Crianças online: metodologias visuais, novas descobertas e desafios éticos

Engl. transl.: Children online: visual methodologies, new discoveries and ethical challenges

# Keywords

* Research with children
* participatory methods
* visual techniques
* digital childhoods
* ethical challenges

# Details

## Year

2017

## Issued

2017

## Language

Portuguese

## Start Page

## End Page

## Editors

Ferreira V.

## Authors

de Almeida A.N.;Delicado A.

## Type

Book chapter

## Book title

Pesquisar jovens: Caminhos e desafios metodológicos

## Publisher

Social Sciences Institute

## Place

Lisboa

## Topics

* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Researching children online: methodology and ethics
* Other

## Sample

30 children from Lisbon region, between 9 and 14 years old, with access to computer and internet at home (sample stratified by gender and social origin)

## Implications For Parents About

Parenting guidance / support

# Abstract

This chapter aims to discuss methodological "novelties" brought about or renewed by research with children, in particular the use of visual techniques. The background is the discussion on participatory methods, illustrated in a recent study on "digital childhoods".
Taking as a starting point the methodological options of a research on children and the internet (C) in Portugal, it explores two techniques in particular, based on the visual record: the photograph taken by children and the "netnography" of the appropriation of new information technologies and Communication.
Under a comprehensive theoretical background (the sociology of childhood, the participatory turn in research with children - which "gives them a voice" and actively involves them in "tasks" - and the ethical problems in working with this age group), processes, results and ethical dilemmas in the use of those techniques are discussed.
A note on the concept of child used in this chapter. Any classificatory category is socially constructed, so contingent "choice". As enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), "children" are individuals below 18 years of age. Because this is a book that takes "young people" as a unit of analysis, we favor the fringes of older children (9 or more years), that is, subjects in transition from childhood to youth.

# Outcome

Main results about the methodologies used (photographic register and digital etnography):

- The photographs show the proliferation of electronic devices in Portuguese homes.
- Children have often chosen to photograph them under the caption "favorite objects", which reveals the centrality they have in their childhood.
- However, there were children capturing toys, non-digital games, books, sports equipment, cuddly toys, pets, family photos, etc. as "favorites", that is, new technologies coexist with traditional forms of fun, games or expression of affections.
- At this stage of the project that entered the children's home, the gender differences found gained importance.
- Although the picture of the technological house is similar, gender differences are located in the way in which the child integrates technology in the domestic environment, arranges and fits the multiple technological devices in the non-technological family scenario.
In addition, there were differences in the way they describe and interpret the motives associated with their photographs.
- The internet has not come to replace the "old media". Instead, it came to provide a new platform to access them, more adaptable to the tastes and interests of the children, as well as without restrictions on schedules or programming.
- It was also found that children use the internet as a tool for cultural creation and expression of creativity (eg websites for photography or drawing; personalization of work environments and profiles on social networks, etc.). Also in this field, there were noticeable differences related to the gender of children.
- These metodologies allowed the children to be independent in their choices, especially about what they want to photograph and on how to interpret it. Looking to what children were doing online and talking to them about that was also not intrusive, as it allowed to see their actual routines and the meanings they attribute to it.

Main results about ethical considerations:

- Ethical issues arise at three levels: access to research subjects; the information production and interpretation process, the investigator-investigated relationship; the diffusion of knowledge.
- The use of visual and digital techniques poses specific ethical problems. Informed consent from parents and children is required, as it is more difficult to ensure anonymity in visual images than in written materials (all precautions must be redoubled).
- This question is also valid for online ethnography, and it is necessary to respect limits, for example with regard to documentation and public or private status of correspondence by e-mail.
- However, there is a need to negotiate situations in which children did not want anonymity to be maintained, for reasons of recognition of their participation.
- In the present study, the relationship with the guardians of the children was not always easy, with cases of interference in the preservation of privacy conditions, namely with the unexpected and disturbing entry in the conversation with the researcher.
- The fact that the researcher who did the fieldwork was a woman and had a young appearance facilitated entry into the home environment and the process of establishing trust with children, but gave her a lesser degree of control and authority over adults, giving openness to more authoritarian or abusive attitudes.