

# **EXPLORING CHILDREN'S SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN THE U.S.: THE ROLE OF DIGITAL AND PRINT MEDIA IN CHILDREN'S LIVES**

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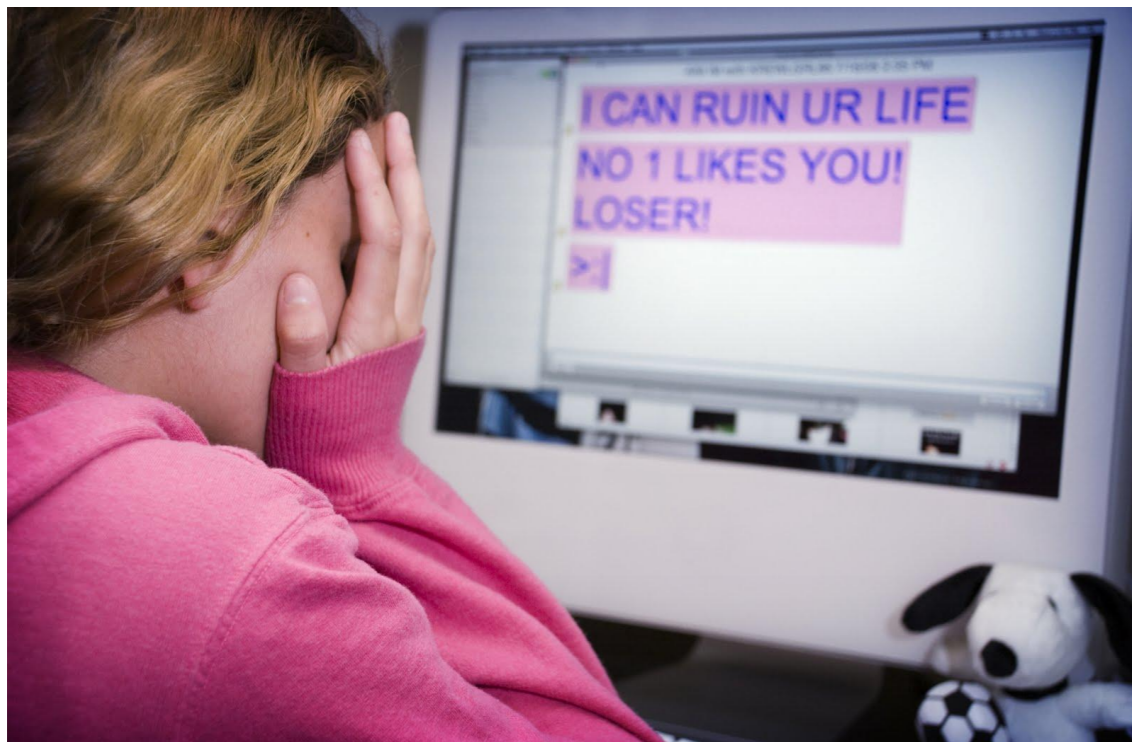
# BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

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- As digital technologies have become more integrated into children's home & school lives, it is important to consider their differential effect on children's well-being over more traditional print media sources (such as books).
- Despite recent calls for increased research of children's self-reported well-being (e.g. Dinisman et al., 2015), more research is needed regarding children's subjective well-being in general, and more specifically, the intersection between media & well-being.

# WHAT THE RESEARCH HAS EXPLORED REGARDING CHILD DTM USE AND WELL-BEING

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# EVEN EBOOKS AND EDUCATIONAL APPS TEND TO GET A BAD REPUTATION



# WHAT WE FOUND....

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# BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

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The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore:

- **What roles do digital & print media play in children's subjective well-being?**
- **Are those roles similar or different?**

# CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDINGS OF WELL-BEING – GLOBAL AND LOCAL CONTEXTS

<http://www.cuwb.org/>

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**Interview protocol designed by Fattore, Fegter, and Hunner-Kreisel (2014)**

# METHODS

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## Sample

- 22 children in Wave 1 US Substudy (spring 2015)
- 8-13 years old (average age 10.36 years)
- 14% 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 18% 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 32% 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 32% 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 4% 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- 7 males 15 females
- from 3 states in the Midwestern U.S.
- from variety of racial and SES backgrounds, primarily White
- More purposive sampling for diversity in Wave 2  
(24 children, data just collected spring 2017)



# **METHODS**

## **Procedure**

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- **Sampling using convenience and snowball sampling through social networks, local schools and community centers**
- **IRB approval, parental informed consent, child assent**
- **Semi-structured interview & mapping exercise**
- **Children drew & explained what was important to them and what made them feel “well or good”, and in the second part of the interview, described how they felt in particular contexts and domains of their life (home and family, school, economic context, and Q’s about safety, choice, and feeling listened to).**

# METHODS

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## Data Analysis

- The larger study was used a basic interpretive qualitative design for maximum flexibility in analysis procedures
- Transcripts were analyzed using a phenomenological approach following a 3-step process (Creswell, 2013):
  1. Identifying & coding significance statements

Each transcript was coded by at least two researchers to assess reliability, and discrepancies were identified and discussed until consensus was reached.
  2. Inductively clustering of codes into themes
  3. Articulating themes & patterns across themes

# FINDINGS

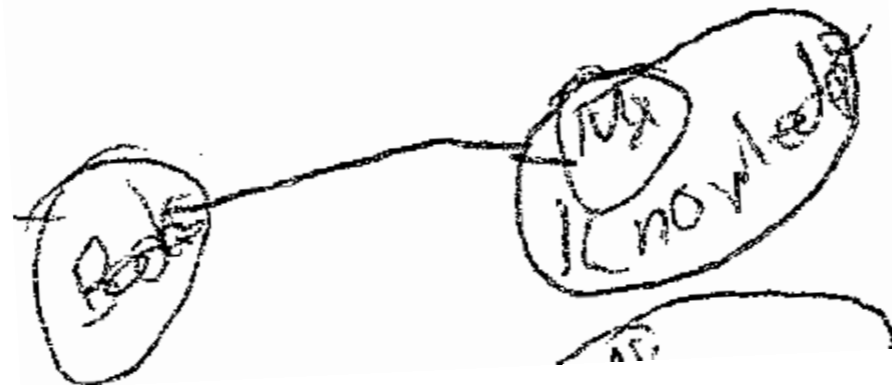
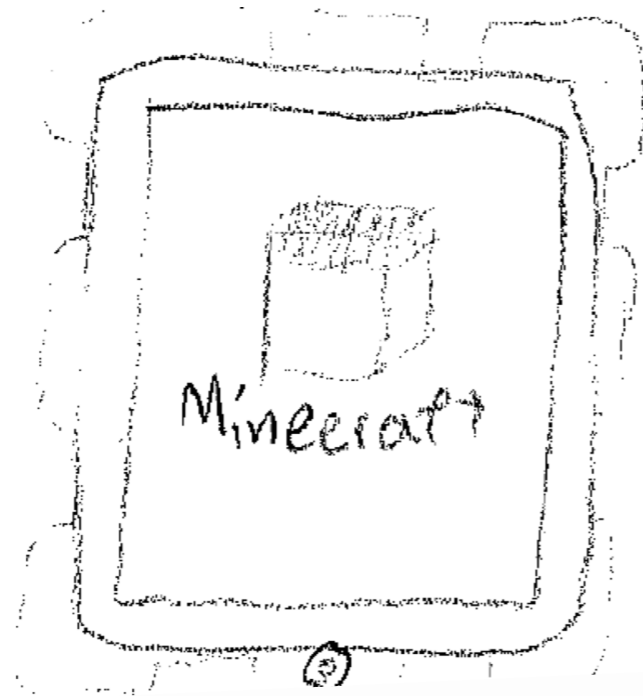
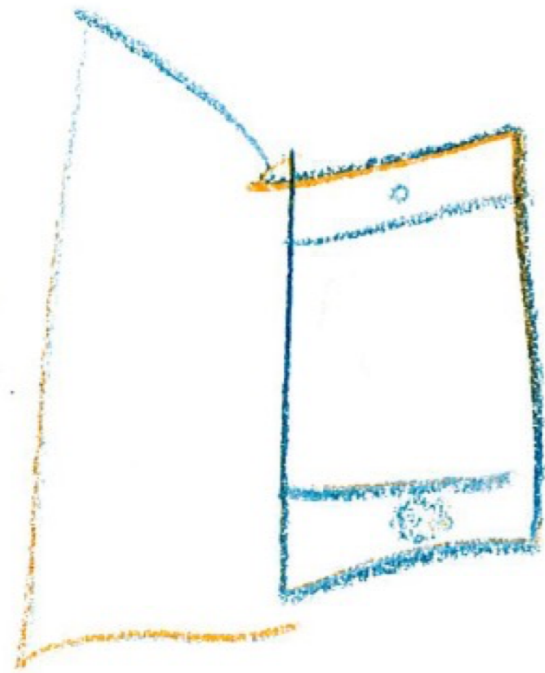
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- **1 Overarching theme:** Children believed both media formats were important to children's well-being.
- **Six sub-themes:** Under 3 themes, digital & print played similar roles. Under the other 3, their roles differed.

## WHAT CHILDREN'S WORDS AND DRAWINGS REVEALED USING A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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- DTM and print media use contribute to their subjective well-being, although they are not *essential*
- They included a variety of DTM and PM on their “maps”



# Similar Roles: Digital & Print

## Rewarding & Meaningful

- Media was meaningful & rewarding to them.
- Media enriched their lives.
- Earned media as a reward for good behavior.
- Saved money to purchase media.

# Similar Roles: Digital & Print

## Contributes to Life Satisfaction

- Used media as hobbies & leisure activities.
- Used media to relax, have fun, be creative, & “get away.”
- Most common types were books (reading), movies, TV, video games, & internet-based activities.

# Similar Roles: Digital & Print

## Contributes to Self-Acceptance

- Described & evaluated themselves in terms of media & its role in their lives.
- Self-descriptions & evaluations included kinds of media, activities with media, & preferences (shows, games, characters).

# Differing Roles: Digital vs. Print

## Connection to Others

- Used digital media to manage connections with others & social relationships.
- Used digital media to feel supported & happy.
- Used digital media to practice conflict management.
- Did not report using print media to connect with others.



# Differing Roles: Digital vs. Print

## Autonomy (Choice, Independence, & Safety)

- Digital media gave opportunities to make choices, express preferences, & experience freedom/independence although at times their freedom was restricted.
- Digital media helped them feel safe in their autonomy (call 911, weather updates, message parent).
- Only one child mentioned using print media to feel calm & safe.

# Differing Roles: Digital vs. Print

## Competence & Skill

- Used print & digital media to build skills & competencies.
  - Overwhelmingly reported using print media as tools for learning.
  - Used digital media to build digital media skills (e.g., video game play)

# DISCUSSION

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Digital & print media play some similar positive roles in children's well-being, such as being rewarding, contributing to life satisfaction, & shaping self-acceptance.

# DISCUSSION

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The shift to greater inclusion of digital technologies in children's home & school lives offers some unique opportunities for positive impact on well-being, such as through connecting them to others, giving them autonomy, & helping them feel safe & secure.

# DISCUSSION

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Print media continues to play an important & unique role in children's lives, especially as a tool for learning.

# NEXT STEPS

- Examine new transcripts for similar or different themes.
- Cross-cultural collaboration and analyses
- Triangulation with quantitative data from children (Children's World's survey), parents (parental well-being measures), and demographic data (parent report) to examine potential patterns for subgroups (e.g. lower SES)
- References available upon request. Email:  
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