

Notes on The App Generation

Identity

- p. 60 The app identity, then, is multifaceted, highly personalized, outward-facing
- 61- Identities of young people are increasingly packaged. The packaging has the consequence of minimizing a focus on an inner life, on personal conflicts and struggles, on quiet reflection and personal planning...but also a push toward an overall packaged sense of self.
- 62- Online spaces can be an “identity playground”
- 63- there is a more polished self online. People are more concerned with making it look like they're living rather than actually living.
- 64- Student's online identity is less complete than their offline identity
- 66- For the affluent youth, their focus largely rests on presenting a polished, packaged self that will meet the approval of college admissions officers
- 67- Many young people suffer from a ‘planning delusion’- a (mistaken) faith that if they make careful, practical plans, they will face no future challenges or obstacles
- 68- in 1967, 86% of college freshman said that ‘developing a meaningful philosophy of life’ is ‘very important’ or ‘essential’, compared to 46% in 2012. This occurs within a context of a societal trend toward individualism and away from community
- 69- By the mid to late 2000's, fully 30% of students scored high on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory
- 70- There is also a corresponding rise in volunteerism, but that may be driven by a desire to pad their resume
- 71- “Snapchat exchanges are not so much a conversation between 2 people, as with text messages, but rather a series of mini-performances for an audience of one.”
- The externalized self also lends itself to measurement and quantification, such as number of followers. (the Quantified Self)
- 76- 30-40% of ordinary conversation consists of people talking about themselves, whereas around 80% of social media updates are self-focused.
- 77- Narcissism indicates a personality so fragile that it needs constant support
- 30% of college freshman frequently feel overwhelmed by what they have to do (up from 18% in 1985)
- 78- There is growing anxiety and aversion to risk
- 80- Today's parents demonstrate a passionate desire to shield their children from experiencing any sort of unhappiness or hardships. The therapists observed that this emphasis on happiness seems to leave young people unable to cope with the emotional complexity of life.
- 81- In 15 countries, researchers found the proportion of youth who are online is inversely related to the proportion of youth with a driver's license.
- 85- Studies revealed that college students were in contact with their parents an average of 13.4 times per week.
- 86- Evidence shows that college students who use their digital devices to maintain frequent contact with their parents tend to be less autonomous.
- 91- Today's identities are increasingly externalized, packaged selves, a growing anxiety and aversion to risks and a broadening of identities.**

Intimacy

- 93- Ultimately, we find that the quality of our relationships in this app era depends on whether we use our apps to bypass the discomforts of relating to**

others or as sometimes risky entry points to the forging of sustained meaningful interactions

94- 78% of all adolescents in US own a cell phone, 63% of teens say they text every day, and the typical teen sends 60 messages a day (100 among older girls)

99- From 1985-2004, the average number of discussion partners Americans had dropped from 3 to 2. From 1972-2008 there was an 13% drop in people who believe that ‘most people can be trusted’ (from 46% to 33%)

101- Students who had used Facebook for a longer time tended to agree that others were happier (than they were).

102- Apps may not be well suited to support the kind of deep connection that sustains and nourishes relationships

104- This sort of arm’s length way of conducting relationships ultimately empties them of true intimacy. There is a risk that we come to see others as objects to be accessed- and only for the parts we find useful, comforting, or amusing.

108- By and large, young people use online communication not merely to substitute for face to face communication but rather to augment it.

On line communications can support a sense of belonging and self-disclosure, 2 important mechanisms through which intimate bonds are formed during adol.

110- Today’s young people are less empathetic than youth of the 1980’s and 90’s

118- Apps make interacting with others much quicker, easier, and less risky. If used in moderation and to augment rather than replace face-to-face contact, such conveniences can certainly enable meaningful relations, and, at their best, strengthen and deepen personal bonds. If we don’t truly connect with others, we cannot put ourselves in their shoes (empathy).

Imagination

140- Youth of today display less willingness to take risks in their creative productions

144- “the visualization hypothesis posits that children’s exposure to ready-made visual images restricts their ability to generate novel images of their own.”

146- In multitasking, the opportunity for deeper thinking, for deliberation, or for abstract thinking is much more limited

Time away from a task enables individuals to restore their cognitive resources, gain new perspectives, and avoid impasses.

Grand summary:

161 The app worldview shapes and perhaps constrains the ways in which the chief challenges of youth and early adulthood are negotiated. With respect to identity, there is pressure to present oneself as an impressive, desirable kind of person and to make sure that all signs (and postings) confirm that perhaps precociously crystallized sense of identity. Similarly, with respect to intimacy, the capacity to announce- indeed, to define- one’s connections to other persons may preclude fuller exploration, with its heightened vulnerability but also with greater potential for deep and continually evolving relations with truly significant others. Finally, and on a more positive note, with respect to imagination and creativity, digital technologies afford enormous potential for individual or group breakthroughs- provided that the existing apps are treated as approaches to be built upon, rather than ones that constrict or constrain one’s means and goals.