



Mediating the public/private boundary at home : children's use of the internet for privacy and participation

Sonia Livingstone

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.

Cite this version:

Livingstone, S. (2005). Mediating the public/private boundary at home : children's use of the internet for privacy and participation [online]. London: LSE Research Online.

Available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000506>

This is an electronic version of an Article published in the Journal of media practice, 6 (1). pp. 41-51 © 2005 Intellect Books.

<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/ppjournals.php?issn=14682753>

**Mediating the public/private boundary at home:
children's use of the internet for privacy and participation**

Sonia Livingstone

KEYWORDS: children and young people, domestication of new media, Internet, public/private sphere

ABSTRACT: Popular and academic discourse contains numerous claims regarding the role of the changing media environment in the privatization of public space or, conversely, in the extension of the public realm into the domestic. This article examines the changing public/private boundary for children, young people and their families as new forms of media, most recently, the Internet, enter and become established within the home. By looking more closely at the public/private boundary, three distinct processes are identified, one concerned with questions of interest and profit, one with participation and community and one with governance and privacy. Children's experiences of the Internet are considered in relation to each of these, revealing their concerns for privacy, pleasure and peer-networking. The article analyses these processes in terms of the drivers of social change in order to better understand existing social tensions over the public/private boundary in relation to changing media and changing conditions of childhood.

Sonia Livingstone
Professor of Social Psychology
Department of Media & Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science

CONTACT DETAILS:

e-mail address: s.livingstone@lse.ac.uk

telephone numbers: +44 (0)20 7955 7710

[Media@lse](#)

**London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE
United Kingdom**

Professor of Social Psychology, Media@LSE

Claims about the transformative power of the new media encompass many dimensions of social life. One of the most widespread claims is that long-established and traditionally-significant boundaries between distinct spheres are being blurred or transcended (Lievrouw & Livingstone 2002). These include the boundary between work and leisure (via home working, teleworking, flexi-working, etc), between entertainment and education (as in the neologisms of edutainment and infotainment), between local and global (here we have glocalization, the global village, etc), between producer and consumer (as products are co-constructed or socially shaped by consumers), between adult and child (as in the disappearance, or the death, of childhood) and between citizen and consumer (increasingly conflated as the ‘citizen-consumer’).

These are familiar boundaries that we have lived within and committed ourselves to. They institutionalize dominant values and they are regulated and reinforced at all levels from domestic practices to international law. Yet they now seem to be, in these late- or even post-modern times, up for renegotiation. The increasing mediation of everyday life represents one among many social trends driving forward this discursive and material process of renegotiation. Social changes bring with them huge public uncertainty and in relation to new media this uncertainty in turn provokes widespread anxiety. Newspaper headlines regale us with claims that children are gaining access to what only adults are supposed to know, that

commercial institutions are gaining control over education and knowledge, that governments are extending their surveillance into our private thoughts and habits, that global players are squeezing out local cultures and so forth. On the other hand, the optimists predict that the socially excluded may find new routes to participation, that knowledge is being democratized, that consumers get to create rather than just passively receive content and so forth.

The transformation of childhood

One such boundary is that between public and private. Popular and academic discourse contains numerous claims regarding the role of the changing media environment in the privatization of public space or, conversely, in the extension of the public realm into the domestic. This article examines the changing public/private boundary for children, young people and their families as new forms of media – most recently, the Internet – enter and become established within the home. Here a discourse of ‘the new’ intersects with emotive and polarized discourses of childhood – with children as in some ways immature and in need of protection from potential harms, including from the media, but in other ways as in the vanguard, active pioneers in staking out new territories in youth culture (Livingstone 1998). The strong feelings that these polarized positions arouse hint at a long history of cultural anxieties surrounding childhood in which society avows a positive view of children yet systematically devalues, intrudes upon or excludes their needs and experiences (Qvortrup 1995): they are disenfranchised within the public sphere yet castigated for being apathetic or antisocial; they are subject to increasing surveillance yet seen as deceitful or subversive; they lack the financial resources to be consumers yet are criticized for their superficial consumerist values and so forth.

The historical changes to childhood over the past century or more rest on a series of more fundamental changes in the structures of employment, the education system, gender relations and the family, together with the rise of consumer culture, of a psychological or therapeutic culture and, of course, of youth culture (Hill & Tisdall 1997; James, Jenks & Prout 1998). Western industrial societies are delaying some of the traditional markers of adulthood, extending the years of education and pushing back the start of employment, of financial independence and hence of leaving the parental home. At the same time, at least by comparison with recent decades, it seems that society is bringing forward the age of sexual knowledge and experience, of lifestyle and identity choices, and of consumer spending power through the lucrative youth and, more recently, children's, market (Buckingham & Bragg 2004; Kinder 1991; Kline 1993).

The outcome is a period of 'extended youth' in which young people are betwixt and between, caught in a series of cultural shifts whose effects are at time contradictory rather than complementary. Buchner et al. argue that childhood increasingly includes the responsibility of constructing a 'leisure career' or 'biographical project', a responsibility that requires young people to anticipate future uncertainties and deal with risk and status insecurity in the context of a loss of traditional forms of family and community support (Buchner, Bois-Reymond & Kruger 1995). Expressed more positively, Giddens proposes that we are witnessing 'a democratization of the private sphere' (Giddens 1993:184-5), a historical transformation of intimacy in which children, along with other participants in a relationship, have gained the right to 'determine and regulate the conditions of their association'.

Mediating childhood

The media are far from neutral observers on the sidelines of change. Importantly, the media have remade themselves in recent decades – through youth television, pop music, globalized children’s culture, the expanding magazine market, video games, etc. – precisely so as to serve the needs, or to exploit, depending on one’s views, the demanding task of ‘growing up’. Identity development is thoroughly mediated, framed by the worlds of music, fashion, sport and lifestyle, and it is also increasingly problematic – witness the growth of stress, anorexia and depression among young people. The media foster youth culture through both their contents and forms. Through their contents, they directly address the concerns, interests and experiences of young people. Through their forms, they provide the personalized, mobile, stylized, casualized media goods that today mark out the spaces and timetable of young people’s lives. In so doing, and because of the multi-determined ways in which young people use them, the media contribute to a repositioning of young people in relation to the public and private spheres – casting them both as consumers and as citizens, in the present and for the future.

One might argue that, to the extent that young people play a pioneering role in relation to the media this is because society offers them few alternatives, positioning them so that the media offer a rare space for experimentation and expertise, providing a route – and hence also a focus of generational tensions – for the playing out of the consequences of wider social changes. Young people use the media precisely to push at, explore and transgress established norms of public and private. They relish the potential of the media to offer the flexible tools and the free spaces within which to construct their individuality and relationships. And they

are at times naively blind to the power of the media to position them subtly but firmly according to consumerist pleasures, external cultural prescriptions and powerful interests.

Yet let us put this desire for media in context. As I have argued elsewhere (Livingstone 2002), staying at home is framed, to a significant degree, by the meaning of ‘going out’, an option ever less available to many children and young people. Especially for parents of younger children and of girls, going out is widely perceived to be risky while staying home is safe. A privatized, media-rich bedroom culture is also supported by the apparently progressive exclusion of children and young people from public places in society (as funds for youth clubs are withdrawn, as hanging about on street corners is discouraged, public leisure facilities are beyond the financial resources of many).

Unpacking the relation between public and private

These contextual shifts that frame young people’s media use relate to the so-called blurring of the public/private boundary in several ways. In what follows, I shall argue that three underlying processes are implicated: the influence the private sector has over children’s leisure, the degree to which children participate in the public sphere and the rights of children to privacy from public regulation and structures of governance.

To unpack and clarify the relationship between public and private, I turn to Habermas’s (1981/7) critical theory of society. He relates the public/private distinction to a further distinction between the system and the lifeworld (Fraser 1990; Habermas 1981/7), this being in some ways similar to the familiar sociological distinction between structure and agency (the lifeworld refers to people’s ‘horizon of meaning’ or ‘relatively informal ways of life,

contrasted with market and administrative systems', Outhwaite 1996:369). Table 1 maps out the resulting four spheres of society – the state, the economy, the public sphere and the personal or intimate sphere. While each of these spheres can be applied to many empirical domains, I have here applied them to the analysis of children and the media. Since in a media-saturated society no aspect of society is untouched by the media, each quadrant is readily associated with distinct ways of thinking about the media and children or young people (as citizens, consumers, objects and agents).

Put Table 1 about here

Habermas's contention is that these four analytic spheres 'should' remain distinct but in late modern capitalist society each increasingly intersects or interpenetrates the other, producing the shifts and tensions that prove so challenging. Consequently, instead of conceiving of a single blurring or intersection between public and private domains, this is replaced by a series of intersections between pairs of quadrants, opening up a more subtle analysis of the issues at stake. Of the several intersections possible, I consider in detail the three that concern the personal or intimate sphere in order to understand young people's activities in relation to new media and social change. Imagine, if you will, three arrows in the table – linking the economy to the personal sphere, the public and personal spheres, and the state to the personal sphere. Each of these intersections marks out a tension blurring the boundary between public and private.

Intersection of the personal sphere and the economy

Questions of interest and profit lie at the heart of the intersection of the personal sphere and the economy. In addressing the privatization of children's leisure, identity and lifestyles, a

central concern arises over the relative power of businesses and consumers. Two complementary shifts support the increasing interpenetration of the personal sphere by private interests: the rise of individualization and of commercialization. The trend towards individualization facilitates a diversification in tastes, leisure interests and lifestyle preferences (Beck 1992; Livingstone 2002), further divorcing these socio-demographic factors and generational 'inheritance'. Hence, the media offer the opportunity to experiment with distinctive and satisfying identities, providing also a shared focus for relationships and, moreover, the resources for marking off territory from parents and others. Insofar as young people do the unexpected in initiating new trends that are subsequently capitalized upon by the corporate sector – examples include 'grunge' fashion, rap music, text messaging – their creativity also plays a significant role in influencing youth culture (in the lifeworld) and the economy (in the system world).

However, the lively and creative interests of young people are simultaneously the target of a huge, commercialized leisure industry which construes youth as the new market opportunity and which is canny in its cross-promotion of consumer goods in the media domain on an increasingly global scale. It is also articulate in its reflexive adoption of child-centred discourses of children's rights, empowerment and identity as part of their branding and merchandising efforts (Kinder 1999). So, the interests and anxieties of young people all become grist to the mill of mass consumerism which, in turn, further promotes individualization through the provision of particular, even esoteric, niche media products. Children are enthusiastic adopters of consumer products associated with their favourite television programmes, sports teams, pop music groups – they want the wallpaper, the duvet cover, the collectable toys, the branded tee-shirt, the cuddly toys. On the Internet, their top search teams, their favourite websites, their preferred games all pursue these themes.

A good example is the effort to privatize online contents and services. Increasingly, online contents are branded and/or sponsored, organized according to normative preferred readings, funded by difficult-to-avoid advertising. Behind the scenes, they collect personal data on the user's every click, search and download (Montgomery 2001; Turow 2001). The concept of the walled garden is symptomatic: commercial websites are typically designed to be 'sticky', to contain the users, enticing them with branded and themed contents so as to prevent their leaving. Each site offers a 'whole community', 'all' one could ever want to do or say or know 'in one place'. These walled gardens counter the optimists' rhetoric of the Internet as a democratic and open space of links and connections, freedom and choice, not to mention anarchy and counter-culture (Burbules 1998). Although these contents and services are often enjoyed and desired by children, this does not necessarily justify the imposition of commercial interests on resources that could, to a far greater degree than occurs at present, serve children's – indeed, the public – interest. Also of concern is the observation from research that children lack the critical literacy – awareness of online privacy rights, ability to detect sponsorship, recognition of commercial strategies and goals, etc. – to judge fairly what these contents and services represent (Livingstone 2004; Livingstone & Bober 2003).

Intersection of the personal sphere and the public sphere

The intersection of the personal sphere and the public sphere blurs the public-private boundary in a different way. Here, the central issue is participation. Since the lifeworld sustains society and carries the ideals of the culture, its relation to deliberation and decision-making – to the vitality of the public sphere – is fraught. The media have more often than not been identified as undermining, rather than supporting, the public sphere, drawing people

away from the community, encouraging them to be motivated by self interest rather than disinterestedness (Putnam 2000). Early findings that children who spent a long time on the Internet became addicted, depressed, loners exemplified such anxieties.

But subsequent research tells the opposite story for it now appears that while the early studies, by necessity, examined early adopters who lacked friends online, today's youth have a critical mass of friends online (Subrahmanyam, Greenfield, Kraut & Gross 2001). It seems that online communication does not displace but rather supplements or even stimulates face-to-face communication, strengthening social networks (Livingstone & Bober 2003), although whether this contains the seeds of future participation or of new social movements remains to be seen. Similarly, young people have proved themselves the pioneers in both online and mobile phone communication, generating the customs and practices by which a peer group regulates its considerable volume of communication across diverse channels, resulting in new norms of participation and networking (see Drotner, this volume). As the empirical evidence repeatedly confirms, the driver of change in this public/private blurring is the activities of young people themselves, although the wider social conditions of childhood, including the many structures that serve to marginalize or exclude children, should not be forgotten.

However, such sociality has limits. Young people also express a strong desire to be alone, particularly when they find circumstances constraining. Here too the media are orchestrated to achieve this privacy. For instance, consider the media-rich bedroom, with its 'parents: keep out!' notice on the door (Bovill & Livingstone 2001); the personalized media (walkman, discman, radio) that block out family intervention or interruption; the absorbed playing of computer games, writing online diaries (or 'blogging'), which are password protected, and the use of hidden files and other privacy tactics (Livingstone & Bober 2004). Such activities

represent symbolic means of inserting distance into relationships, for communal/public spaces have a normative, even coercive dimension that can override individual interests.

Young people use media both to sustain and participate in peer culture and to move away from and distance themselves from intergenerational or family culture. Recalling our earlier discussion of their uncomfortable positioning in an extended youth, betwixt and between independence and dependence, the public responsibilities of adults and the private protections of children, this is unsurprising. As Flichy argues, media allow family members to ‘live together separately’, so offering some resolution to the contradictions of modern family life (Flichy 1995). Taylor and Harper provide a telling illustration of young people using their mobile phones to text each other ‘goodnight’, supplementing, or perhaps replacing, the face-to-face ‘goodnight’ to their parents (Taylor & Harper 2002).

What are the implications of these observations? First, that participating in a common culture – sharing experiences, reaching decisions, negotiating values – depends ever less on the co-location of participants. Rather, the media serve to displace participation in time and space, permitting new forms of collectivity but perhaps also inhibiting old forms of deliberation or introducing new grounds for exclusion. Second, parents are seeking the means, again using media, to counter the individualizing effects of diverse and multiple media so as to sustain some degree of common culture within the home. Hence they may encourage eating together in front of the television, using sports or soaps to share some intimate time on the sofa, interacting together through a website, even instant messaging each other, or following up media themes to occasion family discussion, whether of a personal or a political nature. Third, the challenge remains of how to encourage participation among young people, not just in peer culture but also in the wider public sphere. As traditional structures of work as well as

traditional values and expectations are lost, cues to participation and citizenship are no longer salient to young people (Kimberlee 2002). Though it seems unproductive to blame young people themselves for their so-called apathy and though the media could doubtless do more to help, many are turning their critical gaze onto the structures of participation in society that fail sufficiently to involve and value young people (Livingstone, Bober & Helsper 2004; Prout 2000).

Intersection of the personal sphere and the state

At the intersection of the personal sphere and the state, questions of governance come to the fore. In relation to children's media use, these oscillate between protectionist and *laissez-faire* strategies, depending on the political climate and on whether the state seeks to regulate the relation between children and media by regulating the media or by regulating children (via their parents and teachers). In the UK the trends are to roll back interventionist regulation of the media, replacing this with industry self-regulation while shifting the responsibility insofar as possible from the state to parents, teachers and children themselves – both these suggest a kind of privatization of regulation. For example, one key plank of the Ofcom's (the communications regulator) duties is the promotion of media literacy to ensure that users, especially but not only children, are equipped to make best use of the media and to avoid any associated dangers (Livingstone 2004). Presumably, the successful promotion of media literacy will devolve responsibility to individuals, thereby legitimating 'lighter touch' regulation of the media industry.

The driver of social change here is public policy, itself driven in part by public opinion, so things move slowly, unlike processes driven by youth culture and by commercial interests. Moreover, we are in a period of transition, with the media environment diversifying,

globalizing and commercializing ahead of an updated regulatory framework and, often, ahead of public understanding of these changes. Consequently, we are witnessing a series of dilemmas where public and private values clash. For example, in an attempt to encourage participation, the UK government recently promised every child an e-mail address, a promise rapidly withdrawn when it was pointed out that listing children's e-mails on a school website might aid paedophiles more than politics. A similar dilemma arises when, on the one hand, the state aims to encourage children's online freedoms but, on the other, seeks to restrict school use of the Internet to certain approved activities. Or when the education system hopes to facilitate the home-school link to encourage informal learning (a public good) without devoting teacher time to guiding parents in the use of the Internet (this being a domestic – that is, private – matter).

Parents attempt to control children's use of the Internet, children attempt to evade control. Both resort to the rhetoric of trust – parents, in order to justify not regulating their children, children, in order to justify evading regulation. Both employ a range of subtle and not-so-subtle tactics, resulting in struggles over the decision to locate the computer in a public or private space or to impose more or less draconian prohibitions on the use of interactive services, for example. A simple example is that of the Sim Series software which supposedly promotes public values – teaching children 'about pollution, city planning, and the creation of healthy environments' (Calvert 1999:186); yet as any parent of a pre-teen knows, such software is gleefully played 'against the grain' – destroying the city, encouraging urban destruction, experimenting with the means of killing the inhabitants – in other words, precisely subverting such public values. On a more serious note, children who lack privacy offline may choose, or may need, to seek it online for, the threats to children's safety within the privacy of the home are, statistically, far greater than threats from strangers (Russell

1980). Privacy is thus less about keeping secrets for their own sake as about having control over who knows what about you, choosing who you tell, and how, as well as choosing who you do not tell.

Conclusion

This article has reflected on the experience of children and young people's uses of new media to develop a wider argument about the renegotiation of the boundary between public and private. We have seen that children and, especially, teens co-opt the media in their own interests to create privacy for themselves, to explore their identity and self-development away from parents and other adults while at the same time forging a dynamic and sustaining peer network. By looking more closely at the public/private boundary, three distinct processes have been identified – one based on matters of interest and profit, one based on matters of participation and community, and one based on matters of governance and privacy.

The elaboration of this framework, as exemplified through children's uses of new media, revealed the different features, concerns and drivers of social change that characterize these three oppositions as they map onto the blurring or intersection of three domains: economy/personal sphere, public sphere/personal sphere and state/personal sphere. The claim that the traditional distinction between public and private is becoming blurred is thus unpacked into a series of distinct but intersecting questions of meaning, value, agency and responsibility. In short, 'public' and 'private' mean something different in different contexts, as part of distinct debates, and should not be confused or conflated.

Each of the arguments was stimulated by and tested against a child-centred approach to research (Corsaro 1997), the point being to complement and at times counter adult-centred

and media-centred approaches. This allows the inclusion of voices too often marginalized in debates about children and media and brings into focus a range of media uses not otherwise recognized (i.e. visible to adults, public), especially the playful, secretive, evasive, tactical, subversive (i.e. the private). Grounding the account first and foremost in children's lives rather than in technological innovation captures some of the historically and culturally-contingent complexities with which new media are appropriated both into homes and more broadly into society. It is hoped that the present analysis provides a productive account of how the changing media environment alters the opportunities and dangers for social, economic and political engagement that face young people and their families.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the colleagues with whom these ideas have been discussed: Magdalena Bober, Moira Bovill, Nick Couldry, Daniel Dayan, Kirsten Drotner, Peter Lunt, Mirca Madianou, Dominique Mehl, Dominique Pasquier, Roberta Pearson and Andrea Press.


Table 1: Habermas’s spheres of society, as applied to media and children

	Public	Private
	Child as citizen	Child as consumer
System	<u>The state:</u>	<u>The economy:</u>
Child as object	Legal and regulatory frameworks for the media industry, including protection for ‘fourth estate’ <i>Children as object of media education and, through their vulnerabilities, of content guidelines and controls</i>	Media industry, media markets, commercial logic of media, advertising and links to consumer markets <i>Children as commodity or market, characterized through ratings, market share and unmet needs</i>
Lifeworld	<u>The public sphere:</u>	<u>The personal or intimate sphere:</u>
Child as agent	Media as forum for democratic debate, mediated community participation and public culture <i>Children as active and engaged, informed, participatory and/or resistant</i>	Media providing the images, pleasures, habits and goods for identity, relationships and lifestyle <i>Children as selective, interpretative, pleasure-seeking, creative in doing identity work</i>

References

- Beck, U. (1992), *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage.
- Bovill, M. and Livingstone, S. (2001), 'Bedroom Culture and the Privatization of Media Use', in S. Livingstone and Bovill, M. (ed.), *Children and Their Changing Media Environment: A European Comparative Study*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 179–200.
- Buchner, P., Bois-Reymond, M. D. and Kruger, H.-H. (1995), 'Growing Up in Three European Regions', in L. Chisholm (ed.), *Growing Up in Europe: Contemporary Horizons in Childhood and Youth Studies*. Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 43–59.
- Buckingham, D. and Bragg, S. (2004), *Young People, Sex and the Media: The Facts of Life?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Burbules, N. C. (1998), 'Rethorics on the Web: Hyperreading and Critical Literacy', in I. Snyder (ed.), *Page to Screen: Taking Literacy into the Electronic Era*. New York: Routledge, pp. 102–22.
- Calvert, S. (1999), *Children's Journeys Through the Information Age*. Boston: McGraw-Hill College.
- Corsaro, W. A. (1997), *The Sociology of Childhood*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Flichy, P. (1995), *Dynamics of Modern Communication: The Shaping and Impact of New Communication Technologies*. London: Sage.
- Fraser, N. (1990), 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', *Social Text*, 25/26, pp. 56–80.
- Giddens, A. (1993), *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Habermas, Jürgen (1981/7), *The Theory of Communicative Action, vol 2. Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hill, M. and Tisdall, K. (1997), *Children and Society*. London and New York: Longman.
- James, A., Jenks, C. and Prout, A. (1998), *Theorizing Childhood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kimberlee, R. H. (2002), 'Why Don't British Young People Vote at General Elections?' *Journal of Youth Studies*, 5(1), pp. 85–98.
- Kinder, M. (1991). *Playing with Power in Movies, Television and Video Games: From Muppet Babies to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Kinder, M. (ed.) (1999), *Kids' Media Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Kline, S. (1993), *Out of the Garden: Toys and Children's Culture in the Age of TV Marketing*. London and New York: Verso.
- Lievrouw, L. and Livingstone, S. (eds.) (2002), *Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Social Consequences*. London: Sage.
- Livingstone, S. (1998), 'Mediated Childhoods: A Comparative Approach to Young People's Changing Media Environment in Europe'. *European Journal of Communication*, 13(4), pp. 435–56.
- Livingstone, S. (2002). *Young People and New Media*. London: Sage.
- Livingstone, S. (2004), 'Media Literacy and the Challenge of New Information and Communication Technologies'. *Communication Review*, 7, pp. 3–14.
- Livingstone, S. and Bober, M. (2003), *UK Children Go Online: Listening to Young People's Experiences*: London School of Economics and Political Science.

- Livingstone, S. and Bober, M. (2004). *UK Children Go Online: Surveying the Experiences of Young People and Their Parents*. London School of Economics and Political Science
<http://www.children-go-online.net>.
- Livingstone, S., Bober, M. and Helsper, E. (2004), *Active Participation of Just More Information? Young People's Take Up of Opportunities to Act and Interact on the Internet*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science.
<http://www.children-go-online.net>. 
- Montgomery, K. (2001), 'The New On-Line Children's Consumer Culture', in D. Singer and J. Singer (eds.), *Handbook of Children and the Media*. London: Sage, pp. 635–50.
- Outhwaite, W. (ed.) (1996), *The Habermas Reader*. Oxford: Polity.
- Prout, A. (2000), 'Children's Participation: Control and Self-realization in British Late Modernity'. *Children & Society*, 14(4), pp. 304–15.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000), *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Qvortrup, J. (1995), 'Childhood and Modern Society: A Paradoxical Relationship', in J. Brannen and M. O'Brien (eds.), *Childhood and Parenthood*. London: Institute of Education, University of London, pp. 189–98.
- Russell, D. (1980), 'The Incidence and Prevalence of Intrafamilial and Extrafamilial Sexual Abuse for Female Children'. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 7, pp. 133–46.
- Subrahmanyam, K., Greenfield, P., Kraut, R. and Gross, E. (2001), 'The Impact of Computer Use on Children's and Adolescents' Development'. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 22(1), pp. 7–30.
- Taylor, A. S. and Harper, R. (2002), *Age-old Practices in the 'New World': A study of Gift-Giving between Teenage Mobile Phone Users*. Paper presented at the SIGCHI

Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems: Changing Our World,
Changing Ourselves. Minneapolis, MN.

Turow, J. (2001), 'Family Boundaries, Commercialism, and the Internet: A Framework for
Research'. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 22(1), pp. 73–86.