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The myth of the digital native: Why it persists and the harm it inflicts

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The digital native is just one of many terms that describe young people as a digitally savvy group, distinctively different in the ways that they understand and use technology when compared to older generations. A term popularised two decades ago, it has influenced the ways policy makers and other stakeholders think about young people and the most appropriate ways to educate and support them. It is a way of framing young people's relationship with technology that has limited empirical basis, yet persists and indeed grows stronger year by year. The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate the problems behind this term and the negative implications it can have for some young people, particularly those who are already experiencing forms of social inequalities.

Overview

The discussion below is divided into five main sections. In the first, the notion of the digital native is detailed. Second the empirical evidence of young people's uses of technology is reviewed, and contrasted with the concept of the digital native, demonstrating that the key premises of the term are inaccurate and not based on research evidence. The third section argues that the continuing support for the idea of the digital native is harmful to children and young people: both in the (lack of) support that they receive to use new technologies and at a more general level of policy making, where assumptions about digitally savvy youth drive services for young people online. The penultimate section examines why this discourse persists even when it is not supported by the evidence. The final section concludes with some proposals for future research and some ways forward for education systems.

Digital natives vs. digital immigrants

"Digital native" is one of a group of terms – net generation, Google generation or millennials – which make strong claims for the significance of technologies within the lives of young people. For some (Prensky, 2001^[1]; Oblinger and Oblinger, 2005^[2]; Palfrey and Gasser, 2011^[3]), new technologies have been such a defining feature in the lives of younger generations that they predict a fundamental change in the way young people communicate, socialise, create and learn: "These kids are different. They study, work, write, and interact with each other in ways that are very different from the ways you did growing up" (Palfrey and Gasser, 2011^[3]); "they took to it [technology] like ducks to water" (Tapscott, 2008^[4]).

The key elements of the digital native concept, as described by Prensky, is that young people should be considered "Native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet." This makes them fundamentally different to older generations - 'the immigrants' - who simply do not know how to "speak the language" of technology in the same way. This is a big problem, Prensky suggests, as it is vital that education is changed to support digital natives – but the digital natives are being taught and guided by digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001^[1]).

There are some positives and negatives in the idea of the digital native. From a more positive perspective, it is very important that we understand young people and their uses of technology. It is not so long ago that young people's experiences and perspectives were discounted by the research community, and only became a genuine focus of research in the 1960s, with the rise of the sociology of childhood and related fields. Furthermore, digital technologies are a complex set of social and cultural artefacts which need to be understood in relation to the ways that people use them and think about them. Thus, any move that encourages researchers, policy makers, teachers and other stakeholders to consider young people's technology use can only be a good thing.

There are also some grains of 'truth' in the notion of the digital native: a higher proportion of young people do use the Internet and other new technologies than older generations. Age tends to be quite a strong factor in models that help explain who uses technology and who is likely to benefit the most from it. Also, it is very clear, that for every generation, they are connected to one another by a common culture and technology is certainly a part of that for the majority of young people (Jenkins, 2009^[5]). Indeed, for many young people, technology is one important way to experience a sense of autonomy and personal control over various aspects of their lives (Buckingham, 2008^[6]; Davies and Eynon, 2013^[7]).

However, there are also many problems in this way of conceptualising young people. The idea is intended as a way to think about and understand young people, but there is a lack of precision driving the argument. A basic problem is one of definition - who is a 'digital native?' All of the arguments in support of the notion are primarily based on when a person was born. However, this is problematic because these ideas have been discussed for a significant period of time. Indeed, if we agree with Prensky, then anyone born after 1980 is a digital native. The term therefore covers quite a wide range of people over ages and life-stages

and a significant proportion of the population. This makes the term almost meaningless as many parents and teachers are now as technically proficient as their younger, digitally native, counterparts (Jones and Czerniewicz, 2010^[8]).

Beyond problems with the definition, there are also problems with the way that digital native discourse conceptualises young people and technology in essentialist terms. It is one part of a wider set of simplistic discourses about young people that either frame their relationship with technology in dystopian terms (where vulnerable children will be exploited by this technology) or promote a utopian view where children, unlike adults, have a natural innate ability to use and excel at using technologies (Buckingham, 2008^[6]). These views have been popular for many years and co-exist. For example, Selwyn identifies six discourses about young people and new technologies in the United Kingdom prominent in media and policy circles since 1980 to 2000. These include: the 'natural' child computer user where children are seen as having an innate ability to use technology (i.e. a digital native); the 'adult' child computer user where children are experts and teachers are novices and young people have to show adults (in a non-threatening way) how to use technology; and the 'victimised' child computer user where innocent young children are exposed to undesirable content (Selwyn, 2003^[9]).

Although this work was some time ago, similar themes can be seen in much of the popular and policy discourse around young people today. Indeed, the digital native perspective still perpetuates and is perhaps even gaining increasing currency within discussions about the future direction of education and the most appropriate way to provide public services and social support for young people. The digital native notion becomes a kind of shorthand argument in this respect which claims that formal education short-changes young people who can do so much more on their own initiatives, and in their own contexts, than adults are aware of or can engage with; and that any initiative to support young people needs to use technology in order to meaningfully connect with them.

Debunking the myth

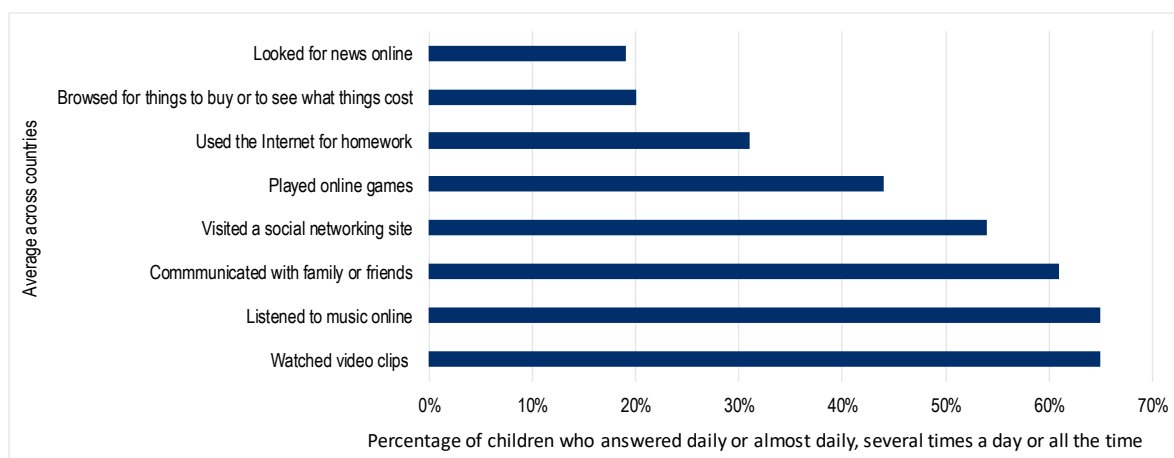
Critiques of the digital native concept are not particularly new (Bennett and Maton, 2010^[10]; Facer and Furlong, 2001^[11]; Valentine, Holloway and Bingham, 2002^[12]; Helsper and Eynon, 2010^[13]). Many of these critiques compare the popular discourse to the empirical evidence available about young people and their technology use. First, analysis of survey data across generations demonstrates that the differences between older and younger generations are not fundamental, or as clear cut as the digital native myth suggests. For example, in their analysis of nationally representative survey data in Britain, Helsper and Eynon (2010^[13]) found that younger generations did tend to be more likely to have certain characteristics that we would expect if they were 'digital natives'. They had a greater range of technologies in the household, tended to use the Internet as a first port of call, had higher levels of Internet self-efficacy, multitasked more and used the Internet more for particular activities (such as homework). However, they also found that generation was not the only significant variable in explaining these patterns: education, experience and gender also played a part. In sum, individuals could be placed along a continuum of engagement with the Internet and other new technologies, there was no clear generational divide (Helsper and Eynon, 2010^[13]).

The lack of clear generational differences is not the only aspect of the assumptions behind the notion of the digital native that are not supported by the evidence. Empirical research has presented a more fine-grained and balanced picture of how this supposedly homogenous generation actually engage with digital technologies, especially in their own time, within their own settings. There is significant evidence from an array of countries that young people and their uses of technology cannot really be understood as one homogeneous group. Instead there are significant variations in how and why young people use new technologies. There are for example, differences in the levels of engagement with activities like creativity, communicating, participating, information seeking, entertainment; differences in quality of access to

technologies and young people's level of digital skills. There are also significant shifts in usage over time from pre-teen to post-teen years reflecting the wider social and cultural aspects of growing up; and the levels of benefits young people are able to achieve from technology (socially, economically and educationally) also vary significantly (Davies and Eynon, 2013^[7]; Davies and Eynon, 2018^[14]; Facer and Furlong, 2001^[11]; Eynon and Malmberg, 2011^[15]; Hooft Graafland, 2018^[16]; Livingstone and Helsper, 2007^[17]; Livingstone et al., 2019^[18]; Ito, 2013^[19]).

These differences in engagement have been mapped across countries for many years. For example, the most recent EU Kids Online survey of over 25 000 children aged 9–16 from 19 European countries found significant trends in access and nature of Internet use. The survey data, collected between autumn 2017 and summer 2019, demonstrated the varied ways that young people may access the Internet, with the smartphone the most popular form of access across all countries. The survey also showed that in general watching videos, listening to music, socialising and playing games were the most common activities (see Figure 9.1) but patterns varied significantly across countries. There were also age differences with 15-16 year-olds tending to do more online (both frequency and range) than younger age groups. Finally, while operational and social skills across the 19 countries were consistently quite high, information navigation skills and creative skills were far more uneven (Smahel et al., 2020^[20]).

Figure 9.1. Percentage of Internet users aged 9-16 who carry out online activities daily



Note: All children 9-16 who use the Internet from Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland.

Source: Adapted from (Smahel et al., 2020^[20])

As will be discussed below, the reasons for these differences are multifaceted and related to individual and local contexts as well as macro level factors including the nature of the educational system, broadband infrastructure, legal systems and cultural expectations (Smahel et al., 2020^[20]). These differences are in stark contrast to the homogeneous vision of young people offered by those supportive of the notion of the digital native; and have significant implications for how young people should be supported in their technology use.

The risks of the digital native discourse

The significant disconnects between the discourse of the digital native and the research evidence available in many countries is highly problematic. In this section three problems are highlighted: the effect this

discourse has on educators, parents/guardians, its neglect of the realities of digital inequalities among young people, and its acceptance of the status quo with respect to the current role of technology in society. Each is discussed in turn.

Supporting children in a networked era

As noted above, research demonstrates that there is no obvious generational divide in the ways that people access and use technology. As argued by Helsper and Eynon, in their study of Internet use, adults (i.e. parents and teachers) can “speak the same language of technology” as young people if they want to do so. There are differences in why and how people use technology, but this speaks more to life-stage, social context and interest than any kind of fundamental inability to use or understand technology in a particular way (Helsper and Eynon, 2010^[13]).

In addition, we know from many studies the important role that schools, parents/guardians play in young people’s digital experiences, for example, in supporting access to technology, in supporting them to develop digital skills and providing them with a series of support networks that they can draw upon to further their interests and engagements with technology (e.g. (boyd, 2014^[21]; Philip and Garcia, 2013^[22])). This support of course, is not only ensuring young people are able to make the most of new technologies but also to help them navigate the risks of the Internet and related technologies so they are protected from harm (Livingstone et al., 2019^[18]).

However, many parents, guardians, and school teachers often feel that they do not have anything to offer young people in using technology, and position them instead as the experts. The digital native rhetoric is actively disempowering for many of the people who can and should be supporting young people (Bayne and Ross, 2011^[23]; Helsper and Eynon, 2010^[13]). As a society, it is important to make decisions about how society wishes young people to use and engage with new technologies, and how education systems are developed to support that vision. The lack of proper debate, and a belief in the notion of digital natives is having negative impacts on young people. Indeed, this ‘hands off’ approach, particularly by schools, is likely to have the most significant implications for those young people who are already experiencing forms of social exclusion.

Digital inequalities

Research has also shown consistent differences in the ways that young people use technology and the benefits they obtain from them, and these patterns are in part explained by socio-economic factors. In general, those who are not as well-off tend to have less quality of access to technologies (e.g. own device, suitability of device for learning, quality of home Internet connection etc.), have fewer people who can support them (often as their parents or guardians may not have high levels of digital skills) and tend to be less skilled (without access to technologies or appropriate support then skills development is difficult).

Those young people who are not able to effectively use technology are increasingly disadvantaged. For example, they experience challenges while in education as they may be unable to do homework set online as they do not have access. They may also not have the skills to use technology effectively, and in some settings the necessary range of skills are not always taught at school as certain skill levels can be assumed for ‘digital natives’ (Davies and Eynon, 2018^[14]). Outside of school, they are ostracised from peer networks and forms of civic engagement, and often miss out on other additional support services as most support for young people moves online (Robinson, 2009^[24]; Eynon and Geniets, 2015^[25]; Helsper, 2017^[26]; boyd, 2014^[21]).

Researchers have highlighted these inequalities for decades (Facer and Furlong, 2001^[11]; Valentine, Holloway and Bingham, 2002^[12]), yet most of the time these young people remained largely invisible to policy makers, supported by the digital native discourse. The recent COVID-19 crisis, where in many countries schools were closed as part of the reaction to the pandemic, finally made visible to many the

significant inequalities there are both within and across countries in relation to young people's ability to access and use new technologies. Many were shocked by the extent of the problem.

How we address these inequalities is important. Although there is a strong instinct to focus on the provision of digital access in the form of a laptop and Internet connection, such schemes will be insufficient (Sims, 2013_[27]). They need to be part of a far wider educational agenda. As boyd (2014_[21]) notes if schools absent themselves from engaging in supporting young people in their development of their uses of the digital, this reproduces inequality. For example, the EU Kids Online survey, showed that young people tend to deal with negative online experiences by talking to parents or friends as opposed to school teachers or other professionals (Smahel et al., 2020_[20]). Thus, those who have parents and friends who are less digitally literate will have fewer resources beyond school to support their development of digital literacy, even once they are online.

Policies to address digital inequalities also need to be part of a wider commitment of social change. For most young people, the reason they do not have access to technology in the home is due to a lack of material resources. Having a laptop does not eradicate problems of families not having sufficient money for food or heating, or adequate health care or job opportunities. Digital inequalities are very highly correlated with other measures of social inequality. The importance of ensuring we think about technology and youth with an awareness of wider social structures brings us to the next risk.

An acceptance of the status quo

The digital native discourse effectively celebrates all young people's uses of technology in an uncritical fashion, and does this alongside an uncritical and deterministic model of technology, where all technology is exciting and positioned as the factor that will drive our future society. This leads to an overriding acceptance of the status quo and a deterministic view of technology that does not help young people or those trying to support them.

The acceptance of technology as 'a good thing' is reflected in statements such as this one by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which suggests that "Information and Communications Technology (ICTs) can enhance education, reduce youth unemployment and promote social and economic development. Youth can only leverage the transformative power of ICTs, however, when they have access to ICTs and are equipped with a range of digital skills to use them to their benefit." (ITU, 2020_[28]). In other words, technology is a good thing and young people have to simply be able to leverage its potential.

However, young people themselves are not convinced of the straightforward benefits of technology. For example, a Pew survey of teenagers' technology use in the United States in 2018 found that, "Despite the nearly ubiquitous presence of social media in their lives, there is no clear consensus among teens about these platforms' ultimate impact on people their age. A plurality of teens (45%) believe social media has neither a positive nor negative effect on people their age. Meanwhile, roughly three-in-ten teens (31%) say social media has had a mostly positive impact, while 24% describe its effect as mostly negative" (Anderson and Jiang, 2018_[29]). In addition, we know that the majority of young people use a fairly small range of apps or platforms typically related to socialising and entertainment, where young people are behaving merely as consumers of the Internet (Davies and Eynon, 2018_[14]).

Relatedly, there are concerns about the use of digital technologies by young people that lead to the production and use of digital trace data across the life course that commercial companies profit from (Lupton and Williamson, 2017_[30]). It is important to attend to the ever increasing role of corporate and third party actors in the collection and storage and processing of data for activities that young people do online, including for learning and education. Indeed, there has been a significant discussion about the needs for children's rights to be firmly integrated into the agendas of global debates about ethics and the use of 'Big Data' that are ongoing and need significant attention (Berman and Albright, 2017_[31]; Livingstone and Third, 2017_[32]; Lupton and Williamson, 2017_[30]). As a society it is important to think about these emerging

patterns, both in young people's use of technology and the wider technical, commercial, legal and political environment.

At the same time, there is also evidence of an increasing “responsibilisation” of young people. In other words, that young people are responsible for their success in the ‘fourth industrial revolution’ in ways that promote neoliberal logics and neglect wider social structures. Despite concerns across the globe about growing levels of inequality, typically the way to resolve these issues is through education and a focus on the individual as opposed to wider interventions that support social justice. This can be seen in a variety of aspects of education (see e.g. (Hope, 2015^[33]; Reveley, 2016^[34])) including in the focus on coding in schools. Coding is promoted as a way to guaranteed ‘success’ for the individual and society – but coding does not translate into the same opportunities for everyone. All young people have different levels of economic, social, cultural and political resources and this clearly influences the kinds of opportunities they are able to get from new technologies (even if their use, skills and access looks the same) (Davies and Eynon, 2018^[14]).

In essence, the digital native discourse does not encourage critical reflection on the relationships between technology, education, young people and society. Do we want to live in such an unequal society, and accept the status quo, or do we want something different for future generations?

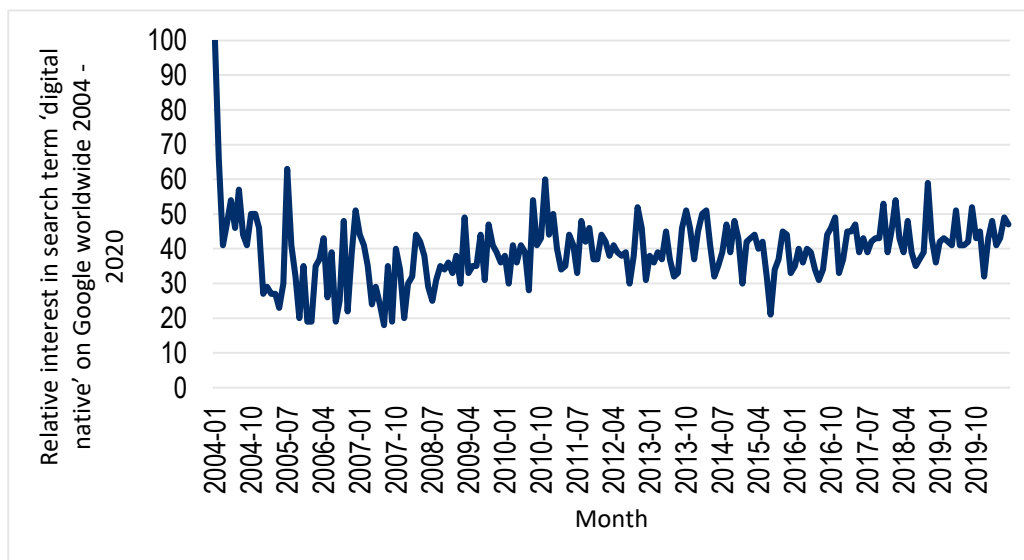
Why the discourse persists

Despite there being limited empirical evidence to support the notion of a digital native, this term is well recognised in popular and policy discourse alike. The briefest of Internet searches will reveal a host of reports, blogs and policy statements that continue to use the term ‘digital natives’ and take as their starting point that all young people are digitally savvy for a whole host of topics related to education, employment and well-being.

Systematic searches of public interest in this domain clearly show that interest in defining young people in this technologically deterministic way is not significantly diminishing and remains strong (Judd, 2018^[35]). Following some of the analyses by Judd, we can see from a simple google trends search that the relative interest in searching for digital natives worldwide has not significantly diminished since around 2005 (Figure 9.2).

Given the power of the digital native discourse, it is important to think about why the term digital native and other popular discourses about young people persist. Quite simply, who benefits from this continued promotion?

Although there may be many beneficiaries it seems the most prominent are the commercial sector (Selwyn, 2003^[9]). The digital native rhetoric encourages parents and guardians to purchase devices for their children to support their homework. This purchasing of technology to support young people does not end there. The digital native rhetoric also provides additional justification for discourse that supports technology as a solution to wider social challenges. For example, the need to use technology to reform education, or to promote ‘social mobility’ by providing young people with the means to get on in life through the take up of online opportunities.

Figure 9.2. Relative interest in search term 'digital native' on Google worldwide 2004-2020

Note: Google defines Interest over time as: "Numbers represent search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time. A value of 100 is the peak popularity for the term. A value of 50 means that the term is half as popular. A score of 0 means there was not enough data for this term."

As some authors have argued, the digital native discourse is not something that can be tackled through empirical evidence alone, the metaphor itself needs to be directly interrogated. This includes the "underlying discrimination implicit in its metaphors" of the native vs. immigrant discourse" (Bayne and Ross, 2011^[23]), and the market-driven, essentialist views of technology discussed above (Bayne and Ross, 2011^[23]). As Selwyn notes, "the notion of the digital native should be seen more as a discursive than a descriptive device, employed by those seeking to exert some form of power and control over the shaping of the (near) digital future" (Selwyn, 2009^[36]). It is therefore important that research with young people does not inadvertently reinforce and exacerbate the digital native debate by legitimising the term through acknowledgement of it and allowing such discourse to set the agenda.

A future agenda

An important way to achieve a change in the discourse is to encourage a wider group of stakeholders to engage in deliberation about the role and future design of technology in the lives of young people (Bijker, and Pinch, 2012^[37]). This penultimate section highlights some key issues for future work and policy making that could help to achieve this goal.

Education policy and practice

As noted above, a central point in research to date is that teachers need to recognise their importance in supporting young people in their uses of technology. Young people are not all experts, and just like all areas of education, adults have a responsibility to support young people in their endeavours. Stakeholders need to decide whether to continue down the current path, and see the same patterns of behaviour or decide to more actively intervene in providing support for young people of all ages in their uses of technology (Smahel et al., 2020^[20]).

This relates to wider questions of the role of schooling in society. As Biesta argues there are three interrelated functions of the school: to enable young people to acquire qualifications that reflect their “knowledge skills and dispositions to be able to do something”; to facilitate (in both unintended and intended ways) the ways that young people “become part of particular social, cultural, and political “orders.” (i.e. socialisation)”; and help young people “to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting” (i.e. subjectification) (Biesta, 2015_[38]). Most of the focus on young people and technology use in schools is accomplished through the prism of qualifications and skills, tending to ignore subjectification and socialisation. However, such important aspects of schooling should not be ignored in relation to technology (see e.g. (Jenkins, 2009_[5])).

One way to achieve all three roles of schooling is to incorporate a critical digital literacies agenda into schools, enabling young people to challenge the status quo with regard to technology, learning and everyday life and to support a more holistic transition to adulthood. Such a move would be in contrast to the relatively narrow digital skills agenda that has manifested itself in many countries that focus primarily on the need for young people to code (Davies and Eynon, 2018_[14]). Indeed, there has been much analysis and debate about the need for a more democratic educational agenda related to digital skills policies with many concerned that there is a significant disconnect between what young people want and need to learn as part of their formal education and what schools offer (Wallis and Buckingham, 2016_[39]; Morgan, 2016_[40]; Biesta, 2015_[38]). This could be achieved in many ways, for example, there is increasing support for ‘critical digital design’ that brings together the production of artefacts with a focus on ethics (i.e. drawing attention the power relations and inequalities that are apparent in current society); and the personal (i.e. highlighting that the way individuals make meaning when engaging with technology in everyday life can be understood as a learning resource), supporting agency and identity development (Pangrazio, 2014_[41]).

Similarly, there are important issues to explore in relation to who is setting the technology agenda, and how the current landscape is dominated by a few commercial actors. There are many implications of this, but one significant set of questions is around young people’s data rights and right to privacy. As noted above, this is an issue both in and outside schools and is particularly important for policy makers. Indeed, education is distinct from other domains in which big data are being applied and needs special consideration particularly for younger age groups (Clayton and Halliday, 2017_[42]). There needs to be a more holistic view of how and where learning and education takes place, and by whom, to ensure that all institutions engaged in learning (not just formal educational institutions) are accountable; and that the rights, needs and experiences of all young people are recognised.

Research

There are a number of research gaps in our current understandings of young people and technology. First, most of the data available about how young people experience technology is currently collected via traditional social science methods (for example, from interviews, surveys, or diaries). However, very little work has used other methods from social data science that could enable tracking what young people actually do with technology as a complement to existing approaches that measure how young people experience and value technology in their lives. For example, many young people use social networking sites such as YouTube and TikTok as places to socialise and learn about topics that are of interest to them. As they use these platforms they leave a trail of digital traces behind them: views, content, comments, time spent are all tracked by the companies that own such sites. Companies tend to use this kind of large scale digital trace to improve profits. In contrast, researchers could potentially use this kind of data to get insights into how young people learn and engage with new technologies over time that would complement the self-report measures typically collected by social scientists. Indeed, a large proportion of work about young people and their experiences of the digital realm is cross-sectional. It is therefore difficult to see or measure what the social, educational and health implications of using technologies are over time and the use of digital trace data could help to address this. There are, quite rightly, significant ethical concerns about the use of such data by companies. However, these concerns should not mean that strong ethical practices

cannot be developed in this domain by researchers in collaboration with young people. The potential additional insights into young people's practices with technology could be considerable.

Second, although there has been some very rich work in this space, there is a lack of research in some parts of the globe (Holloway and Livingstone, 2013^[43]; Hooft Graafland, 2018^[16]; Livingstone et al., 2019^[18]). The vast majority of the work to date with young people has focused predominately in Europe and North America, with very little focus on the experiences of those from low and middle income countries (Livingstone et al., 2019^[18]). However, this is changing. For example, Global Kids Online - a collaborative initiative between UNICEF, the London School of Economics and Political Science, and the EU Kids Online network is an ongoing initiative to capture more of the world's experiences of technology. Countries now included in this important initiative include: Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Ghana, Montenegro, Serbia, South Africa, the Philippines and Uruguay, and fieldwork is underway in Albania and Canada (Livingstone et al., 2019^[18]).

There are also limited amounts of research with those from younger age groups: very little is known about the social, health and educational implications of ever younger children using new technologies including the Internet (Holloway and Livingstone, 2013^[43]; Livingstone et al., 2019^[18]). However, this is also changing. For example, the Australian Research Council (ARC) seven-year Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child focuses on the experiences of children aged zero to eight and their families.

Thirdly, much of the work on 'digital youth' tends not to be carried out in significant conversation with the broader youth studies or sociology of childhood literature. In general, a significant proportion of the work in this area is highly empirical with limited engagement with theory. It is important to build on more theoretical work in understanding students' digital practices (Beckman, Bennett and Lockyer, 2019^[44]; Selwyn, 2012^[45]; Sims, 2013^[27]; Robinson, 2009^[24]; Livingstone and Sefton-Green, 2016^[46]) to critique the digital native discourse and provide a strong alternative that can develop over time. Indeed, more theoretical work would protect against the ahistorical nature of much of the debate about young people and technology and ideally offer a way to provide a meaningful alternative to the digital native discourse (Bennett and Maton, 2010^[10]; Selwyn, 2012^[45]).

Conclusion

The digital native discourse does not fit with the empirical evidence. Young people have very diverse uses, attitudes and experiences of technology. Although they may participate in a distinct teenage culture in relation to the digital world this does not make it impossible for adults from all stakeholder groups to help young people navigate their use of technology, just as it is not impossible to help them to develop the wider competence and knowledge they need to operate meaningfully in the world. Though catchy, and easy for policy makers to respond to, the discourse of the digital native does not offer appropriate ways to conceptualise the relationships between young people and technology nor offers insight into appropriate interventions to educate and support them. Indeed, though not directly harmful for the majority, it has highly negative implications for some, particularly those who are already experiencing forms of social inequalities. It is imperative that we reframe the discourse and find new, research informed ways forward for our education system and wider support for young people.

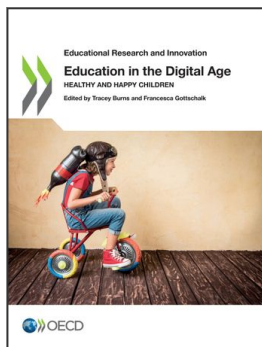
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