



Net Children Go Mobile

What can research on children learn from cross-cultural qualitative research?

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Overview

- The project: Net Children Go Mobile
- Smartphones and tablets
- Similar methodology and analytical approach to EU Kids Online

Participating countries

- Denmark
- Italy
- Romania
- UK
- Ireland (self-funding)
- Belgium (self-funding)
- Portugal (self-funding)
- Germany (self-funding, only qualitative part)
- Spain (self-funding)



Qualitative report

- Haddon, L. and Vincent, J. (2014) *European children's and their carers' understanding of use, risks and safety issues relating to convergent mobile media*

Goal

- Different ways in which this qualitative research enhances our understanding children and smartphones
- Examples of how does it do so
- Areas of discussion to which this contributes
- Different ways of using qualitative cross-cultural comparisons, the different roles this material can play

Acquisition and use

Children make/influence decisions about:

- buying smartphones
- what to download
- what apps to use
- when and for how long to use them
- where to use them

Constraints on acquisition and use

- The qualitative research shows the circumstances in which they make decisions, the pressures, the constraints
- Children are constrained more than adult users (e.g. pressures from adults and teachers)
- Various financial, time and space constraints

Bases for making decisions

- What influenced parents decisions to buy/allow smartphones/tablets for children at that point in time (and not earlier)?
- What was the content of the negotiations?
- Examples: children's perceived maturity, rites of passage, rewards, automatic hand-me-downs

Finding a place in an ecology of devices

- The decision-making process about when to use a smartphone, tablet, laptop, PC, console or other device
- New devices do not automatically replace older ones (remediation)
- We see how the ecology is re-arranged
- What the 'post-PC' world really looks like

Change over time

- The different ways in which children's use evolves over time
- Not just a case of more of everything
- At the individual level some activities may be reduced (e.g. SNS)

Children's concerns and frustrations

- Children's concerns and frustrations may sometimes be similar to their parents, but not simply repeating them!
- e.g. frustrations about disruptive/
unnecessary communications
- e.g. concerns about their own use taking
time away from other things

Children's concerns and frustrations

- The interviews show how negative some things are perceived to be relative to perceptions of 'standard' risks
- What do they talk about first?
- What do they talk about most?
- What do they get agitated about?
- What do they complain about?

Children's concerns and frustrations

Examples:

- Commercial sources trying to trick/cheat them, hidden costs
- Trying to repair social relations when a peer has pretended to be them online
- Complaints about peers being on their smartphones when co-present

Subtle enhancements of risks

Risk experiences and worries:

- Migration of harassment and meeting strangers to WhatsApp
- Ease of 'borrowing' phones and identify theft
- More private material on smartphones that peers might see
- Money can be taken from the device if an account has been set up

Complexities of school rules

- Experience: the enforcement of school rules varies – e.g. concessions
- Children's ambiguous perception of school rules
- Teach reactions - especially confiscating smartphones – can be problematic

How did qualitative contribute?

- Variety of constraints and why they exist
- Content of negotiations in different households
- Decision-making behind choices
- Understanding individual change over time

How did qualitative contribute?

- Insights into children's concerns and frustrations
- New details of how smartphones effect risk
- Perceptions of school rules and examples of issues

To what areas did it contribute?

- Wary of industry rhetoric – e.g. ‘always at hand’
- Post PC era
- Questioning always more and more use

To what areas did it contribute?

- How other concerns balance against 'standard risks'
- Subtle shifts in risk experience
- Complexities of school regulation

Cross cultural qualitative: Pooling data

- Showing the same point is being expressed across countries (concern, perception, experience, issue)
- Using material from different countries to show the variations on a theme, how a similar point occurs in slightly different guises (e.g. hidden costs, identity theft)

Clues and illustrations

- Prevalence of phenomena in the qualitative in different countries - clues for future quantitative research (or for re-checking quantitative)
- E.g. fears about smartphones and plagiarism
- Illustrative of quantitative patterns - vignettes, stereotypical households from different countries

Reflecting country specificities

- History/historical claims about country differences (e.g. Romanian parents experience of parental mediation of TV when they were children) – can we see implications in the data?
- UK history of safety awareness arising – wary of showing smartphones in certain public spaces (prevalence makes sense given background knowledge)

Predicting through understanding cultural variation

- Understanding motivations relate to country specificities in order to predict statistics
- Example: Buying smartphones when children are mature enough – particular markers of maturity specific to some countries (Catholic Holy Communion, Confirmation)

Conclusions

- There are various ways in which the qualitative could be used to understand the smartphone and tablet experience
- These could contribute to a variety of arguments
- Most of this involved pooling data
- There was a reluctance to explore differences (e.g. small samples)
- The data was used in a few ways to do this