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EU DigiLitEY COST ACTION Final Conference

Reconceptualising Early Childhood Literacies: An International Conference
Manchester Conference Centre, Manchester, UK 7th-8th March 2019

Symposium - A day in the digital lives of children aged 0-3: the tablet and TV

Chair: Julia Gillen, Lancaster University, UK

Presenters: Yehuda Barlev, Rosie Flewitt, Ana Jorge, Kristiina Kumpulainen, Jackie Marsh, Mitsuko Matsumoto, Raquel Pacheco, David Poveda, Helena Sandberg, Heidi Sairanen, Fiona Scott, Ulrika Sjöberg, Ebba Sundin, Vitor Tomé

Structure of presentation

This presentation will be in the form of a collective, rather than the traditional symposium format of several connected papers. Our collective presentation will have three parts.

Part 1 We will begin with an introduction to the project, the Day in the Digital Lives of Children aged 0-3, by members of DigiLitEY Working Group 1 Children in Homes and Communities. We will briefly explain the rationale for the project, before moving to the project design including methodological and ethical dilemmas.

Part 2 The second part of the presentation will centre on two technologies in the home: the TV and the tablet. Each presenter will briefly describe the place of the TV and tablet in the family studied in terms of children's engagement with the technology during the 'day' and the family's attitudes towards it as explored through direct observation and interview data. This will be illustrated through still images where permissions allow and/or diagrams.

Part 3 Our discussant, David Poveda, a member of the research team, will draw some threads together, discusses implications for understanding the place of technologies in the lives of young children and their families, and open up the discussion with the audience.

Introduction and rationale The 'A Day in the Digital Lives of Children aged 0–3' project aims to identify the way in which digital technologies inform the lives of very young children and their families. Recently, the digital practices and literacies of children under eight have been the focus of relevant research, and the area of study is rapidly growing (e.g. (Chaudron, 2015; Chaudron, Di Gioia, & Gemo, 2018; Sefton-Green, Marsh, Erstad, & Flewitt, 2016) since a wide range of digital devices are present in children's lives even from the first months of life (e.g. (Marsh et al., 2015). Children are going online at younger ages, too, which may involve risks as well as providing new developmental and learning opportunities (Byrne et al, 2016). The TV and tablet were selected as our focus for this presentation of our research they are often but not always present in the children's lives and we found a great diversity in how they are engaged with by the children. Both are much studied technologies, although the place of the TV in the home and children's development is an issue that may have waned in terms of attention by researchers in recent decades. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that its place in young children's home has necessarily diminished; see for example contemporary studies by Chaudron, Di Gioia, & Gemo, (2018) across Europe and by Huber, Highfield, & Kaufman, (2018) in Australia. Among the participant families there was evidence of increasing use of digital television or integrated with smartphone use (e.g. through Chromecast). On the other hand, tablets, as a relatively new technology, are the focus of

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much research attention on mobile (portable) media practices as well as through the previously mentioned more comprehensive surveys of use (Haddon, 2013; Mascheroni & Cuman, 2014).

Participants and methodology The researchers visited 14 families, with the focus on one child in each family (See Table 1). The researchers used the ‘Day in the Life’ (DITL) methodological approach (Gillen & Cameron, 2010; Gillen et al., 2007). After recruitment, there were three visits to each family in 2017/ early 2018:

- 1) A familiarisation and pilot visit
- 2) During the main ‘Day in the Life’ the child’s activities are recorded for a minimum of six hours in total
- 3) The researchers return to the family with a video of extracts from the day, totalling around half an hour in length. They discuss this data with the family, while (audio) recording this discussion.

In addition, researchers completed a survey regarding the technological devices owned by the family, devices and applications accessed by the child, and the competences demonstrated by the child.

Case	Country	Name of child (pseudonym)	Age of child on day of filming
1	Finland	Emma	34 months
2	Finland	Julia	35 months
3	Israel	Dana	30 months
4	Portugal	Vicente	33 months
5	Portugal	Matias	27 months
6	Portugal	Tomás	21 months
7	Spain	Gloria	21 months
8	Spain	Roser	21 months
9	Sweden	Anna	30 months
10	Sweden	Oscar	30 months
11	UK	Lily	14 months
12	UK	Petra	14 months
13	UK	Charlie	32 months
14	UK	Wanda	9 months

Table 1: Participants with country and age

We must emphasise that the table above includes the country in which the child is located, but this is not to suggest that nationality or location is a more important influencing factor than any other in what is sometimes called the “domestication” of technologies (Haddon, 2011). Nor should our dataset be taken as any claim to representativeness. Rather, we seek to add to a qualitatively rich

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picture through detailed case studies, although elements of our methodology do allow for some comparisons.

Towards findings and discussion Detailed analysis of our findings is underway. One preliminary caution is that owing to technological convergence, it is in some cases difficult to assign a piece of technology to a specific category. Televisions are easier: we already know that 7 of our families had a standard TV set and 10 a TV connected to the internet. Tablets are far harder to quantify in part owing to the varying ways in which they can be defined. iPads are a prototypical example of a tablet and appeared in 6 households. Some technologies are tablets specifically designed for children other devices have the potential to be used as a tablet, or alternatively quite otherwise, such as Microsoft Surface Pro. Therefore in our presentation each participant will follow the family in the case they are studying inflected through their own insights into identifying and describing the place of the “TV” and “tablet”.

We are interested in the “set of social and material practices” that, as Law (2016) outlines, can be described as how technology or perhaps better technoscience shapes the world and is shaped by the world. Attending to these practices we are attuned to details of space and time, the materiality of artefacts and the complex ways in which people, especially the young children in our families, are involved.