NET GENS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES....THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Michelle PIERI, Stefano CASTELLI
Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca
Piazza dell’Ateneo Nuovo, 1
20126, Milano, Italia
Correspondence: michelle.pieri@unimib.it

Abstract
One of the most prominent features of contemporary schools is that students are born and raised within a context which takes for granted and considers as “natural” the existence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Internet. Our research question was to understand how Net Gens articulate their discourses around the possibility of using their “ubiquitous” and “vital” ICTs in general, and specifically, mobile communication in the home-school relationship.

A qualitative approach to research was chosen and carried out using the focus group technique.

We conducted two focus groups, involving students from two high schools. One school is in Milan, a big industrial city in the north of Italy, while the other is in Piacenza, a much smaller city about 70 kilometers (40 miles) south from Milan. We found many common points and a big difference between students of Milan and students of Piacenza. In Milan social control is very weak, while in small cities like Piacenza there is very strong social control. We found that mobile-mediated home–school communications are more accepted in Piacenza because they do not really change the status quo. In Milan they are more useful, but less accepted, since they do change the status quo.