Medialiseret forældreskab: digitale mediers rolle i overgangen til forældreskabet

Engl. transl.: Medialized parenting: the role of digital media in the transition to parenting

# Keywords

* digital media
* parents
* mobile technologies

# Details

## Year

2017

## Issued

2017

## Language

Danish

## Authors

Damkjaer M.S.

## Type

PhD Thesis

## Publisher

Aarhus Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation og Kultur - Medievidenskab

## Place

Aarhus, Denmark

## Topics

## Sample

Multi-case study of eight Danish first-time parents' use and experience of digital media in relation to their new social role as parents.

# Abstract

As digital media have become an increasingly integral part of personal and family life, they have also become woven closely into one of the most central phases of change in life, namely the transition to parenthood.
Having a child is a life change that involves changes in life, both practically and socially and in terms of identity. Digital media offers a wide range of resources targeted at the family foundation, not only websites with articles, services and products, but also online forums where parents can meet and exchange tips and thoughts. At the same time, social networking media, not least Facebook, provide new opportunities to share family life with a very wide circle of acquaintances. Mobile technologies, especially the smartphone, add more tools and make the range of information resources and communication channels constantly available.
This PhD thesis examines the role that digital media plays in the transition to parenthood. Specifically, the dissertation aims to answer the following research questions:
What cultural and social dynamics and processes of change, including what opportunities and challenges, are associated with the role that digital media play today in the transition to parenthood?
The dissertation explores this question on the basis of a synchronous study within an overall medialization perspective. The first part of the dissertation focuses on a conceptualization of the relationship between digital media and parenting as well as an exploration of theoretical perspectives and methods that make it possible to investigate the interaction between them. Specifically, the dissertation builds on a number of key studies in audience research, which have contributed knowledge about the media's role in the family and the home. This is done by involving three approaches to medialisation: the cultural, the institutional and the material, each of which offers important perspectives for analyzing and understanding the interplay between media communicative and socio-cultural change processes. In addition, the dissertation includes perspectives from family sociology and understandings of the relationship between communication and ritual.
Against this background, the dissertation unfolds a multi-case study of eight Danish first-time parents' use and experience of digital media in relation to their new social role as parents. The eight cases have been selected continuously on the basis of a questionnaire survey in resp. a West Jutland municipality and in the Aarhus area distributed via these areas' local health care, which also participates in initial expert interviews. The multi-case study itself is based on three types of empirical material, namely a) qualitative interviews (both couples and individuals) with the eight parent couples integrated with b) observations of their media environment at home and c) an archive of recorded activity associated with their Facebook profile during the pregnancy period and in the first four months as a new family (a total of 13 months) harvested via the new research tool 'Digital Footprints'.

# Outcome

Primary contribution:
A multi-case study that shows how first-time parents in relation to their new social role use digital media to establish and maintain relationships, get information and guidance and explore and express their new identity as parents. The study points out that communication about family on social networking media, especially Facebook, is associated with new expectations of how parents should act communicatively. The main contribution of the case study is the crystallization of four types of communicative orientation, which characterize parents' approach to Facebook as a social network medium, and which are expressed through differences in aesthetics, taste and values. The four types of communicative orientation are: a) a family-oriented, b) a peer-oriented, c) an oppositional and d) non-use.
Secondary contribution:
Based on qualitative audience research and medialisation theory, the dissertation contributes to conceptualizing the relationship between media and parenting. This is reflected in a study design focusing on how first-time parents use and experience digital media as text and technology, as well as on the attribution of meaning that their media use is associated with in the context. This is a contribution to the development of new methods in audience research, as qualitative interviews and media environment observations are combined with analysis of comprehensive data from the case study participants' Facebook profiles harvested via the new research tool ‘Digital Footprints’.
In conclusion, the dissertation briefly outlines future research initiatives for further understanding of the increasing and increasingly complex interplay between family, parenting and digital media.
(translated by the coder, 28/8-21, from: https://pure.au.dk/portal/da/publications/medialiseret-foraeldreskab(d74b6c36-0c1c-485c-8ded-b4ddf52a1248).html)