Chapter 13
Interactive Generation
Brazil Research:
Children and Teenagers using Computers, TV, Games, and Mobile Phones

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ABSTRACT
The contemporary hybridism has led new generations to a connected-based society in which relations among individuals are even more mediated by the arising Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Some aspects of these mediations need to be deeply understood since new and different usages, habits, and practices with media are being observed among those born since the nineties – the digital natives. Aiming to investigate this context, a study was carried out to better understand how children and teenagers interact with four screens: computers, TV, games, and mobile phones. From a quantitative methodological approach, data was collected using a survey applied in Brazilian schools. A theoretical framework on digital literacy concepts was used as base for two-layer of data analysis on these four media, and the results were organized in five topics that show the main outcomes. They can be the basis of further educational policies grounded in real diagnosis.

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SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE
RESEARCH CENTER BACKGROUND

The study to be described in the next pages of this chapter is correlated to a twenty-five-years research track on innovative proposals which contribute to the reconfiguration of learning and teaching processes, through the use of the Internet and other multimedia resources. That is the base-concept of the “Research Center for New Communications Technologies Applied to Education–School of the Future–USP” at the University of São Paulo–USP, Brazil. Since its foundation in 1989, R&D projects were carried out with the commitment of contributing to the improvement of education in Brazil through the better understanding of Information and Communications Technologies impacts in formal and non-formal learning and teaching environments.

Its structure based in a partnership model involving university, society and different research funding agencies and government spheres provided a sustainable model for the development of long-term action research projects.

The “Interactive Generation Brazil Research: children and teenagers using computers, TV, games and mobile phones” is part of a wider project created in 2008 by Telefonica, University of Navarra (Spain) and Inter-American Organization for Higher Education (OUI). This group founded the “Interactive Generations Forum,” a nonprofit organization compound by researchers, teachers and enterprises from different fields, which aims to stimulate the use of technologies for improving people’s life.

But, before that, since 2005 several studies about ICT uses and possessions by children and teenagers from European countries were carried out by University of Navarra and Spanish Telefonica Foundation. In 2010, the Brazilian Telefonica Foundation decided to carry out a Brazilian edition of the same research due to Brazil’s economic growth and protagonism in the use of new technologies. The School of the Future—USP was invited to be part of this initiative by doing the analysis of the Brazilian data collected during 2010 and 2011. The emphasis of this project was to understand better the new and different usages, behaviors, habits and practices with four specific screens: computer, TV, games and mobile phones. This was a pioneering survey in Brazil, and constitutes the first national research in the subject with an extensive data.

The work resulted in a book published in 2012 by Brasilina Passarelli (Scientific Coordinator of School of the Future/USP) and Antonio Hélio Junqueira (researcher of School of the Future/USP), and it is the basis for the approach presented in this chapter. With the aim of emphasizing and clarifying some relevant research findings, new considerations, comments and updates were considered in this paper development.

THE CONTEMPORARY HYBRIDISM: STATE OF THE ART

Understanding media universe and new ways of learning, teaching and producing knowledge in a connected context requires qualitative and quantitative studies regarding the impacts of ICT on contemporary life. Few theoretical frameworks based in the concept of literacy have contributed to the better understanding of this scenario. Considering literacy as a set of social practices (Warschauer, 2003), we have been observed emerging literacies on WEB 2.0 environments that leads to an individual and collective production of network knowledge. These new forms of authorship inspired in digital collectives and others network players in hybrid frontiers collaborate with the formation of a so-called “skin of culture” (Kerckhove, 1997; Castells, 1996; Latour, 2008). So, if in a first stage of the industrial capitalism society the artifacts to transmit knowledge were books and newspapers, in the network society emerging literacies refers to the ability of interact and communicate using ICT, such as TV, games, smartphones and so on.