Playful Subversions: Young children and tablet use

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Re-coded videos, field notes and interviews from two different studies (of a different subject than this particular article)

# Abstract

Drawing on data from empirical studies of small children (4- to 8-year-olds) using tablets in educational settings, we explore the ways they resist the expected use of the various applications in order to invent their own forms of interaction. We propose the category of playful subversion to conceptualize the different kinds of technology appropriation and the pleasures of playful tinkering. We identify four aspects of playful subversion in relation to tablets – invention, definition, assignation, and performance – and argue for a less normative understanding of children’s interactions with technology.

# Outcome

introducing the concept of playful subversion observed in tablet use among young children
the [..] "research seeks to document children’s own ways of dealing with, and appropriating, digital technology in educational contexts. We have experienced that it is the impulse of both teachers and educators (parents too) to stop children when they ‘deviate’ and try to put them back on track (to use the devices as they were intended). Instead, we should be more aware of the potentials of deviation and how playful subversion can promote agency and an explorative ground for creative encounters. Understanding the potential of subversive modes of play can contribute towards more nuanced models of official (teach- ers) and unofficial (parents) education for, and with, young children." (p. 55)