

Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out

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Kids Living
and Learning
with New Media

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Conventional wisdom about young people's use of digital technology often equates generational identity with technology identity: today's teens seem constantly plugged in to video games, social networks sites, and text messaging. Yet there is little actual research that investigates the intricate dynamics of youth's social and recreational use of digital media. *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out* fills this gap, reporting on an ambitious three-year

ethnographic investigation into how young people are living and learning with new media in varied settings—at home, in after school programs, and in online spaces. By focusing on media practices in the everyday contexts of family and peer interaction, the book views the relationship of youth and new media not simply in terms of technology trends but situated within the broader structural conditions of childhood and the negotiations with adults that frame the experience of youth in the United States.

Integrating twenty-three different case studies—which include Harry Potter podcasting, video-game playing, music-sharing, and online romantic breakups—in a unique collaborative authorship style, *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out* is distinctive for its combination of in-depth description of specific group dynamics with conceptual analysis.

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"Mizuko Ito and her team have put together an extraordinarily perceptive series of essays about what it means to grow up in a digital era. They cut through the myths that cloud our conversations about 'kids these days' and what they are doing during long hours online and on mobile devices. Every parent, teacher, and librarian should read this book cover-to-cover. This is crucially important research, presented in clear and accessible prose."
— John Palfrey, co-director of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University, author of *Born Digital*

"This is a beautifully written and extraordinarily rich account of perhaps the most important challenge cyberspace gives us: understanding how it is changing our kids, and how it might change our understanding of literacy. We've had clues about both before. But this is a critically important and deeply informed contribution to this essential subject of learning."
— Lawrence Lessig, Center for Internet and Society, Stanford University, author of *The Future of Ideas* and *Remix*