

The use of electronic devices in the out-of-school activities of children and teenagers

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Abstract

There are two reasons behind the interest in studying the use of electronic devices in activities that children and teenagers do outside of primary and secondary schools. First, the increasing transformation of social practices as a result of ICT penetration, through the use of electronic devices, in almost all activity contexts in which children and teenagers develop their activities beyond school: family, leisure and cultural centers, museums, sport clubs, etc. For some authors, the use of ICT in these contexts have an impact on children's development of digital literacy. Secondly, the new learning ecology framework has emphasized the importance of studying the learning process in which children are involved in different contexts, both inside and outside school. In this context, we present the results of a questionnaire applied to three different cohorts of students according to their age: 10 (411 students), 13 (460) and 16 (535) years. The questionnaire explores whether electronic devices are used or not in a number of predetermined activities and, if so, what devices are used. The results show significant differences regarding the kind of activities with major frequency in the use of electronic devices within the whole sample and according to their age. A comparative analysis also identifies the variables area of residence (rural/urban), socioeconomic status (medium-high/medium-low), gender (male/female) and cultural background (native/immigrant) as sources of differences, although the differences are seen in some age groups more than in others. In general, the most used devices are mobile and tablet.

Keywords: activity contexts, electronic devices, new learning ecology, information and communications technologies