

MOOC Digital Youth Work

2.4 Video script “Young people in the digital world”

In this video we are going to look at the digital world young people are experiencing right now and how to connect with them by following key principles of youth work.

An essential youth work principle is to engage with young people and their daily realities, so it makes great sense to take the processes of digitalisation into account.

Since the end of the last century, the internet and digital media have become major spaces for young people to spend their leisure time, communicate and create friendships. The use of online media and video games has grown rapidly, facilitated through a range of services such as video streams, chat rooms, blogs and social media.

Recent statistics show that almost all young people use the internet daily and only 1% of young people in the EU have never accessed the Internet.

Still, we need to be aware that economically disadvantaged young people (especially in rural areas) have difficulties to access internet regularly

The vast majority spend their leisure time and use internet for entertainment. Almost 9 out of 10 are part of one or more social networks online. 6 out of 10 use internet to access online banking or seek health-related information. 3 out of 10 have applied for a job online and just 13% used the internet to take part in online consultations or voting.

In high gaming countries, young people spend more than 6 hours a week playing online games. Watching other gamers play video games online is becoming more popular than watching sports!

Social networks, gaming, mobile apps, web design or ‘maker’ activities can provide enormous opportunities for the development of creativity, persistence, experimentation, collaboration and agility.

Although the internet can provide a place for young people to share their experiences and to exchange their views, there are also safety risks online. Concerns range from

young people being exposed to harmful content or misinformation to the fear that excessive screen time may cause some health issues.

One universal digital world does not exist, but many very diverse worlds, where access to the internet and support are very different. You may have your own idea of a young person's digital reality, but we invite you to engage in dialogue with young people and explore it together.

When looking at the youth digital world, let's apply some key principles and ethics like in other areas of youth work:

- Demonstrate acceptance and suspend judgement. We accept young people as they are and seek to understand their everyday reality. Judgement can quickly become a barrier in building trusting relationships.
- Be honest with young people - admit you may not understand some of their digital world. Show curiosity and ask them to explain how things work or why they prefer certain tools, networks or content over something else
- Young people have huge experience in dealing with digital media. Create space for them to contribute their skills and link their digital world to the world of youth work.

Now meet your young people in-person or online and explore their digital world together.