

Cybersafety, Social Networking and the Personal Web: Young People and Adults in Conversation

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Cybersafety, Social Networking and the Personal Web: adults and young people in conversation

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**Co-operative
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**For Young
People**

**Technology
and Wellbeing**

Social Networking a risky business

- 83% of young Australians use the web to engage with, construct and maintain social networks
- The 'personal web' – a shift from information and entertainment to communication via social networking sites (SNS)
- Common perception that young people's social networking practices are unsafe, dangerous, even life-threatening
- Young people at risk of cyberbullying, identity theft, and other forms of predation





**Technologies are
being developed
almost faster than we
can keep up with.**

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Known **benefits** of SNS use

- Enables identity formation & self-expression
- Strengthens social relationships and communities
- Fosters civic participation
- Cultivates media and web literacy
- Encourages creativity and digital content creation
- Facilitates a sense of belonging and collective identity: resilience, self-efficacy and wellbeing

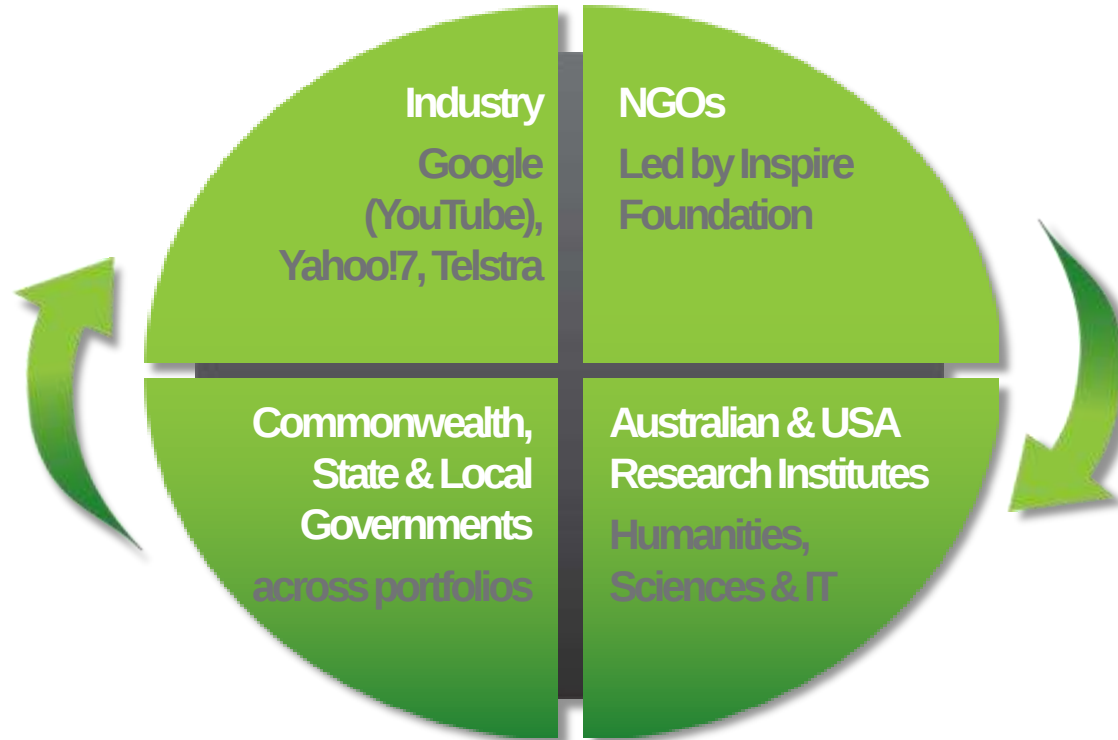
The Benefits of Social Networking Services,

P. Collin, K. Rahilly, I. Richardson and A. Third

<http://www.yawcrc.org.au/publications>



Cooperative Research Centre for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing



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Research Program 1 – Safe and Supportive

Technologies as 'settings' to enable all young people

Research Program 2 – Creative and Connected

Technologies enabling vulnerable and marginalised young people – linking creativity and wellbeing

Research Program 3 – User-driven and Empowered

Technologies enabling young people experiencing mental illness

<http://www.yawcrc.org.au/>



The challenge

A generation gap

–Skills (the ‘how’)

–Attitudes (the ‘why’)

Our response

- Small-scale pilot study
- Young people as experts
- Intergenerational dialogue and knowledge sharing
- Inversion of conventional power relations



An innovative approach

Living Lab

- Simulates or re-creates a real-world activity
- Participants contribute to the research process
- Observational technique

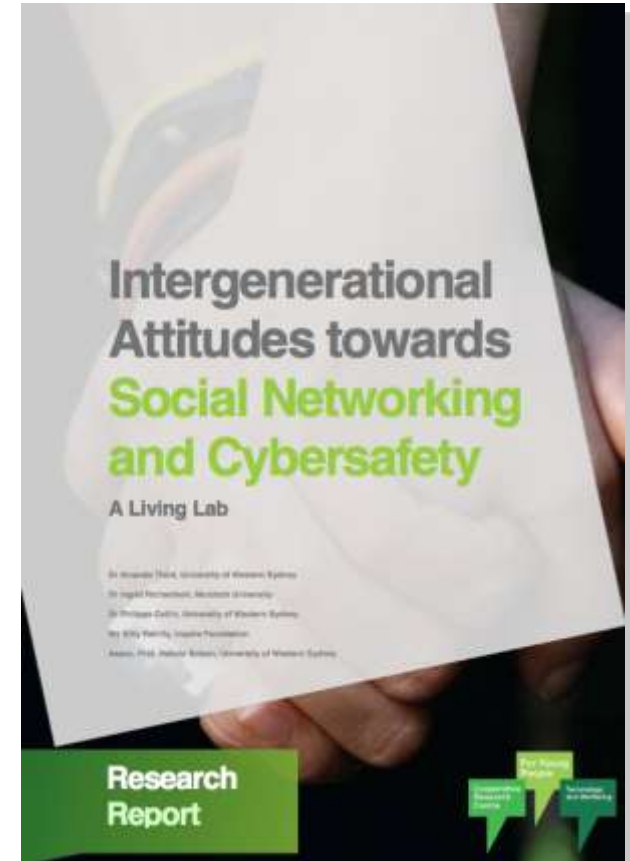
Interrupted Spaces

- ‘Interruption’ to usual experience
- Reversal of conventional power relationships
- Critical reflection upon common assumptions

Intergenerational Attitudes towards Social Networking and Cybersafety: A Living Lab

A. Third, I. Richardson, P. Collin, K. Rahilly, & N. Bolzan

<http://www.yawcrc.org.au/publications>



What **adults** say...



What **adults** say...

- Demystification of young people's SNS use
- Enabled a deeper understanding of young people's social networking practices 'outside the square' (of media hype, assumptions around online risk and cybersafety)
- Provided a unique and open space of non-hierarchical communication with young people

"This was a really innovative way to learn about what young people do online. It was so unusual it took me by surprise. I learnt such a lot from my young person. Stuff I can use in my conversations with my kids."

"It was reassuring to hear about their actual experiences and see what they actually do. They know more than we think."



What **young people** say...



What **young people** say...

- SNS use is **integral to young people's lives** – part of a complex merger of online and offline interaction
- Strategies for dealing with online risk are developed predominantly via **knowledge-sharing with peers** – help-seeking and support
- Young people have a variable and **critical understanding of the term 'friend'**
- Young people have **a wide range of media literacy skills** gained through everyday practices and informal learning processes
- SNS enables the **control and ownership of personalised space**
- SNS is used primarily to **enrich existing friendships** and social networks
- The Living Lab was **empowering**, promoting young people's expertise, enabling them to challenge adults' negative attitudes towards youth and social networking



Implications

- **The Living Lab** – models a ‘setting’ for authentic and non-hierarchical intergenerational dialogue
- **The interrupted space** – allows for a critical reflection upon conventional assumptions and attitudes about social networking
- **Use of experiential, real-world and non-didactic methods** to ‘tap into’ and understand young people’s lived experience and everyday practices
- **Acknowledge the technical and social expertise of young people**
- **Enable high-level intergenerational conversations** about the social and cultural dimensions of young people’s technology use
- **Remain flexible and iterative** to keep pace with the emergence of new online and networked media
- **Develop strategic responses and policy in partnership with young people**



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<http://www.yawcrc.org.au/>

YAW-NET

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