How Do You Connect?

Investigating Children's Use of Apps for Interacting with Family, Friends and Others

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Research Team

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Project Components

1. Literature review
2. School leader survey
3. ***How Do You Connect?**
4. Case studies

* Subject of this presentation

How Do You Connect Cohort

School	Children	Girls	Boys
Hakea Primary	19	10	9
Saltbush Primary	13	8	5
Tree Fern College	28	16	12

HAKEA PRIMARY
A state school, located in a low SES area, serving a culturally and linguistically diverse community.

SALTBUSH PRIMARY
A state school located in a regional town, serving a working and middle class community.

TREE FERN COLLEGE
A private faith-based school located in a suburban area, with a middle class community.

How Do You Connect? Research Design
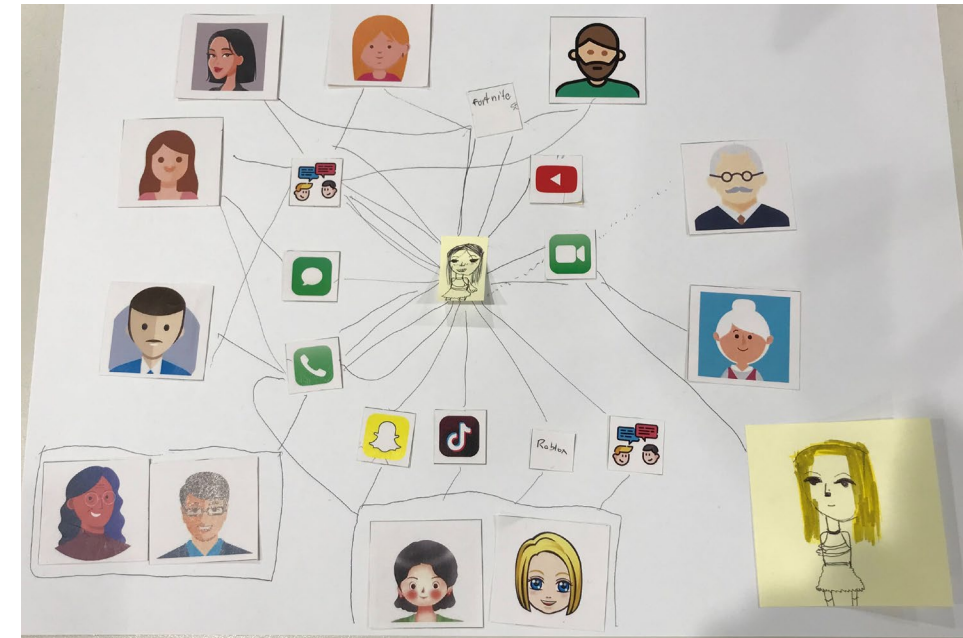
Research questions

- What **digital apps** do children use when interacting with family, friends, educators and others?

- For what **purposes** do they engage in digitally mediated interactions?

- How do they **experience** their digitally mediated interactions?

The How Do You Connect Kit

- People cards

- App cards

- Emoji cards

- Sticky notes & markers

Data collection

Individual children were engaged in creating network diagrams whilst engaged in conversation with a researcher. The activity was filmed (no faces visible), and the audio was transcribed.

Example of a child's network diagram.

Quantitative analysis

Descriptive statistics were derived for: size of networks, membership of networks, number of apps, type of apps, and purposes for app usage.

Qualitative analysis

Thematic analysis of transcripts explored the nature of children's digitally mediated interactions.

Networks & Apps

Number of contacts in children's networks

Site	Average contacts
Hakea Primary	14.8
Saltbush Primary	9.6
Tree Fern College	9.8

Number of apps used by children

Site	Average apps
Hakea Primary	10.4
Saltbush Primary	6.3
Tree Fern College	7.6

Children at culturally diverse state school Hakea Primary had on average **more extensive networks** and also used on average **more digital apps**.

Type of apps used

Local differences were found in the **usage of specific apps**.

	TikTok	Snapchat	Discord	Email
Hakea (n = 19)	13	11	5	6
Saltbush (n = 13)	6	9	4	0
Tree Fern (n = 28)	5	6	2	21

Children at faith-based Tree Fern College relied on the apps integrated into the school's laptop program and were the highest users of email. They were least likely to use social media and gaming apps.

Hakea children were the keenest users of TikTok. Several children were active content producers.
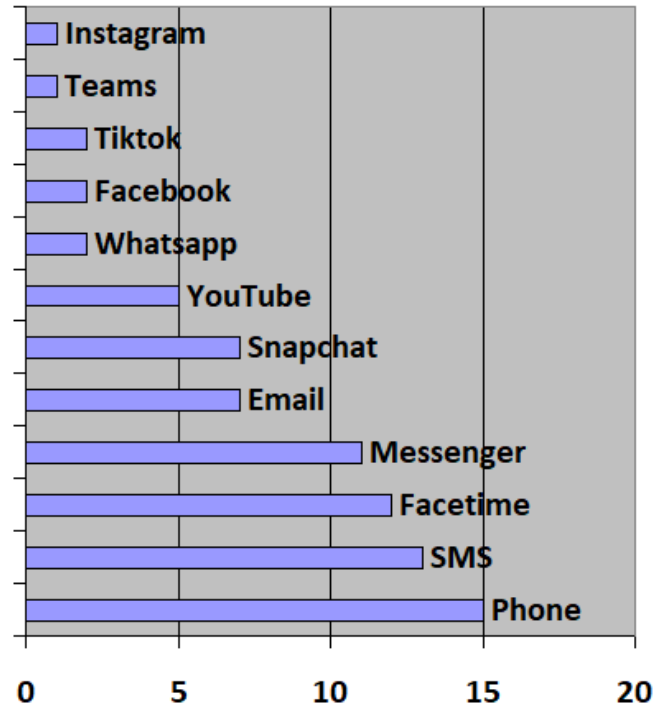
Saltbush children were proportionally greater users of instant messaging app Snapchat. None of them used email.

Digital interactions, parents & gender

Apps for interacting with parents

Across the cohort, a range of apps was used by children for interacting with parents.

Gender and children's networks

Overall, the average number of contacts did not distinguish between girls and boys. However, **gender differences** were found at the extremes i.e., in those with the **largest and smallest networks.**

Network size	Boys	Girls
> 14	7	3
< 8	1	5

Gender and app usage

Gender differences were apparent for specific apps.

App/Gender	Girls	Boys
Snapchat	21	7
Discord	1	10

Gender and interactions with parents

Gender differences were apparent for digitally mediated interactions with parents. **Interactions with mothers** were reported by significantly more **girls** (70%) than boys (56%).