Co-designing with the App Generation: Findings and Collaboration Opportunities for Research, Design, and Policy around Digital Youth

LEAVE BLANK for proposal

First Author Name
Affiliation
Address
e-mail address

LEAVE BLANK for proposal

Second Author Name
Affiliation
Address
e-mail address

ABSTRACT
For information and technology, youth lead in defining the present and driving the future. Since early 2000 there has been an increasing interest across ASIST subfields in better understanding how youth engage with information and technology in formal and informal settings and how they can be better supported. This panel continues dialogue in the digital youth research and design community about work in-progress, upcoming events, collaboration opportunities and more. The session begins with an overview of the 2014 Digital Youth iLab held in Seattle and focuses on the trajectory of work pertaining to digital youth, its significance and the future of research, design, policy and practice.

Digital youth, Digital media, design, technology, information behavior.

INTRODUCTION
A research community around digital youth has emerged across major professional meetings in information science—ASIST 2011 in New Orleans, LA (Fisher & Dresang, 2011), iConference 2013 in Fort Worth, TX (Fisher, Dresang, Davis, Yardi, & Druin, 2013), and iConference 2014 in Berlin, Germany (Juncker, Marrtens, Fisher, Dresang, Davis, Yardi, Druin, & Anderson, 2014). These sessions have attracted researchers and professionals across varied subfields, who share an interest in digital youth, in learning from each other, in collaborating, and in connecting the field with other disciplines, as well as industry and affecting policy. The 2014 ASIST panel aims to continue these synergies and launch conversation for establishing community research goals for 2015 and beyond. The panel will report on a national leadership forum—the Digital Youth iLab held in Seattle, share latest findings from their work as faculty in the University of Washington Information School’s Digital Youth Research Group, and share thoughts on opportunities for research programs, collaborations and impact. Like past events, the session will be highly interactive and engaging for all participants.

BACKGROUND ON DIGITAL YOUTH
Over the last few years there has been an increased desire to understand more about digital natives (Palfrey, 2013) and digital youth (Erstad, 2011). Notions of digital youth have been conflated with oversimplified statements about generational change promoted by the idea of digital natives and immigrants (Prensky, 2006) and amplified by notions like Generation X and Y, or Generation Me (Twenge, 2006). Other research (e.g. Buckingham, 2003) informs us that conceptions of digital youth are much more complex. This has resulted in several research initiatives (Erstad, 2012; Itō, M, 2009; Livingstone & Bulger 2013; Ahn, J. et. al, 2014) and publications (Boyd, 2014; Erstad, 2011; Gardner & Davis, 2013) dedicated to exploring how, when, and why youth use digital tools. Methodologies for digital youth research have also undergone change, becoming more collaborative and inclusive of children’s perspectives (Walsh, Foss, Yip, & Druin, 2013).

In 2013 the University of Washington Information School made a commitment to helping researchers and professionals understand more about how youth engage with technology and how youth can be better supported that was based on bringing together experts from diverse, cognate fields. The iSchool with sponsorship from the Institute of Museum & library Services (IMLS), Facebook, Microsoft Research, the King County Library System, and the Seattle Public Library is organizing the 2014 Digital Youth iLab—where thought leaders from industry, research policy and practice are invited to engage and help shape a digital youth agenda to guide future work. The six areas for discussion include: digital and information literacies, formal and informal learning, games and learning, mind and brain research, policy initiatives, and social and mobile media.

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ASIST 2014, November 1-4, 2014, Seattle, WA, USA.

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ABOUT THE PANEL
In this 90-minute panel, 40 minutes will be given to the speakers and the remainder will be for the interactive engagement with the audience with everyone sitting in a circle. The panel will kick-off with highlights of the 2014 Digital Youth iLab (augmented by a handout), followed by the panelists briefly discussing the opportunities and challenges they foresee for research, collaboration and impact around digital youth. The panel will be moderated by Dr. Karen Fisher and will further comprise Drs. Negin Dahya, Katie Davis, Mike Eisenberg, and Jason Yip.

In terms of the speakers’ expertise, Dr. Karen Fisher is a lead organizer of the National Digital Youth iLab, and PI of the InfoMe Group’s work funded by the IMLS and Microsoft on how immigrant and refugee youth serve as information mediaries within their social networks, especially with elders and strangers, and how they can be supported through co-design. Fisher will also share how the InfoMe group runs Teen Design Days—their award-winning, co-design method for working with youth in community settings.

Dr. Negin Dahya explores the sociocultural context of digital media production and technology use, especially in under-served settings. She has studied underserved schools and communities in Canada; transnational teaching/learning through digital technologies for refugees living in refugee camps in Kenya; and, studies focused on “serious play,” ranging from examinations of social and political content in educational videogames to girls’ videogame development for teaching/learning STEM in schools.

Dr. Katie Davis explores the role of digital media technologies in adolescents' academic, social, and moral lives. Currently, she is investigating strategies for leveraging networked technologies to promote rich learning experiences for high school students from non-dominant backgrounds.

Dr. Mike Eisenberg’s extensive research has focused on youth in school setting across pre-K-12 (Big6, Super3) through higher education level in seeking understanding of information literacies and how students are affected by trends in technology.

Broadly speaking Dr. Jason Yip’s research examines the role of digital media in supporting participatory cultures in youth engagement. More specifically, how the design of learning environments and technologies support participatory cultures in science learning for children; the participatory process of co-designing new children’s technologies with children; and finally, how learning and participation occurs in joint media engagement (JME) with families and children.

Taken together, the panel represents a productive diversity of digital use research across age, gender, nationalities, formality of learning, and socioeconomic spectrum, as well as across methodological, theoretical, and technology foci.

Examples of challenges and opportunities that the panelists may discuss with session participants include:

- Understanding in more depth the complex intersection of factors that influence how digital media production programs are designed and implemented, and what social, cultural, economic and/or other systemic factors impact the digital learning and work of young people;
- Understanding the relationship between the contexts of the production work, the influence of circulating and accepted discourses, and the impact of particular media genres as related to what gets made;
- Determining the kinds of expertise and perceptions children have and finding new methods of participation to support design practices of new technologies;
- Recognizing how factors related to gender, race, sexuality, class, and religion influence what youth do and do not produce (silence) in their digital media work;
- Understanding how family characteristics, environmental factors, and technology affordances shape the way families participate, interact, and learn around digital media;
- Understanding how youth define technology in their daily lives, how it enables them, empowers them, and what are the indicators of impact on different stakeholders; and,
- Researching the challenges of growing up in a digital era when the norms are continuously evolving.

PANELISTS’ BIOGRAPHIES
Dr. Karen E. Fisher a boundary-pusher, boundary-spanner, and Professor in the University of Washington Information School and Adjunct Professor of Communication. Her obsession is how people experience information as part of everyday life. Her current work asks how ethnic minority youth help other people through information, and how they can be supported through co-designing technology, services and policy. Active in ASIST, the iConference, ISIC, and international conferences in cognate fields, funders of Karen’s work include the IMLS, Microsoft and the NSF. Her baby, Theories of Information Behavior—with S. Erdelez and É. McKechnie, is a top-selling ASIST monograph, and the next is underway. She holds a Post-doc from Michigan; PhD and MLIS from Western Ontario; and BA from Memorial University of Newfoundland. infome.uw.edu

Dr. Negin Dahya completed her PhD in the Faculty of Education, York University, Toronto, Canada. Her research is grounded in anti-oppressive education for ethnoracial minority groups, with a focus on girls and women using technology. Dr. Dahya worked for 7 years in media education at the National Film Board of Canada, a government funded film production agency with a mandate to promote media literacy to young people and adults across Canada and globally. In addition to her research in this area, Dr. Dahya has developed and delivered digital media...
Dr. Katie Davis holds two master’s degrees and a doctorate in Human Development and Education from Harvard Graduate School of Education. Prior to joining the faculty at the UW iSchool, Katie worked with Dr. Howard Gardner and colleagues at Harvard Project Zero, where she was a member of the GoodPlay Project and the Developing Minds and Digital Media Project research teams. Davis is the co-author with Howard Gardner of *The App Generation: How Today’s Youth Navigate Identity, Intimacy, and Imagination in a Digital World*. She also serves as an Advisory Board Member for MTV’s digital abuse campaign, A Thin Line.

Dr. Mike Eisenberg is the founding dean of the Information School at the University of Washington, serving from 1998 to 2006. Known as an innovator and entrepreneur, Mike approached the iSchool as a startup—transforming the school into a broad-based information school with academic programs on all levels (bachelors through doctorate), increasing enrollment 400%, generating millions in funded research, and making a difference in industry, the public sector, and education on all levels. Mike is a prolific author (9 books and dozens of articles and papers) and has worked with thousands of students—pre-K through higher education—as well as people in business, government, and communities to improve individual and organizational information and technology access and use.

Dr. Jason Yip completed his Ph.D. at the University of Maryland – College Park in the College of Education (Teaching and Learning & Policy and Leadership) with an affiliation at the Human-Computer Interaction Lab. He worked closely with Dr. Allison Druin on Kidsteam, an intergenerational design group composed of researchers and children developing new children’s technologies for companies and non-profits like Nickelodeon, the National Parks Service, and National Geographic. He has an interdisciplinary background focused on the learning sciences, child-computer interaction, and science education. He completed his postgraduate research at the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop. He holds both an MSEd and a BA from the University of Pennsylvania.

REFERENCES


