

Appendix B: Informant Interview Protocol

The following general template of questions was used as a starting point in preparing for interviews with informants. In each interview, questions were tailored to the background and expertise of the specific informant.

The GoodPlay Project: Ethical Perspectives on Youth and Digital Media

Informant Interview Protocol (General Template)

I. Broad entry questions

1. Can you tell us how you became interested in researching / teaching youth / or participating in the new digital media?
 - a. What findings from this research have been most surprising or intriguing to you?
 - b. What is the focus of your current and future research?

II. Digital media: buckets, goals, and roles of participants

2. How would you define the domain of digital media?
 - a. How would you parse the domain? In other words, what are

the most important “buckets” (or major types of activities) that make up the domain?

3. Which buckets of the digital media are most important to explore in a study of young people?
 - a. If applicable: What kinds of digital activities are the kids you studied most frequently engaged? What specific sites do they frequent (MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, Second Life, *World of Warcraft*, and so on)?
4. What are the various goals of participants in these activities?
 - a. Is there consensus around the goals of participation in a given space (MySpace, games, blogging, and so on)?
 - b. Have you witnessed instances when the goals or values of participants are in conflict? (Example: A jokester “crashes” a massive multiplayer online game, pretending at first to be a serious player, winning the trust of coplayers, and then undermining the game at an opportune moment). If so, how was the conflict resolved?
 - c. Can you think of a case (or space) in which the conflicting goals or values of participants were successfully managed? How was this accomplished?
5. What kinds of roles are these young people playing in these spaces?
 - a. Are these roles explicitly defined?
 - b. What kinds of responsibilities accompany these roles?
 - c. Are these responsibilities explicitly acknowledged or implicit?

III. Ethical issues

6. In your experience studying / teaching youth about / participating in the digital media, have you come across

- situations in which youth (or adults) struggle over right versus wrong courses of action?
- a. In other words, what types of ethical dilemmas have you come across?
 - b. Are these dilemmas unique to the digital space?
 - c. Are there distinct ethical situations or dilemmas that arise among young participants? Describe.
7. Do distinct ethical issues emerge in the different buckets that make up the domain?
- a. For example, what kinds of ethical issues and dilemmas are common in the blogging space? In multiuser games? In online communities? In chat rooms?
 - b. Are any of these issues unique to a particular bucket or to the online (versus offline) world?
8. When there is unethical behavior (or behavior that is seen as unethical), what sanctions are imposed? By whom?
9. How aware are young people of the ethical implications of their online conduct?
- a. In your research, did you find evidence of awareness of the ethical implications of one's conduct online? Do specific examples or incidents that reflect such awareness come to mind?
 - b. Are there ethical issues relating to the Internet that you believe young people in particular are unaware of or deliberately ignore? Do specific examples or incidents come to mind?
 - c. Are there ethical issues that you think young people should be made aware of? If yes, do you have any ideas about how this could be best accomplished?

10. Are the ethical concerns (and awareness) of young people similar to or qualitatively different from those of older generations? If different, how?
11. Broadly speaking, what major ethical concerns do you have about the digital media?

IV. Mentors

12. Based on your knowledge of this space, do you have a sense of whom kids turn to for advice in their activities online? Do they have mentors?
 - a. If yes, who are they (peers versus traditional mentors or individuals with greater in age, experience, or wisdoms)?
 - b. Some would argue that peer mentoring is more common for youth participants in new media. How is peer mentoring different from (and similar to) traditional mentoring in this space? Where, when, and how does digital mentoring happen?
 - c. What are the implications of peer mentoring for awareness of ethical issues and for encouraging ethical conduct? In other words, do you think that peer mentors are capable of instilling ethics in their mentees in the same way that traditional mentors do in other domains?
13. Is there evidence that kids have “antimentors” or well-developed conceptions of the kind of conduct online that is inappropriate, disrespectful, and so on? If yes, elaborate.

V. General opportunities and challenges of the new digital media

14. What are the greatest opportunities offered by the Internet? For young people?
 - a. Do you think that the Internet opens up unique opportunities for civic engagement? If yes, could you describe how? If no, why not?

- b. Do you think the greatest opportunities of the Internet can or will be realized? If so, when and how? If not, what obstacles might prevent their realization?
 - 15. What are the greatest challenges posed by the Internet? For young people?
 - a. What are your thoughts on the digital divide between white middle-class kids and less privileged kids? Do you perceive this gap to be closing?
 - b. Do you think these challenges can or will be surmounted? If so, when and how? If not, why not?
- VI. Ethical issues in digital research
- 16. What major challenges can you foresee for us in conducting this research?
 - 17. Can you speak generally about any major ethical considerations in doing research on the digital media that we should bear in mind as we go forward?
 - 18. In addition to conducting interviews such as this, we hope to observe young people as they engage in various online interactions. For instance, other researchers (developmental psychologists) who study the social interactions of adolescents on the Internet have entered teen chat rooms as passive observers.
 - a. What are your reactions to this?
 - b. Do you see any ethical issues involved in this type of research?
 - c. What might be some alternative ways of learning about how kids are interaction online?
- VII. Conclusion / information gathering
- 19. Is there anything relevant to digital media, ethics, and young persons that you would like to add that I didn't ask you about?

20. Can you recommend other individuals with whom we should speak (including other educators working with kids and technology, experts, researchers, as well as very experienced participants – both youth and adult)?

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A Synthesis from the GoodPlay Project

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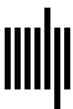
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