges and professional applications ask youth to share examples of their creative work related to disciplinary practice within or outside schools (Byrne & Davidson, 2015). Making out-of-school practices relevant for future opportunities promises to provide a wider audience with access to higher education and professional opportunities (Peppler, Maltese, Keune, Chang, & Regalla, 2015). Thus, portfolios in out-of-school makerspaces are increasing their relevance. Specifically focused on making, software and hardware tools have been designed for capturing and sharing processes and projects. For example, Spin is a tool that allows youth to create revolving animated GIFs of their projects (Tseng, 2015b). However, it can be challenging for out-of-school makerspaces to implement consistent space-wide portfolio practices. In the flow of making it can feel disruptive to pause and snap a photograph, especially if the photograph does not serve an immediate project purpose (Keune, Peppler, Chang, & Regalla, 2015). It is unclear what immediate purposes would motivate the capturing of making processes.

To better understand youth motivations that could guide portfolio practices in out-of-school makerspaces, we took a sociocultural and situative approach to motivation (Nolen, Horn, & Ward, 2015). Unlike strictly cognitive approaches to motivation that focus on aspects of the learning environment that stimulate internal shifts in individual understanding and skills, situative approaches of motivation are concerned with the meaning of particular social practices within the broader context of a learning environment (Nolen, Horn, & Ward,

2015). For example, rather than considering how photographs of a 3D-printing process communicate an individual's knowledge of the disciplinary concepts of engineering, we focus on the underlying objectives that called the youth to snap and share the pictures in the first place, potentially to explore, engage, and enrich social practices. Apart from understanding what drives youth to document, we are also curious about how technology might mediate and support particular motivations and sustained practice (Blumfeld et al., 1991). We refer to this as mechanisms that facilitate capturing and sharing.

Introducing the Digital Harbor Foundation

The Digital Harbor Foundation (DHF) is a youth-serving, out-of-school makerspace. The space offers a diverse range of youth programs, including courses centered on 3D printing, constructing micro-controller musical instruments, soldering robotic creatures, and open-ended explorations. The long-standing history of portfolios in the space allowed us to observe how youth documentation takes place, and what motivates and facilitates the youth to create portfolios. The space has been facilitating portfolios since early 2014, and since then has continuously refined its portfolio practices in response to programs and youth needs. Every youth has a WordPress-based portfolio page with a unique URL, and all websites are linked to an umbrella page that displays the latest posts of each portfolio. Overall, the space-wide system presents an opportunity for the youth to document their out-of-school work in an open portfolio that grows with them.

Over the course of a year, our engagement with DHF consisted of online observation of 22 youth portfolios and two field site visits that included observations of youth documentation, and semi-structured portfolio walkthroughs with six youth whom the educators had identified as having exceptional portfolios[2]. The portfolio walkthroughs combined a walkthrough approach from usability testing, in which designers click through their interactive interfaces while performing a typical task (Rieman, Franzke, & Redmiles, 1995), and (2) semi-structured interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). During the walkthroughs, we asked the youth to open all the online documentation of their projects and to show examples of their work while we asked them questions about their documentation and making practices as well as their motivations

for capturing and sharing their work. Portfolio walkthroughs typically lasted 30 minutes, and were audio- and video recorded.

We chose to dive into three youth portfolio cases in our analysis of motivators and mechanisms because these portfolios extended the adult-initiated process.

Youth portfolio cases

A portfolio for building an extended professional network

Akida was most intrigued by electronics, coding, and Minecraft. Recently, he had created an interactive project in collaboration with staff and other youth: the makerspace donation box. This project involved the creation of a cube with red and blue laser-cut walls (Image 1). The front side had laser-engraved instructions that read: "Give a donation and get an instant *thank you*." Below this, Akida's name and the year of making were engraved. While the box seemed to have been cut and assembled with precision through anchoring the laser-cut pieces tightly together, it was in fact prototypically held together with masking tape. The sides of the boxes had carefully aligned holes similar to those found on speakers, so that sound could escape from the hidden electronics inside the box. Inside, microcontrollers were connected to speakers and programmed to play a recording of makerspace youth

Image 1. Akida's Donation box

and staff members saying "thank you" when someone dropped coins into the box. The donation box was positioned on a small table next to the entrance of the makerspace.

Although the donation box was one of his favorite projects, Akida did not document it on his makerspace portfolio. He planned to share the code for the project in the future, and the fact that the project was displayed and in use at the makerspace made it possible to go back and capture the work online. More importantly, the project was displayed along with other youth projects, including a cardboard sign with embedded LEDs that changed color depending on the hashtags posted to the social media feed of the makerspace. This project inspired the creation of a large light installation for the White House art festival SXSL (South by South Lawn) in 2016. Besides serving as inspiration for potentially larger projects, photographs of the donation box were often shared on social media. For example, sharing a photograph of Akida presenting the donation box at a local manufacturing company made it possible for his work to be amplified and to reach an audience outside the makerspace (see Image 2).

Presenting work to audiences outside the makerspace can be a motivator for youth to preserve their projects. Displaying and using projects inside the makerspace was one mechanism for achieving this, while another was to provide opportunities for anyone to capture and share by encouraging visitors to post pictures for their online network. The interplay of online and offline sharing of youth work in the makerspace and beyond can create dynamic impacts on the way youth experience the possibilities of their projects.

A portfolio for spinning off new projects based on old threads

Alma was a high school senior at a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)-focused school, where she centered her academic interests on engineering. Her school activities differed from those at the makerspace, where she could engage engineering concepts through hands-on creative projects.

The DHF required the youth to create a project combining the many skills and techniques they had learned, including circuitry and 3D printing. Alma created an installation that she titled "Wonderland 2.0" (Image 3). The installation consisted of blue 3D-printed mush-

Image 2. A social media post showing Akida presenting the donation box

rooms that were positioned on a painted cardboard box and connected with copper tape and wires to a Makey Makey breakout board. Using sound-editing software, Alma coordinated eerie sounds to different wires and programmed the computer to play them when the mushrooms were touched.

Incorporating different skills into the project, Alma constructed it one idea at a time, without knowing its final shape or form when she started:

Everything came together. As I first set out in doing this, I would have never expected this to happen. (...) When I first started I began
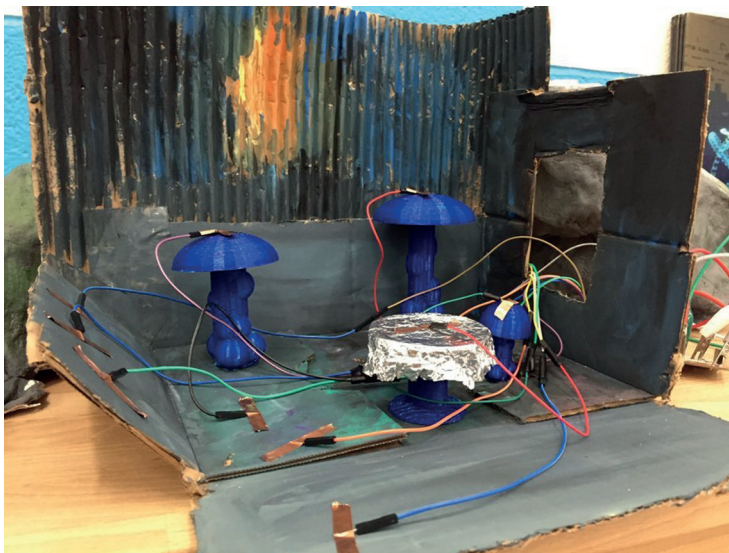
Image 3. Alma's installation "Alice in Wonderland 2.0", combining the skills she learned at the makerspace

with an idea of a mushroom, a table, and a setting created with a 3D printer. Once the sounds and the painting got in, the project grew and ideas started flowing. It was not planned from the start.

In the flow of making, Alma's ideas emerged as she layered more and more skills onto the project while working toward her final project. One example of layering prior skills was related to the stackability of the mushrooms. Similar to a birdhouse she had previously documented on her portfolio (Image 4), Alma had to consider the tolerance setting of the 3D printer she was using to create removable parts. Each of the printers at the makerspace was assembled and calibrated by hand, so it was important to know the settings of the printer in use while working on a project that required precision.

Alma started documenting projects on her DHF website when she joined the makerspace. At designated times, she wrote periodic posts throughout the beginner's course, addressing her audience through witty writing and usually including project photographs. These allotted times presented checkpoints for Alma to remember to keep track of capturing the making in order to better serve the creation of her final project:

Image 4. Screenshot of Alma's birdhouse post

> I think [my portfolio] helps making. (…) It helps when you're well on your way, you can always go back and remember what you did and what you may not remember in the present. Going back, you can get a fresh look on things, and that changes your perspective and that would also help your current making.

For Alma, consistent documenting was a way to mindfully work toward completing her final project. Jotting down notes online helped her plan ahead. Knowing that the posts would serve to inspire her next moves motivated Alma to document regularly. Prompts and specifically allotted timelines helped her capture her work easily; this portfolio creation became part of her creative flow and facilitated idea spin-offs.

A portfolio for overcoming social apprehension

Evan joined the makerspace hoping to overcome his shyness and learn to work more easily with others. At the makerspace he could move at

his own pace, from working on personal projects alongside peers, which he called working "human-adjacent," to contributing to collaborative projects in small groups. In this move to overcome his shyness, Evan's portfolio played a strong role. Just how important the portfolio was to Evan can be seen in the sheer number of project posts he published online. Over the course of a year he published a total of 33 posts, the highest number in the makerspace. In nine of these posts, he reflected on his social interactions with others. This was nearly triple the average of the other youths, suggesting that Evan was deliberately seeking to capture his progress in this area.

One of the projects Evan highlighted for us as particularly interesting to him was part of a Zombie-centered design course, in which makerspace educators asked the youth to prototype a solution for escaping from zombies across a ravine. Evan created a pulley bridge out of cardboard and string (Image 5, left). He explained that it was challenging to make the bridge function and to plan for a clean, functional design. To show how the bridge would function, Evan shared a video on his portfolio that demoed his prototype (Image 6, right). He explained that he looked across the portfolio entries of other youth working alongside him and noticed that "there were different ways for people to get across the gorge." The process offered by the online portfolio infrastructure motivated Evan to reflect on face-to-face and online social engagement.

Another example of Evan's social engagement at the makerspace was related to a Minecraft course, in which small groups of youth collaborated to build a small virtual town. Evan led one of the construction groups, coordinating the actions of his group members with other groups by moving in and out of the virtual space:

> When everyone had different pieces of the map, we had to do it twice, because the first time things collapsed. But the second time it worked a lot better when people were forming groups. (...) It was the same when we built the final colony in the final project. Before we worked more organized, we elected leaders and worked in groups. But the first day of building a colony a few people did random stuff and a leader (of another group) got distracted and (the joined) leadership was difficult to keep going. Once everyone decided to build in the same place, the group came together.
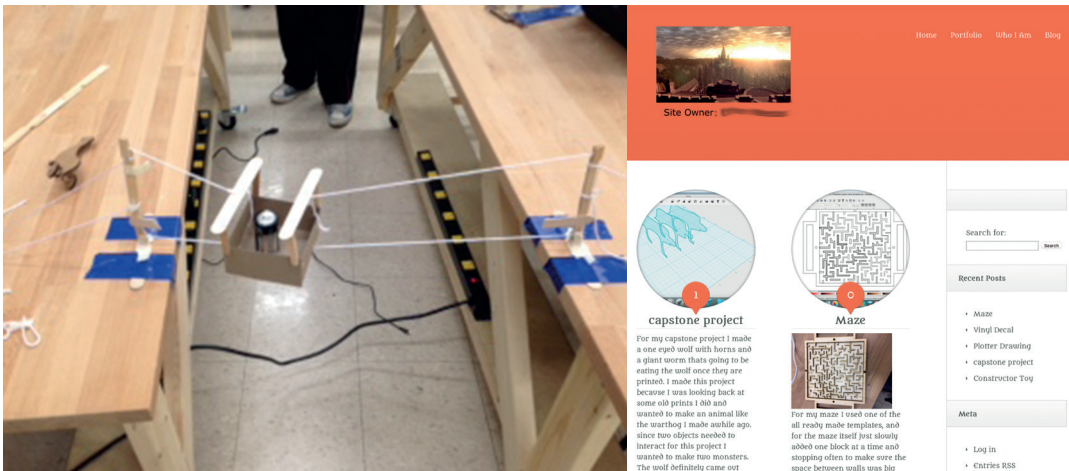
Image 5 & 6. Snapshot of Evan's pulley bridge (left) and portfolio (right)

Using the portfolio to reflect on social engagements and capture strategies for successfully working with peers seemed to motivate Evan to continue documenting and sharing his work. The mechanism that made this possible was that he could choose how many posts he wanted to share about his engagement, and to follow this own progression through the chronological organization of his posts. Working with these projects and documenting his experiences led Evan to take on new challenges, such as presenting his work outside the makerspace in front of adults he had not previously met. Neither Evan nor the educators had imagined this possibility when he first joined the makerspace.

Discussion and conclusions

All the cases explored in this article tell unique stories: Akida's portfolio served to extend his professional network through combining online and offline sharing; Alma's portfolio helped her spin off new projects based on old threads; and Evan used his portfolio to overcome social apprehension.

Looking across the cases, we identified important motivators and mechanisms in the creation of the three youths' portfolios that could inform the establishment of portfolio practices in other out-of-school makerspaces. Table 1 summarizes these motivators and mechanisms.

Table 1. Motivators and mechanisms of portfolios at the Digital Harbor Foundation

Motivators	Mechanisms
Connecting to authentic audiences	• Provide physical and online spaces for sharing projects. • Encourage visitors to capture and share youth projects.
Taking ownership over portfolios	• Offer choice over how and where to document and share. • Make customization features available. • Encourage use of existing tools and support multiple spaces.
Working toward a final project	• Make it known to youth that small projects can build toward final projects. • Allot time for documenting and browsing portfolios.
Comparing project solutions	• Initiate a space-wide portfolio system. • Encourage sharing portfolio posts among youth.
Encouraging following passions and elaborating interests	• Be flexible about number of posts. • Provide opportunities for shifting between personal and shared projects. • Give space to track progress over time.

The three cases show how possibilities arise as youth are given the space and resources for making and for taking ownership of documenting and sharing their work. This way, portfolios are not simply a requirement set by adults, but a way to share with peers, follow passions, and elaborate interests. Their portfolios allowed these three youth to share their projects on their own terms, in their own ways, and on their own time.

At the DHF, adult-driven portfolio practices ignited and spread documentation throughout the makerspace. All the portfolios presented in this article took the adult-driven portfolio process and turned it into an adult-initiated process that was flexible enough for the youth

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to adapt to their personal purposes and needs. For example, they were motivated by the ability to *follow their passions and elaborate their interests* through a flexible number of required posts, opportunities to shift between personal and collaborative projects, and visual tools for seeing their personal development.

The youth *connected to authentic audiences* who were genuinely interested in their projects presented outside the makerspace, and found their projects being shared on social media by visitors. This speaks to the importance of providing opportunities for youth to engage communities with specialized interests within the safe confines of the out-of-school makerspace. Treated in these ways, portfolios can become tools for uncovering interests and possibilities for future opportunities and community memberships.

The youth were motivated by *taking ownership over their portfolios*, which was encouraged by giving them the power to make choices about aesthetics as well as location(s) in the matter of how and where their work would be viewed by others. The immediate usefulness of the portfolios was also perceived when the youth were allowed to use their portfolios to *work toward a final project*; for example, when the makerspace provided time and space for documenting and browsing portfolios. Viewing projects and portfolios could inspire *comparing project solutions*, new ideas or ways in which challenges could be overcome.

While youth are creating projects in makerspaces, preparing for college or future jobs might be a far-away goal; however, these cases show that the social context of portfolios – creating and sharing work within and outside local learning spaces – may be more immediately useful and personally relevant for youth and serve as a driver to continue documenting. Through diverse tools, the youth took ownership over the process of capturing and sharing their work, and beyond this, took ownership of their future making opportunities and possibilities.

Note

1. The expression is a shortening of kindergarten (K) for 4- to 6-year-olds through twelfth grade (12) for 17- to 19-year-olds.
2. More information about the Open Portfolio Project: http://makered.org/opp/

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13
Pockets of Freedom, but Mostly Constraints

Emerging Trends in Children's DIY Media Platforms

Deborah A. Fields & Sara M. Grimes

The spread of "web 2.0" and WYSIWYG ("what-you-see-is-what-you-get") content creation tools has led to a massive increase in user-generated content across the connected digital landscape. According to a survey conducted by YouTube and Ipsos Reid, over 90 per cent of online "millennials" create content at least once a month (YouTube, 2014). From citizen journalism to personal "vlogs," producing do-it-yourself (DIY) media has become a key component of many young people's digital experience. One of the most important aspects of this phenomenon is how it expands even younger children's access to "mass" media production and distribution. Whereas child-made media was once relegated to refrigerator doors and classroom bulletin boards, it can now be published online.

From an educational perspective, this shift has the potential to open up numerous social learning practices that build on long-acknowledged aspects of learning (e.g. Buckingham, 2009; Vygotsky, 2004). From a rights perspective, increased participation in media making has important implications for children's cultural rights and potential rights as authors, artists and performers. At the same time, designing DIY media platforms for children is situated at the crossroads of a number of challenging – and oftentimes competing – social expectations and

controversies. These include geographically bound regulatory requirements (Grimes, 2013), commercial influences, parental concerns, digital divides, and emerging "hierarchies of access" (Grimes & Fields, 2012).

The *Kids DIY Media Partnership* seeks to identify the types of support systems – regulatory, infrastructural, and technical – that most effectively and sustainably foster a rights-based, inclusive, child-centric approach to addressing children's cultural participation online. The first stage[1] of this project consisted of a media scan aimed at identifying websites describing themselves as having a focus on DIY media, that were determined to be targeted to children or otherwise child-inclusive (for a few examples see Images 1-4)[2]. The sites identified through this scan were then subjected to two forms of content analysis: first a broad analysis of their graphic user interface (GUI) designs (herein referred to as "designs") and texts, and second a review of their privacy policies and terms of service documents. The third stage consisted of two workshops that brought together designers, educators, researchers, and children's media policy advocates to discuss some of the challenges and issues associated with children's DIY media creation and sharing. Drawing on the findings and discussion of the research above, in this chapter we argue that children's freedom of expression is constrained within the online DIY media landscape in three main ways: the low

Image 1. Tate Kids homepage (partial view). Users create art and games, and browse ideas from the Tate Museum.
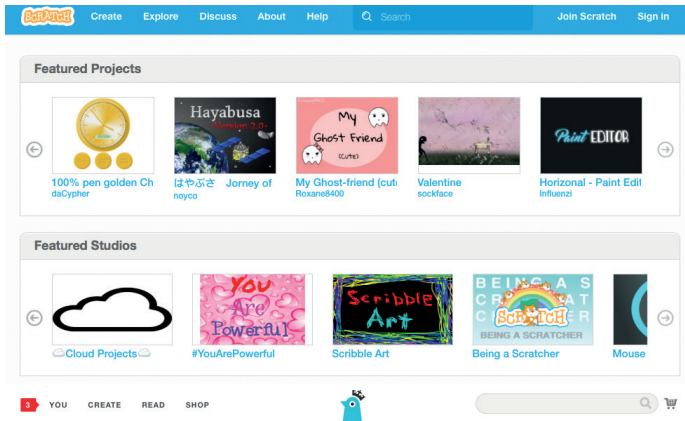
Image 2. Scratch.mit.edu homepage (partial view). Users share their computer programming creations as well as browse other users' work. The homepage on Scratch is dominated by user-generated content.
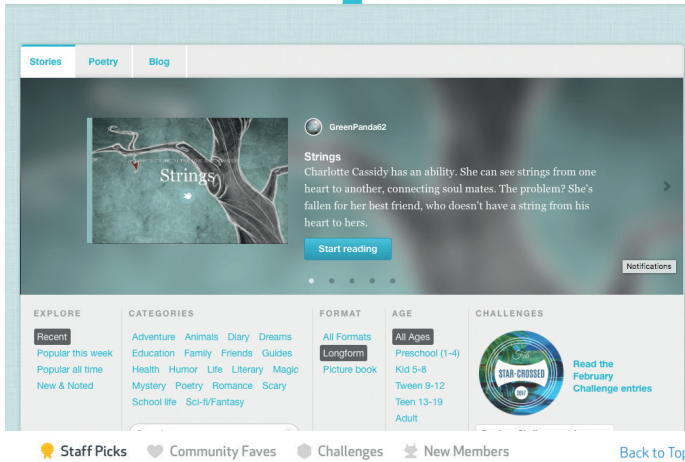

Image 3. Storybird.com homepage (partial view). Users write and share stories by assembling professionally created illustrations.
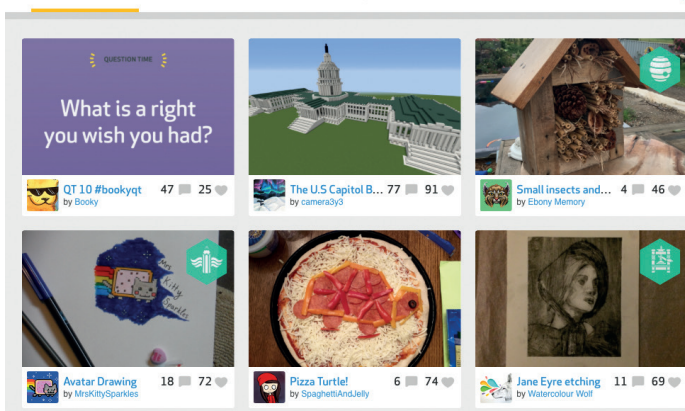

Image 4. DIY.org homepage (partial view). Users share a wide range of things they have made both digitally and physically.

161

availability of sites where children can lawfully share their DIY media creations; the limited design features for sharing and creating found on these sites that *are* available to children; and the absence of adequate guidelines and policies prioritizing children's freedom of expression currently available to designers.

Literature review

Previous academic research on children's digital media making has been limited in many ways. For one, large surveys of Internet use tend to exclude children entirely, focusing instead on teens and young adults. Important exceptions to this include works associated with the *EU Kids Online* project (Livingstone, 2008), longitudinal research conducted as part of the *Young Canadians in a Wired World* project (Steeves, 2014), and research by Svoen (2007). Even here, younger children aged 0 to 8 years are absent from most available data sets. While a growing number of qualitative studies examine the experiences of younger children creating and sharing content online (e.g. Burn & Richards, 2014; Willett et al., 2013), it remains an underexplored area of research. Among recent studies that do attend to children's DIY media production, there is a tendency to focus on classroom contexts, and most do not explicitly consider children's *sharing* of their creations (for an exception to this, see Fields, Kafai & Giang, 2016). Instead, sharing behavior is implied instead of described, or simply noted as a potential implication of creative production (e.g. Kearney, 2007).

As with other aspects of children's digital technology use, few (if any) previous studies consider the overall scope and quality of the available spaces, tools and platforms for children's DIY media making, especially with consideration for how larger policy influences might shape these designs. To date, much of the scholarship on children's online spaces has focused on single websites, some of which were developed under highly unique circumstances – such as at a university (e.g. *Scratch*), or through a special funding initiative (e.g. YouMedia). Similar trends can be found in the literature on children's games, apps and other digital technologies (e.g. Rafalow & Salen Tekinbas, 2014; Bailey, 2016) – leaving a dearth of comprehensive and comparative research to draw on.

These gaps in our understanding are problematic, as we cannot assume that trends exhibited by teens and young adults will hold for

children, or that the features found on one site are universal. This is especially the case when we consider not only the vast differences in development experienced between the preschool and teenage years, but also differences in family structures and supervision of online activities. For instance, even among users of similar ages, sharing behaviors can differ substantially (e.g. Svoen, 2007). Concurrently, however, emerging research suggests that increased participation in media making and sharing can provide children with a myriad of valuable opportunities from giving and receiving constructive criticism (e.g. Black, 2008), to public and civic engagement (e.g. Bennett, 2007), to exercising one's communication rights (e.g. Coombe, 2010). Furthermore, the spread of child-created content has the potential to make media as a whole more diverse and democratic, through the inclusion of the voices, ideas and perspectives of a group that has until recently been largely excluded from directly contributing its content (Grimes & Fields, 2015).

The kids DIY media online landscape

The first step in our research was to map out the scope and shape of online DIY media platforms available to children under the age of 13 years. A media scan was conducted with the goal of identifying all available English-language websites where children could make and share media content they themselves had created, remixed or heavily customized. While our search yielded a handful of intergenerational websites previously known to include child users, we largely focused on those that described themselves as, or otherwise indicated that they were, targeted specifically to youth, kids and/or children. The scan was completed over a four-month period in 2013-2014 by researchers located in different geographic regions using multiple search engines (e.g. Google, Bing) and search terms (e.g. "DIY media," "stories by kids," "children's music websites").

The media scan produced several unexpected findings. First, we were surprised by the relatively small number of sites it yielded. Our preliminary data set counted in the low hundreds, and was further reduced once we eliminated sites that claimed to be for children (e.g. in their self-descriptions) but contained terms of use or privacy policies that forbade children under the age of 13 from participating. Second, relatively few DIY media sites for children contained sharing

features. A significant number of our early search results contained tools or resources for creating media, but did not provide any features or systems for sharing this media with others. During the early stages of coding, 107 sites – nearly half the sites in our preliminary data set – were eliminated for failing to include built-in sharing features, despite containing descriptions or other indications that such features would be provided. In terms of major trends within the online children's DIY media landscape, "making" clearly trumped "making and sharing." Ultimately, our media scan identified only 140 websites that allowed children under the age of 13 to both make and share their own media content (Grimes & Fields, 2015).

What do kids DIY media sites look like?

The content of 120 of the sites identified in the media scan was subsequently analyzed using a standardized, 83-item coding protocol. The content analysis did not extend to content made or posted by the sites' users, but instead focused solely on content created by the sites' owners/operators, including features of the sites' designs, descriptive texts (e.g. About Us pages, instructions), advertisements, terms of service, and privacy policies. While a comprehensive overview of the content analysis findings is beyond the scope of this chapter, a discussion of dominant trends can be useful for understanding what the children's online DIY media environment looked like in 2014 (see Table 1 for layout of results discussed below).

As this was a criterion for inclusion, all the sites examined provided tools, features and/or forums for users to either make or upload some form of DIY or user-generated content, which could then be shared with either the public or other registered users. The vast majority enabled on-site sharing, while another significant proportion enabled users to share through third-party sites such as Facebook. We examined the extent to which user creations were included in the construction of the site's public face or "front page," and found that most, seven out of ten, showcased their users in some way. The most popular means of showing user involvement on the front page was by displaying users' shared content, their DIY media creations.

Another key consideration was the extent to which children's content was moderated, censored or otherwise restricted on the sites.

Table 1.   Qualities of Kids DIY Media Websites (per cent)

Supports for sharing user-generated content	%
On-site sharing	96
Sharing in third-party sites	68
Visibility of users on front page	
Showcase users on front page	74
Showcase users' creations on front-page	65
Moderation	
Moderate users' content before posting	19
Site moderates content of users' communication	26
Instructions to report unacceptable content	65
Networking residues	
Commenting	80
Liking/favoriting/rating	68
Private messaging	48
Text chat	16
Curate projects in a gallery or list	49
Finding and following other users	
Friend users	37
Follow users	52
Search for other users	56
Support for creating content	
Support for creation within the site	**55**
User forums	44
Expert support	22
User-generated tutorials	17
No support from site	45

N=120

Note: Sites provided multiple features wich is why the sum within each category is exceeds 100.

Source: Compiled by the authors

Notably, only a fifth of the sites analyzed moderated user content before it was posted, while less than a third monitored users' contributions to on-site forums, comment sections, and other communication channels. Support for various forms of peer moderation was more prevalent: 65 per cent of the sites instructed users to "report" unacceptable or offensive content. It is important to note that the content analysis did not extend to the sites' own creation tools, which may very well have contained design limitations that restricted users at the

point of creation (including banned words filters, missing features, or reduced menu options).

Creation does not happen in a vacuum: many supports, both technical and social, are needed to help children develop the skills and understanding to be creative in a particular area, as well as to cultivate the conditions in which a shared cultural experience might emerge. As such, we also examined the ways, and the extent to which, the sites fostered community and allowed for users to provide one another with peer support. Eight out of ten sites did provide users with features allowing them to leave (public) comments on other users' projects. Many also enabled users to "like," "favorite" or otherwise rate each other's creations. Other forms of communication were less common. Less than half the sites offered private messaging or text chat features, and less than half enabled users to curate projects to a public list or gallery.

In terms of friending and following, just over half the sites allowed members to friend, follow or search for other users. Many of the sites provided means of creative support from within their own communities, but most did this through the inclusion of user forums – a feature that previous research has found to often be used by only a small proportion of core users (e.g. Kafai & Fields, 2013). In addition, some sites were designed for other means of community support such as expert support and user-generated tutorials. However, at nearly half the sites analyzed, there were no places explicitly designed for users to find help from each other.

Overall, we found that some children's DIY media sites do provide a range of technical and social supports for younger users to engage in media making and sharing, but also that this is far from consistent or even pervasive. Although most of the sites showcased user content on their front pages, thereby including children's voices in the construction of the site's "public face," tools for socializing, networking, and providing peer support were sparse and limited. An unexpected finding was the lack of identifiable moderation policies found on so many of the sites. While this could potentially have beneficial implications for children's freedom of speech rights, it also raises serious questions about compliance with the US Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and the status of children's privacy, safety and well-being within the DIY media realm.

Navigating a complex terrain

Since the partnership was launched in 2013 we have hosted two workshops, bringing together project partners with established children's media producers and designers, educators, policy experts, and academic researchers. These workshops have presented a unique opportunity to share and receive feedback on our preliminary findings, and discuss relevant issues with a cross-sector group of key stakeholders. The first workshop was held in early 2014, included 22 participants (along with 8 members of the research team), and focused on the theme "sharing." The second was held in early 2016, included 18 participants (in addition to 11 members of the research team), and centered on the theme "agency."

An important set of issues brought up by our participants concerned the legal requirements, regulatory protections, and costs associated with maintaining a DIY media platform for children online. Some reported that designers often choose to exclude children (through the inclusion of formal age restrictions, for instance) because of governmental regulations on collecting data from users under the age of 13, particularly those established by COPPA. If companies do target users under 13, they risk opening themselves up to potential litigation and civil penalties. The challenges involved in moderating online content and communication in order to make sites "safe" for children were raised as a related concern. Effective moderation requires people who can review all content and comments, which necessitates a significant investment of time and money. In both cases, money spent on legal fees or moderator salaries was described as detracting investment from the sites themselves – for making them better, expanding their features, and so on. Participants discussed the implications these legal and moderation concerns had on the kinds and quality of digital media available to children.

Another issue raised by our workshop participants was the perceived lack of resources available to help designers navigate regulatory requirements, as well as evaluate and apply appropriate ethical standards to the design and management of children's online DIY media spaces. Some of our participants suggested that placing strict limits on certain words, themes or images was an unavoidable part of hosting a space where children post and view user-made content, but they also acknowledged that defining these limits was sometimes difficult. This discussion shifted to the lack of appropriate standards and guidelines to

refer to when making such decisions. Relatedly, participants discussed tensions around the privacy policies and terms of service contracts contained within children's websites, games and apps, specifically those that arose when the desire to ensure that children (and parents) understood the policies conflicted with the various legal requirements associated with such documents. Some reported that although they had wanted to include child-friendly language about privacy, intellectual property ownership and other terms of service in their policies, their legal departments had ultimately nixed these plans, opting instead for standard, legalese-laden documents.

Our participants also expressed concerns about younger children's access to adequate information on the implications of posting content online. A number of them proposed that at least some of the problems we discussed might be addressed through digital literacy curricula specifically aimed at teaching younger users about their rights and responsibilities as content creators. Others mentioned that many parents and educators also lack a firm understanding of the various issues involved, and did not have the adequate resources to effectively guide their children through complex copyright and privacy issues. This led to some concerns about the ability of both children and parents to make informed decisions about the legal relationships they enter online, as well as some preliminary questions about how digital literacy can be addressed in, or perhaps even built into, privacy policy and terms of service documents.

The discussions that unfolded during these workshops thus provided additional context for understanding the findings of our media scan and content analysis, while introducing some contradictions as well. On the one hand, the participants revealed some of the probable reasons behind the paucity of sites available to children for creating and sharing their own DIY media content, highlighting the various challenges that designers face at various points in the development process, as well as the lack of adequate support available to them when it comes to tackling the emerging ethical and legal issues involved. On the other hand, our findings suggest that not all sites are equally limited by the types of considerations raised by our workshop participants – at least not in ways discernable through our content analysis. For instance, very few of the sites we examined appeared to moderate or review user-made content. As mentioned, this raises important questions about the rates

of COPPA compliance found in this area of the children's digital landscape, as well as the implications for children's freedom of expression and other cultural rights. It also raises new questions about how and where regulatory requirements and industry standards relating to the publication of children's content might both overlap and conflict.

Conclusion and next steps

Overall, the findings of our media scan and content analysis show that many sites did not sufficiently afford or support users' sharing content with the public or sharing ideas with other creators. This trend is concerning, since sharing and interacting with others play such an instrumental role in many of the benefits associated with media making. It is important to note, however, that our research also identified a number of promising exceptions to the dominant trends identified above. This included a site that incorporated creative commons licensing and a site that provided detailed editorial feedback on all user-created submissions, as well as a handful of sites featuring peer mentoring tools and support systems. While these exceptions were not discussed in this chapter, they do form the basis of the next planned step in our research – a series of in-depth case studies aimed at better understanding the workings, rationale and uses of sites (as well as digital games and apps) found to contain particularly noteworthy, child-centric, and ethical approaches to supporting children's DIY media making and sharing.

The findings described here have informed our research in other ways as well. Key among them are the contradictory findings that emerged around issues of content moderation, COPPA compliance, and children's freedom of expression rights. Previous research suggests that many web 2.0 platforms opt to ban children under the age of 13 in order to avoid the costs and potential challenges associated with moderating children's content and ensuring COPPA compliance. Many of our workshop participants confirmed that this was often the case, and some related anecdotes about projects or features that were ultimately discontinued on these very grounds. Our media scan results appear to support this finding; however, our content analysis results do not. The discrepancy raises a number of questions: Does the lack of on-site moderation observed among these sites translate into greater freedoms for children to express themselves and be creative? Or are these trends

evidence of a lack of accountability and responsibility on behalf of the site creators? Or, were our results skewed by the limited scope of our coding protocol, or alternatively, by a lack of transparency about underlying content moderation and censorship practices?

On these and other issues, our findings have raised more questions than answers. This is especially the case when it comes to thinking about *why* children's DIY media sites are designed the way they are, and *what* the implications are for children's creativity, learning and cultural rights. In addition to justifying the need to conduct an in-depth comparative case study, our findings to date inform some of the questions we will be asking in our upcoming interviews with children's DIY media site designers. We are also drawing on these findings, particularly the issues and questions that emerged during our workshops, in our planning of a daylong consultation event with a select group of child media makers, to be held in the final year of the *Kids DIY Media Partnership*. While there is still much work to be done, we anticipate that at the project's end our study will yield a rich and detailed mapping of the contemporary children's DIY media landscape, and provide a set of recommendations for building and managing child-centric, ethical and rights-based platforms, policies and approaches for supporting children's media making and sharing online.

Notes

1. Additional research stages associated with this project include a transnational policy analysis and a series of in-depth case studies, both of which are currently underway. Once the data from these stages have been analyzed, we furthermore plan to hold a daylong "child advisory" event, which will bring together *Kids DIY Media* partners and child creators to discuss the implications of our findings, and establish a series of next steps and priority areas.
2. The sites covered a broad range of media, from writing and art to game-making and science. A few examples are Scratch.mit.edu, storybird.com, youtube.com, diy.org, roblox.com, gamestarmechanic.com, and kids.tate.org.uk.

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14
Peer Teaching and Learning

A Case of Two Five-year-olds as Minecraft Creators[1]

Sara Sintonen, Maj-Britt Kentz & Lasse Lipponen

Minecraft is a highly interesting form of the digital culture of our time. Oakley (2014) speaks of Minecraft as a sandbox, because just like in a sandbox, Minecraft players create the game world themselves while building content in it (Banks & Potts, 2010). While the Minecraft world could be researched from the perspective of play, we became more interested in looking at it as a pedagogical phenomenon and creative production that encourages peer learning from the perspectives of both learning and teaching. In our research on Minecraft creation by two Finnish five-year-old children, our attention was strongly drawn to their spontaneous pedagogical activities: peer learning and teaching. We were amazed at how two five-year-olds were capable of acting in a self-directed manner, teaching each other, working together to solve rather complex challenges arising from the Minecraft environment, and building a cohesive and intensive session in collaboration.

Minecraft as a digital environment for children

Minecraft is often characterized as a (game) world without any rules, storyline, or predefined objectives (Bebbington & Vellino, 2015). Its desktop version (PC/Mac) has five game modes, each of which has clearly defined rules. Creative mode, the freest of the five, allows for endless construction, collection and peaceful living. In contrast, in the Survival, Adventure, Spectator and Hardcore modes, the boundary

conditions are clearly defined (Koutsouras et al. 2016). Weapons, potions, protective gear, and traps used in different modes also have clear instructions: what kinds and amounts of construction or raw materials are needed, and the order in which the construction and preparation can progress. Following the guidelines also requires precise knowledge of the location of the necessary materials, as well as the courage and skill to acquire them. For example, before you can prepare a healing potion (vs a harming one), you will first need to craft a brewing stand, a cauldron and a glass bottle (Milton, 2014).

Playing Minecraft on a server brings a collaborative multiplayer dimension to the game (PVP, person versus person). Any user can choose to set up a Minecraft server and, as administrator, define the rules on their platform (for example, they might choose to authorize or disable the option for live team playing), which further elicits the players' creativity. The multiplayer genre is closely linked to sharing game sessions and following them on YouTube channels. YouTube offers Minecraft enthusiasts game instructions and solutions for survival, and also new ideas for creating and building their own game culture. The vocabulary used in YouTube's Minecraft videos reflects the fact that Finnish players generally prefer to use English as their interface language.

The transparency and flexibility of Minecraft has prompted players to create complex worlds, amazing works of art, and performances (Duncan, 2011). Minecraft is currently one of the bestselling PC games in the world, making it a point of interest for many researchers from different academic disciplines. Globally, it is also one of the digital brands best known to pre-school and primary-school aged children (Chaudron et al. 2015; Noppari, 2014). In the context of learning, Minecraft and its environment have been studied in terms of the development of teenagers' information literacy (Bebbington & Vellino, 2015), as a learning environment that reflects and supports high school students' creativity in literature studies (Cipollone et al. 2014) and inspires the production of art, develops students' collaborative planning (Wu, 2016), and promotes social learning (Banks & Potts, 2010). These researchers seem to have focused on looking at Minecraft as a tool for achieving a certain learning objective.

Collaborative activities in digital environments and the basis for peer learning

Many environments of digital culture are community platforms. Bruns (2008), for example, speaks of *produsage*, whereby an open and wide-ranging community of participants is an active producer of content that is continually modifiable and developable. Such environments promote peer learning: Minecraft encourages users to be creative and supportive of each other, and in doing so, support peer learning (Wernholm & Vigmo, 2015).

Peer learning is typically defined as an event in which the learner serves as a teacher to his or her peers and the community works together to solve a problem (Fawcett & Garton, 2005). We approach peer learning through a socio-cultural frame of reference with Vygotskian roots (Greeno, 1997; Säljö, 2001). From this perspective, learning first and foremost entails an involvement in activities by a set community. Knowhow is seen as communal, a practical skill of doing and acting. In participation, knowledge is created from and mediated through the variety of perspectives of the participating actors. People learn to use the tools of thought and action, and especially those of the communities they take part in. In addition to participation, the socio-cultural learning framework emphasizes the importance of tools in human action (Säljö, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). Peer learning is defined here as learning from others, including the teaching aspect, on the one hand, and communal learning as a mutual, shared process on the other.

In young children, peer learning is often studied from the perspective of what children learn about themselves and their own abilities in relationships with others of their own age, with the peer group acting as a model for thinking and behaviour (Bandura, 1997). In light of this material, peer learning is based on teaching each other. It is manifested as mutual negotiation and the search for a solution born out of the creative process.

From peer learning to mutual knowledge-building

The focus of this article is an analysis of the shared Minecraft creation activity of two five-year olds from the perspective of peer teaching and learning. Our qualitative data consist of a video recorded session (22:13 minutes), which represents peer learning and teaching, as well

as the players' Minecraft competence and ability to perform sovereign actions in digital environments. Our data show children who are competent in their own digital cultures communicate in a way that can be characterized as an expert interaction, through teaching and learning. The video data were collected in an environment that was natural for both five-year-olds in the study. Both players were in their own homes, using laptops and communicating at the same time via FaceTime on mobile devices (iPads). They themselves had come up with the idea for this technological setting for sharing their game.

Image 1. One of the players showing the screen to the other player through FaceTime.

We will now consider the five-year-olds' digital creation in Minecraft through five episodes. These episodes represent the nature and quality of the intersubjective, shared idea and understanding the players have, and show how they engage in a participatory and collaborative social teaching and learning context.

The game session (22:13 min) is divided into two clear subsets. Most of the first ten minutes (9:26 min) covers the use of the EMC (energy matter currency) generator. The session continues with a focus on building a versatile and powerful tool for Minecraft (the morning star). It is

worth noting that the players, Topi and Mikael, do not see each other playing in real time, except when their communication is mediated via the iPad. In other words, the two create in 'different worlds', and do not play side by side during this session.

During the first part of the session, Topi's primary role is to advise and explain the EMC generator's operating principles and benefits, as the tool is new to Mikael. The two friends' comments are distributed fairly evenly, with Mikael slightly more active (61 comments) in his role as the primary learner than Topi (53). Since the boys are working separately, Topi (for whom the EMC generator is already a familiar tool), has the ability to do other things on his own, like looking after his bee farm. Thus, in addition to explaining the use of the EMC generator and advising, explaining, and justifying his choices, Topi himself has an opportunity to experiment and learn new things.

In this first part of the session, the cooperation between the boys starts easily and naturally. They work on the EMC challenge for ten minutes, but to begin, only one direct question from Mikael and one straight answer from Topi are required. The rest of Topi's EMC responses (15) are explanatory, specifying and justifying, and also include questions guiding Mikael's progress and comments supporting his choices, such as 'Yes', 'So' and 'Okay' (10).

Mikael's role as a learner manifests itself in the discussion in a variety of ways. He explains his actions quite richly from a pedagogical point of view. He asks Topi for clarification six (6) times, expresses his understanding of the instructions/advice (3) and his acceptance of and compliance with the instructions given (7), and slows Topi's pace down once (1). Mikael justifies his solutions and choices relating to the construction phases (8), and explains and shares his achievements (13).

Although Mikael is immersed in his work, he follows (5) what Topi is doing the whole time and comments briefly, for instance saying 'Okay' and 'Yep'. In Mikael's case, our attention turned to his reflective speech, which also acts to guide his own actions when faced with new things (12). The role of learner prompts Mikael (4) to also thank Topi and express his enjoyment: 'Thanks for telling me that, that it's this I mean, it's so cool that I can copy these now…'

The second half of the session also starts very spontaneously. Mikael has just managed to get the EMC generator to work and grasped the principle of 'duplication', although complete success still requires some fine tuning, and at the same time the phone rings at Topi's and he leaves to report this to an adult. Mikael continues fine tuning and Topi returns. Topi begins to persuade Mikael to pursue new challenges, asking 'You know Morning Star?'.

The second half of the session, therefore, focuses on the construction of the Morning Star. As the tool is new to Topi as well, he starts learning by doing, meaning that he begins to build while explaining the building process at the same time. The work becomes less synchronized, as Mikael was not prepared for the change, and it takes him a while to gather the necessary materials and working space. During the session Topi himself becomes a learner, trying his best to figure out how the morning star can be constructed. The players gather dark matter, duplicate it their own, and take turns counting how many stacks (=64) of red matter the EMC generator has produced.[2] As the gaming session progresses, the vocabulary they use becomes more professional and incorporates more English terms mixed into the Finnish.

Although the setup of the activity changes (both players are now learners), the narration shows that the action is intentional. Morning Star is a common goal that is achieved through peer learning in a nuanced way, and through deeper mutual intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity requires initiative, listening to the other and understanding perspective, as well as linguistic exchange. According to Kronqvist (2004), these are obligatory conditions for successful collaboration. In the final stage, when the players are close to the target, they are creating the same, new thing in the game almost synchronously. At this point, the negotiations, questions and mutual teaching have turned into talking out loud to themselves (Episode 1). Finally, the players manage to reach their goal:

Topi's parent: Five minutes. Boys, now, five minutes.
Mikael: Okay, that's fine.
Topi: Okay.
Mikael: Now, yes, I have mor[e]…I just take a little like this…
Topi: Dark matter, picks, dark, no but… what am I doing…
Mikael: Dark matter, picks [pickaxes] over there. Okay, I put some

of those here, like this, this, this, this, this. Now we do this, like this. Now, yes, now. Now a lot of these come... really... I take only a little of this dark matter...

Topi: Guess what I have?

Mikael: What?

Topi: Morning Star.

Mikael: Yes.

In the second period of the gaming session, Mikael starts acting more independently, and tries different solutions on his own. The players might work on their own for longer periods of time, but when one of them needs help, both are immediately drawn back into the joint action and dialogue (Episode 2):

Topi: I really need to make a chest.

Mikael: Like so, so, so… [mumbles]

Topi: I have an invi… [inventory] full of red matter.

Mikael: Okay. I'll just put some things in there. What…okay, one can't do that. So, can one put any of these in? No, only Silver Ingots… [explains his own testing]

Topi: Okay, now I have also Dark Matter in here, good.

Mikael: I just take some of these…Silver Ingots…not really, let's take some of these…

Topi: Dark Matter

Mikael: So, let's check one of those over here…

Topi: I did…[mumbles]

Mikael: [mumbles] Th-th-this is way, not that way, yes, now!

Topi: Okay!

Mikael: [lifts his arm] Mum, come and see! [mumbles] a couple of stacks of these…

Mikael: Here is my red matter! Then one creates some more…let's take some more

Topi: How much red matter do you have?

Mikael: Wait, see, let me tell you soon, as soon as I've put these emeralds in here…

Mikael: Forty-two.

Peer learning emerges in the material as negotiation and guidance, but also includes commanding the other and reflecting out loud. It is

clearly not simply a discussion as an exchange of ideas; a discussion during a Minecraft gaming session manifests itself as social, shared thinking (Mercer, 1996) that also progresses synchronously at the level of the players' activities. Mercer noted that not all speech helps learning, but found exploratory talk – characterized by collaborative reflection, problem analysis, comparison of explanations and making joint decisions – particularly important for community and peer learning. This feature of peer learning (exploratory talk, shared thinking) are visible in Episode 3:

> Topi: The other option is, that you write in there…wait a minute. Write. Wait a minute. Can you write the same thing, the one, how did you get the EM…EMC machine?
> Mikael: Hmm…?
> Topi: That E N E R G Y.
> Mikael: Yes?
> Topi: Write it down.

Although in our material peer learning is based primarily in linguistic activities, the gaming sessions also emphasized the importance of sharing the game view (Episode 4). Sharing the representation and looking at it together gives the boys an opportunity to point at this representation. This makes it possible for them to 'see' what the other is thinking. In this way, tools serve primarily to facilitate interaction and participation between people. Minecraft is a framework for the action, but does not limit or determine it:

> Mikael: [shows his screen via FaceTime to Topi]
> Topi: See there, at the top, a chest.
> Mikael: Oh, those?
> Topi: That's the place for those, for those chips
> Mikael: Oh, you mean those, with that kind of, chest, with a lot of colours, you mean?
> Topi: Y-yes
> Mikael: Yes, yes, I'll take them both, because I'm not sure which one it is.
> Topi: Mmm, oh, are there two of those?
> Mikael: Yes.
> Topi: …equal?

Mikael: Yes.
Topi: Okay, then it's right.

The learners have equal decision-making power (because both are building on their own, but with the same content), and mutual respect. This is in line with Slavin's (2014) view of peer learning as being about a common will to succeed, rather than competition. Slavin emphasizes the role of a shared, clearly defined objective in a successful peer learning experience. In his view, the objective and the action have to be sufficiently challenging, with none of the parties acting as a helper to another, but everyone is supposed to learn. The situation must be enjoyable, as peer learning is strongly social and communal in nature. This is illustrated in Episode 5:

Topi: You know morning star?
Mikael: Oh, what?
Topi: You know morning star?
Mikael: Yes, I... [is listening while working]
Topi: Have you ever managed to make one?
Mikael: No, what's morning star? [stops for listening]
Topi: Well, it's like, if you right-click [on the mouse], it will attract a lot of that kind of cobblestone, and will leave the ores in there.
Mikael: Okay, how you do it, I want to know?
Topi: You need to put, wait a minute, I need to check that too. Blah. You need to have a lot of red matter.
Mikael: Okay, I'm already copying them here, it works!
Topi: Okay, let me see.

In the above exchange, one player probes the other for his knowledge of Minecraft's morning star tool. As the dialogue progresses, it is discovered that the asker himself is slightly unsure how to use it. However, the players solve this together. Ogden (2000) brings up an interesting point concerning collaboration and peer learning: making sense together. He argues that, in addition to a common language, the parties need to have an understanding of others and the environment. This includes mutual respect (De Lisi, 2002). Shared Minecraft creating sessions, like the episodes presented here, are possible only when both parties are familiar with each other's — partly unspoken — intentions, goals and beliefs, in addition to a very sophisticated communication system (ibid.,

215). In this case, this includes knowledge of the game's terminology. Interestingly, the players have taught themselves the sophisticated communication system without adult guidance.

Discussion

Minecraft is an environment where young people can create, play and communicate with others. In this case, two five-year-olds were on their way to doing this, for instance, collaborating as multiplayers in a local setting. They were creating and producing their own digital culture, whereby 'communities entice learning by initiating a give and take dialogue between individuals across all backgrounds and skill levels' (Kuznetsov & Paulos, 2010:7). Our study shows that also these very young children are comfortable in a digital environment, exploiting it in highly diverse and rapidly developing ways. The players' collaboration conveys both insensitivity and sensitivity in cheering, encouraging and helping the other player. As well as skills related to playing Minecraft (e.g. IT skills, English, mathematics), the players learn social skills and how to settle conflicts. They also develop new rules for the game, as a kind of in-game play, expressing their creativity. Game discourse is a dialogue between two amateur experts, whereby ideas, experiences and observations related to other digital cultures are also shared. Further, our own analysis of the players' creative and productive actions shows that digital tools are not an 'addition' to their activity, but rather an integral part of it. These tools mediate player communication and actions.

In this case, the five-year-olds' gaming knowhow and the skills and knowledge associated with the game are a product of participation and playing together, rather than a prerequisite for participation. This is an interesting finding: these five-year-olds are capable of intersubjective digital production and scaffolding. It is particularly remarkable that the two players spontaneously and continuously created new tools for shared action: different concepts and stories related to the action.

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Thus, they deliberately sought to change their social practices and their material, instrumental world. At the same time, they moved towards a common understanding of which resources are available, where to find them, and how they are used and reproduced.

Notes

1. This article has been modified by the writers of the original Finnish version. It will be published in Kasvatus & Aika, 2017, http://www.kasvatus-ja-aika.fi/site/
2. Dark matter is an extremely powerful material for buildings in Minecraft that is undestructible. Red matter is an item that can be used to upgrade other items.

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15

"Children Love to be Hilariously Silly and Dead-Serious Alike"

Interview with Margret Albers

Margret Albers has been managing director of the Children's Media Foundation GOLDENER SPATZ and director of the German Children's Media Film Festival of the same name from 1996 to 2016. She developed the festival from a film and television only festival to a media festival where children are engaged at several levels. In addition, she is the board spokeswoman of the Association for the Promotion of German Children's Film. Together with Thomas Hailer and Greg Childs, she is responsible for the direction of studies at the Academy for Children's Media. She is also project director for the initiatives Outstanding Films for Children, and Television from Thuringia[1]. Albers was recently nominated president of the European Children's Film Association.

You have been the managing director of the German Children's Media Festival "Goldener Spatz" from 1996 to 2016. How did you come up with the idea to introduce the Spixel-Award for television productions of children into the festival in 2005?

From the mid-90s on, we had an increasing amount of submissions from projects and institutions which enable or support children to produce films. Some of these films were of remarkable quality. Since the festival's competition is aimed at professionals, we started to present a selection of films in a side-programme called "Up- and Coming Talents" in 1999. Facing an increase of productions made by children that have been aired either on Public Access or Regional TV, on the long term this non-competitive slot turned out to be unsatisfactory.

Therefore we teamed up with the Thuringian Media Authority, which runs the "Public Access Children's Channel PiXEL" in Gera and started with this competition for TV productions made by children.
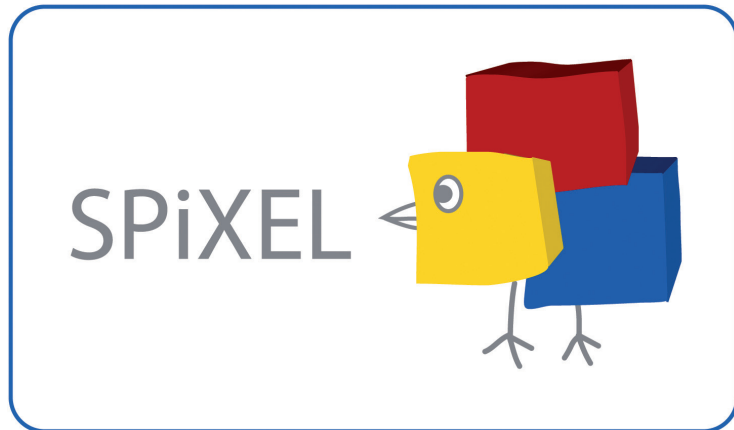
Image 1. SPiXEL- Logo
Source: Deutsche Kindermedienstiftung GOLDENER SPATZ

What is the main idea behind the Spixel Award and which age groups do you address?

There are different awards that have their focus on the media-educational process, which leads to an audio-visual product. In the case of the Spixel the focus lies on the production itself. To submit a film it has to be aired on TV or (since 2016) been made available on the internet. The aim is to support and award high quality and experimental TV productions made by children, age 8 to 14.

What kind of challenges did you have to manage with the Spixel Award in the beginning?

We had to make it known at the right places, but that actually happened quite fast because the approach of the competition is quite unique. In the first year, the age group was "up to 12 years". This turned out to be difficult. One of the main criteria of the award is that the films have to express the children's viewpoint. Especially in case of productions made by young children, the viewpoint of the educators became very evident. Therefore we changed the age range into 8 – 14, which actually works quite well.

Why do you differentiate between animation productions, feature film productions, and information or documentary productions?

To display the variety of TV productions made by children. Most of the TV formats made by children can be differentiated in these categories, as animation, feature film and information/documentary.

How would you describe the creative process behind the productions?

As different as the productions are, [so are] the creative processes behind them: Sometimes friends join in their spare time together to be creative. In some cases, children who have never met before take part in a media summer camp, develop an idea, and make a film. "Making a film or magazine" could also be part of a project week at school. There are also children who do every step of filmmaking on their own, but that is rather an exception, like Midas Kempke's 7-minute stop motion "Harry Potter and the Lego-Philosopher's Stone – Part III", which won the animation Spixel in 2013.

The Toolbox available for children to display their creativity has grown larger and more technical. Most of them have at least access to small high resolution cameras or smartphones and you don't have to pay a fortune for editing-software anymore. Nonetheless, the production of a TV programme, either as a magazine or short film, is a craft. While developing and finally producing a programme, children figure out that it is more difficult than it seems on first sight. Skilful media educators who are not eager to realise their own visions are crucial at this point – they give advice and support and don't intend to lead throughout the process.

Usually children develop basic skills quickly and react to production restrictions (e.g. huge explosions) with new, more manageable ideas. Being part of a film or TV project is for the participants being part of a creative process and in most cases a positive teamwork experience.

The Spixel competition has now been running for 12 years. Can you summarize some tendencies in the production of the participating children regarding style, topics, professional role models for the children, passion for television or….?

Image 2. Happy Award Winners & Jury 2016. Source: Deutsche Kindermedienstiftung GOLDENER SPATZ

The popularity of crime/detective stories is unbroken since we started with the Spixel Award. Also, picking up topics that are relevant while growing up, like friendship and first love. In recent years, we had an increasing number of productions dealing with mobbing in its analogue and digital variations.

Throughout all categories, children display a strong sense of justice and [show] that they care about the environment and the fate of other people. In magazine formats, grown-up interview partners often have a hard time to deal with the frankness of the interviewing children. Regularly the difference of what grown-ups say and what they do is unmasked. In this context, the young TV makers also like to provoke. In the street-interview format "What makes you ask these stupid questions?" (2010) passers-by in Hamburg are asked questions like "Who is lazier – we schoolkids or unemployed people?" The answers

are revealing. Also, in terms of style children display a sometimes very quirky sense of humour, like in the stop motion production "Who let the plopp out" (2014): Rapper "Bottle" (actually a beer bottle) is abducted by two Ninja-Pine-Cones.

Over the years there have been a lot of parodies of popular TV-formats, especially casting shows, which makes obvious how well known and liked TV-formats are.

Could you please summarize your experiences with the award in term of children's creativity?

The use of audiovisual means to display their creativity becomes more and more natural for children. They are quick adaptors of formats and like to play with them. They love to be hilariously silly and dead-serious alike. Unfortunately neither media nor education acknowledge, value or support this immense creative potential as they should.

Note

1. http://www.kids-regio.org/speakers/albers-margret/

Training Teachers to Spark Young People's Creativity

The educational setting is a place where creative expressions can stimulate learning and facilitate the appropriation of new knowledge. In this section, the reader will find examples of how this can be done through different teaching methods.

16
AMORES

## Discovering a Love for Literature Through Digital Collaboration and Creativity

Geoff Walton, Mark Childs, Janet Hetherington & Gordana Jugo

What is AMORES and why was it necessary?

More than a fifth of children and young people (23 per cent) rarely or never read (GB: Department for Education, 2012) on their own time, and nearly a fifth (17 per cent) would be embarrassed (Clark, 2012) if their friends saw them reading. Many school children lack knowledge of their own national or broader European literature. Teachers find it challenging to interest children (especially boys) in reading literature, but agree that the use of ICT could help raise the level of student interest. To implement ICT in literacy teaching, we argue that teachers need not only expertise in using ICT but also a new teaching methodology in order to find effective ways of using ICT to engage pupils in reading and writing through the creation of e-artefacts. What we mean by *e-artefact* is anything that can be communicated digitally, such as a photograph, video, digital comic strip, blog entry, tweet or Facebook post, and that is based in some way on a story that the schoolchildren are reading. What we mean by *literature* is more contested, but keeping in mind the rationale that reading is of value in a person's development – for example because it requires extended focus and concentration – and that storytelling is imperative, while wanting to be flexible concerning what was important to the children, we regarded extended narratives in any format as literature. Hence, from the examples given by the

children themselves, fanfiction, autobiographies and graphic novels were included, while magazines, websites and computer code were excluded. AMORES was designed to address the issue of children's disengagement with literature through a new teaching methodology of interactivity and collaboration using ICT and the pupils' creativity, which requires teachers to become more digitally literate and use these new capabilities in their teaching in the classroom.
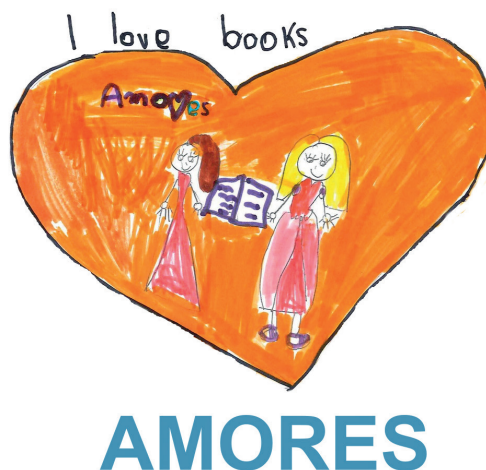
Image 1. AMORES logo competition winner designed by Rafaela Familia from 1st Model Experimental Primary School of Rhodes, Greece

How did we do this?

The project used an approach called Participatory Research in Action, or PRA (Fetterman, Kaftarian & Wandersman, 1996). This treats teachers as experts, placing them at the heart of the process, empowering them to express their opinions and identify what they need to know to become digitally literate. It is also based on the idea that learners construct meaning through the act of design and collaborative learning, whereby meaning is constructed jointly by a community (social constructivism). Teachers are excellently positioned to be actively engaged in the research process, and are able to introduce young people to this method. Using this technique and working with children and young people to create e-artefacts, the researchers and the participants learn from each other as equals (Tavares, Hepworth & De Souza Costa, 2011). Ultimately, this not only enables teachers to deliver the research aims

> **AMORES**, a two-year European Union-funded project under the Comenius Multilateral strand of the Lifelong Learning Programme, is a collaboration between schools from Croatia, Denmark, Poland, Sweden and the UK, led by CARNet (Croatia) and three UK higher education institutions (Coventry, Northumbria and Staffordshire Universities). It secured €299,500 and ran until the end of November 2015. All the resources mentioned here are freely available for download via the AMORES website: www.amores-project.eu.

but also enables each teacher to incorporate his or her own personal goals into the process.

PRA is seen as favoured because it takes into consideration local knowledge and experience, and is therefore arguably more practical and thus findings may be more deliverable in the future (Reason & Bradbury, 2011). Thus, ownership of the AMORES process by teachers is more secure because they are involved in both the research itself and the outcomes of the project. This ultimately leads to improved research results and an enhancement of teachers' professional practice in digital literacy.

The teachers' face-to-face workshops

We held a teacher workshop in Stoke on Trent in March 2014, led by the UK partners (Northumbria, Staffordshire and Coventry Universities). This not only established the PRA community of practice but also informed the creation of a six-week online course (May-June 2014) as well as a second workshop, held in Stoke in March 2015.

The benefit of engaging teachers as co-researchers is twofold: not only do we gain their expertise and knowledge regarding using technology in this context; they also get the experience of embedding technology as part of their teaching practices, and are able to use the research process to procure time for learning and to reflect upon their teaching experiences.

In developing the PRA methods, specific issues which may impact upon the teachers' involvement were also taken into account. Prior to the workshop a questionnaire had been disseminated to gather data on current practice and user needs. The questionnaire's findings were

Image 2. Teacher workshop, Stoke on Trent, UK, March 2013

summarized to provide an introduction to all the schools involved, and to inform the selection of which technologies to suggest to the teachers for use. These activities were included to enable participants to feel more comfortable in working with each other, and to demonstrate that their views and experiences were highly valued. This approach helps participants feel more able to influence decision-making, even though the project objectives had been established in the EU bid beforehand. This approach ensured that the group felt an ownership of the objectives.

The first workshop comprised three sections, over three days (a second workshop was held in March 2015). Two teachers from each participating country (except Poland, from which one teacher attended) as well as representatives from the lead partner (CARNet Croatia) and the quality assurance organization 36.6 from Poland, participated.

Section 1: Each teacher was encouraged to think about the wider school environment and consider how technology was being used within the home, in out-of-school settings (including libraries), and in the home environment.

Teachers talked about and shared their experiences of using technology, and reflected upon their learning needs.

Section 2: The research team presented potential ways in which technology could be used to help support literacy work, and worked with the teachers to reflect on and develop these uses.

Section 3: The teachers discussed how their learning and the relationships that had developed over the course of the workshop could influence the structure of the next part of the project, and began drawing up initial plans to implement this. Through this process they developed content for the online teacher-training plan.

Mapping and asset-building

While we used a number of interactive techniques in the workshop, here we describe one in particular. Participants were asked to work in small groups to develop images of a typical learner in their education system. The teachers were placed in groups of two and given a large piece of flipchart paper. One drew around the other to create a representation of a learner. They then drew a line down the middle of the outline drawing and began discussing the typical characteristics of their learners, listing these in the drawing. The advantage of this task was that participants were able to start identifying with the similarities and differences between education systems, societies, and the experiences of the young people. It also helped them reflect upon their assumptions and knowledge concerning the lives of their learners. It prompted discussion concerning how to best work with learners, and indicated points of similarity that could be exploited to support communication between learners from the different schools.

Online course

Based on the outcomes of the workshop, a plan was devised for the teachers' online training course to further enhance and embed their digital literacy capabilities. In brief, the online course lasted approximately six weeks and consisted of the following activities: creating videos and comic strips, and learning about games-based learning. The platform used was Edmodo (a secure social medium specifically designed for schools), and using videoconferencing for collaborative learning. The course, delivered via Moodle, can be found at http://www. amores-project.eu/results.html .

Teachers engaged strongly with the video creation section of the online course as well as the comic strips, and the evidence for this comes through very clearly in the final artefacts created by the students. However, they were less engaged with the games-based learning and the Edmodo platform itself. Edmodo was used more as a repository for students' e-artefacts than for genuine discussion and collaboration between students. Our teacher colleagues were generally positive regarding the online course, but one teacher mentioned that it may have been better to "use the online module as a test for the ideas in the implementation phase, pick a specific book and try to create some lesson plans so we can compare approaches in different school systems. That way everyone could see how it could actually be incorporated into reading in the classroom; [in other words,] building the ship while sailing."

In parallel with the online course, the project team drew up a Technology Selections Report based on what the teachers felt they needed in order to enhance their digital literacy capabilities. This report used the SECTIONS model (Students [i.e. users], Ease of use, Costs, Teaching & learning, Interactivity, Organization, Novelty and Speed) developed by Bates and Poole (2010), which is a framework for evaluating technology and can be found at http://www.amores-project.eu/results.html .

Drafting and piloting a new teaching methodology

The teachers involved in the project and the research team jointly drafted an innovative teaching methodology – the most important result of the AMORES project – which promotes student creativity, interaction and engagement with literature. As opposed to simply reading a book and writing a book report, the methodology includes the following steps: reading the book, creating e-artefacts based on the book, sharing these e-artefacts with peers via social networks and videoconference, and finally reflecting on the process.

The literature review, accessible at http://www.amores-project.eu/d1-1-download indicates that creating artefacts is a learning strategy that involves the highest-order learning skills, found at the top of the revised Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2011). The pedagogical theory that best describes learning by creating is that of Papert's idea of constructionism. This emphasizes not only the learning that is

triggered by the constructivist approach of activity-based learning (or learning by doing), but also the importance of the learning that occurs as a result of discussion leading to shared meanings.

The recommended instructional strategy is therefore collaborative creation, which is underpinned by the theory of social constructivism. In brief, collaborative learning is described within social constructivism as a means by which meaning is constructed jointly by a community (Conole, Littlejohn, Falconer & Jeffery, 2005). Lewis, Pea and Rosen (2010) summarize social constructivism as the process in which "by together questioning texts and situations, conceptualizing problems, designing solutions, building artifacts, redesigning, re-conceptualizing and reinterpreting, people generate forms of public knowledge that in turn provide conceptual and relational support for further interaction and learning". Lewis, Pea and Rosen (2010) remark that "students engage in deep learning when they research, design and construct an artifact or model as a representation of their knowledge" and that "constructionism links personal and social influences on learning because the artefact produced is an output of the interaction of personal and social knowledge construction that needs to be meaningful and made public".

The model for this online collaboration was Dahlsveen's storytelling arc (Tilkin, Paulus, Biesen, & Land, 2011), which was reinterpreted by the authors as a cycle.[1] When viewed as a cyclical process, the storytelling arc closely resembles Kolb's experiential learning cycle[2] (Kolb, Rubin & Osland, 1991). The act of telling the story is motivational for the creation of the story, and feedback from audiences promotes further motivation for creating more stories.

These two forms of interaction resulted in marked differences in the success of their implementation. The use of the social media platform was used as a collaborative tool only in its later stages, and only to the extent that students commented on and "liked" particular artefacts. Reasons for this included unfamiliarity with using social media for learning, and difficulty organizing content within the platform, resulting in its being used purely as a content repository.

The videoconferencing was highly effective, however, commonly on the second attempt. Initial attempts displayed the usual initial barriers to interaction through the medium (indicating that the initial training course had not been successful in relaying how to circumvent these

barriers). Students displayed the storytelling and audience relationships indicated by the Dahlsveen model, with no discernible impairment due to the distanced mode. Unanticipated barriers involved the small age difference between participants (small to us but large to the students) and students' self-consciousness over a (misplaced) perception of poor language ability.

The conclusions from this interaction are that rehearsal, planning and playfulness will help students develop the confidence to present and respond in videoconferencing activities. Modelling learning activities online will help teachers comprehend how social media can be used to facilitate the sharing and co-creation of content.

Students need time to reflect on the creation of e-artefacts. Reflection as a whole class exercise, in which students can see each other's work, can also be motivational and is the point at which learning about the meaning and content of the literature can be investigated in more depth. In fact, we would argue that it is because the creation of artefacts requires reflection that the AMORES methodology is such an effective learning process. In this regard, videos (in which students appear) seem to work best as shared classroom activities as students find them more personally engaging and because they take a longer time to create, thus extending the period for which a text is investigated and resulting in deeper reflection.

Bilateral videoconferences

A number of bilateral videoconferences (VCs) took place; here we describe a typical event. Having read the book *Mio my Son* (original title *Mio min Mio*, by children's author Astrid Lindgren), Swedish students presented the e-artefacts they had created to Croatian students. The 28 students on the Swedish side, and the 16 Croatian students with their teachers, met online in May 2015. The Swedish students presented their e-artefacts about Swedish author Astrid Lindgren and her story. They had made films in iMovie in which they presented parts of the book (iMovie e-artefacts were shared through Edmodo). The films were sent to Croatia in advance, so that the Croatian students could prepare questions to ask during the VC. The Croatian students also voted for the best e-artefact.

Image 3. Danish students visit Poland

World Book Day

All five schools taking part in the project held a joint VC on World Book Day, 23 April 2015. Around 60 students and ten teachers from Denmark, Croatia, Poland, Sweden and the UK shared their experiences in the project up to that point, and talked about some of the books they had read.

E-artefacts competition

We launched a competition open to all schoolchildren in the EU. Contestants were invited to enter their e-artefact in the form of a video or digital comic strip. Five judges, including Dr Jane Secker (Chair of ILG), chose the winning entry, which was announced in August 2015. The winning videos and comic strips are displayed on our website, and the prize was a visit to Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Research results

Students were surveyed through a number of mechanisms suggested by the central research team of the project, but individual schools were
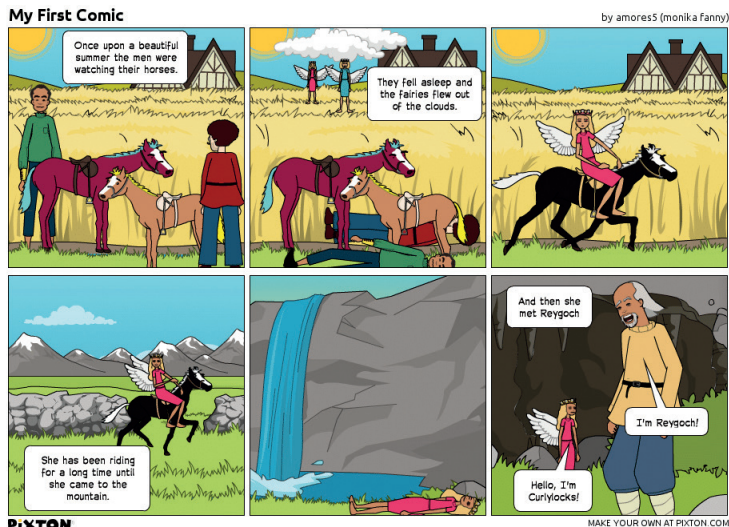
Image 4. An example of an e-artefact from a cartoon generator

allowed to apply those they considered appropriate for their learners, in keeping with the participative and egalitarian ethos of the project. Where surveys were conducted, data were anonymized by allowing the children to select a pseudonym for their responses. A master list of pseudonyms and real names was kept by teachers on paper, and never left the classroom. This meant that all electronic files contained only pseudonymized information.

In the UK we found that *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is a very popular book amongst ten-year-olds, and that the most popular author is David Walliams. From the data we have gathered since the new teaching methodology was tried out, we know that our participant schoolchildren now get more from the stories they are reading; this is manifest in a much greater depth of understanding for both plot and characters. UK schoolchildren created video e-artefacts that explored the story in their own words, which demonstrated a richness in comprehension and knowledge of the text.

In Sweden, we found that the factors encouraging children to read were numerous. We asked them what they had read most recently (a mechanism for finding a randomly selected cross-section of their reading material). Amongst the older children (14 and 15 years old)

who responded, we found that the most recent literature they had read fell into one of the following categories:

- A text set by the school (or a sequel to a set text), cited by half the sample
- A film tie-in (either the novelization of film, or a book on which a recently released film had been based)
- A book within the fantasy genre
- A biography of a sports star or heavy metal musician (i.e. Zlatan Ibrahimović, AC/DC or Ozzy Osbourne)
- Fanfiction[3]
- Responses we did not count as literature (magazine, website or social media)

The inclusion of soccer and heavy metal is a reflection of the issues of masculinity that surround the issue of reading. Many of the respondents (particularly those who used male pseudonyms) reported that they did not like reading, but still reported that they frequently read for fun. This was interpreted by teachers as an aversion to boys categorizing themselves as readers, even though they read, as they perceived this as un-masculine. Boys with higher social status, and self-confidence, had no qualms about self-identifying as readers. The interpretation of the "sports or metal" finding is that some boys will admit to reading a book if it is about what they perceive as an uncontestably male subject.

Amongst the younger readers (12 to 13 years old), the greatest difference was that they read more texts that were not set by teachers: only two of 42 children reported that the last book they had read was a set text, compared with 44 of 88 of the older age group. This indicates that at this age they are far more proactive in finding texts that interest them. As with the older students, fantasy, film tie-ins and the "sports or metal" biographies also featured, whereas differences included the presence of graphic novels and teen dramas. Responses regarding the last item read that were not regarded as literature included newspapers, subtitles in a movie, an inode (a text descriptor in Linux or Unix) and the survey tool itself!

Impact of the project

The most important impact of the project is the success of the AMORES teaching methodology, with 14 participating teachers and around 400 students, which brought about a change in the teaching of national literature by increasing students' engagement with literary works. This is clearly visible in the evaluation report, showing that the use of the AMORES methodology contributes to greater student engagement. The teachers who took part in the project were very pleased with how the use of the methodology had an impact on their classes. All participating teachers were willing to use the AMORES methodology after the pilot implementation and after the end of the project in their literature classes. Additionally, there have also been examples of teachers using the AMORES methodology in other subjects, such as the social sciences.

There were several examples of establishing partnerships with schools and other stakeholders outside the project. The project team held a number of workshops for teachers on how to use the teaching methodology and meetings with the aim of presenting the AMORES methodology and facilitating its adoption by teachers, principals and librarians. This has helped establish a network that will make it possible to encourage more educators to use the AMORES methodology in their classes. This network includes about 40 teachers from the workshops who did not participate in the pilot implementation, and about 70 stakeholders who were present at meetings with members of the AMORES team. The stakeholders included teachers and principals, school librarians, publishers, and a national volunteer reading programme.

Furthermore, at the project website there have been more than 380 registered downloads of the project outcomes, the most popular of which is the AMORES Revised Methodology. The digital training materials intended to help educators make the best use of the methodology in their classrooms have undergone several stages, and are available at the project website: http://www.amores-project.eu/results . These training materials, available in English, Croatian, Danish, Polish and Swedish, have been accessed about 800 times.

Teachers formed a community of practice, sharing ideas and examples of good practice as well as supporting each other in the implementation of the AMORES methodology. The communication went

through different channels, including the AMORES teacher mailing list, the AMORES Facebook community, and the AMORES teacher closed group.

What was encouraging in terms of the AMORES methodology extended beyond changes in the learning of literature. Although the project promotes the reading of literature and digital literacy, it is in its development of students' personal sense of self-efficacy and co-oper-

Image 5. Poster of AMORES teaching methodology

ation that it has its strongest transformative power. There were many stories of students from all the countries who had not previously had the opportunity to present their abilities finding a new presence in the classroom as a result of making videos or comics, or participating in the VC. Students also developed skills in co-operation and language ability. Through their videoconferencing, they acquired a greater knowledge of other cultures and an appreciation of the strength of their own.

What the results also show, however, is an absence of impact on the extent to which children report that they *like* reading. In the analysis of the Swedish schoolchildren at the start of the project, the percentage of children who claimed a love for literature fell at a rate of 12 per cent per year. At the end of the project, the fall-off rate remained unchanged. The sample is too small for any clear-cut declarations; and of course, these are only the *reported* opinions, which are distorted by the children's self-perceptions and how they choose to be perceived. Also, as seen above, reading is tied up with many gender-related anxieties concerning identity. Despite this, the children's engagement with literature within the classroom is heightened, and far more enjoyable. Successful strategies for translating this to transform daily habits of reading still need to be identified.

Notes

1. The storytelling arc defines the beginning and the end of a story, it's the process of storytelling. Traditionally a story comes to an end, but in participatory environments it is possible to create an interactive way of storytelling in which the story unfolds in a circle between storyteller and listeners who participate in the creation of the story (Tilkin, Paulus, Biesen, & Land, 2011: 8-10)
2. Kolb's learning cycle suggests that learners' ideas are formed and reformed continuously through experience, and that they bring their own ideas and preconceptions to differing levels of elaboration to the iterative learning process. In summary this

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cycle involves: doing, reflecting, processing, thinking and understanding, which are governed by the learner's needs and goals, and all elements are necessary for learning to be achieved.

3. Fanfiction websites are communities of devotees of various books, comics, films or games, who write their own short stories based on the characters. The teachers reported that children read these because they were simpler (often having been written by other children), had an "underground" appeal, and were part of an online community to which they belonged (Black, 2007).

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17
Bringing Maker Literacies to Early Childhood Education

Jill Scott & Karen Wohlwend

Literacies are proliferating at a rapid pace as new ways of making meaning become possible with the advent of powerful technologies and innovative practices. This is especially evident in makerspaces (Peppler & Bender, 2013) where new forms of literacy emerge in encounters with digital media (e.g., filmmaking and animation) and manufacturing technologies (e.g., sewing, woodworking, and robotics). Museums, libraries, after-school clubs, and other out-of-school spaces offer informal learning spaces for children and youth in an ever-expanding network of youth makerspaces.

Despite this burst of innovation outside schools, classrooms in the United States look eerily similar to classrooms of the last century, perhaps the chalkboards have been replaced with whiteboards, but the books and seatwork paper-pencil lessons remain squarely situated in traditional literacy practices. However, a quick scan of the playground in those same schools reveals a lively peer culture, enlivened and circulated by digital media that fills children's new textual landscapes. We know from our ongoing literacy playshop research with young children in early childhood classrooms that popular media toys are an important resource for children's media production (Wohlwend et al., 2013; Medina & Wohlwend, 2014; Wohlwend, 2015, 2016). When children are given an opportunity to play together at school, their play often turns to making as they pause to make props for their characters:

from paper crowns for Elsa and Anna (Disney's *Frozen*) or fashion a cape for Thor (Marvel's *Avengers*) from a play kitchen tablecloth. It has also become evident pre-service teacher training must better prepare teachers to respond to the student's interests in popular culture, play, and making. *Maker literacies* (Wohlwend et al., *in press* 2017) that include popular media, toyhacking, and creating films can be included in literacy practices if pre-service teachers develop an understanding of their value and place within the literacy curriculum. How do we tap into the creative potential of play and making interests in a way that aligns with school literacy goals? How could early literacy curriculum and instruction expand to incorporate making into primary literacy methods courses?

This study documents maker literacies pre-service teachers used when a "play, toyhacking, and filmmaking module" was added to their primary literacy methods class. The pre-service teachers completed this module during their literacy methods course at the university. The main purpose was to encourage pre-service teachers to transform and expand their notions about what counts as literacy and literacy curriculum in early childhood education.

Theoretical framework

Play is a literacy that creates action texts (Wohlwend, 2011), stories enacted with bodies, toys, props, and puppets rather than print on paper. During play, players collaborate and pretend scenarios or "as if" worlds (Holland et al., 1998), attaching agreed-upon meanings to bodies, materials, and actions (Vygotsky, 1978; Thiel, 2015). The notion of toyhacking in this article enables redesign of toys' and puppets' materials but also their embedded texts (e.g., characters, narratives) (Rowsell & Pahl, 2006). Digital technologies save and document play and open further opportunities for redesign through video-editing.

In Literacy Playshop, four processes contribute to children's meaning-making with media: play, storying, collaboration, and production. While the three levels move inside-out and back again, the four processes are represented here as loosely-defined domains so there is no production sequence or curricular "cycle" but rather recursive connections spreading across domains in multiple and unruly directions. Each of the four processes contributes a critical, productive, and

interdependent aspect of meaning-making that also links to a larger curricular field: drama, literature, diversity and community, and media and cinema arts (Wohlwend, et al., 2013, p. 46).

Methods and research context of the study

This project is excerpted from a five-year study on literacy play, the data from this particular study documents the 'play, toy hacking, and filmmaking module' added to four sections of a PK-3[1] early literacy methods course at a US Midwestern university. Three instructors and about 140 university students participated in this project. Data sources include video of pre-service teachers' toyhacking and filmmaking, the films they made with their fellow university students and their hacked toys, the elementary student's films, and post project reflective blog entries written by the university students.

We used mediated discourse analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Wohlwend, 2007, 2014) to analyse students' and children's making and film production, tracking collaborative meanings and shifts in participation. Video analysis identified and coded maker literacies and patterns of improvisation and collaboration in the agreed-upon meanings of characters and props as well as roles for students as toy animators, camera crew, directors, musicians, and sound effect synthesizers through the process from toyhacking to video-production. Mediated discourse analysis filtering identified moments of collaborative transformation (e.g., agreements to change characters' texts, the emerging storyline, or students' production roles). Transformative clips were triangulated with students' reflective blog posts (e.g., value of maker literacies in class and in later filmmaking with children in field experiences).

Findings

The sessions progressed in three stages of media pre-production, production, and post-production: toyhacking and character development, storyboarding and filming, and video-editing and sharing.

Participants began the pre-production module by deconstructing familiar characters and narratives of popular culture toy franchises, such as Barbie and Star Wars. They looked closely at each toy to identify its commercial franchise, its character traits and filmic narrative,

and the material messages in its materials. Toys are designed with anticipated identities (Wohlwend, 2009), that is, companies produce toys and games with a particular consumer demographic in mind. This guides the selection of colours, textures, shapes, and other material decisions about toys and products in order to appeal to boys or girls or age groups of children.

In this study, as university students examined a commercial mass media toy, they pondered questions like,

- What is the toys intended text?
- Who is the toy intended for?
- Who could be left out by this toy?
- What could I do to change the toy's text?

Following this critical deconstruction, the participants proceeded eagerly down the hallway to visit the university's designated maker-space where they worked to modify toys' popular culture texts, social meanings, and the material features. In this space students were given boxes full of inexpensive commercial mass media toys that they cut, glued, painted, combined, and otherwise decorated.

When newly revised characters emerged, the participants worked in small collaborative groups to create a storyline for their toys. Through

Image 1 & 2. Sally and Linus telling a new story.

collaborative negotiation and improvisation, stories were enacted and filmed as students animated the toys with hand movements. Once the film footage was gathered, students worked together to share their expertise to edit the short films using the iMovie app on iPads. Most groups added voice-overs, captions, music, sound effects, setting backdrops, and textual elements. Upon completing the editing process, students shared their films with the entire class.

Pre-service teachers expressed enthusiasm about the project through comments such as, "It was a blast!" and "I was surprised by how much fun I had". They also predicted they would incorporate playful making and filmmaking in the future, saying that they felt very engaged in the process and could see value in doing similar activities in their own classrooms someday. One participant explained,

> The day of class that we made our toys and filmed was one of the most fun days of college I have ever had. Even just putting together the toys stretched my brain into ways it was not used to; having to break things apart and put them back together. I can definitely see students boosting their imagination and creativity through this process. I also can see students enjoying the filming and editing because they love technology so much.

In the following weeks, during their field placements, the pre-service teachers dedicated two sessions to working with a focus student to share their hacked toys, create child initiated stories, build props and sets for them, and film their stories. In a third session with their child, the team worked together to edit their original films and celebrate their accomplishments. Upon reflection, many pre-service teachers wrote about how the activities opened doors for creativity and meaning making. One noted that the creativity followed their child home,

> When I came in today, the teacher informed me that Max[2] had so much fun that he went home and made his own toys for our time together this week. They were made of clay and they matched the colour scheme and shape of the hacked toys we brought in two weeks ago. I was so excited that instead of just watching the finished film we also made a new film with his toys and our extra time. Needless to say, I think it was a really successful experience for both of us, and I would definitely try to implement similar projects in the future!

While children are participating in collaborative socially constructed new literacies constantly in out and of school spaces, these participatory literacy practices typically are not welcomed in school. We currently live in an age of accountability, in which, the central driving force of education is increasing standardized test scores (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Top-down policies about schooling bring scripted curricula, data driven teaching practices, standardization, and little room for exploring new literacy practices. We hope that by introducing this creative play, toyhacking, and filmmaking module to literacy coursework that pre-service teachers will find value in the practices and create spaces in their future classrooms for expanded literacies. A majority of the university students, found that participation in the module legitimised an alternative conception of meaning making. Many of the university students completed this project with reflections that expressed strong commitments to using maker and digital literacies in their future classrooms.

 Throughout this project, active engagement and collaborative participation was evident as the university students expressed their excitement about creating new characters and producing digital stories. Many of the pre-service teachers noted that they were initially sceptical about maker literacies and their place in literacy instruction. One student reflected,

> Had I seen the makerspace before this class, I would have probably thought that it seemed out of place [in a college of education]. After the assignment, however, I realize its huge potential.

This potential, for literacy instruction, student engagement, involvement, and collaboration, was referenced by a many of the participants, and often was accompanied by reflections of transformed understandings. Many students responded with positive comments,

> I think this project was a really great way to introduce a different kind of literacy learning. While I can only hope my future school has a space for my students to be this creative, I definitely hope to do a film making process of some sort with them, hacked toys or not. I also think they will enjoy working together to come up with the funniest, scariest, silliest, or most clever movie they can think of. Creativity is essential, and this project hands the opportunity to use their imagination to them.

Image 3. These toys were hacked, but their gendered storyline remained untroubled.

As university literacy instructors, we noticed increased laughter, smiles, and enhanced engagement from our students when we compared makerspace activities with the traditional literacy activities encountered throughout the semester.

Multiple and fluid transformations of the toys' texts occurred through maker literacies in toyhacking, collaborative storying, and media production. Pre-service teachers commented that the ability to create new toys without the traditional marginalizing effects was empowering and fun. Many students pointed out that the toys that they created reflected their worlds more appropriately than the often-exaggerated gender coding of pre-packaged toys. A participant explained, "I loved creating my own toy, that was gender neutral. I purposely chose a usual male dominated toy, a Flintstone dinosaur, and a Hello Kitty doll toy bank to work with".

It is interesting to note that while the participants were encouraged to change the narratives of their toys by hacking them, we also found that the pre-service teachers relied on their own shared knowledge of popular media culture to recreate familiar stories for their characters. Often, these remixed stories (Ito, 2007) did not look at the appropriated text critically, but instead reified stereotypes. Pre-service teacher's talk, jokes, and films tended to reproduce stereotypical toy texts, gendered roles, or popular culture tropes. For instance, one group of six participants developed a film that mimicked *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975). In planning for their film they relied on their shared media knowledge. Despite that the characters had been hacked, the film provided the basis for remixing a commonly-shared and socially understood text. Even though the characters were different, the gendered storyline was not troubled.

Seeking popular culture and social media tropes peers would easily recognize was evident across many of the filming groups in all classes during the literacy module. Groups gained inspiration for their films from popular music videos, damsel in distress tropes, and viral videos. But students can also hold fond memories and other emotional commitments to these shared texts, making them difficult for groups to revise. Children have strong passions for beloved characters and favourite stories that anchor their story making. One pre-service teacher observed this tension in remixing with his focus child,

> He did find the (hacked) toy much more interesting, but even though it was a half horse/half man with a *Peanuts* head [Woodstock], he still automatically decided that the toy was in fact simply a weird-looking Batman. The story that he created was a classic story about Joker being a bad guy, and Batman saving the day. He was somewhat creative in explaining that Joker was "disguised," and adding in the "sneaky Penguin" who was Joker's accomplice, but in general, his story was very much like popular culture stories we had read about before.

A great strength of this project is that the university students were able to actively consider their assigned elementary child's media interests and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) as they were hacking their toys. In addition, they welcomed children's toys and popular culture connections from home into their field experience activities. Allowing

children's favourite storylines and narratives into the classroom validated each child's interests.

The enthusiastic reactions from the children who participated in the project indicated the time spent creating digital films was fun, collaborative, productive, and engaging. Many pre-service teachers noted changes in their focus child's participation level and in their engagement in story making. One university student wrote,

> My student had a blast filming and wanted to make a part two to the video. She was so excited she asked if we could do it next time too. She liked telling stories and I feel like it allowed her to express her emotions. She loved that she was able to do impromptu and make up the story with no restrictions. Overall, I thought this was a great experience and I was able to learn new ideas from it.

Another pre-service teacher noted,

> The move from traditional school literacies to newer ideas of literacies certainly engaged the student – he was enjoying himself but also working diligently to produce a story and a film.

Importance for engaged learning in and out of school

If literacy is a socio-cultural activity then we must provide students with opportunities to create meaning together. The image of children sitting alone, writing at desks needs to vanish. It is through projects like this one that invitations to co-construct can emerge and we can expand our notions of a solitary writer and reader into collaborative makers and producers.

Maker literacies are best supported by playshop models, which expand reading and writing workshops to include play-enriched new literacies curricula. (Wohlwend, 2011, 2013; Wohlwend & Peppler, 2015). The playshop model empowers children to collaboratively produce with digital literacies and new technologies. These literacies will require new kinds of teaching and learning by practitioners in and out of classrooms. While this article has documented learning in a university classroom and elementary school field experience, the learning and teaching applies to out-of-school sites such as museums, arts, after-school programs, and so on. Other practitioners could similarly

visit a makerspace, engage in toyhacking, and experience the power of collaborating creatively, producing digital stories, and exploring the potential of expanded literacies.

We know it is critically important to offer children engaging activities that matter to them. Maker literacies validate children's interests and passions, promote student generated ideas and stories, and allow for co-creation of collaborative texts in socially significant ways. Playshops and maker literacies reveal the exciting possibilities in teaching for collaboration, creativity, storying, technology, and placing play at the core.

Notes

1. Pre-kindergarten (also called Pre-K or PK) is a classroom-based preschool program for children at or below the age of five in the United States, Canada and Turkey. An applicant for PK3 must be three years old by Sept. 30. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-kindergarten

2. All names are pseudonyms.

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18
Meeting Change with Creativity

Interview with Kirsten Drotner

Kirsten Drotner is chair of media studies at University of South Denmark (SDU) and founding director of a national programme Our Museum, and of DREAM (Danish Research Centre on Advanced Media Materials). She is a leading researcher on children's and young people's interactions with media at present and in the past, on the formation of creative, digital media literacies, and on users' engagements with museums, libraries and similar cultural institutions[1].

Tell us how your interest (and approaches) regarding children, youth, media and creativity have developed over your career. How about the projects you are involved in at the moment?

Early in my career I was involved in organizing academic collaboration in Denmark in the area of children's culture. This was a time when the Scandinavian countries of Europe developed a lively interest in approaches to culture that would later be termed cultural studies, based on parallel developments in the UK. In Scandinavia, the particular interest in children's culture tied in with welfarist notions of children as agents in their own lives, not merely as future citizens or denizens of the state. So, my interest in children's and young people's own cultural expressions and the creative processes behind them took inspiration from these trends.

More specifically, I had already conducted historical research on juvenile media representations, resulting in a DPhil. in 1985 followed

by a book three years later[2]. Having spent the best part of my twenties in historical archives, I wanted to turn to more contemporary media issues. So in line with the wider interests at the time in cultural agency, I chose to conduct a media-ethnographic study, not of dedicated fan culture, but of 'ordinary' young people's video-making. I followed about 25 informants for about a year across a range of sites and settings in which they moved, and I analysed their video-making processes as well as their results[3]. This work allowed me to gain insight into the fascinating processes of creative collaboration; and that fascination has stayed with me, even if I have worked on many other media projects since then.

Naturally, the pervasive uptake of digital media technologies that offer immediate and easy options for shaping and sharing all sorts of images, sound and text have turned what 25 years ago seemed like a niche research area into a key concern. I have just finished a project, conducted with my colleague Heidi Philipsen, on children's film-making practices and the didactics needed to further these practices[4]. That work has made it absolutely evident that today children's digital content creation is at the core of exercising their freedom of expression. But it has equally documented that children are not digital natives who already know how to exercise this freedom. They need sustained training to

Image 1. Making stop-motion film offers an easy pathway to productive media and information literacy.

competently use what Uwe Hasebrink and colleagues in the major EU Kids Online project have called the digital 'ladder of opportunities'[5].

While children naturally have a voice, they must learn how to apply digital media to shape its modes of expression so that others may hear and understand, even if these others choose to disagree or reject the result. While 25 years ago I studied young people's media production as a form of peer production within a leisured participatory culture, our current research has illuminated that today children's digital content creation is critically about securing pathways to their citizenship.

"Leisure is hard work" is the title of one of your articles, published in 2008. Could you explain how you came to this conclusion?

The title is really the result of two key findings in our studies on digital content creation. First, we have documented that there is a mismatch between young media users' technical options of production and their abilities to exercise these options in such a way that others understand the result. Many have the technical skills needed, but fewer know how to communicate with media in terms of, for example, narrative, framing or editing; and surprisingly few have a clue about the contexts of power in which their results circulate. They may know about the privacy settings of their Facebook profiles, but they are at a loss to understand Facebook's platform power over their data. Second, we have seen that school provides very little in terms of systematically training students' digital content creation, despite the fact that this training is at the core of 21st-century skills. School, in Denmark as elsewhere, is very focused on reproductive learning (reading, math), rather than on the forms of productive learning that are involved in digital processes of creation. Young media users primarily train these creative resources in their leisure time – hence the title.

If you could send a message to parents and teachers about children's and youth's media creative production, what would you say? What do they need to be aware of and/or inspired by?

We all need to rethink the purpose of media and information literacy in view of the resources needed in the 21st century. In the past, much effort has focused on offering students critical skills of representation, for example spotting ideological bias and marketing efforts. More re-

Image 2. Sharing the fun of production is a serious matter, even for very young children.

cently, we have witnessed an upsurge in a technology-driven emphasis on information skills in terms of handling hardware and teaching students how to code. When it comes to children's and young people's own media output, not only third-sector organisations and school but also parents are keen to guide the young about what (and whom) to avoid online. Given the high-profile and very tragic cases of harm, this is a natural first step. Naturally, children need critical awareness and there is nothing wrong in promoting coding. But the pervasive focus on technological skills and on online avoidance very easily implies that adults are sidestepping the key perspective of how we may guide children's freedom to express themselves online. We need a better balance in teaching about media obstacles and options here.

Parents or school authorities, who may not be persuaded by such fluffy democratic arguments, may take note of a report issued by the

World Economic Forum in 2016 and stating that of the generation populating schools today 65 per cent will hold future jobs not yet perceived or invented[6]. To prepare for such dramatic changes, creative skills are needed by all, not merely a select creative class. For without creativity, no innovation, and no training in meeting change with a capacity to act on that change. And where better to start than by advancing children's and young people's creative media competences. They have the resources; they already apply these in their leisure time. But mobiles and tablets are still often banned in the classroom as distracting gadgets diverting attention from the main elements of teaching. We need to turn the tables.

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Ulla Carlsson (Ed.): *Regulation, Awareness, Empowerment. Young People and Harmful Media Content in the Digital Age,* in co-operation with UNESCO, 2006.

Maria Jacobson: *Young People and Gendered Media Messages,* 2005.

Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen & Jonas Heide Smith: *Playing with Fire. How do Computer Games Influence the Player?,* 2004.

This book *YOUNG & CREATIVE – Digital Technologies Empowering Children in Everyday Life* aims to catch different examples where children and youth have been active and creative by their own initiative, driven by intrinsic motivation, personal interests and peer relations. We want to show the opportunities of digital technologies for creative processes of children and young people. The access to digital technology and its growing convergence has allowed young people to experiment active roles as cultural producers. Participation becomes a keyword when "consumers take media into their own hands". Digital technologies offer the potential of different forms of participatory media culture, and finally creative practices.

YOUNG and CREATIVE is a mix of research articles, interviews and case studies. The target audience of this book is students, professionals and researchers working in the field of education, communication, children and youth studies, new literacy studies and media and information literacy.

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