Chapter 12
Digital Teens: An Investigation into the Use of the Web by Adolescents

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ABSTRACT
The aim of the research is to understand how much the use of the Web and its related services affect the lives of young people, as well as to reflect on the existence, or not, of a gap between students of secondary schools of first and second level. The research was carried out using a “focus group,” and it involved a total of 105 students, divided into two groups, of first and second level at secondary school. Their age ranged between 11 and 19. Each student had also had to answer to a questionnaire. By conducting focus groups, the authors investigated how young people use of the Web and how the tools of interaction affect different aspects of their lives: school, leisure time, and family.

INTRODUCTION
Realizing the importance and influence of online social networks among teens is essential for any modern society. Doing so can provide schools and other places frequented by a better understanding of how these sites can not only be used for educational and marketing purposes, but also be integrated within work environments (Mori, 2008). A peculiarity of the new generation is definitely multi-tasking, described by Rivoltella (2007) as a situation of widespread and very different from traditional one use of media, in which many levels of communication are handled simultaneously while carrying out multiple tasks at the same time. This is enhanced by the capability of digital technologies that allow the new multitasking generation to have a new cognitive style, conducting many tasks at the same time. Another aspect that characterizes the web generation is the fact that young people have also become media produc-
Digital Teens

This is a practice available at sites like snipet, YouTube, Facebook that allow a space to post galleries, and home movies. In these sites young people talk about themselves on the Web. Here social networks are created, and the ‘videomaker’ reputation is created and their work evaluated. In education this phenomenon involves - as usual - opportunities and risks, there is the essential responsibility to educate the young, whom are consumers and at the same time creator, about all the issues related to the ethics of representation. Starting from these considerations, that form the backdrop of a scientific and conceptual, we have the research results involving 105 students of secondary schools (first and second level) in Piedmont.

In the 2006-2007 school year, before Facebook spread significantly, 14 focus groups were conducted. They involved 105 students, who have also been administered a questionnaire on personal and social data. Taking into account these different aspects and issues regarding the use of Internet by young people, we tried to investigate how this new space of social action is present in the lives of young people, particularly at school, in the family, during socialization and entertainment. We utilized some models studying the distribution of the various uses of Internet available in literature.

This research was conducted in Italy and especially in Piedmont during the school year 2006-2007. The research involved a range of Piedmont students aged between 11 and 19 years. The objective was to understand the styles and methods of use of the Internet in relation to more spheres of life of children, namely school, fun, family and socialization. This work is to communicate to teachers because the learning activities should be increasingly mediated by the use of technology to facilitate effective ‘infotelematic’ processes of teaching/learning. In this regard, the Ministry of Education, University and Research has invested heavily in training of teachers’ use of technology. In particular the Ministerial Circular 55 delo 2002 was launched the National Plan for Training of Teachers on Technology? Information and Communication triggering a wide-ranging training that involved about a quarter of staff in service with the aim of bringing more teachers use of ICT for professional and cultural purposes. In the academic year of 2009/2010, the Cl@ssi 2.0 initiative was launched, this training project was developed for the testing of advanced teaching methodologies. A Secondary School with 156 classes of first grade was involved in order to modify the learning environment, through constant use and spread of technology to support teaching daily. This activity involved pupils and teachers on which they may dispose of technological devices and multimedia devices and classrooms are progressively equipped with devices to connect to the Internet.

The main aim of this article wants to investigate the use of information technologies in young boys and girls between 11 and 19. Know computer skills of adolescents may be useful to teachers to propose new learning strategies. In fact, the teenagers’ ability to obtain and exchange information is strongly influenced by the use of Internet and information technologies. This research aims to inform teachers of transversal skills possessed by students through the use of Internet, with the aim of making known to teachers the potentials of this instrument. In fact the use of information technologies are a valuable tool to increase attention and develop teaching strategies that are more engaging for students, because is important to remember that young people are permeated by technology in every context of life. Teachers may have a current availability of the use of technology, which might be useful to think of it as a new teaching style. It is important to think about an evolution of the style of teaching that takes into account the potential of the internet, considering the possibility to propose educational interventions based on concepts proposed by the media education.

The research tools used have referred to two different methods - a structured questionnaire to investigate the socio-master of the referents (ado-