

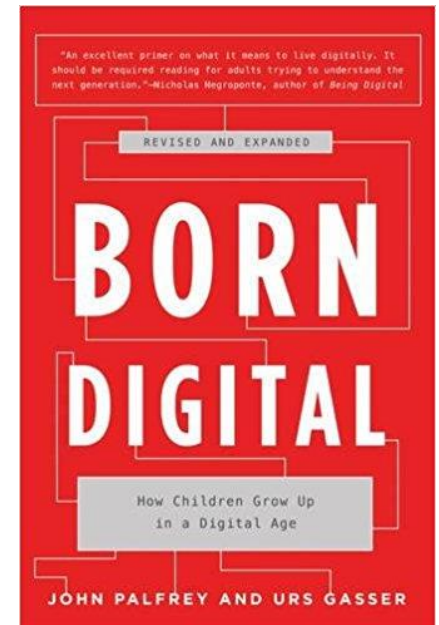
Tech Talks: Tech for Seniors

Born Digital – Gasser and Palfrey

Center for Learning in Retirement - Fall 2017

Glen Maxson

seniortechadvisor.com



Presentation/discussion format

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| • Introduce book and author | 5 |
| • Topic overview and summary | 10 |
| • Book review and discussion | unlimited |

Note: Discussion may span more than 1 class period

Introduction

- Urs Gasser is the Executive Director of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University. He teaches at Harvard Law School, at the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland) and Fudan University School of Management (China). Dr. Gasser has written and edited several books, and published over 100 articles in professional journals.
- John Palfrey assumed the role of Phillips Academy's 15th Head of School on July 1, 2012. Prior to joining the Andover community, he was Professor of Law and Vice Dean for Library and Information Resources at Harvard Law School. He was also co-director of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society, serving as executive director from 2002 to 2008. Palfrey has published extensively on how young people are learning in a digital era, as well as the effect of new technologies on society at large.



Gasser

Palfrey

[Urs Gasser and John Palfrey on Interop: The Promise and Perils of Highly Interconnected Systems](#) - Berkman Center for Internet & Society '12

[Urs Gasser](#) - HLS Thinks Big '16

[John Palfrey: "Born Digital"](#) - Talks at Google '08 (start 3:15 – 30:45)

[Video of "Born Digital"](#), with John Palfrey and Ethan Zuckerman '13 (start **11:45 – 34:15**)

[John Palfrey speaks on the topic of his book "Born Digital"](#), Knight Foundation '14 (start 13:22 – 41:30)

Problem Statement

- Raising children was hard enough. Technology is only making it more complicated.
- It's one thing to worry about how children socialize, learn, and grow up with an always-accessible mobile phone in hand.
- As parents and teachers, we must catch up to them and figure out how to lead the way.
- In 2015, the average US teen spent 9 hours/day using various digital devices (Common Sense Media). The average tween (8-12) spent 6 hours/day on such devices...

Summary

- The first generation of children born into and raised in a digital world are coming of age and shaping our economy, politics, culture, and family life.
- Palfrey and Gasser offer a sociological portrait of these young people who seem extraordinarily sophisticated and strangely narrow.
- A broad range of issues are explored including privacy, information overload, ethical issues raised by social interactions, friendships and civic activities, now mediated by digital technologies.
- *Born Digital* is written for adults who want to understand the digital present and help shape the digital future.

Discussion

- Digital Natives - born after 1980 and with constant access to digital technology
 - constitute a largely homogenous group or generation
 - learn differently from preceding generations of students
 - demand a new way of teaching and learning
- Digital Immigrants - not exposed to digital media at a young age but trying to learn the "native tongue"

Digital Native/Immigrant metaphors create barriers between the older and younger generation of digital users. These metaphors "tend to exaggerate the gaps between adults, seen as fumbling and hopelessly out of touch, and youth, seen as masterful"

- Digital Settlers - pioneered the transition from analog to digital

Identity

- Identities – pre-industrial age
 - Personal – derived from personal attributes – appearance, interests, activities
 - Social – contributed by family, friends, neighbors
 - Social identity could be changed by ‘moving away’
- Identities – industrial age
 - Transportation, urbanization makes it easier to ‘adjust’ our personal identity, but harder to ‘control’ social identity – more permanent
- Identities – Internet age
 - Identities more fluid, and stickier
 - The net effect is a potential decrease in control of our social identity and how others perceive us – a paradox due to online data collection/retention

Protections

- What's to be done about protections in the digital era?
 - Two problems for youth: identity and digital dossier – reputation management
 - Youth can help mitigate potential harm through their own behavior
 - Parents and teachers have an important role to play in educating youth, but must first engage in on-line life to establish credibility
 - Tech companies need to make it easier for youth to make good choices about personal data – they're improving, but have a long way to go
 - [YouTube Kids](#)
 - [K-12 Student Privacy Pledge](#)
 - [Right to be Forgotten](#), [CA Online Eraser law](#)
 - Bottom line: we are all responsible to helping youth make good choices...

Wikipedia

- [Jimmy Wales](#) was nuts to think Wikipedia (the world's greatest encyclopedia ever) would succeed.
 - It would be free, online, and content would be written by tens of thousands of people who would not be paid for their work – crazy, right?
- Started in 2001, Wikipedia now contains 37 million articles, representing 270 languages (5 million articles in English)
- Accuracy – Wikipedia vs. [Encyclopædia Britannica](#) ([Nature](#), Dec. '05)
 - Wikipedia articles contained 4 errors or omissions, *Britannica* articles 3
 - 4 serious errors were found in Wikipedia, and 4 in *Encyclopædia Britannica*
 - *Encyclopædia Britannica* says the study was "fatally flawed" – does it matter?

Digital creation

- The creative revolution is not just about who says what to whom, but who gets to help shape culture:
 - [EvanTubeHD](#) - \$1.3 mil/year 4,523,104 subscribers • 2,978,795,052 views
Joined Sep 20, 2011
 - [Charli's Crafty Kitchen](#) – 29 mil views/mth 790,496 subscribers • 801,998,017 views
Joined Sep 26, 2012
- New information technologies often give rise to creative new art forms
 - Gates invested \$240m in Zuckerberg's 'Facebook project'
 - Venture capitalists looking to young entrepreneurs – gerontocracy is over
 - The best entrepreneurs learned to tap into, and exploit, a counterculture that values and celebrates this creativity and innovation
 - Young entrepreneurs cause 'creative destruction' without asking permission or worrying about implications...

Information overload

- Is particularly acute in the digital era, but concerns aren't new
 - The human brain has limited capacity for attention
 - We not only experience overload, we contribute to it
- You can try to limit intake, or 'chunk' (connect, associate, group) it
- Overload is stressful – 'information fatigue syndrome'
- Coping mechanisms – prioritize tweets, don't read every Facebook post
- TMI can lead to an inability to make a decision at all
 - How much is enough information to make a good choice?
- Many attempt to use 'multitasking' as a way to cope with information overload – really?

Multitasking

- Trying to cope with information overload by looking at it while doing something else is ineffective, and dangerous. Bad strategy...
- ‘Cognitive bottleneck’ – limits how much information we can process
 - Attending to one task slows one’s reaction to a second task, and decreases performance
- Relationship between technology use and psychological well-being:
 - Bad news: high levels of stress and anxiety related to cell phone and computer use
 - Good news: psychological benefits of being connected – less anxious when you keep your phone close, Facebook provides higher level of self-esteem

Aggressive content

- Television – parents' role to keep youth away from violent content
- Internet and gaming – still the parent's role to set limits, but TV, movies, video games all present violent imagery
 - [Common Sense Media](#) – rates developmental appropriateness of games/media
 - [Disturbing stats](#) (American youth):
 - Television: 54% of children watch TV from the privacy of their own bedrooms
 - Television: average youth will witness 200,000 violent acts on television before age 18
 - Television: 46% of TV violence occurs in cartoons, 20 to 25 violent acts per hour
 - Video games: 97% teens – play video games (13hr/wk)
 - Music: Youth 8 – 18yr listen to at least 2.5hr/day, music videos often portray violence/sex
 - Movies: 91% of movies on TV contain violence, more in PG-13 rated movies than R rated
 - 3 effects: developmental, primed response to a stimulus, arousal

Grazing, deep dive, and feedback

- 3 steps for information gathering:
 - Grazing – we absorb a headline or a bit more, maybe a paragraph of a story
 - Speed, accessibility, and how well information has been sorted are important
 - Information needs to be timely, relevant and easy to process – accessible anywhere
 - Deep dive – when you want to go beyond a headline to learn more
 - What are the facts, put it into context, analyze, learn from relevant sources
 - Domain of established brands – CNN, BBS, NY Times, [Global Voices](#)...
 - Feedback – jumping into the debate
 - React publicly to a story, remake it, retell it – have an impact on the way a story is told
- Youth are coping with more information that comes to their attention in new ways, offering new possibilities for engagement...

Disintermediation

- Traditional hierarchies are breaking apart, but powerful interests still play a disproportionate role in politics
- The Internet often causes disintermediation, then re-intermediation
 - Old intermediaries break down, new intermediaries arise
- Political journalists becoming social media stars (2015):
 - [Anderson Cooper](#), [Jake Tapper](#), [Christiane Amanpour](#)...
- Digital technologies make possible a more interactive relationship between people and media
- Semiotic democracy – the theory that individuals might be able to create and alter political meaning directly – tech makes it possible...

Optimism

- Opportunities found at the intersections where the digital blends with the analog. Calls upon what's best about traditional ways of getting things done, and adding in what's promising about the digital
 - Harvard [Copyright^x](#) – blends in-person and online learning
 - [Khan Academy and Phillips Academy](#) – ex: [AP Calculus](#)
- Young people fortunate enough to be living 'blended' lives, and particularly those developing skills in combined analog and digital environments, will be best positioned to take advantage of blended approaches to innovation

Risks, Challenges

- What keeps you up at night about emerging blended environments?
 - No worse than in the past: stranger-danger threat, information overload, intellectual property – not at the top of the list
 - Top 2 challenges we need to take more seriously:
 - Potential use and misuse of data companies and government collect about young people – not so much about what young people post about themselves
 - Trends in data collection, aggregation, and analysis, that we're not able to 'opt-out' of
 - Information quality – more is not always better – our trust in the marketplace of ideas has become outdated
 - We have neglected to build a robust infrastructure at the core of a sustainable information ecology
 - Prohibitive laws are of limited value – need to develop a more complex, collaborative, blended approach
 - Governance would resemble city planning, or careful gardening, and require many stakeholders to work together