

K-12 Students' Digital Life: Activities and Attitudes

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Abstract : In the last few decades, children and youth have been immersed in digital technologies. Indeed, recent studies explored the implication of technology use in their leisure and learning activities. Educators face an essential need to utilize technology and implement them into the curriculum. To do that, educators need to understand how young people use digital technology. This study aims to explore K12 students' digital lives from their point of view, to reveal their digital activities, age and gender differences with respect to digital activities, and to present the students' attitudes towards technologies in learning. The study approach is quantitative and includes 354 students ages 6-16 from three schools in Israel. The online questionnaire was based on self-reports and consists of four parts: Digital activities: leisure time activities (such as social networks, gaming types), search activities (information types and platforms), and digital application use (e.g., calendar, notes); Digital skills (requisite digital platform skills such as evaluation and creativity); Social and emotional aspects of digital use (conducting digital activities alone and with friends, feelings, and emotions during digital use such as happiness, bullying); Digital attitudes towards digital integration in learning. An academic ethics board approved the study. The main findings reveal the most popular K12 digital activities: Navigating social network sites, watching TV, playing mobile games, seeking information on the internet, and playing computer games. In addition, the findings reveal age differences in digital activities, such as significant differences in the use of social network sites. Moreover, the finding raises gender differences as girls use more social network sites and boys use more digital games, which are characterized by high complexity and challenges. Additionally, we found positive attitudes towards technology integration in school. Students perceive technology as enhancing creativity, promoting active learning, encouraging self-learning, and helping students with learning difficulties. The presentation will provide an up-to-date, accurate picture of the use of various digital technologies by k12 students. In addition, it will discuss the learning potentials of such use and how to implement digital technologies in the curriculum. Acknowledgments: This study is a part of a broader study about K-12 digital life in Israel and is supported by Mofet-the Israel Institute for Teachers' Development.

Keywords : technology and learning, K-12, digital life, gender differences

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