



Digital Media and Young Lives Over Time

Preliminary Summary of Results

Dr. Kate Tilleczek¹ & Valerie Campbell, PhD(c)

July 2017

Thank you for participating in an interview for the *Digital Media and Young Lives Over Time: International and Cultural Comparisons Study* (DM Study)².

We promised you a summary of what we found when we spoke to people in Canada, Scotland, and Australia.

But before we tell you some of the things we learned, we want to thank you very much for your help. The information you shared is helping us to better understand what it is like for young people to be living in a digital world.



How does the DM Study work?

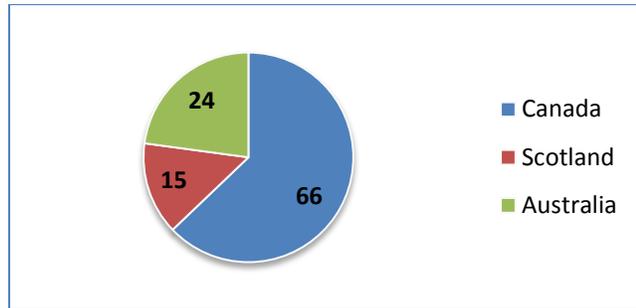
Members of the DM Study team investigated the social and educational impacts of digital media on the lives of young people. We also compared these impacts across cultures and internationally. Between May 2013 and September 2015, we collected stories from young people like you. For more information on the study, you can visit the Young Lives Research Lab website: <http://katetilleczek.ca/>

¹ Kate Tilleczek is the Canada Research Chair in *Young Lives in Global/Local Contexts* and Scientific Director of Young Lives Research Laboratory (YLRL) at the University of Prince Edward Island. Valerie Campbell is a PhD Candidate and Project Manager in the Young Lives Research Lab.

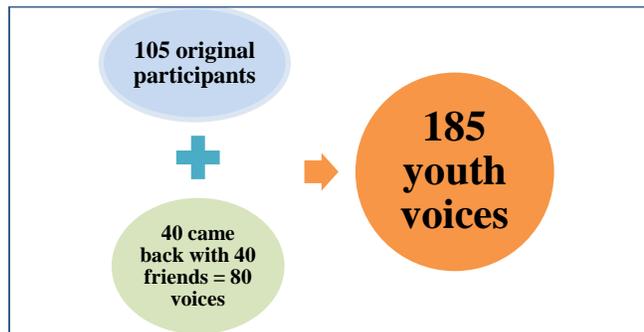
² This project is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca>

With whom did we speak?

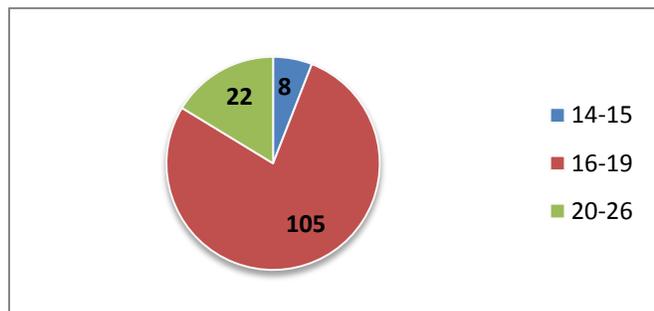
We first spoke with 105 young people in Canada, Scotland, and Australia.



Forty of the original participants returned for a second interview with a friend, their “digital shadow”. So, all together, a total of 185 voices were engaged in telling us about their digital lives.

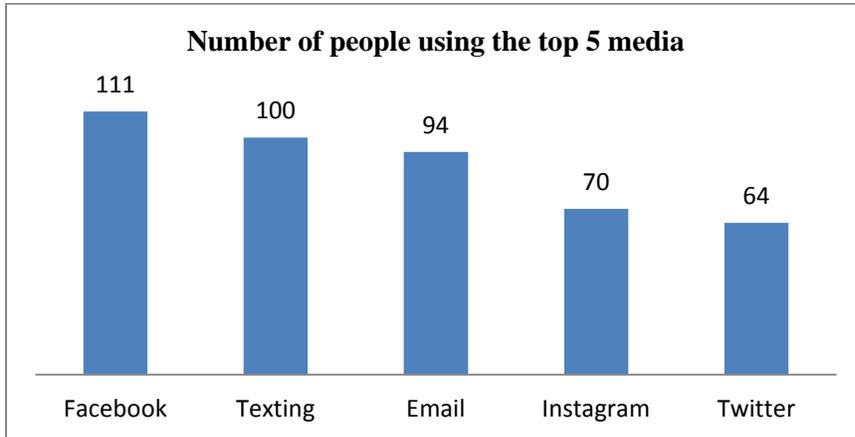


Our goal was to speak with young people between the ages of 16 and 19. Most of the people in our study are within that range.

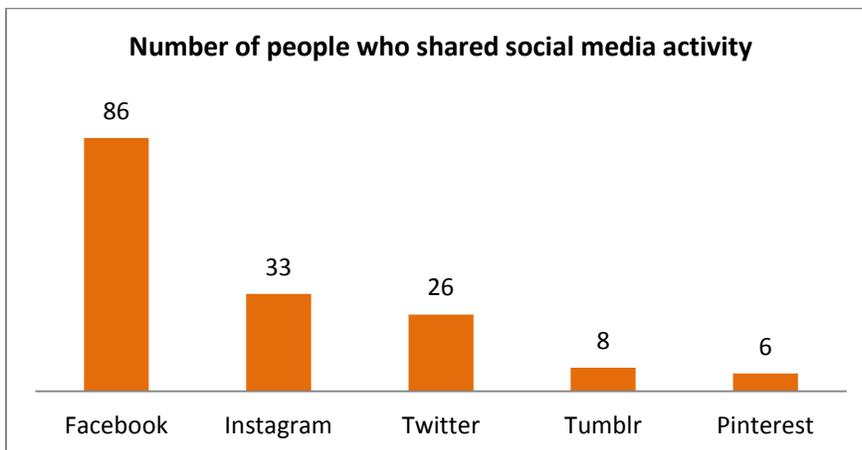


What data did we collect?

We recorded interviews with everybody, either audio or video. We asked you to tell us how much time you spend on social media and the meaning of this for your lives. The digital media that people spend most time on were Facebook, Texting, Email, Instagram, and Twitter. There were others mentioned, and many people used more than one, but these 5 were where they spent the most time.



Then we asked everyone if they would be willing to share some of their social media activity as they were currently using it. Eighty-six people provided us with social media data from: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, and/or Pinterest.



What did we learn? Some main themes.

<p>Complex Relationships</p> <p>I think the cyber world is what everyone wants to be real. I think it's almost a depiction of the perfect life, or in a sense of the imperfect life, where you're either talking about everything that's great or you're using up that 140-word space to say that everything is wrong with your life.</p>	<p>Concern for Younger Generations</p> <p>Like, kids shouldn't be looking at a screen all day. It's going to turn their minds to mush.</p>
<p>Bad for Mental Health</p> <p>It can be a very toxic environment because if you're depressed and half of the people on your site are depressed, everyone's depressed together . . . and no one can lift it.</p>	<p>Technology as Necessity</p> <p>Like probably, eventually you're not even going to be able to walk into any store to apply for a job, you're probably going to have to do it all online.</p>

Benefits and Problems

**Technology and social life:
3 main benefits**

- Ability to connect with other people, especially those far away
- Fast and convenient way to get information
- Entertainment

**Technology and social life:
3 main problems**

- Loss of direct contact with other people
- Lack of privacy
- Bullying / drama

Technology and school:
3 main benefits

- Fast, easy access to information
- Communication tool
- Helps organize work

Technology and school:
3 main problems

- Distraction
- Bullying
- Cheating

These are only some of the preliminary themes we have found so far. We will continue to analyze the data and dig deeper into the ways in which young people interact with and are impacted by technology. We will post anything we publish on our website as well as through our social media accounts. So, stay tuned, there is much more to come!

What have we done so far with this data?

Check out our website: katetilleczek.ca

Completed:

- 7 conference presentations
- 2 book chapters
- 2 technical papers
- Documentary film shorts

In Progress:

- 3 journal articles
- 2 books
- 20 digital portraits

As we move into the next phase of our research, we will speak to some of our original participants again about the ways in which technology has continued to impact their lives.

Once again, we would like to say **THANK YOU!** for sharing your experiences. Your participation helps us better understand the relationships young people in Canada, Scotland, and Australia have with technology.



If you have any questions you can contact either of us. We are happy to hear from you.
(Please use “DM Study” in subject line)

Valerie Campbell: (902) 566-0818 vcampbell@upei.ca

Kate Tilleczek: (902) 620-5127 ktilleczek@upei.ca

You can also reach us through Twitter: @YoungLivesUPEI; #DMStudy; or

Facebook: [Young Lives Research Lab](https://www.facebook.com/YoungLivesResearchLab)