

Digital Families Across the Lifecourse

Seminars funded by: Scottish Universities Insight Institute (SUII)

Seminar 1:

Children and Digital Technologies

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Digital families across the lifecourse: Children and digital technology

Digital Families Programme – Key Aims

- 1) Understand how digital technologies are impacting on family life and personal relationships in Scotland
- 2) Identify the issues that families are grappling with in relation to digital advances, and stimulate new ways of addressing these issues
- 3) Foster innovative collaborations between academics and non-academics with the potential to both raise new questions and inform policy and practice
- 4) Establish a ‘digital families’ research network



Focus of today's seminar

- Explore how digital technologies are changing childhood, including both positive and negative factors
- Identify key issues in the influence of digital technologies on children, and how to address these
- Develop new collaborations between researchers, practitioners and policy-makers interested in taking issues forward



International Context – some recent examples

Hampshire, K. et al. (2015) 'Informal M-health: How are young people using mobile phones to bridge healthcare gaps in sub-Saharan Africa?' *Social Science & Medicine*, 142: 90-99.

Huijsmans, R. and Trần Thị Hà Lan (2015) 'Enacting Nationalism through Youthful Mobilities? Youth, mobile phones and digital capitalism in a Lao-Vietnamese borderland,' *Nations and Nationalism* 21(2): 209-229.



Future Seminars

Seminar 2: Friday 26 Feb 2016, at SU11

- ***Family Life and Digital Technologies***

Seminar 3: towards end of April (in Edinburgh)

- ***Older Age, Caring and Digital Technologies***

Programme websites

- www.crfr.ac.uk/digital-families-across-the-lifecycle/
- www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Programmes/Programmes20152016/DigitalFamilies.aspx



Digital families across the lifecycle: Children and digital technology

- 10.45 Growing up in a digital age: Young children and digital technologies
Christine Stephen, University of Stirling
- 11.30 Break
- 11.45 Roundtable Discussion One
- 12.30 Film One
- 12.45 Lunch
- 1.30 Digital Childhood: Myths and Realities
Natalia Kucirkova, The Open University
- 2.30 Roundtable Discussion Two
- 3.15 Closing remarks and where next
- 3.30 Close



Practicalities

- Wifi access is available through The Cloud
 - if you have not already registered you can do so easily today

- Twitter hashtag:

#digifam1516



Digital Families

Dr Joanne Westwood

University of Stirling

School of Applied Social Science



Digital families across the lifecourse: Children and digital technology

Context: unprecedented growth in use of digital technologies amongst young people

- Smart phones replace PC purchases:
- Mobile technologies: Tablets, watches, 'phones
- Increased use of smart technologies and at an earlier age
- Digital residents (White and Le Cornu 2011) children and young people are natural confident users, familiarity with using digital technologies
- Digital technology and especially social media is the norm in family life



Fear of digital technology and concerns about impact of these on children and young people

- Isolation
- Addiction to social media at the expense of real people
- Impact on social development, concentration
- Cyber bullying by other children and young people
- Online grooming and abuse/exploitation by adults
- Too much screen time and physical effects (posture, eyesight etc....)
- Inappropriate materials (pornography, violence)
- Keeping secrets from their parents
- Wider concerns about online privacy



New technology: old concerns?

“Each new media technology brought with it great promise for social and educational benefits, and great concern for children’s exposure to inappropriate and harmful content” (Wartella and Jennings 2000)

1920’s – 1980’s Children and comics, the radio, films and TV
1980’s - 2000 : video games, computers, gaming, THE INTERNET



Children and young people worlds: How do digital technologies contribute to family life?

Individual activities which weaken the family?



Strengthen family connections?

- A closer relationship between parents and children?
- Texting your monosyllabic teenage son/daughter
- Increasing contact in families where there is divorce/separation/ or in migrant families (i.e. Skype)
- Swapping roles: children becoming experts: moving out of your parental comfort zone when your child shows you how to use Instagram
- Online family calendars which children and parents have access to: managing time, activities, appointments and outings etc....
- Gaming together online ...



Digital families across the lifecourse: Children and digital technology

Children and young people worlds: education

Education:

- Increasing use of digital technologies for communicating with parents once children are in the school
- Easier access to information/events about school
- https://twitter.com/Stirling_High?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor
- <https://www.parentpay.com/>
- <https://www.schooluniformdirect.co.uk/>
- <http://www.peebleshighschool.co.uk/features/show-my-homework-review>



Children and young people worlds: social life

- Social media platforms: connecting online as well as in real time and space, reducing isolation,
- Keeping connected with friends through gaming online (rural locations)
- Access to music, visual media and material world
- Local and Global: friendships and networks across geographical boundaries (pen friends)
- Facebook/scrapbook “records of people’s emerging lives” (Lincoln and Brady 2014)
- Privacy, secrecy and developing identify: moralised terrain (Berriman and Thomson 2015)



References

Berriman, L., and Thomson, R., (2015) Spectacles of intimacy? Mapping the moral landscape of teenage social media . *ournal of Youth Studies*, 18:5, 583-597, DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2014.992323

GWI (2014) Global Device Summary Q3. Available at: URL <https://www.globalwebindex.net/>

Insafe (2015) <http://www.saferinternet.org/online-issues/parents-and-carers/mobile-phones>

Lincoln, S. and Robards, B. (2014) Being strategic and taking control: Bedrooms, social network sites and the narratives of growing up. *New Media and Society*. DOI: 10.1177/1461444814554065

Lafferty, J. (2015) Social Times : Young People More Likely to Use Social Media in Developing Countries
<http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/study-young-people-more-likely-to-use-social-media-in-developing-countries/617242>

White, D.A. and Le Cornu, A. (2011) Visitors and Residents: A New Typology for online Engagement: *First Monday* 16 <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3171>

Wartella, E. A., and Jennings N., (2000) Children and Computers: New Technology— Old Concerns. *The Future of Children : Children and Computer Technology* Vol. 10 • No. 2 – Fall/ Winter 2000 https://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/docs/10_02_01.pdf

