"Digital Natives" or "The Dumbest Generation?"

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"Digital Natives" or "The Dumbest Generation?"

Abstract
A common part of the conversation about Millennials is to describe them as exceptionally technologically-savvy; some have called them "digital natives." But research does not bear this out; people of older generations can be equally tech-savvy, and while many Millennials love their phones and social media, etc., the reality is that all of us are acculturated into a particular era of technology, and members of each generation can exhibit a range of comfort and skill working with different technologies.

Keywords
technology, digital electronics, age groups, cultural lag

Disciplines
Christianity | Communication Technology and New Media | Education

Comments
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Understanding our students’ use of Digital Technology
Can you remember the first time you used a computer?
ANGELA has typhoid.

Date: April 19, 1848
Weather: hot
Health: fair
Food: 170 pounds
Next landmark: 89 miles
Miles traveled: 215 miles

Press SPACE BAR TO CONTINUE
Can you remember the first time you were on the World Wide Web?
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I teach EDUC 334 - Methods of Teaching Science for Elementary and Middle School. I also teach 7th and 8th grade students at Sioux Center Christian School. I am currently an M.Ed. candidate in Dordt's Graduate Program.

A unit plan I wrote for EDUC 543.
My website at SCCS.
My resume. (Word document)
Can you remember the first time you used a cell phone?
The million dollar question...
Do you consider things like computers, the WWW, and phones to be "technology?"
"Technology is not technology if it happened before you were born."

~Sir Ken Robinson
A pencil is an educational technology.
Are novice teachers better at integrating technology?
GROWING UP DIGITAL
It's a generational thing...
Baby Boomers
Generation X
Today's Young Teachers...

- Generation Y
- Millennials
- the Digital Generation
- the NetGen
Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants
A NAME YOU SHOULD KNOW IN EDTECH:
MARK PRENSKY
NATIVE?
NATIVE?
NATIVE?
IMMIGRANT?
IMMIGRANT?
Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants
Prensky: "Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach."
NOT AN INCREMENTAL CHANGE
DISCONTINUITY
Prensky: "Today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors."
READ THE MANUAL?
"DIAL" A PHONE?
"A BROKEN RECORD?"
"Virtual" vs "Real Life"
OMG UR MY BFF!
What is this thing anyway?

SAVE?
Prensky: "Digital Immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language."
Innately Skillful Use of Technology?
Repeated Experiences?
MY STUDENTS JUST DON'T...
I CAN'T GET THEM TO...
THEY HAVE NO APPRECIATION FOR...
Prensky: "Is it that Digital Natives can’t pay attention, or that they choose not to?"
Mark Bauerlein: "The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Superfies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future (Or, Don't Trust Anyone Under 30)"
Bauerlein: "Most young Americans possess little of the knowledge that makes for an informed citizen, and too few of them master the skills needed to negotiate an information-heavy, communication-based society and economy. Further, they avoid the resources and media that might enlighten them and boost their talents."
Passanisi & Peters: "Being a Digital Native is Not Enough"
Passanisi & Peters: "If students are not able to find answers to an Internet search in the first few results pages, they say 'I can’t find it,' instead of adjusting their search, or reexamining the results in depth."
Nicholas Carr: "Is Google Making Us Stupid?"
Carr: "Immersing myself in a book or a lengthy article used to be easy. My mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I’d spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That’s rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages."
Are novice teachers better at integrating technology?
JUST BECAUSE KIDS KNOW HOW TO USE TWITTER, SNAPCHAT, AND INSTAGRAM DOESN'T MEAN THEY KNOW HOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE THEIR LEARNING.
Natives?
Experiences?
Preferences?
The Digital Native: Fact or Fiction?
PRENSKY ISN'T WRONG...
But he may not have it all JUST right...
Kids are acculturated into a digital society (technopoly?)
...but so are adults.
Kids don't *really* have a "native" sense of how to use technology.
Jeremy Harmer: "Shall We Kill Off the Digital Native?"
Harmer: "The effect of the wretched native/immigrant duality is to suggest that all kids are techno wizards. That all kids absorb technology like they breathe the air. And you know what, IT JUST ISN’T TRUE!"
Harmer: "Some children are instant techno wizards, but many others aren’t. Some kids spend all their time gaming, others don’t. Some kids spend all their time on Facebook, others don’t go anywhere near it (and are probably migrating away from it anyway as I write this blog)."
Harmer: "And you want to know more? Some adults who came to computers late are techno wizards and some aren’t. Some adults (I have met a few of them) spend hours of their life gaming, some don’t. Some adults spend all their time on Facebook. Many don’t."
DIGITAL CITIZENS

ALL OF US..."NATIVES" AND "IMMIGRANTS ALIKE"
Prensky himself has backed off from this natives/immigrants discourse in recent years!
Lately, Prensky talks more about "digital wisdom"
Prensky (2009): "As we move further into the 21st century...the distinction between digital natives and digital immigrants will become less relevant.

...I suggest we think in terms of digital wisdom."
WISDOM?
"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 1:8
Can we use technology with wisdom?
Can we TEACH with wisdom?
How do we foster wisdom in our students?
"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:5-6
I have been researching pre-service teachers specifically. Does this ring true for students in your discipline?

Should we expect students to learn to do it “our way,” or should we expect to teach in “their way?”

Are your students learners? Are you a learner?