Digital Space as Semi-Permeable Membranes

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experiential design + gaming environments

Digital technologies are part of this world and of our worldview; they are part of what shapes us materially and ontologically as embodied subjects… Rather than pointing up the difference between self and technology, [digital media] are designed to engage the ***technologized self***" (Shinkle, 2005, 30)

Digital Natives?

http://www.automation-drive.com/fla-animation

Voices of Digital Natives Project

- SSHRC-funded, a 3-year qualitative inquiry into epistemological and educational impacts of online environments on young media users (age 4-13)

- ***Informal learning*** (Silverstone, 1999) as overarching theoretical framework to;

  - Define digital media practices by young media users
  - Understand collaborative learning and play in network
  - Articulate the shift from novice to expert based on peer-to-peer learning

Research Objectives

- How young media uses interface world through digital media and construct their own *digital habitat*

- How they make learning choices and co-construct knowledge with their peers

- How they adopt digital media to blend the online to offline interactions

- How their performance with/through/around digital media will change over time

Methodology

- Ethnographic, participatory and socio-economic approach, observe young users *in situ,* in order to;
  - *Observe how they use digital devices*
  - *Explore their worldview*
  - *Enter a friendly mode of communication and build trust*
  - *Engage in discussions with them*
- 31 children in Greater Toronto Area; Interview each child at least 3 times over 12months-2years
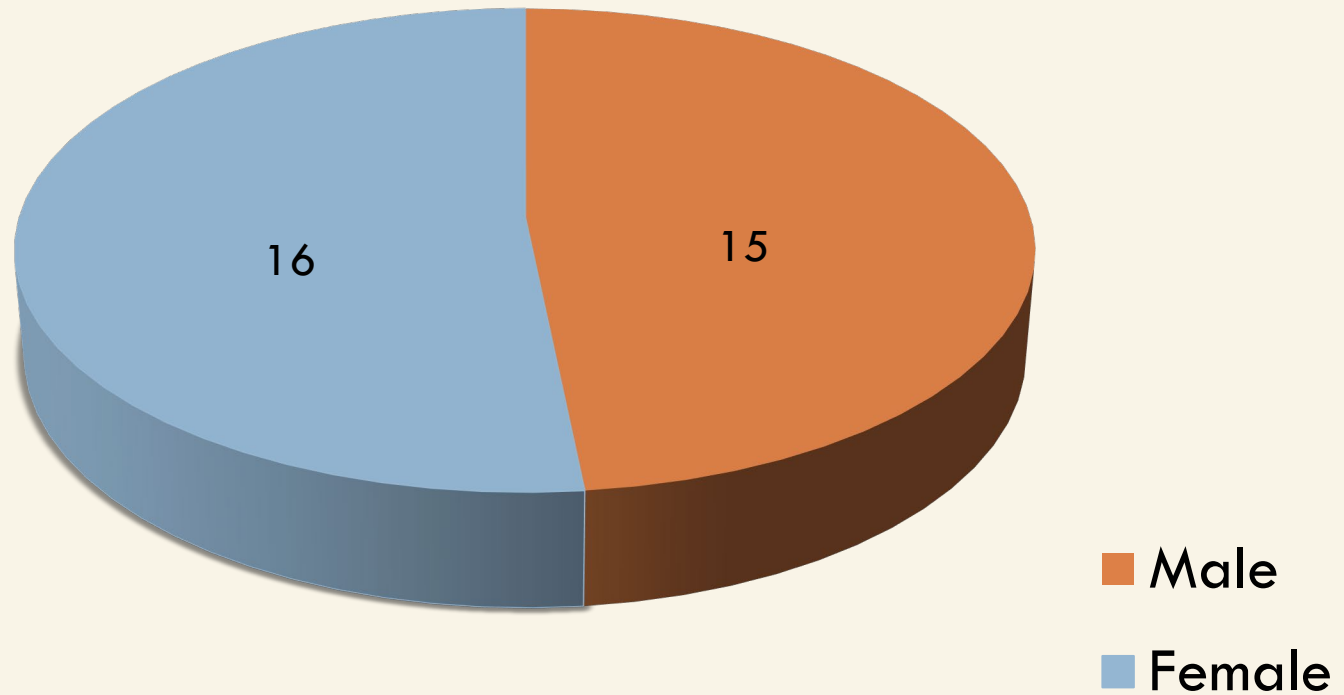
Participant Demographics
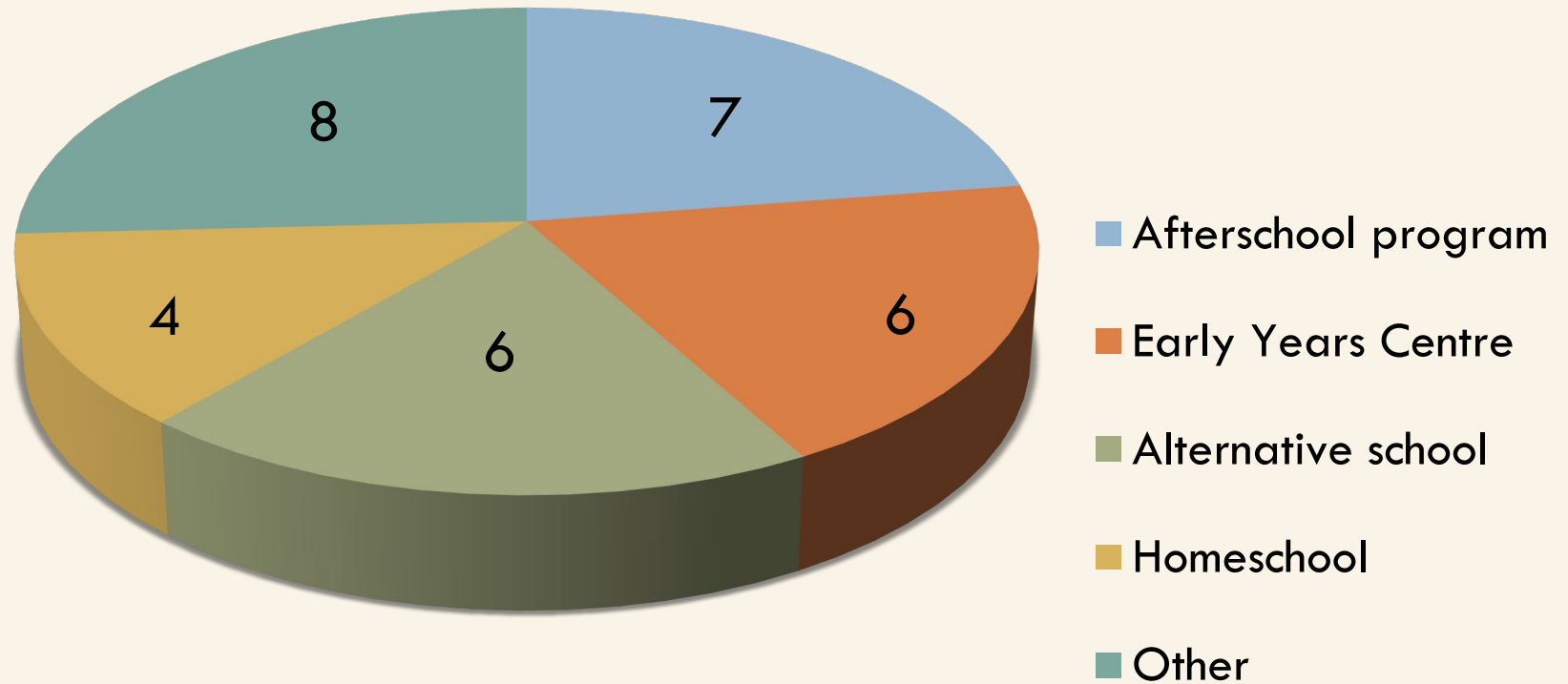
Age Distribution (total *N*=31)
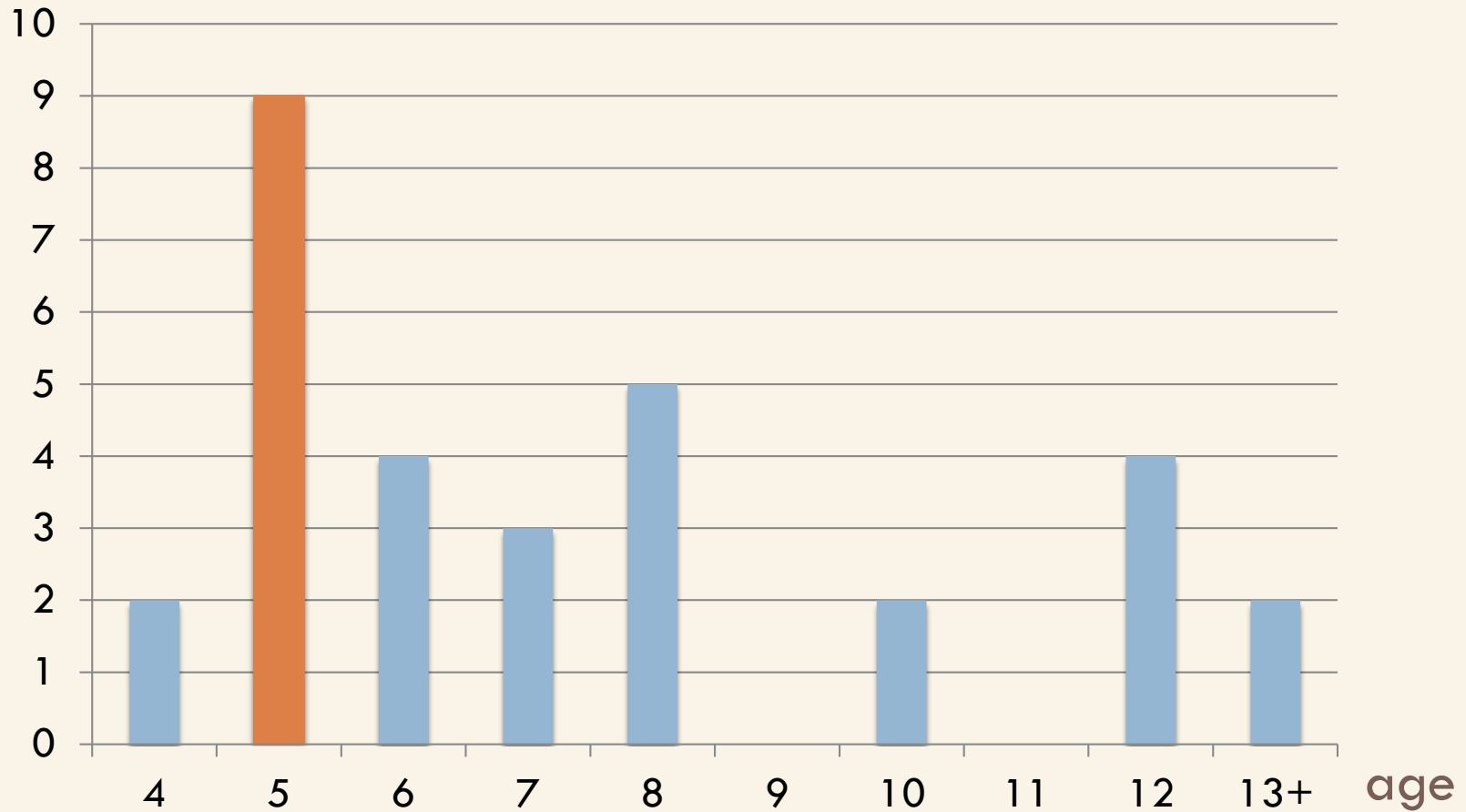
Participant Demographics

Gender Distribution

Pie chart showing gender distribution: Female 16, Male 15

Legend: Male (orange), Female (blue)

Participant Demographics

Recruitment Location

Digital media as social space

☐ Our participants use digital media for

　　◻ Gaming

　　◻ Searching information

　　◻ Communicating distanced family members and friends

　　◻ Making their own content

☐ Gaming as socializing and informal learning practice

Learning through peer-produced content

- Internet as multi-directional educational tool and environment
  - Social networking (Facebook) for school work
  - Learn new skill from YouTube videos (how to dance cook, play guitar and violin etc)
  - Video chats with teachers outside Canada
- Challenge conventional notion of authorities in preferring lay experts to professionals

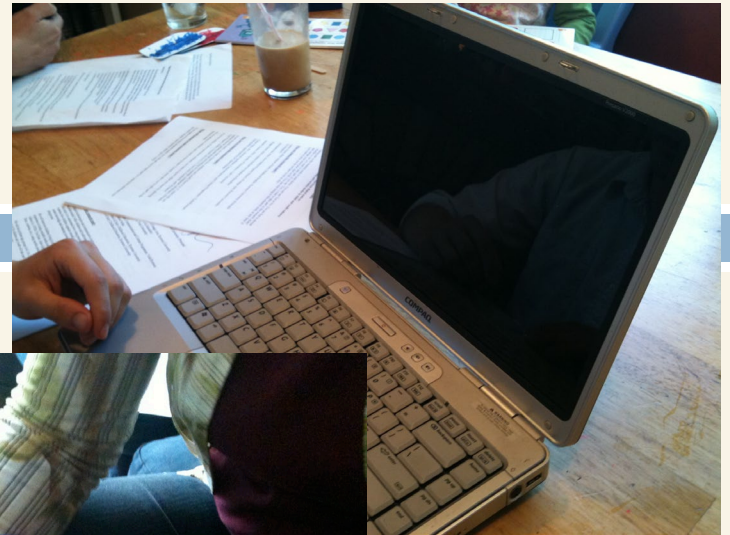# Constructing their LittleBigPlanet

Mash-up work by 10 yrs old Game&Music lover
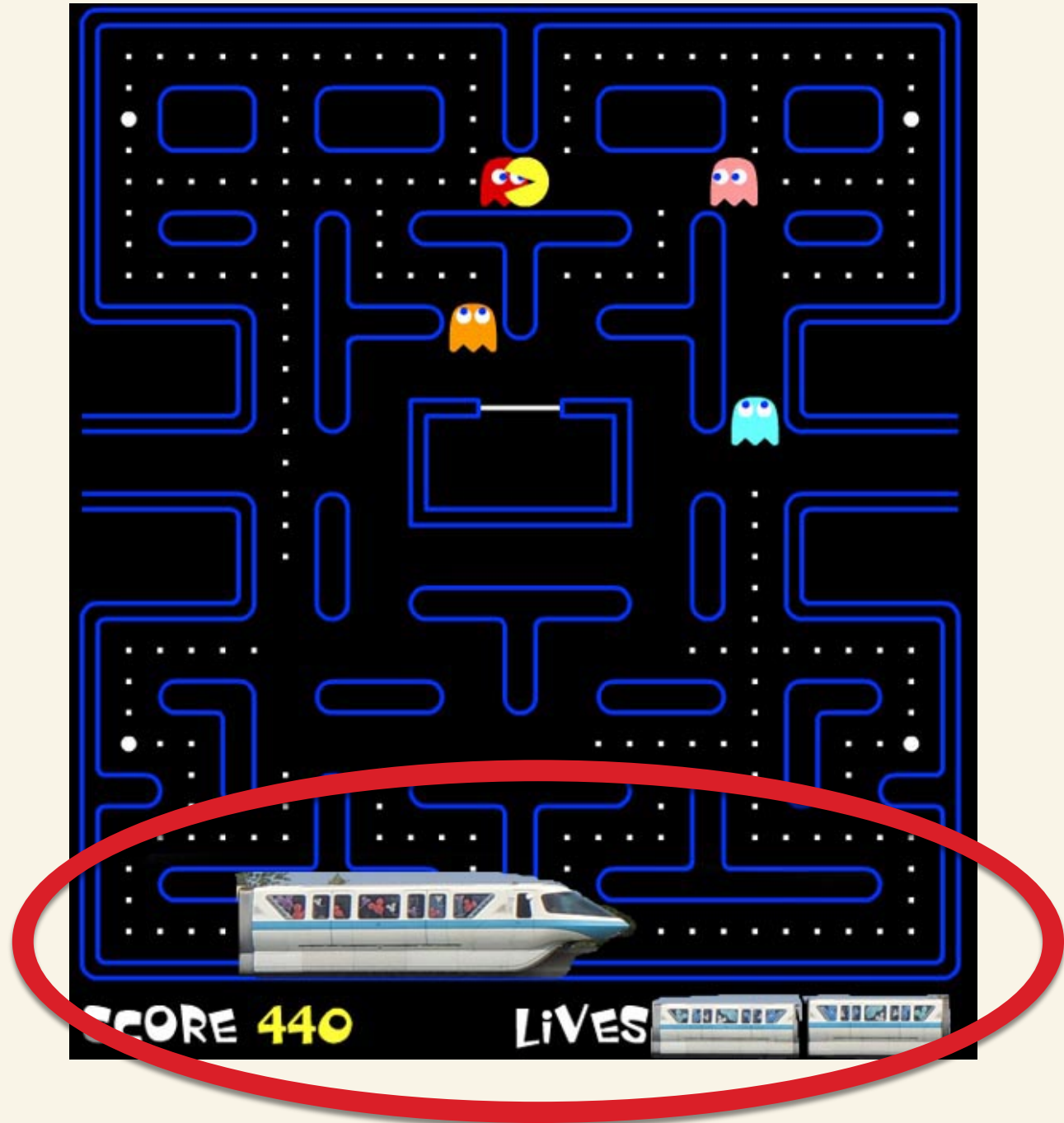
Mobile Natives

- Widespread adoption of mobile devices (laptop, smartphones, tablets, mobile gaming consoles)

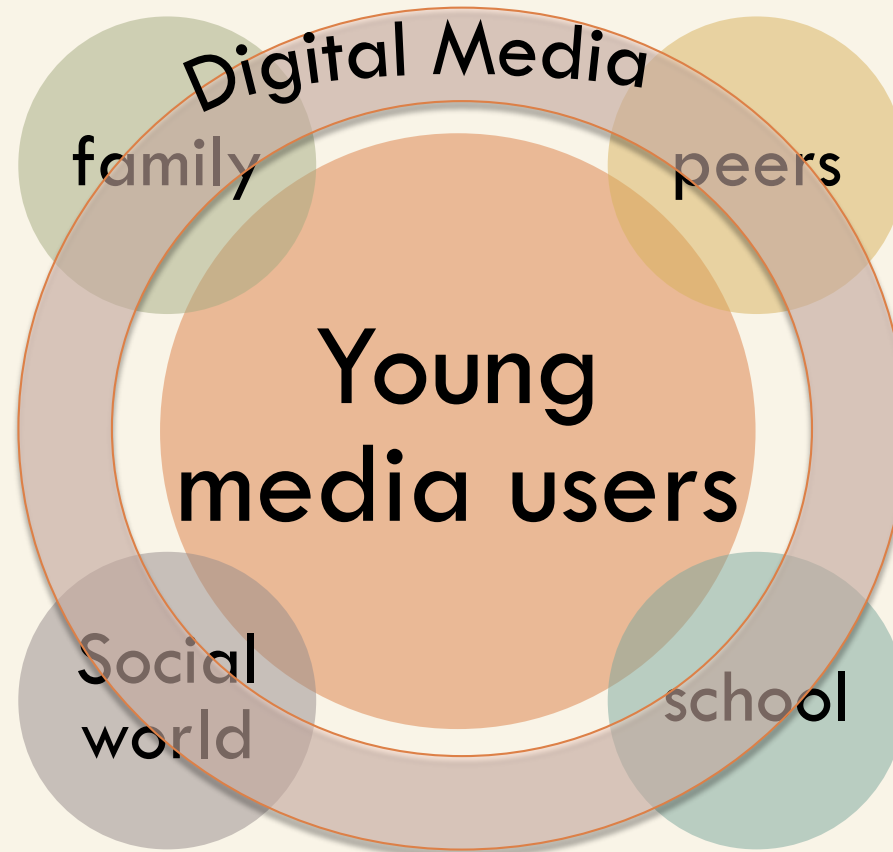- Increased mobility, traversing spaces

Mobile Natives

- Difference between children born before and after 2005
- Shift from computer as "gaming device" to computer as "search engine," "entry point to learning space
- Influence of parental use

Semi-permeable Membrane

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Thank you!!

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