Digital play: a new classification

# Details

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* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Learning
* Digital and socio-cultural environment

## Sample

2000 UK parents of 0- to 5-year-olds who had access to a tablet (survey) and six children aged 0–5 and their families (ethnography); 12 children aged between 3 and 5 (recorded play)

# Abstract

This paper draws on an ESRC-funded study of play and creativity in
preschool-aged children’s use of apps in the UK. The main objectives
of the study were to collect information about access to and use
of apps in the home, establish the most popular apps and identify
the features of those apps that are successful in promoting play
and creativity. A mixed-method approach was used to collect data,
including video filming of children using the most popular apps. In
identifying play types that emerged in the analysis of data, the team
utilised an established taxonomy, which outlines sixteen play types.
This taxonomy was reviewed and adapted to analyse data from the
project relating to digital play. Through this process, an additional type
of play, transgressive play, was identified and added to the taxonomy.
The paper outlines the implications of the revised taxonomy for future
studies of play.

# Outcome

"This study has indicated that Hughes’ taxonomy can be applied in a digital context, albeit
with appropriate adaptations. It has demonstrated that what changes in digital contexts is
not so much the types of play possible, but the nature of that play. Contemporary play draws
on both the digital and non-digital properties of things and in doing so moves fluidly across
boundaries of space and time in ways that were not possible in the pre-digital era. The
findings of this study provide a counterpoint to those who seek to dichotomise digital and
non-digital play, suggesting that play with digital technologies is not ‘real play’ (Palmer 2016)." (March et al., 2016: 250). Hughes’ taxonomy of play ( see Hughes, B. 2002. A Playworker’s Taxonomy of Play Types. 2nd ed. London: PlayLink) should be extended to incude ‘transgressive play’, it can be applied to digital play.