

Abstract

Title of Dissertation: (IM)MOBILIZING COMMUNITY COLLEGE YOUTHS' DIGITAL CULTURE: THEORIZING THE IMPLICATIONS OF EVERYDAY DIGITAL PRACTICES, PERCEPTIONS, AND DIFFERENCES AMONG FREDERICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE YOUTHS

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This study complicates American youths' digital culture by analyzing the digital practices, perceptions, and experiences of students, ages 18 to 24, attending Frederick Community College in Frederick, Maryland, through an interdisciplinary lens that infuses intersectional theory with Bourdieu's triad of habitus, field, and capital. Mixed methods research combining data from the FCC Digital Practices Survey and focus group interviews indicated that community college youths engaged in a spectrum of practices to socialize and communicate, engage in entertainment and creative practices, and manage everyday life, information, school, and work. Community college youths actively participated in digital culture through social networking, listening to music, watching television, playing videogames, and engaging with other technology. Not only did they feel pressured to adapt digitally, they also intentionally disengaged from technology, managed their lives using digital tools, resolved communication conflicts, monitored their online identities and privacy, developed various forms of digital expertise, and

observed the impacts of adults' struggles with technology at home and in the classroom.

Data patterns, including differences between males and females, and among youths with different racial and ethnic identities, revealed contradictions among their everyday digital practices, their confidence with performing these practices, and their perceptions of practices' importance in college and in their future everyday lives and work. This study theorizes the impacts of these contradictions, proposing that as youths encounter shifts in the symbolic value of digital practices between their everyday digital culture and the field of education, they experience what Clarke et al. (2009) termed "digital dissonance," conflicts between their everyday digital practices and their digital engagement in education. Impacts of digital dissonance, which range from resolution and circumnavigation, to digital stagnation and immobilization, affect the uneven positions youths take up within the field of community college education and potentially result in the unintended reproduction of social inequity. To disrupt the reproduction of inequity, this study considers the material consequences of digital immobilization for community college youths and advocates for intentional reform and research that mobilizes their digital practices.

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COLLEGE YOUTHS

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Dedication

To my son, Lucas, who texted me at age ten to proclaim that videogames make him a better person, who laughs at how dumb-thumbed I am, and who reminds me everyday of how living in the digital age is both exhilarating and exhausting.

To my parents, Flora and Blake Weirich, for listening intently to my digital banter for over a decade and instilling in me a lifelong curiosity to explore and the stubbornness to persist.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	vii
Chapter 1: Complicating American Youths as a Digital Nation	1
Purpose of Study	3
Theoretical Framework	11
Research Design	21
Significance and Limitations	23
Overview of Chapters	26
Chapter 2: Historicizing and Contextualizing American Youths’ Digital Culture	30
Framing Youths in the Field of Digital Culture	30
Limning Youths’ Everyday Digital Practices in the Field of Education and in the Context of Community College	52
Chapter 3: Exploring FCC Youths’ Digital Practices, Perceptions, and	
Differences: Data from the FCC Digital Practices Survey	62
Demographic Characteristics	64
Technology Access, Ownership, and Usage	67
Digitally Socializing and Communicating	73
Confidence with Digitally Socializing and Communicating	75
Importance of Digitally Socializing and Communicating	76
Engaging in Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices	77
Confidence with Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices	80
Importance of Entertainment and Creative Practices	81

Managing Life, Information, School, and Work Digitally	83
Confidence with Digital Management	85
Importance of Digital Management	86
Digital Differences among FCC Youths	88
Differences between Males and Females	88
Differences among Youths with Different Racial and Ethnic Identities	94
(Dis)Connections between FCC Youth’s Digital Culture, Their Differences and Perceptions of College and Their Futures	103
Chapter 4: Listening to Community College Youths’ Conversations about Digital Culture	111
Life Management: Productivity and Digital Dependence	113
Digital Communication (Dis)Connections and Conflicts	116
Social Networking Practices, Purposes, and Perceptions	120
Self-Regulation: Digital Identity Management and Intentional Disengagement	125
Technology Ownership: Pressures and Practices	130
Digital Differences: The Sneakerhead, the Fashionistas, and the Techies	133
Adults Just Don’t Get It: Misconceptions about FCC Youths’ Digital Culture	143
(Dis)Connections between Youths’ Digital Culture, Learning, and Their Community College Experiences	147
Chapter 5: (Im)Mobilization of Youths’ Digital Culture in Community College Education	152
Digital Dissonance and Immobilization	159
A Closer Look at the Educational Impacts of Digital Immobilization: Technological Competence in General Education Curricula	164

Rethinking the Value of Youths' Digital Practices: Implications for Reform and Research in Community College Education	170
Appendix A: FCC Digital Practices Survey Documents.....	176
Survey Design	176
Survey Sample and Administration Procedures	182
Data Assessment Methods.....	184
Voluntary and Informed Consent Form.....	187
FCC Digital Practices Survey.....	189
Appendix B: FCC Focus Group Documents.....	202
Focus Group Interview Design	202
Focus Group Sample and Administration Procedures.....	203
Coding Method	205
Voluntary and Informed Consent Form.....	208
Introductory Script.....	210
Moderator Question Guide	213
Focus Group Participant Background Information Survey.....	214
Recruitment Flyer.....	216
Appendix C: IRB Approval Documents.....	217
References	221

List of Tables

Table 1.	<i>Age and Sex of Survey Respondents</i>	64
Table 2.	<i>Race, Ethnicity, and Social Class of Survey Respondents</i>	65
Table 3.	<i>Dependence and Work Status of Survey Respondents</i>	66
Table 4.	<i>Home Internet Access</i>	67
Table 5.	<i>Most Frequent Conduit to Internet Access</i>	68
Table 6.	<i>Personal and Family Ownership of Technology</i>	69
Table 7.	<i>Technology Usage</i>	70
Table 8.	<i>Confidence Using Cell Phones, Computers, and the Internet</i>	72
Table 9.	<i>Importance of Using Cell Phones, Computers, and the Internet in College and in the Future</i>	72
Table 10.	<i>Frequency of Digital Socializing and Communicating</i>	74
Table 11.	<i>Confidence with Digital Socializing and Communicating</i>	76
Table 12.	<i>Importance of Digital Socializing and Communicating in College and in the Future</i>	77
Table 13.	<i>Frequency of Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices</i> ..	79
Table 14.	<i>Confidence with Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices</i>	80
Table 15.	<i>Importance of Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices in College and in the Future</i>	82
Table 16.	<i>Frequency of Managing Life, Information, School and Work Digitally</i>	84
Table 17.	<i>Confidence with Managing Life, Information, School and Work Digitally</i>	85
Table 18.	<i>Importance of Managing Life, Information, School and Work Digitally in College and in the Future</i>	87

Table 19.	<i>Differences between Males and Females' Frequency of Six Digital Socializing and Communicating Practices</i>	89
Table 20.	<i>Differences between Males and Females in the Frequency of Five Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices.....</i>	90
Table 21.	<i>Differences between Males and Females in Frequency of Three Digital Management Practices.....</i>	91
Table 22.	<i>Differences between Male and Female FCC Youths' Confidence with Five Digital Practices.....</i>	93
Table 23.	<i>Differences in Importance of Five Digital Practices in College between Males and Females</i>	93
Table 24.	<i>Differences in Importance of Four Digital Practices in Their Future Lives and Work between Males and Females.....</i>	94
Table 25.	<i>Differences in Videogame Unit and Laptop Ownership among Youths with Different Racial or Ethnic Identities</i>	95
Table 26.	<i>Differences in Four Common Digital Information Practices among Youths with Different Racial or Ethnic Identities</i>	96
Table 27.	<i>Differences in Confidence with Using Video-Editing Software among Youths with Different Racial or Ethnic Identities</i>	98
Table 28.	<i>Differences in Confidence with Using Software to Create Music among Youths with Different Racial or Ethnic Identities</i>	99
Table 29.	<i>Comparison of the Importance of Seven Digital Practices in College among FCC Youths with Different Racial or Ethnic Identities.....</i>	101
Table 30.	<i>Overview of FCC Digital Practices Survey Sections.....</i>	177

Chapter 1: Complicating American Youths as the Digital Nation

In 2010, PBS' *Frontline* aired "Digital_Nation: Life on the Virtual Frontier," an investigation into the "implications of living in a world consumed by technology and the impact that constant connectivity may have on future generations." The primary focus of the documentary was American youths; the primary concern, the impacts of technology on their everyday lives. Inscribing American youths as the digital nation, the documentary reinforced an imagined community that emerged over a decade ago when youths were tagged as a net generation comprised of *digital natives* – savvy technology learners, users and consumers, whose worlds were saturated with new media, whose interaction with and uses of digital technologies would change how they acted, thought and learned (Tapscott, 1998; Prensky, 2001; Orrell, 2007). The film's segments, interspersed with commentary by digital media scholars, oscillated between cautionary and optimistic, reflecting the contradictions present in ongoing national discourses about the promises and pitfalls of youths' digital practices.

By positioning American youths as the "Digital Nation," the documentary cast the generation as problematic, urging analysis and intervention to assure their productive contribution to the maintenance and progress of the nation. In 1998 Tapscott echoed this urgency for attending to youths' digital practices, arguing that understanding their digital expertise was vital for "parents, teachers, policymakers, marketers, business leaders, and

social activists” (p. 2). His typology of those invested in youths' interactions with digital technology coupled with the proliferation of multi-million dollar, youth-focused research initiatives by The Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project and the MacArthur Foundation exemplify the cultural and institutional investments in understanding American youths' digital practices. These groups have been watching for notable reasons: Survey data have reported that through multitasking, American youths ages 8 to 18 are exposed to an average of 10 hours of media content during a 7.5 hours per day, seven days per week, excluding time spent texting, talking on the phone, or using computers to complete school work (Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, 2010, p.11). Of the 95% of youths ages 12-17 who access the internet regularly, most have written, created videos, remixed media, and shared other forms of original content (Madden et al., 2013). These studies indicate that American youths are active agents in the consumption and production of digital culture.

Collectively, youths' consumption and production involves numerous *digital practices*, activities that use some form of digital technology for everyday purposes including socializing and communicating, engaging in entertainment and creative practices, and managing life, information, school, and work. American youths' digital practices, however, are not analogous. Research across disciplines has substantiated differences among youths' digital practices, some of which are influenced not only by their access to technology but also by their race, gender, and social class. What arises from

this research is the need to further analyze these differences and theorize the material consequences of youths' digital practices (Buckingham, 2006; Ito, 2010b; Boyd, 2008; Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). Three observations support this call for research. First, recent data about the growth in ownership of, access to, and uses of technology among youths have led to claims of the ubiquitous presence of digital technology among American youths (Purcell, 2011; Lenhart et al., 2010). Second, youths have encountered increased regulation of their digital practices within specific everyday social spaces. On college campuses, for example, student handbooks and syllabi commonly outline policies that restrict use of cell phones and define acceptable technology usage on campuses, in libraries, and within classrooms. Third, the fields of digital culture and education have been engaged in an ongoing process of legitimizing specific digital practices. Collectively, claims of ubiquity, regulation, and legitimization of digital practices have obscured (1) the unequal orientation of American youths toward technology, (2) their agency in acquiring digital skills and producing culture, and (3) the power of regulation and legitimization to reproduce social relations that reinforce inequity.

Purpose of Study

This study investigated American youths' digital culture by focusing on the everyday digital practices, perceptions, and experiences of a segment of youths that has remained largely unexamined by scholars: community college

youths. Through an analysis of the digital culture of students ages 18 to 24 attending Frederick Community College (FCC), this study illuminated the tensions between their engagement with digital culture and the field of education. Guiding this study's exploration of FCC youths' digital culture were five research questions:

1. How are Frederick Community College youths accessing and using technology in their everyday lives?
2. What are Frederick Community College youths' perceptions of their confidence with specific digital practices?
3. What are Frederick Community College youths' perceptions of the value of specific digital practices in college and their future?
4. What are patterns of difference in their digital practices, confidence levels, and the value they associate with them?
5. Given the patterns of difference among youths' digital practices, how does legitimization of digital practices within the fields of digital culture and education potentially promote and/or sustain inequity among youths?

Questions one through four gauged youths' digital practices and perceptions, and differences in those practices and perceptions. Informed by the theoretical framework guiding this research, these questions offered insight into the digital experiences of community college youths and the cultural influences on their relationship with digital culture. Question five positioned the previous questions' results at the juncture of digital culture and education,

two fields with the power to confer symbolic value to digital practices, and to privilege specific digital practices over others. Through these five questions, this study has addressed gaps in our current understanding of American youths' digital culture.

First, the study focused on a growing segment of diverse youths: community college students ages 18-24, specifically youths enrolled at Frederick Community College (FCC), a medium-sized, suburban two-year college located in Frederick, Maryland. Historically community colleges have played a role in educating the American populace with specific ends in mind. Beginning in the 1900s, community colleges' educational efforts have focused on vocational training for local specialized workforces, retraining adults in the later stages of industrialization when automation displaced workers, and expanding higher education access to women and minorities through open admissions that supported terminal two-year degrees and transfer to four-year institutions for those seeking a baccalaureate degree (Cohen & Brawer, 2013). Central to community college missions is the education of local citizens, particularly women and minorities from lower, working and middle classes.

Within the past decade, workforce demands for post-secondary education, rising tuition at four-year institutions, and the economic downturn beginning in 2007 have prompted exceptional growth in community college enrollment by youths ages 18-24, as well as their non-traditional counterparts (Fry, 2009). Despite a slight decline in enrollment for the past two years,

overall community college enrollment has grown 21.8% since 2007 (Mullin & Phillippe, 2011), accounting for 45% of all undergraduate enrollments in the United States (AACC, 2013). Expanding from under 5,000 to 6,269 students over six years, the 30% enrollment growth at FCC between 2006 and 2011 has mirrored these trends. Of the 6,289 students enrolled in fall of 2011, the largest increase has occurred among youths: over half were youths 21 and under (FCC, 2011). As a cohort, the FCC youth population has grown visibly on campus.

Paralleling enrollment increases in community colleges, federal and state education policies centered on college completion, educational quality, and affordability have mandated community colleges and their four-year counterparts to account for timely success of their students and to meet changing labor demands (Mullin, 2010). In particular, labor forecasts predicting exponential growth in technology labor sectors and the need for post-secondary education as well as advanced technology skills in everyday work environments (Henderson, 2012; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013a, 2013b) have intensified the pressure to prepare college students for a technology-driven, 21st century labor market. This pressure has been reflected in higher education accreditation standards requiring the development and assessment of students' information literacy and technological competence as part of the general education curricula (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2006). Community college discourses about defining, infusing, and assessing information literacy and

technological competence in the general education curriculum have revealed chasms in faculty perspectives on the purpose and value of digital practices. Often absent from these conversations have been data-enriched, population-specific observations about community college students' digital practices. This study has addressed the absence of a specific cohort of community college students – youths, and has rendered visible their digital practices and perceptions, with the intention that their experiences will motivate reform.

Second, the study approached analyzing community college youths' digital practices, and their perceptions of confidence with and value of digital practices through a lens of difference. Underlying the open access and workforce development foci of community college missions has been a persistent construction of social class: Local lower, working, and middle class students comprise a majority of the student body. Frederick Community College is no exception. Primarily serving residents of Frederick County, Maryland, FCC is a popular choice for a diverse group of public school graduates from lower, working and middle classes. In fall 2011, 39% of Frederick County Public School graduates attended FCC, accounting for approximately 60% of all Frederick County Public School graduates who enrolled in college the semester following their high school graduation. Slightly more than half of the students were female, and nearly 27% were students of color. Approximately 37% of students attended full-time; the remaining 63% attended part-time. A majority (64%) intended to transfer to a four-year school (FCC, 2011). Over 85% of the youths surveyed were

financially dependent on their parents; most worked at least part-time. Nearly 100% indicated that cost and location were the primary reasons for attending FCC. Together the data suggest that FCC is populated by multi-classed youths from diverse backgrounds seeking local and affordable access to higher education.

As youths transition into community college, digital generation and digital native rhetoric have consistently fueled broad assumptions about their skills, confidence and competence, overlooking the intricacies of their experiences with technology (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007; Thomas, 2011). While a long-standing compilation of research has indicated that access to technology results in a division between the haves and have-nots, research focused on youths' everyday uses of technology has suggested multiple differences in digital practices exist based on race, class and gender (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Celeste & Shafer, 2004; Hargittai, 2010; Van den Beemt, Akkerman, & Simons, 2011). Rather than attending to an isolated construction of difference that aligns with an oversimplified social class have/have not binary, this study employed mixed methods research to analyze gender, racial and ethnic differences among FCC youths' digital practices, confidence levels, and perceptions of value of digital practices. At the time of this research, a survey tool with the detailed measures delineated herein combined with focus group follow-up interviews was not apparent in the literature.

Finally, and much more personally, this research has been fueled by my passion to advocate for today's youths and promote education equity. I was not innocent in this project: my perspective – shaped by my identity and my experiences as an undergraduate, community college faculty member, and student of American Studies – has driven my focus on youths, digital culture, and community college education. As a white, middle-class female raised in the blue-collar region of Western Pennsylvania, I was aware at a very young age that attaining a degree would provide me opportunities not afforded friends and family who lost their jobs when steel production was shipped overseas and coal production slowed down in the 1970s and 80s. My entrance into college as a second-generation student was a proud moment for my family. Despite an aptitude for mathematics and sciences, I completed a degree in Secondary English Education. A gendered choice? Perhaps. A practical choice? Most likely. A regret? Not at all. For me, the degree was an effective way to secure employment doing what I loved: teaching.

Disillusioned by my struggle to secure a full-time teaching job in the early 1990s, I worked in the nonprofit education sector assessing the skills of young people and displaced workers who sought post-secondary training to enter or reenter the workforce. Central to my clients' training was technology; central to my work was using technology to communicate with them. My observations of technology reshaping education, communication, and the workplace prompted me to pursue a graduate degree.

Although I recognized how technology was changing culture and education, its symbolic value became salient when I applied to graduate school at University of Massachusetts at Amherst. A letter of recommendation from my undergraduate honors advisor included a description of my study of technology's impacts on education. I vaguely recalled focusing on technology in his classes. Yes, there was talk of technology's influence on the confluence of reading, writing, and visual literacy. Oh, and, several frustrating computer labs sessions sluggishly gophering around for library resources, and attempting to use file transfer protocol. At the time, my peers and I critiqued the relevance of these activities: "Technology will change the future of education and American culture? Yeah, right."

Yes. Right. Based on my technology experience, I was offered an assistantship to train graduate students to use the Internet. The year was 1995. And in a month's time I transitioned from working in adult education to training graduate students in to use the World Wide Web at a time when web browsing was in its infancy. My undergraduate record may have been sufficient to gain admission to graduate school; my advisor's recommendation, however, offered academic capital with the added benefit of a nearly cost-free graduate education, and forged my entrée into the field of digital culture. *In that moment, I recognized the power of academics to assign symbolic value to digital practices.*

Several years after graduation, I secured a faculty position at Frederick Community College. Its open access mission resonated with my roots and reflected my desire to teach young people and adults. Flash-forward through fourteen years of community college teaching, through a time warp of technological advances that has reshaped American culture, globalized its economy, influenced everyday life, reconfigured education, and altered the workplace. During that time I have observed contrasts between youths' production of digital culture – the digital practices in the everyday lives of my students— and the symbolic value that cultural and educational discourses ascribe to their digital practices.

As a student of American Studies for over a decade, I have viewed these contrasts through a theoretical lens of culture, power, and difference – a lens that complicates the intersections of digital culture, education, and community college youths, a lens of advocacy aimed at disrupting practices that reproduce inequity among youths. My pursuit of this research emanates from my stance as an American Studies critical educator, as one who seeks to promote dialogue about youths, difference, digital culture, and equity at Frederick Community College and beyond.

Theoretical Framework

Over the past ten years youth-focused interdisciplinary research in the fields of digital culture and education has prompted the codification of new media literacies including computer, information, and digital literacy (Palfrey &

Gasser, 2008; Ito et al., 2008, 2010; Mazzarella, 2005; Gunn & Miree, 2012). The ongoing process of legitimization, discussed at length in chapter two, has been steeped in relations of power over the value of the youths' digital practices and cultural production. By positioning community college youths' digital practices at the juncture of the fields of digital culture and education, this study theorizes the convergences and divergences between youths' digital practices, perceptions, and experiences, and two specific fields with the power to assign symbolic value to digital practices. To illuminate the complexity of FCC youths' digital culture practices, this research infuses Pierre Bourdieu's triad of habitus, field, and capital with intersectional theory.

Bourdieu (1983) proposed that systems of power operating within social life and culturally recognized institutions enable the reproduction of social relationships that privilege dominant groups. He argued that the Marxist constructions of the labor and leisure binary relied on a conceptualization of social class relations determined by economic capital that obscured other forms of capital:

It is impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory. (p. 241)

For Bourdieu, Marxist theory did not fully complicate the structures that influenced social practices. He (1993) posited a sociological theory that analyzed social life and cultural production through the interrelated concepts of habitus, field, and capital. These interrelated concepts provide a

framework for a micro-level analysis of cultural production and power. An overview of these terms illustrates their interplay.

Habitus is a dynamic internal system that embodies individual's cultural conditions. As a social system of "durable, transposable dispositions," one's habitus is shaped by beliefs, values, practices, and perceptions deeply embedded in the fabric of everyday life. Replete with social distinctions such as race, class, gender, religion, sexuality, nationality, and geographic location, habitus positions agents within structures of power and dominance (Bourdieu, 1993, p.72). Structures of power are culturally and socially created through the interactions of agents in fields, systems of social positions organized through power relationships that govern practices and experiences. The positions agents occupy within a field of cultural production, such as digital culture, are by informed their habitus which "generates and organizes practices and representations" at the unconscious level and are affected by other agents in the field (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 5).

Individuals enact agency within a field through the uses of capital, specifically social, cultural, and economic capital. Social capital are resources based on "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 249). In other words, they encompass social networks and relationships through which cultural productions, in this case, digital practices, are recognized and legitimized. Cultural capital includes knowledge, skills,

education, and advantages that shape social status. The forms of capital individuals have, leverage, and accumulate to influence their positions of power within a field vary according to their habitus. A goal of leveraging social and cultural capital is the accumulation economic capital—making money or gaining assets; however, economic capital's relationship to social and cultural capital is hidden for the sake of maintaining power that reproduces social relations of dominance. Within a field, agents struggle to convert one form of capital into another to achieve status, but they risk failure if the conversion is rejected or ignored by other social agents in the field, particularly if it attempts to subvert existing power structures.

Social and cultural capital operates within a logic of symbolic power conveyed through meanings agreed upon by social agents within a field (Bourdieu, 1983). The symbolic value bestowed upon forms of social and cultural capital occurs through a process of legitimization enacted through power relationships within and across various fields. For Bourdieu (1993) the field of education and its associated institutions, bestowed with cultural authority to attribute symbolic value to cultural production, reproduces social relations through a slow process of cultural consecration, which limits symbolic value bestowed upon cultural products and producers. By creating distinct schemes of perceptions and appreciation, the education system “maintains a disjuncture between culture produced by a field of production...and scholastic culture” (p. 123).

When applied to FCC youths' production of digital culture, the Bourdieusian triad offers a particular gaze that positions community college youths as social agents whose everyday digital practices are shaped by the dynamics of their habitus, their social and cultural capital, and the regulatory practices of the fields of digital culture and education. Analyzing the patterns of community college youths' everyday digital practices, their confidence with digital practices, and their perceptions of the value of digital practices through this lens reveals the imbricate influences of their habitus on (1) their practices, (2) the different positions of agency they enact in the fields of digital culture and education, and (3) the contradictions in the symbolic value attributed to digital practices between these fields.

While this framework enables a micro-level cultural analysis of specific everyday digital practices, the model has its limitations: it does not fully complicate difference. Central to this study is the premise that community college youths, a socially constructed category of difference, are not isolated in their experience of multiple dimensions of difference. A conventional rendering of Bourdieu's concept of habitus would suggest that community college youths' digital practices are shaped primarily through social class distinctions, which, in turn, shaped their dispositions and their agency within the fields of digital culture and education. Lower, working, and middle social class constructs undergird the figure of the community college student; however, they do not shape exclusively the habitus of students entering

community college. Age, race, gender, and other dimensions of difference overlap to inform their dispositions and agency.

Feminist and critical race scholars have critiqued Bourdieu's notions of habitus and capital as privileging social class over other constructions of difference (particularly gender and race), and limiting agency within the confines of habitus and field (Moi, 1991; McNay, 1999; Adkins & Skeggs, 2005; Tzanakis, 2011). These scholars among others (Lovell, 2000; McLeod, 2005), have suggested that an augmented Bourdieusian framework – one that accounts for other dimensions of difference, rethinks the limitations of agency bound by social practices, and examines the processes of valuing particular types of capital – could effectively theorize the complexities of social practices.

Incorporating intersectional theory into the Bourdieusian framework extends the concept of habitus to encompass other cultural differences. From its inception, intersectional theory has complicated difference. Rooted in black feminist studies, early incarnations of intersectional theory brought to the forefront white feminist researchers' use of gender as a unifying category of oppression at the expense of other dimensions of difference, particularly race. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectional theory asked, "How does the fact that women of color are simultaneously situated within at least two groups that are subjected to broad societal subordination bear upon problems traditionally viewed as monocausal?" (Crenshaw, 1993, p. 114). Like Crenshaw, Patricia Hill Collins (2000) theorized that the interrelated

marginalized dimensions of difference played out in the lives of women of color in complex ways. Collins (2000) argued that intersections of difference connected to and mutually influenced intersectional systems of society, such as race, gender, class, and ethnicity (p. 42). According to Collins, bringing black women's experiences of these intersecting forms of oppressions into conversation with hegemonic matrix of domination – cultural oppressions that operate systemically – provided a basis for black feminists to address inequality, offer alternative stories of lived experiences, and enact social change.

A powerful theoretical perspective, intersectionality has challenged feminist, critical race, American Studies, and other interdisciplinary scholars to consider how oppressive constructs of difference and systems of domination operate interdependently in people's lived experiences, not hierarchically or independently. Infusing intersectional theory into the Bourdieusian framework supports an exploration of community college youths' digital practices, and differences within other constructs of marginalization and oppression, particularly gender, race, and ethnicity.

A critique of intersectional theory has been its lack of a systemic methodology that is applicable across disciplines (McCall, 2005; Nash, 2008). To address this shortcoming, McCall (2005) proposed several methodological approaches to intersectional analysis and critique. Among them is the categorical approach, a model that “permits an examination of substantive issues that are far less prominent in women's studies than they are in the

social science disciplines and in contemporary society more generally” (p. 1784). The categorical approach:

begins with the observation that there are relationships of inequality among already constituted social groups, as imperfect and ever changing as they are, and takes those relationships as the center of analysis. The main task of the categorical approach is to explicate those relationships, and doing so requires the provisional use of categories. (p. 1784-1785)

With its support of multidimensional comparative analysis, the categorical approach to intersectionality is useful in attending to the diverse backgrounds of community college youths in this study. First, the approach does not obscure the classed construction of community college students with other dimensions of difference already in play in community college youths’ everyday lives. Second, categorical intersectional methodology offers a guide for structuring measures of difference in the survey and focus group data by maintaining socially constructed categories, such as gender, race and ethnicity, as means of acknowledging and analyzing the complexity and inequity of these relationships. As observed in the data related to digital practices, FCC youths as an aggregate enacted a wide range of digital practices, yet females and males, and youths with different racial and ethnic identities enacted some of these practices with different frequencies, enacted them with different levels of confidence, and perceived them as having different academic and future relevance.

Viewing community college youths' digital culture through a categorical conceptualization of intersectional theory enables inclusive theorizing.

According to Nash (2008), inclusive theorizing

strategically mobiliz[es] the language of commonality (however provisional or tentative that commonality might be) in the service of constructing a coherent theoretical and political agenda. (p. 4)

Invoking a common language of community college youths, difference, digital practices, and education promotes critical dialogue and equity advocacy that motivates political and pedagogical change. In sum, when applied to an analysis of FCC youths' everyday digital practices, perceptions, and experiences, an intersectionally-informed rendering of Bourdieu's triad proposes that

1. Habitus—deeply embedded historical, social, and cultural constructions of difference—shapes the unequal positions community college youths take up within the fields of digital culture and education.
2. Rules within the fields of digital culture and education regulate the practices and positions available to community college youths.
3. Community college youths exercise agency and struggle for status within the fields of digital culture and education by accumulating and using symbolic capital – social and cultural – in an effort to legitimize their practices.

4. The extent to which community college youths struggle for status within these fields is informed by their habitus, and reflected in both their digital experiences and their perceptions of the symbolic value of their digital practices as they pertain to their everyday life, college, and future. Yet, while their habitus *is shaped* by constructions of race, class, and gender, these constructions *do not exclusively, nor in isolation, overdetermine* the social positions or capital available to them in the fields of digital culture and education.
5. The processes of valuing particular types of capital – in other words, the legitimization of specific digital practices – *are subject to overdetermination* by academics and other agents in these fields.

Analyzing FCC youths' digital culture through this framework enables theorizing about how community college youths' positions as digital cultural producers and how the symbolic value attributed to the social and cultural capital they accumulate shift as they encounter the field of education, for this field positions them as learners whose digital practices may or may not embody the same social and cultural capital. Further it enables theorizing about how their positions might be affected not only through the agency they enact in the field of education as they struggle to accumulate social and culture capital through their digital practices, but also how the influences of their habitus and their experiences as learners affect the positions they envision and value they attribute to their digital practices in their future lives and workplaces.

Research Design

To support a theoretical analysis of community college youths' digital culture, I employed mixed methods research by surveying incoming community college youths and conducting qualitative focus groups with community college students. The methodology permitted both the cross-analysis of data and observations of the convergences and divergences of patterns across quantitative and qualitative information (Campbell and Fiske, 1959; Chatterji 2005; Collins, Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 2006). The survey – focus group combination was particularly suited for gaining more in-depth understanding of community college youths' digital culture and analyzing this culture through the intersectionally-informed Bourdieusian framework structuring the inquiry into their digital practices, perceptions, and differences.

The research occurred in two phases: the survey phase and the focus group phase. The survey phase gathered data about Frederick Community College (FCC) youths' digital practices. The choice to design and administer the FCC Digital Practices Survey arose from the goal to elicit direct and timely input from a sample of incoming youths attending FCC in fall 2012. The survey permitted the collection of data from a small but significant subset of the population that reflected those of the general population (Creswell, 2003; Babbie [1990] in Creswell, 2003). In this case, the survey provided a means for analyzing the digital practices and perceptions of a sample of incoming students that reflected the broader population of incoming youths.

To provide a more complex rendering of community college youths' digital culture, I conducted a series of follow-up focus group interviews. In contrast to quantitative methods, the focus groups offered an opportunity for observing cultural norms and values in a more natural setting (Creswell, 2003) and yielded more ideas and content than other methods (Morgan, 1996). Barbour and Kitzinger (1998) noted that focus groups are particularly useful in studying experiences and attitudes related to a specific topic (p.5), in this case, FCC youths' experiences with and ideas about digital culture. The conversational nature of focus groups allowed "participants to explore and clarify their views" using group dynamics to facilitate the process rather than researcher (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 299). Further, focus groups interviews permitted observations of consensus and diversity of perspectives among participants (Krueger & Morgan, 1993). These patterns of consensus and difference provided insight into how participants' habitus shaped their views and influenced their agency with digital practices.

According to Morgan (1996), social and cultural researchers have advocated for the survey – focus group research sequence as productive combination of methodologies that often produces more robust detail and data. However, each methodology has limitations. Influenced by participant time, effort and interest, and replete with margins of error, survey data provide a one-dimensional snapshot of community college youths' digital practices. Focus groups are imbued with relations of power: group dynamics do not necessarily provide equal voice for all participants nor sever the presence of

the researcher from the process. The potential exists for individual participants to be silenced or to contribute ideas, attitudes, and beliefs based on seeking group acceptance versus sharing their actual experiences or beliefs. Morgan (1996) contended that these occurrences do not constitute reasons to abandon focus group methodology but rather to understand them in terms of a reflection of cultural contexts and pressures experienced by participants (p.138-139). Acknowledging these limitations, the survey – focus group method provided a multi-faceted means of gathering information about youths' digital culture. Details about the designs, samples, administration procedures, and data assessment methods for the survey and the focus group interviews are described in Appendices A and B, respectively.

Significance

This study contributes to American Studies by expanding our understanding of American youths' everyday digital practices and the influences on their digital cultural production at the intersection of the fields of education and digital culture, capturing the impacts of their habitus on their digital experiences in their everyday lives, engagement in college, and perceptions of their future. The interdisciplinary activist lens of American Studies scholarship exposes the disparities between youths' digital culture and the processes of legitimization of digital practices, prompting advocacy for educational and cultural practices that interrupt the reproduction of privilege of particular digital practices and practitioners.

By attending to a group of youths marginalized in academic discourses and nearly invisible in American Studies scholarship – community college youths, this study compels scholars to rethink how American youths and their digital practices are constructed, and even overlooked, in theoretical critiques and observations about American digital culture. Embedded in a political environment where neoliberal education policies cloak inequity by interpreting “individual success or failure...in terms of entrepreneurial virtues or personal failings (such as not investing significantly enough in one’s own human capital through education)” (Harvey, 2005, p. 65), this research challenges power and privilege by honing in on the tensions between community college youths’ digital culture and processes of legitimization occurring in the field of education. As academics and policymakers convergence to contest the symbolic value of digital practices and production, this research is timely for interpretations of the symbolic value of community college youths’ digital practices and cultural production, when absent attention to power and privilege, are complicit in reproducing social relations of inequity.

Limitations

The population of youths surveyed and interviewed attended Frederick Community College, where I have been an English professor for nearly 15 years. Because the survey sample and focus groups included only FCC youths between the ages of 18 and 24, the results preclude generalizability to community college youths attending other institutions. In addition survey

respondents and focus group participants did not include FCC youth participants to those for whom English was their primary language. The voluntary nature of focus group participation and the low percentage of Asian, Latino, and Indigenous youths enrolled at FCC resulted in limited presence of Asian and Latino youths, and an absence of Indigenous youths. Further, because survey participants included small numbers of Indigenous, Asian, and multiracial respondents, determining statistical significance of digital differences among survey respondents with different racial and ethnic identities was challenging. In instances when n values for racial and ethnic categories were deemed too small to apply tests of significance, differences in digital practices were observed categorically without the assignment of significance. Also, the small number of Indigenous, Asian, and multiracial youths surveyed prevented a combined cross-tabbed analysis of differences among males and females with different racial and ethnic identities. Despite this limitation, which affects the generalizability of results across Frederick Community College youths, patterns of difference in digital practices were observable among youths with different racial and ethnic identities and are discussed within the context of the surveyed cohort. Finally, the study's focus on community college youths does not address the presence of adult community college students. While this population is beyond the scope of this study, adult students and their digital experiences are equally as relevant to the enacting educational policies that promote equity.

Despite these limitations, the study's focus on a local population of community college youths facilitated the completion of this research in a timely manner with scarce resources. My familiarity with the student population and the community allowed me to gain access and establish researcher credibility with youth participants. In addition, sharing the results with FCC colleagues has generated conversations about policy and practice reforms. Overall, this study, though small-scaled, provides a first step in illuminating community college youths' digital practices. The methods employed in this study offer a foundation for additional research at other institutions and with other populations.

Overview of Chapters

The following synopsis provides an organizational overview of the remaining chapters. Chapter 2: *Historicizing and Contextualizing Youths in the Fields of Digital Culture and Education* situates American youths historically and reviews literature on digital culture, youths' digital culture, and education through the theoretical lens of this study. The chapter begins by framing youths' absence and presence in early digital culture literature, looks more closely at the historical shifts in American cultural category of youth, and then recontextualizes youths' digital practices within the fields of digital culture and education.

Chapters 3 and 4 encompass the core of this research: the patterns, themes, and differences observed in the survey data and focus group

interviews. Chapter 3: Exploring Community College Youths' Digital Practices, Perceptions, and Differences extracts the data from the FCC Digital Practices Survey completed by 255 incoming community college youths. Data include technology ownership and access; frequency of engaging in specific digital practices; and perceptions of their confidence with, and value of these practices in college and in their future. In addition to reporting the collective results of the surveyed youth cohort, the chapter describes patterns of difference in digital practices, confidence levels, and perceptions of value between males and females, and among youths with different racial and ethnic identities. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the gaps between youths' digital practices and perceptions of their value by introducing alternative narratives that instigate rethinking community college youths' digital culture.

Chapter 4: Listening to FCC Youths' Digital Culture Conversations elucidates the digital experiences voiced by 25 first-year FCC youths who participated in focus group interviews. The themes and differences observed in their conversations suggest that FCC youths had a complex understanding the impacts of digital practices on their everyday lives. Aware of their dependence of technology to perform everyday activities, FCC youths actively connected with peers, negotiated conflict, managed their identity, and regulated their practices. Observed variations in their conversations suggest differences among FCC youths' digital practices, and individual insurances of digital expertise resulting recognition and status. From their conversations

also emerged a series of messages about the disconnections between their digital culture, adults' perceptions of their culture, and their community college learning experiences. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the collective focus groups' themes, differences, and messages that further advances rethinking community college youths' digital culture.

Chapter 5: (Im)Mobilization of Youths' Digital Culture in Community College Education vets the theoretical and practical implications of community college youths' digital practices, perceptions, and differences. Through a convergence of the survey and focus group patterns and themes, the chapter expands on the concept of *digital dissonance*, coined by Clarke, Logan, Luckin, Mee, and Oliver (2009), to reflect on the conflicts and contradictions youths experience between their everyday digital practices and their digital engagement in the field of education, specifically within the context of community college. The chapter explores the various impacts of digital dissonance, which range from resolution and circumnavigation, to digital stagnation and immobilization depending on the positions youths take up within the field of community college education. These positions, influenced through the interaction among habitus, field, and capital, mutually reinforce the symbolic value bestowed upon the various digital practices they enact. In addition, the chapter considers the material consequences of immobilization for community college youths including academic performance, college completion, and their future trajectories in terms developing the technological competence for participating in their future everyday lives and workplaces.

Finally, the chapter advocates for reform that explicitly works to resolve digital dissonance by engaging community college youths' digital culture in the academy, rethinking the processes of legitimization, looking at digital practices through a lens of equity and advocacy that supports the development of youths' technological competence, and repositioning digital practices within the general education curriculum and within the faculty development queue.

Chapter 2: Historicizing and Contextualizing

American Youths' Digital Culture

To contextualize American youths' digital culture, the following interdisciplinary selection of literature limns the struggles between youths' digital practices and specific institutional discourses seeking to understand, codify, and/or regulate youths and their digital consumption and production. The first section reviews research that has shaped the field of digital culture, critiques the absence of youths therein, historicizes and defines youth, and discusses the interdisciplinary literature on youths' digital practices. The second section repositions youths' digital practices within the context of education with a focus on the context of community college.

Framing Youths in the Field of Digital Culture

Despite the proclamation that "digital culture has always been about youth culture," (Adam, 2002, p.158), youths were present, but undertheorized, in early digital culture research. Both Turkle (1984) and Rheingold (1993) celebrated the potential for youths' uses of Internet communication technologies and online communities. Turkle (1984) proclaimed:

[Youth] use the computer in their processing of world and identity construction. They use it for the development of fundamental and conceptual categories, as a medium for the practice of mastery, and as

a malleable material for helping forge their sense of themselves. (p. 165)

Although youths were central to prophesying the potential for formation of digital identity, communities, and agency, the subjects in Turkle's and Rheingold's research remained relatively attached to privileged factors of identity—middle and upper class, white youths and young adults with access to both education and technology. How youths were occupying positions within the field of early digital culture was not a central focus, despite their presence and work within it.

Like other fields of cultural production, digital culture has emerged as a legitimate field codified by academics and other agents of authority, including media, who have shaped the rules governing digital practices and defined its boundaries. Codification of digital culture emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. Seminal works on the effects of digital technologies including Turkle's *The Second Self* (1984) and *Life on Screen* (1995) and Rheingold's *The Virtual Community: Life on the Electronic Frontier* (1993) established what Silver (2006) has called the “twin pillars” of the field— identity and community (p. 8). Turkle and Rheingold claimed the limitless possibilities for individuals to experiment with multiple identities and create communities of myriad forms. Rheingold (1993) went further, claiming: “because we cannot see one another in cyberspace, gender, age, national origin, and physical appearance are not apparent unless a person wants to make such characteristics public” (p. 26). Identity and community continue to shape discourses about the field.

These early celebratory notions of digital culture, however, did not account for agents' habitus within the field. Scholars soon critiqued constructions of identity and community through the lens of gender and racial differences. For example, Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto" (1985) positioned the cyborg figure as a relational hybrid construct of women and technology and a map for feminist ideology, politics and activism. Meanwhile, Stone (1996) critiqued (dis)embodiment in virtual spaces and explored the potential and limitations for post-gender and alternative constructions of sexuality; and Bruckman (1993) analyzed gender-swapping in virtual communities. These are but a sampling of scholarship that theorized gender and embodiment in early digital culture research and theory. Critical considerations of race in online environments emerged in the 1990s, reflected in the work of Braidotti (1996), Kendall (2002) and notably in Nakamura's seminal work *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet* (2002), wherein she declared, "The internet is a place where race happens" (p. xi). Offshoots of Nakamura's research resulted in critical deconstruction of race in online environments. Early research on race, gender and to a lesser extent sexuality (Campbell, 2004), demonstrated that within the field of digital culture agents' habitus coupled with the rules governing practices and legitimization in the field are not free from struggles over meaning and hierarchical structures of power.

While presence of difference resonated throughout the critiques of early digital culture scholarship, youth remained an unattended category of difference. The following overview of youth as historically constructed

category of difference serves to address this oversight and offer insight into the intricacies of youths' relationships to digital culture.

Early incarnations of youth, anchored in pre-industrial constructions of Western childhood, suggested that the value of children was related to their place in the economy of both their households and their nations (Heywood, 2002). Modern definitions of childhood and youth, paralleling industrialization and the emergence of the middle class, formally codified childhood as a separate and protected stage of development marked by child labor laws, compulsory education, and the legitimization of other institutions such as psychology and education that shaped ideas of children and youths' purpose, development, and behavior (Mintz, 2004). Often cited as those who are between the ages of 12-17, the term "youth" corresponds to psychosocial human development associated with adolescence, the stage of late childhood (Erikson, 1968), which defines youth as the transitional stage that focuses less on play associated with childhood and more on work (e.g., the work of education). As a transitional period, youth as a category is demarcated as the developmental stage of crisis, "needing a variety of kinds of interventions and reforms" (Frost, 2001, p. 81). The end of this stage, adulthood, is marked by individuals' productive contributions to society via formal entry into the economy.

Late capitalism, signified by post-WWII changes in family structure, women's growing presence in the workforce, globalization and consumer culture, repositioned youth in relation to the formal economy and culture,

affecting their purpose (Mintz, 2004). As a condition of late capitalist post-industrial nation, American youth as an aggregate experience a delay of formal entry into the workforce and adult life (Livingstone, 2002). This delay has resulted in a crisis over their identity and their purpose:

As the attainment of 'adulthood' is delayed, what counts as a valuable use of time is contested between children and adults. Young people's identity, sense of self-worth and participation in peer relations must all be constructed in this period of non-productivity. (p. 174)

Delayed entry into adulthood has reconfigured traditional constructions of youths as those aged 12 -17 by extending the category of youth to the ages of 24 and even into the late twenties, depending on the context (UN General Assembly, 1981; Arnett, 2000). Approximately 49% of youths aged 16-24 have at least part-time employment in low-skill jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011) and 41% of 18-24 year olds are enrolled in post-secondary education (National Clearinghouse for Education Statistics, 2011). Part-time employment and college enrollment reflect a delay of many youths' entry into the adult world of full-time work, and suggest that many youths have more time to engage in activities other than waged labor.

However, to suggest that all youths experience similar cultural and economic conditions such as delayed entry into the workforce and extended time to engage in other activities erases the differences among youths' experiences of everyday life and confines them within a privileged white, patriarchal logic of the middle class. Research on the history of children and

youth labor in America illustrates the uneven relationship of children and youth within the economy (Parker, 2007). Historically, for example, a greater percentage of American working class youths and youths of color have consistently been employed in low-skilled, low-wage jobs in contrast to their wealthier counterparts, suggesting that they enter adult life at different ages (Hindman, 2002). Mintz (2004) postulated that class was and is “the most significant determinant of children’s well-being” (p. ix). Yet social class is not the only marker of difference that affects youths’ experiences. Studies of youths’ family relationships, geographic location, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality and sexuality conclude that youths’ lives transcend a generalized accounting of the conditions and experiences of American youths’ everyday lives.¹

Data have consistently suggested that regardless of differences among youths’ experiences of everyday life, media consumption has become increasingly important to youths’ identity, culture, and education (McNeal, 1994; A. Dyson, 1997; Livingstone, 2002; Jenkins 2003; Mazzarella, 2005; Buckingham, 2007; Boyd, 2009). Beyond passive consumption, youths exercise agency in their uses of media by engaging in cultural economies of fandom (Fiske, 1992; Ito, 2010a), exchanging goods within their own economies (McRobbie, 1989), reappropriating popular cultural for their own

¹ The research of Zelizer (1994), Kotlowitz (1992), Adler, Hernandez & Riley (1995), and Stafford and Stafford (2006) offer a small sampling of the diversity of youths’ material conditions.

means (Ross & Rose, 1994; Mactavish, 2008; Yee, 2006), and creating subcultures, such as online fan fiction and gaming communities, that use and reconfigure commodities as a means of responding to and rebelling against mainstream hegemonic ideologies (Ito, 2010a; Ito et al., 2008; Ondrejka, 2004). Collectively, youths “develop their own institutions, rules, and value systems” (Coontz, 1992). In other words, they create their own cultural economies through and within their digital practices.

In contrast to early digital culture scholarship’s lack of focus on youths, media-related research has focused on youths’ participation in the digital culture. As early as 1999, youths’ digital access and practices have been central to the research of The Internet and American Life Project (Pew Research Center, 2005), the Kaiser Family Foundation (Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, 2010) and the MacArthur Foundation (Buckingham, 2007). Widely cited in both academic and public discourses on youth digital culture, these research efforts have focused on digital technologies’ impacts on youths’ everyday life, specifically as they pertain to youths’ usage, well-being, and learning.

Media studies scholar Henry Jenkins (2003, 2006a, 2006b) has written extensively about the power of young fan communities, gamers, and bloggers to use, shape and “poach” media texts, while building interactive communities and influencing media production itself. Jenkins proclaimed that Internet communication technologies and Web 2.0 platforms provide youths with tools for creating culture. Coined “participatory culture,” media consumers exercise

agency by shaping the media via “archiving, annotation, appropriation, transformation, and recirculation of media content” and “demand[ing] the right to participate in the creation and distribution of media narratives” (Jenkins, 2003). Ample research on youths’ use of digital technology, particularly the Internet, supports Jenkins’ observations: As of 2013, 95% of American youths ages 12-17 access the internet regularly; 78% of teens own cell phones, and 54% of them text daily (Purcell, 2011; Madden et al., 2013). Beyond access and ownership, wired American youths aged 12-17 are content creators, those “who have created or worked on a blog or webpage, shared original creative content, or remixed content they found online into a new creation” (Lenhart & Madden, 2005, p. 1), with 80% actively using social networking sites, 38% of online teen sharing original creations, 27% creating and uploading videos, 21% remixing texts, and 14% blogging (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2012). These data suggest that some American youths are active agents in the production of digital culture.

Despite the celebratory tone, the “participatory” nature of digital culture is not an enterprise severed from relations of power. A review of youth-focused research literature through an intersectional configuration of Bourdieu’s triad reveals that youth digital culture, while supportive of youths’ agency to produce culture, is governed by rules that privilege particular productions and practices. Over the course of eight years, youth media scholar Mikuto Ito and twenty-two colleagues conducted 20 ethnographic studies focused on American youths’ use of digital technology and their digital

culture (Ito et al., 2008, 2010). Guided by a sociological approach to childhood, these projects documented the impacts of youths' digital practices on their everyday lives: shaping their identities, building peer relationships, playing videogames, creating and sharing texts via blogs, videos, music, and pursuing and developing extensive interests online.

Ito and her colleagues discovered patterns of participation and production based on (1) *distinctive goals for participation* and (2) *differentiated levels of engagement with digital media*. Goals for participating in online communities and activities were primarily *friend-driven* or *interest-driven*. Levels of engagement with media ranged from *hanging out*: connecting with peers, to *messing around*: seeking information associated with a random or purposeful interest or experimenting with media creation, to *geeking out*: acquiring knowledge and/or skills that result in the development of some expertise (Ito et al., 2010). The patterns of youths' participation and engagement proffered by Ito et al. (2008) suggest that youths consume and produce digital culture *differently*. These differences align with different goals of participation and production, and varying media ecologies—the physical and virtual environs surrounding users. More significantly, however, these differences are embedded in a double logic of influencing and being influenced by material conditions and markers of difference particularly race, class, and gender (Nakamura 2002; Mazzarella, 2005; Willett, 2005; Everett, 2007; Boyd, 2011). Differences in participation and production are embedded

in a cultural economy of power that both encompasses and transcends youths' digital culture.

In the following review of research on prominent formations of youths' digital culture, combining Ito and her colleagues' categories of production (*hanging out, messing around, and geeking out*) with the intersectionally-informed definitions of Bourdieu's habitus and capital illuminates differences in youths' digital practices and the implications therein.

Hanging Out: Friendship. Developing peer relationships has been a central tenet of youths' development, and social networking sites (SNS) have offered a digital forum for building social relationships with peers. In ethnographic studies of youths on MySpace and other SNS, Boyd (2008; 2009) concluded that the youths' engagement in SNS mirrors their development and negotiation of real life peer relationships. These connections are embedded in what Boyd termed "networked publics," online public spaces wherein a perceived audience shapes individual youths' ideas of "cool:"

What teens are doing with this networked public is akin to what they have done in every other type of public they have access to: they hang out, jockey for social status, work through how to present themselves, and take risks that will help them to assess the boundaries of the social world. (p. 137)

Profiles are unique pages where one can "type oneself into being" (Sundén qtd. in Boyd & Ellison, 2003, p .3) and often include tastes in media, film,

music, and other activities; markers of gender, age, and race; creative texts such as poetry, blog entries, photos, and multimedia; group affiliations, and friends. They “use specific media as tokens of identity, taste, and style to negotiate their sense of self in relation to their peers” (Ito et al., 2008, p. 14). With availability and circulation of forms of popular culture through multiple technologies, media and Internet presence via social networking sites are central to hanging out online and in real life.

Furthermore, youths recognize the political stakes in the creation of online profiles, the peers who make up their communities, and the public personas they project to their peers in virtual environs. Because identities and friendships are observable in network publics, youths often actively manage their identity and negotiate conflict, friendship statuses, and other connections recognizing that SNS reflect their peer status (Boyd, 2008; 2009). The power associated with peer status among youths proffers the accumulation of social capital and is a central focus for youths, since they have limited access to economic or political power (Milner, 2004). However, youths tend to reproduce social networks along markers of difference—race, class, and gender—reflecting their real life networks (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Habitus seemingly shaped their accumulation of social and cultural capital, potentially affecting the value of their capital should they attempt to leverage it beyond their networks, beyond the field of digital culture, and into other fields.

Hanging out: Difference. Youths also hang out beyond the scope of the communities that they experience in their everyday lives. Many times the drive to expand their online networks beyond local connections they encounter in everyday life is interest-related. Interest-driven participation “put specialized activities, interests, or niche and marginalized identities first” (Ito et al., 2008, p. 18). For example, as mediated networked publics, SNS are not necessarily spaces where marginalized youths perform certain aspects of their identity due to risks associated with social status and some times safety. Pascoe (2007a) has argued that “fag” discourse, for example, affects male and female youths, and can drive some to seek outlets for making intimate connections beyond their local peer networks. Online communities for marginalized youths, such as GLBT teens and fan fiction communities (Tosenberger, 2008), offer opportunities for seeking friendly and intimate connections unavailable to them otherwise (Ito et al., 2008, p. 16-18). That marginalized youths seek other online avenues for cultivating communities indicates that SNS are imbued with social constructions of identity that may shape and/or limit participation. Social networks like Black Planet, Asian Avenue, and Mi Genté explicitly target audiences based on race and ethnicity, cultivating participation based on cultural affiliation and creating cultural boundaries as a result (Byrne, 2008). Although these sites cultivate limited youths’ participation, they are “useful vehicles for strengthening their cultural identities, for teaching them how to navigate both public and private dimensions of their racial lives, and for providing them access to a more

globalized yet unfixed conversation about their community histories” (Byrne, 2008, p. 86). These sites rely on youths’ habitus to compel participation; yet, how youths utilize and perceive the social and cultural capital of these sites is dependent upon complex factors of identity and community and the purpose for participation.

Although online communities formed around markers of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality offer youths spaces to negotiate their identities and connect with others, these spaces can fall prey to hegemonic constructions of identity that can marginalize members. For example, in “What are gURLs Talking about? Adolescent Girls’ Construction of Sexual Identity on gURL.com,” Girrso and Weiss (2005) explored girls’ empowerment by investigating the “girl-authored sections of gURL.com.” They claimed that these sections of the site offer spaces for interacting with others who may be like/unlike them, expressing ideas that may otherwise be considered taboo and claiming agency (p. 32). Focusing on the chat room pertaining to sexuality, Girrso and Weiss observed that the interactions therein reflect teen girls “performing and emerging sexuality online”; yet, they were also troubled:

The girls who enter this all-girl environment are limited in their ability to transcend the language and symbols of males. Into a community constructed and constituted by females, they bring andocentric conceptions of the distinct roles of men and women, attitude and norms representative of a pre-Web world of male mastery and female submission. [G]irls have space to explore their budding sexuality...yet,

there are limits. When girls stray too far, speak too explicitly, or express excessive agency, they are quickly reined in, reminded by other members of the community that certain larger societal expectations must still be met, even in this ostensibly progressive and “safe” space. (p. 45)

While Girrso and Weiss concluded that girls on gURL.com connect, speak and explore in a safe environment, they observed that this community is not wholly accepting but rather open to relative “*tolerance*” where “virginity, sexual activity, and expressions of heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual attraction are all *accommodated*” [emphasis mine] (p. 46). The article concluded with girls asserting agency and “demonstrating their ability and their right to make their own choices; in other words, truly exerting girl/gURL power” (p. 47). Yet, their power was delimited by the messages of patriarchy, androcentricity, and heteronormativity that girls receive from the site and from one another. Still, there is evidence suggesting that youths seek spaces that transcend engendered spaces (Pascoe, 2007b).

Research also indicates that popular SNS are imbued with constructions of race and class. Nakamura (2002) argued that the assumption of diverse presence on the Internet elides issues of technological access and how bodies are differentially incorporated into digital networks (as well as economic and global networks) and presents a “cosmetic multiculturalism” (p. 21-24). The visual presence of Asians and African-Americans constructs one as a model technologically savvy minority while the

other suggests that the digital divide has been overcome. She concluded that within an American context:

This is not digital identification, but digital *dis*identification—disavowal of the recognition of race in local contexts in favor of comfortably global ones” that produces a “disappearance from awareness of American racial minorities” that conceals “the West’s reluctance to acknowledge [the] colonization of global media, and ongoing racist practices within its borders. (p. 20-22)

Prominent SNS sites serve as an illustration of Nakamura’s argument. Boyd (2011) observed that a substantial number of youths have migrated from MySpace to Facebook over the course of five years. Through extensive analysis of the migration and interviews with youths from diverse racial, ethnic and social class backgrounds, she proffered that MySpace users were more likely youths of color and Facebook users, while diverse, were primarily white. Invoking Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of distinction, Boyd (2011) argued that racialized constructions of both sites resonated around distinction in music, media, and perceptions of Facebook as more “elite.” Youths’ habitus—a combination of symbolic markers of difference combined with specific tastes in media and associations with particular peer groups and activities—seemingly influences youths’ choices of SNS. Their choices suggest that youths may acquire different social capital depending on the SNS they use, which may affect the skills acquired in other forms of online participation and media engagement as well as reproduce hegemonic social relations.

Messing Around: Looking and Experimenting. Beyond making social connections based on aspects of identity, interest-driven participation often transcends hanging out and moves into more direct engagement with media in the form of “messaging around” by looking around, seeking information, and playing around with digital media and gaming. This engagement with information and media is important to youths: 87% of youths use a search engine (e.g., Google, Wikipedia, other specialized sites) at least once per week to seek information not related to completing school work. Beyond seeking information, youths experiment with creating fan fiction, mixing media, creating videos and participating in fan communities. Online gaming is replete with opportunities for messaging around as they provide “player-level agency and customization” (Ito et al., 2008, p. 24). The concept of messaging around is steeped in curiosity, experimentation, and low-stakes production of media that build knowledge and skills.

When local peer networks do not offer youths the social and cultural capital that supports their pursuits, niche interests may steer youths to look elsewhere for interest-based sites and communities. For example, Thomas’ (2007) ethnographic study of 60 teens in the virtual community *Middle Earth* revealed that youths created avatars, wrote poetry, and developed ongoing collaborative stories derivative of *Lord of the Rings*. As they shared online, they solicited and gave feedback on one another’s work. Their interest promoted them to seek connections beyond local peer networks as a means of gaining and contributing knowledge to a broader community.

Youths contribute to a wide array of fan fiction sites, producing derivative works such as stories and videos that combine clips from films, storylines, and characters. Fan fiction communities dwell on fan fiction sites such as fanfiction.net and general sites such as livejournal. Users can lurk on these sites, create and edit wikis that archive the original works, comment on derivative works, join discussion threads, and submit their production for posting. The productions reflect the rich remixing of culture by youths that require the acquisition of intricate skills ranging from manuscript creation to digital editing. Many of these communities have particular submission standards and formal processes for submission. As youths participate in and contribute to these sites, they form relationships with others, and their contributions can circulate among a community of fans with similar interests and gain recognition. Depending on youths' depth of participation and engagement in these environs, they can gain status, social capital, as well as cultural capital, through recognition of their contributions.

Similarly, extensive interest-driven communities develop around gaming with popular games like *World of Warcraft* (Yee, 2001, 2006, 2008). Youths may explore these sites but ultimately the goal is to participate. Within the realm of the game, youths' acquisition of gaming skills in conjunction with the ability to construct virtual avatars offers them multiple ways to contribute to community and to negotiate their identities (Yee, 2001; Gee, 2003). Beyond the realm of the game, weblogs and other game-focused forums exist for users to share game modifications (mods) and

exchange information such as cheat codes (Mactavish, 2008). Similar to fan fiction communities, these massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) such as *Counter-Strike* and virtual communities such as *Second Life* are structured to *rely* on players' contribution and form the basis for the games' expansion and development (Ondrejka, 2004). Themes that resonate within these communities are that participants initially tinker with contributing, but as they gain skills and recognition, their standing within the communities changes; like fan fiction contributors, they gain social as well as cultural capital as their interest and expertise grows. Hierarchies of status emerge within these communities, suggesting that the power to reproduce social relations along lines of difference exists.

Geeking Out: Developing Capital. When messing around transcends casual tinkering and media production, youths geek out:

Geeking out involves learning to navigate complex domains of knowledge and practice and participating in communities that traffic in these forms of expertise. It is a mode of learning that is peer-driven, but focused on gaining deep knowledge and expertise in specific areas of interest. (Ito et al., 2008, p. 28)

Differentiating geeking out from messing around are (1) devoting time to technical and/or creative skill development and productions that cultivate expertise and (2) earning validation within an expertise-related community and/or network, be it virtual or real. For example, in her study of anime digital culture, Ito (2010a) found youths who were successful at anime music video

production remixed Japanese anime with other typically English-based music, dialogue and texts to create works derivative of the original commercial production. As their expertise grew, video creators sought feedback from those with similar skills. Popular contributors earn social and cultural capital in the form of prestige among their peers, including fandom.

Some youths have translated their digital expertise, be it in the form of technical skills or creative production into economic capital both within and beyond conventional corporate economic structures by selling virtual goods, marketing their music on MySpace, and creating their own technology businesses (Ondrejka, 2004; Jenkins, 2006; Ito et al., 2008). However, instances of converting social and cultural capital in digital realms, regardless of levels of prestige, have been the exception to the rule.

Messing Around and Geeking Out: Difference. The trajectory of accumulating capital is not necessarily the same for all youths who move from messing around to geeking out. Differences arise in youths' digital practices based not only on their interests and how they leverage their skills, but also on their habitus (Ito, 2010a, 2010b; Livingstone, 2002; Buckingham 2000, 2007).

For example, through in-depth interviews and observations, Danico and Võ (2004) found that cyber cafés offered Asian American and immigrant youths spaces to gather and compete in a safe environment that did not focus on their race, class and citizenship differences, but rather on their gaming skills. Symbolic of the digital divide, these cafés provided an escape from home and

a safe haven from the unstructured urban landscape, offering low-cost access to entertainment and “after school programs for working class youth” (p. 184). Gamers were primarily male, reflecting the complex habitus wherein their female counterparts often attended to the home and child-rearing duties while parents worked several jobs. What shaped these Asian-American and immigrant male youths’ practices was a combination of interest, identity, community, and material conditions. This combination reflects a notable shift in the digital divide not simply attributable to social class but rather complex habitus structures.

DiMaggio et al. (2004) noted that the nature of the divide has shifted from “unequal access to differentiated use.” More recent statistics suggest that access to the internet among youths from different classes is about the same; still, access to high-speed internet, which necessarily affects the speed with which user can access information, is more readily available to Caucasian youths whose parents are college-educated and make over \$50,000 (Purcell, 2011). Evidence suggests that youths without high-speed Internet use public venues and other spaces to gain access; still, those with broadband do have faster, more efficient access, implying that the digital divide exists. Yet access is not the primary delimiting factor in the determining youths’ digital practices. As Selywyn (2010) demonstrated in a review of empirical research, differences in the frequency of use and differentiated uses of digital technology align with specific factors beyond social class to race and gender.

A survey conducted by Smith (2010) found that Internet access among youths of color is equal to access rates among white youths; however, differences occur in how youths of color are using this access. African-American and Latino youths, for example, are more likely to seek entertainment and information related to creative practices. Further, more youths of color are using their cell phones as their primary access to the Internet. How their habitus affects their practices may be traced to the oral and visual traditions that inform their cultural experiences (Driscoll, 2009). The information they are accessing and how they are using it has raised concerns over whether or not their activities are productive in terms of seeking education and career-related information. For example, studies indicate that youths of color create intricate communities of gaming, remix, and digital underground cultures; these complex practices, however, are often overlooked as legitimized practices (Danico & Vö; Driscoll, 2009). Such oversights reflect the uneven value attributed to youths' practices.

Similarly, structures of privilege with regards to digital participation and production are visible between males and females. For example, online and offline, teen boys continue to dominate digital gaming culture. While teen girls' participation in videogaming has increased to 47% of market share, their transition from more casual gaming to serious gaming continues to be stigmatized (Ito et al., 2008; Kafai, Heeter, Denner, & Sun, 2008; Jenson & De Castell, 2010). Access to videogaming continues to be aligned with youth male culture reflected in the dominance of men in the videogame production

industry and the persistence of barriers to access to advanced videogame status, despite equal interest between male and female youths (Jenson, 2010). In contrast, blogging and online fan fiction cultures are dominated by girls but not exclusively (Lenhart & Madden, 2005; Jenkins 2006), and tend to be categorized as less “serious.” These gender differences in digital practices suggest not only the potential for unequal skill and knowledge development, but also the privileging of specific production over others. This process, in turn, affects the value and type of social and symbolic capital they can accumulate and seemingly reproduces male privilege.

What resonates throughout youths’ digital practices as they hang out, mess around, or geek out are the *differences in the potential* for accumulating social and cultural capital depending on their level of engagement, their habitus, and seemingly naturalized boundaries of differentiated uses. Within youths’ digital cultural economy, status – a form of both social and cultural capital – is conveyed to youths not only through legitimization by peers but also via mutually reinforced structures of privilege and differentiated access supported by cultural institutions that both govern and confer value of digital practices. A closer look at the cultural institution of education supports the reproduction of this privileging process and suggests that the process is naturalized.

Limning Youths' Everyday Digital Practices in the Field of Education and in the Context of Community College

Beyond the field of digital culture, the value of digital practices varies according to the structure of those fields and the positions available to agents in those fields. For youths that primary field is education, a cultural institution that regulates production of knowledge historically imbued with the authority to validate digital practices and often critiqued for its complacency in reproducing social relations of power.

Criticism over the past decade has focused on education's failure to meet the shifting needs of a post-industrial, information-driven, networked society (Castells & Cardoso, 2006). Despite popular panic that youths have not been prepared to effectively compete in a global economy (Montgomery, 2007) and forecasting by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013a, 2013b) that predicts exponential growth in technology labor sectors, technology-focused education reforms undertaken over a decade ago have moved slowly. Scholars have argued that despite educational policies and curriculum that support the development of youths' information and media literacy, the field consistently has overlooked youths' digital practices and productions beyond those codified under basic technological literacy. Drotner (2008) analyzed youths' accumulation of digital skills in their creation and distribution of multimedia texts in everyday, non-educational settings. He argued that formal education has ignored their practices, despite their development of multimodal literacy skills needed in the digital workplace.

Terranova (2000), Gee (2003), and Jenkins (2006) have argued that youths' self-motivated skills and knowledge development have been undervalued in educational discourses.

Recent legislated educational reforms and efforts contained in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and President Obama's 2009 College Completion Initiative have spurred the movement to redesign substantively public education through the integration of digital technology with the intended goal of educating citizens. Signs of this movement permeate all levels of education, K-16, through public, non-profit and for-profit funds devoted to technological infrastructure improvements, assessment and reporting software, digitally-based curriculum and online learning, pedagogical reforms, and technology-focused professional development for educators. The collaborative nature of this movement is mirrored in the "Digital Promise" Initiative, launched in 2011 with a specific mission:

Through its work with educators, technologists, researchers, and leading thinkers, Digital Promise supports comprehensive research and development to benefit lifelong learners and provide Americans with the knowledge and skills needed to compete in the global economy. (Digital Promise, 2012, p.2)

Organized as a non-partisan, non-profit organization, Digital Promise has a lengthy list of private philanthropic foundations and corporate sponsors (Digital Promise, 2012). In the private, philanthropic sector, support for integrating technology into education is reflected in the mission statements,

program initiatives and grant opportunities of non-profit foundations such as the MacArthur Foundation's Digital Media and Learning Research Hub, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, George Lucas' Education Foundation Edutopia, and tech-focused, higher education non-profits such as Educause. In the business sector, shifts in information access and text consumption have prompted prominent education publishers, along with software and hardware producers, to redefine their products to include digital texts, virtual labs, and simulations to maintain their market share (Davis, 2013). In sum, multiple stakeholders are vying to shape the future of education and to engage in the process of legitimizing digital practices to meet particular ends.

Complementing public, non-profit, and profit sectors' focus on digital education reform is research focusing directly on youths' learning through and with technology. Research spanning K-12 content areas provides ample evidence of the impacts of technology integration in the classroom on youths' learning (Vega, 2012). Differences in youths' digital practices have also garnered attention in K-12 education redesign. A prominent example is the youth-centered research resulting in the creation of Connected Learning (Ito et al., 2013). Supported by a network of scholars, educators, and private funders, connected learning is a K-12 model of learning

that holds out the possibility of reimagining the experience of education in the information age by drawing on the power of today's technology to fuse young people's interests, friendships, and academic

achievement through experiences laced with hands-on production, shared purpose, and open networks. (Connected Learning, 2012)

Central to Connected Learning is equity: the complexity of youths' digital experiences is integral to their learning and difference is rendered visible in an effort to "address the gap between in-school and out-of-school learning, intergenerational disconnects, and new equity gaps " (Ito et al., 2013, p.4). Equity advocacy reflected in models such as Connected Learning indicates that youths and their differences are present in digital shifts occurring in K-12 education.

In contrast, differences among youths' digital practices are relatively absent in community colleges conversations. Discourses about digital practices are informed by research focused on defining and assessing essential 21st century digital literacies for learning and the workplace, aligning these literacies with curriculum (Mourshed, Farrell, & Barton, 2012), evolving technology infrastructure for online and hybrid delivery of learning, and providing faculty professional development and training on the transformative potential of technology in the classroom. Informing these discourses are reports such as the *ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology* (Dahlstrom, Walker, & Dziuban, 2013). Published annually since 2004 by EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research, the report summarizes current college students' technology ownership, access, practices, and preferences as they pertain to learning and provides guidelines for improving learning through tech-enhanced pedagogy and learning

delivery. Despite being data-rich, the annual reports historically have not focused on detailed everyday practices, differences among cohorts of students, or the implications related to equity. Other community college research focused student differences including race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and age do include digital difference; however, as reflected in the works of Jaggars (2011) and Xu and Jaggars (2013), differences among students resonate around themes of correcting achievement gaps through remediated digital literacy instruction and academic preparedness; they do not center on the cultural complexity of digital differences nor the potential of engaging these differences in learning environments.

Corporations, on the other hand, have been attending diligently to youths' digital participation and contributions (Terranova, 2000; Castronova, 2002; Park, 2006). Participatory culture has proven a prolific method for youths' generation of digital culture in online environs. What academics label digital cultural production, corporate media companies call user-generated content (UGC) and they seek to capitalize on it. According Wunsch-Vincent and Graham (2006/2007) of the Organisation[sic] for Economic Co-operation and Development, youths under 25 years of age are the primary "social-drivers" of user-created content online, and corporations are seeking ways to "monetise"[sic] this production of content:

[M]edia companies, the communications industry (in particular mobile operators), and other commercial players have identified the revenue potential behind [UGC] and are investing substantial amounts of

money,” as exemplified by investments by both corporations and venture capitalists. (p. 13-14)

Businesses benefit from youths’ contributions online. Popular youth entertainment hubs, blogs, fan sites, and SNS have constructed spaces for users to exercise agency by making choices and contributing. Producing culture on these sites is embedded in coding shaped by cultural constructions of identity and community. This coding provides the ability to track, record and provide custom-made choices based on self-selected and non-self-selected market indicators. According to Parks (2006), this information represents “a set of industrial and technological practices that work to isolate the individual cultural tastes of the viewer/consumer in order to refine direct marketing—that is, the process of delivering specific audiences to advertisers” (p. 134). These practices result in “the programming of the self,” whereby:

[T]he process of selection—which is often celebrated as expanded... choice—is clearly circumscribed by marketers’ determinations of “relevant” content... organized around social distinctions (whether gender, age, race, class, sexuality, or lifestyle) that are arranged to maximize profit for media producers, networks, and advertisers.

(p. 135)

In an effort to compete for users’ attention, production, and consumption, technology and media industries profit under the guise of proffering choice and do so by marketing to default structures of identity and niche interests.

This faux programming of self, attractive to youths who are negotiating their identities, is prone to gendered and racialized practices (Mazzarella, 2005; Nakamura, 2009a, 2009b). Structured to rely on user-generated content, social networking sites and online gaming communities (Ondrejka, 2004; Yee, 2006) are replete with these practices, resulting in a dynamics of habitus, capital, and the field of digital culture that reify difference through rules that encourage agency while simultaneously obscuring the power of programming that reproduces gendered and racialized choices of self-representation and social relations.

Unless rendered visible, similar mechanisms of difference and structures of inequity have the potential to be replicated, as multiple stakeholders coalesce to legitimize digital practices in the field of education. Bourdieu (1993) argued that the ‘production of belief’ in the value of symbolic goods is conveyed through those vested with the power of authority (p.74). As producers of knowledge imbued with power to determine symbolic value of digital practices, scholars, academics, and other stakeholders in educational reform must attend to youths’ practices and their differences, and confront the privileging of digital practices as they struggle over the symbolic value of digital practices and productions.

Even the model I co-opted from Ito et al. (2008) to structure the analysis of youths’ digital culture in this chapter—though presented in the language of youth: “hanging out, messing around and geeking out”—is infused with the nomenclature of education. The model itself constructs a

hierarchy of participation and production that privileges specific skills, such as those associated with “geeking out,” over those inherent in the social goals of digitally “hanging out.” Although the potential for accumulating social and cultural capital appears at each level, the types of capital available to youths and the symbolic value of that capital shifts from one category of participation to another. Looking more closely at the different youths who engage in each level of this hierarchy suggests that the model itself replicates a hierarchy that reinforces white, middle-class male youth privilege. Gradation of particular practices in both quantitative and qualitative research delineate particular practices as more ‘capital-enhancing’ than others; this label clearly reflects a Bourdieusian distinction aligned with raced and socially-stratified male privilege (DiMaggio et al., 2004; Zillien & Hargittai, 2009). Attending to the formation of such hierarchies becomes particularly relevant as the field of education engages in a process of assigning symbolic value to particular digital practices.

Cathy Davidson, co-founder of HASTAC and author of *Now You See It: How Technology and Brain Science Will Transform Schools and Business for the 21st Century* (2011), has advocated for looking at youths’ digital practices differently by “un-learning” old education paradigms and patterned behaviors, and “re-learning” through active creation, experimentation, and collaborative problem solving enhanced through technology. As opposed to critics, such as Clifford Nass whose research has decried youths’ digital multitasking as unproductive (Dretzin, 2010), Davidson (2011) has suggested

that current frameworks for analyzing the value of youths' digital practices are antiquated, resulting in "attention blindness," that privileges linearity of task completion and standardized testing at the risk of misrecognizing the educational value of youths' multitasking, gaming, and blogging, among other practices in the digital age. Futurist and game designer, Jane McGonigal (2011) has echoed the promise of youths' collaborative learning and problem-solving through gaming and, like other gaming education advocates, has enacted specific systems to integrate game-based reward mechanisms such as leveling-up and badges into digital learning activities. Each has recast the approach to systemic education reform by focusing on the promise of youths' digital practices and their digital differences.

As a community college professor for nearly fifteen years, I have watched the tensions over the value of youths' digital practices in the social spaces of Frederick Community College. Texting friends and family, logging onto social networking sites, multitasking, online gaming in the student lounge, and seeking information beyond the course topics both in and outside of the classroom are common activities on campus among youths and many adults. A popular lament among faculty and administration is that many of youths' digital practices often interfere with students' attention, learning, communication, reading, and thinking. Conflicts between youths' digital practices and the educational goals have resulted in the implementation of policies restricting and monitoring the use of technologies in classrooms and other spaces such as libraries (Cortesi, 2014). These regulations rely on a

binary of appropriate/inappropriate uses of technology that reaffirms traditional pedagogy and privilege, while obscuring the potential for engaging community college youths' everyday digital practices to transform learning. As a transitional space for a diverse and growing population of local youths, Frederick Community College is a site for exploring youths' everyday digital practices and viewing them through the different lens that Davidson (2011) has suggested.

Chapter 3: Exploring Community College Youths' Digital Practices, Perceptions, and Differences: Data from the FCC Digital Practices Survey

This chapter describes Frederick Community College (FCC) youths' digital culture by distilling the results of the FCC Digital Practices Survey completed by 255 incoming students ages 18 to 24 during the summer and fall of 2012.² The survey questioned youths about their Internet access, technology ownership and usage, and the frequency with which they performed digital practices related to socializing and communicating; entertainment and creativity; and the management of life, information, school, and work. These questions were accompanied by inquiries about youths' confidence with digital practices and their perceptions of the importance of digital practices as they pertained to college and their future everyday lives and work.

Frequencies were measured using the Likert scale choices of daily, weekly, occasionally, rarely, and never. Frequency responses of "daily" and "weekly" were interpreted as *common* practices in the everyday lives of youths. "Occasionally" and "rarely" responses reflected a degree of exposure to the practice suggesting that the practice was *present* in but not necessarily central to their everyday lives, while "Never" responses denoted that these

² To assure that the survey sample reflected the demographics and digital practices of incoming youths, 250 responses were needed for 95% confidence level. This target number was based on Frederick Community College enrollment data dated August 21, 2012 as reported by Frederick Community College Enrollment Services. A total of 255 surveys were completed.

practices were *absent*. Frequency results are discussed in terms of the extent to which the practices appeared *common, present, or absent* in community college youths' everyday lives.

Confidence and perceptions of importance data were gathered to elucidate the convergences and divergences between youths' habitus and the field of education and theorize potential impacts on community college youths' agency. To gauge youths' confidence with digital practices, respondents specified if they were confident, somewhat confident, or not confident performing each practice. To estimate perceptions of importance, respondents specified whether or not each practice was important in college and in their future everyday lives and work. Additional details about the FCC Digital Practices Survey design, sample, administration procedures, and data assessment methods are delineated in Appendix A.

After a summary of respondents' demographic characteristics, the chapter describes incoming FCC youths' Internet access, technology ownership, and usage. It then transitions into an account of their digital socializing and communicating; engagement in digital entertainment and creative practices; and digital management of life, information, school and work, including differences between males and females and among youths with different racial and ethnic identities. The conclusion complicates interactions between FCC youths' digital culture, habitus, and the field of education by juxtaposing patterns of their practices, perceptions, and differences with contrasting points of data.

Demographic Characteristics

A demographic overview of the 255 survey respondents provides a profile of 18-24 year old freshmen cohort who enrolled in FCC during fall 2012. Over 75% of incoming youths were 18 or 19 years olds; 55.3% were males and 44.7% were females (Table 1).

Table 1

Age and Sex of Survey Respondents

Demographic	Frequency N = 255	Percent 100%
Age		
18	135	52.9
19	58	22.7
20-21	30	11.8
22-24	32	12.6
Sex		
Male	141	55.3
Female	114	44.7

The racial and ethnic representation included 61.2% white, 16.9% African-American, 10.6% Latino, 5.1% multiracial, 3.5% Asian, and 2.7% Indigenous youths.³ Individually, the number of respondents of color fell within the margins of error reflected in Frederick Community College race and ethnicity statistics for incoming students ages 18-24. When combined, however, respondents of color were overrepresented in this sample, comprising 38.8% of the sample compared to 26.9% of FCC students of color between the ages of 18-24 (Table 2). As a result, white youths were underrepresented in the

³ The FCC Digital Practices Survey used U.S. Census Bureau race and ethnic categories. Given the small number of Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Native Alaskan respondents, these identifiers have been combined into the category of Indigenous for the sake of brevity. For this study, other racial and ethnic categories have been simplified to a one-word identifier.

sample, comprising 61.2% of survey respondents, compared to 73.1% of the 18 -24 year old student population.⁴ The social class distribution of respondents indicated that a majority was either middle or working class: 44.7% were middle class; 34.9% were working class; 9.0% were upper middle class; 9.0% were not sure; and 2.4% were lower class.⁵

Table 2

Race, Ethnicity, and Social Class Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Demographic	Frequency N = 255	Percent 100%
Race and Ethnicity		
African-American	43	16.9
Latino	27	10.6
White	156	61.2
Multiracial	13	5.1
Asian	9	3.5
Indigenous ⁶	7	2.7
Social Class		
Lower Class	6	2.4
Working Class	89	34.9
Middle Class	114	44.7
Upper Middle Class	23	9.0
Not Sure	23	9.0

A majority of respondents were dependent on their parents financially, with 83.1% living with their parents and 4.3% of them living elsewhere. The

⁴ Calculations of the demographic distribution of students ages 18 - 24 were based on enrollment data from Frederick Community College's Enrollment Management System, PeopleSoft, on January 13, 2013.

⁵ Survey respondents' social class status was determined through an assessment of the occupational prestige of their parents' occupations. This measure more closely aligns with the social class performance than estimation of social class based on family income. See Appendix A for a description of the occupational prestige coding process.

⁶ This category includes Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Native Alaskan respondents.

remaining respondents (12.5%) lived independently and supported themselves (Table 3).

Table 3

Dependence and Work Status of Survey Respondents

Demographic	Frequency N = 255	Percent 100%
Dependence Status		
I live with my parent(s)/guardian(s) and am dependent on them for financial support.	212	83.1
I do not live with my parent(s)/guardian(s) but am dependent on them for financial support.	11	4.3
I live on my own and financially independent.	32	12.5
Work Status		
Full-time: 35+ hours/week	39	15.3
Half-time: 20-34 hours/week	75	29.4
Part-time: up to 20 hours/week	69	27.1
I do not work.	72	28.2

Most respondents worked: 27.1% worked up to 20 hours per week; 29.4% worked 20-34 hours per week; and 15.3% worked full time, while 28.2% were not employed. Cost and location were two prominent reasons they chose to attend FCC; other reasons included not being sure what they wanted to do and the choices of available majors. In terms of enrollment and academic goals: over 63% planned to attend full-time and more than 70% planned to transfer to a four-year institution after completing courses or attaining their associate's degree at FCC. Most incoming youths were middle or working class, financially dependent on their parents, and lived with them but worked

at least part-time. Overall, attending FCC seemed to be a practical choice for youths.

Technology Access, Ownership, and Usage

Often digital divide research has aligned digital practices with Internet access and ownership of technology. Within the context of community college education, concerns about lack of access fuel broad assumptions about students' college-readiness and impacts on their learning. Data about youths' Internet access and technology ownership reflects extent to which digital practices may or may not be incorporated into their everyday lives. Survey results indicated that a significant majority (97.2%) of incoming FCC youths' had home access to the Internet (Table 4) through broadband, cell phone Wi-Fi, or dial-up modem. Of the remaining respondents, 2% were unsure of the type of access but had access, and less than 1% had no home access.

Table 4

Home Internet Access

Type of Internet Access	Frequency N = 255	Percentage 100%
With dial-up modem	10	3.9
Through broadband	209	81.9
Through my cell phone	29	11.4
No access	2	.8
Not sure, but have access	5	2.0

In addition, a majority of respondents reported that their most frequent conduits to Internet access were mobile: 41.5% indicated most frequently

accessing the internet through their cell phones, and 31.0% reported accessing it on their laptop wherever they happened to be. For 26.2% of respondents, the most frequent point of access for Internet connection was at home, while for 1.2% of respondents, access occurred at a location outside their homes (Table 5). Collectively, these data suggest that Internet access is ubiquitous, with relatively few respondents reporting no access and a small percentage (3.9%) reporting dial-up mobile access, which is comparatively slower than broadband connections. Where a more significant difference occurred was in the mobility of access among those surveyed, with a total of 27.5% reporting most frequent access at home or at another location, and 72.5% reporting more mobile availability through their cell phones or laptops.

Table 5

Most Frequent Conduit to Internet Access

Most Frequent Internet Access	Frequency N = 255	Percentage 100%
Home computer	67	26.3
Laptop where ever I happen to be	79	31.0
Cell phone using Wi-Fi	47	18.4
Cell phone using a data plan	59	23.1
Computer at school, library or other place	3	1.2

Access in the form of ownership provides insight into how youths may or may not engage in digital culture in their everyday lives. Similar to national trends in ownership (Madden et al., 2013), surveyed youths reported high instances of personal ownership of particular technologies: 94.12% own cell

phones; 100% owned either a laptop (74.51%) or a desktop computer (25.88%); and 84.31% owned mp3 players. Over one-half personally owned televisions (61.57%), videogame consoles (60%), and digital cameras (57.65%). Over a third owned video cameras (35.29%). Fewer owned computer tablets (18.43%), and e-book readers (12.55%); only a small percentage paid for landline telephone access (5.88%).

As reflected in Table 6, the technologies individuals did not own, their families owned. Combined personal and family ownership exceeded 95% for cell phones, digital cameras, televisions, and laptops; 90% for mp3 players, desktop computers, and video cameras; and 85% for landlines and videogame consoles.

Table 6

Personal and Family Ownership of Technology

Technology	Personal Ownership N = 255	Percent 100%	Personal + Family Ownership N = 255	Percent 100%
Cell Phone	240	94.12	255	100.00
Landline	15	5.88	221	86.67
Digital Camera	147	57.65	253	99.22
Video Camera	90	35.29	235	92.16
Videogame Console	153	60.00	227	89.02
Desktop Computer	66	25.88	237	92.94
Laptop Computer	190	74.51	245	96.08
MP3 Player	215	84.31	241	94.51
Television	157	61.57	252	98.82
E-book Reader	32	12.55	167	65.49
Computer Tablet	47	18.43	169	66.27

With the exception of e-book readers and computer tablets, which account for 65.49% and 66.27% combined personal and family ownership,

respectively, data suggest that a wide range of technologies are present in FCC youths' everyday lives.

Despite substantial access to a variety of technologies, surveyed youths' usage of these devices varied. When asked how often they use specific types of technology, respondents chose from four frequency measures: often, sometimes, rarely, and never. As shown in Table 7, over 90% of the surveyed cohort reported using cell phones (90.59%) often, with an additional 5.1% reporting that they sometimes used cell phones. Combined, over 80% used laptops, mp3 players, and televisions often or sometimes.

Table 7

Technology Usage

Type of Technology	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Cell phone	90.59%	5.10%	3.92%	0.39%
Landline phone	3.53	24.71	39.61	32.16
Digital Camera	18.43	40.00	31.76	9.80
Video Camera	11.37	27.06	42.75	18.82
Videogame console	28.63	26.27	27.45	17.65
Desktop Computer	30.59	30.98	28.24	10.20
Laptop Computer	66.67	20.00	9.41	3.92
MP3 Player/Ipod	62.35	22.35	8.24	7.06
Television	55.69	34.12	8.24	1.96
E-book reader (like the Kindle)	7.84	9.41	22.75	60.00
Ipad or similar computer tablet	16.08	14.12	19.61	50.20

Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)

Although combined personal and family ownership exceeded 85% for the digital camera, video camera, videogames console, desktop computer, and landline phone (Table 6), significantly fewer reported that they often used their digital camera (18.43%), video camera (11.37%), video game console

(28.63%), desktop computer (30.59%), and landline phone (3.53%). Of this technology subset, several were used sometimes: digital cameras (40%), video cameras (27.06%), video game consoles (26.27%), and desktop computers (30.98%).

An overview of rarely or never used technologies reveals additional trends. First, over 80% of the cohort rarely (22.75%) or never (60%) used an e-book reader; and nearly 70% reported rarely (19.61%) or never (50.2%) using a computer tablet (Table 7). These numbers align with the low percentages of combined personal and family ownership of these technologies (Table 6). Second, prominent ownership of a landline phones exceeded 85%, yet over 70% reported rarely (39.61%) or never (32.16%) using them. Similarly, over 60% reported rarely (42.75%) or never (18.82%) using a video camera, and over 40% indicated rarely (31.76%) or never (9.8%) using a digital camera. Combined landline phone, digital camera and video camera usage intimates that integrated cell phone technology has rendered these less useful. Similarly, laptop usage may have affected desktop computer usage, wherein over 38% report rarely or never using a desktop computer. Finally, in contrast to the prominence of personal and family ownership of videogame consoles (Table 6), over 45% of the cohort rarely (27.45%) or never (17.65%) used a videogame console (Table 7). These numbers combined with the technology ownership data suggest that youths' ownership did not equate usage. In other words, digital practices were shaped by more than technologies' presence in their everyday lives.

As illustrated in Table 8, surveyed youths were confident using cell phones (98.04%) and computers (92.94%), and connecting to the Internet (95.69%), with the balance reporting that they were somewhat confident.

Table 8

Confidence Using Cell Phones, Computers, and the Internet

	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident
Using a cell phone	98.04%	1.96%	0.00%
Using a computer	92.94	6.67	0.39
Accessing and using the Internet	95.69	4.31	0.00
Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)			

Additionally, over 90% of respondents deemed using a computer and connecting to the Internet important in college by (Table 9). The relevance of these practices in respondents' future everyday lives and work changed significantly, however, with less than 75% of respondents deeming computers and the Internet relevant to their future. In contrast, slightly more than 60% indicated that cell phones were important in college, while a growing number, nearly 82%, deemed them important in their future.

Table 9

Importance of Using Cell Phones, Computers, and the Internet in College and in the Future

	Important in College	Important in My Future Everyday Life and Work	Change in Importance: College vs. Future
Using a cell phone	61.18%	81.96%	20.78%
Using a computer	92.94	72.55	-20.39
Accessing and using the Internet	91.37	73.73	-17.65
Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)			

Measures of confidence and importance related to other technologies are integrated into the following digital practices sections since many overlap with enacting particular practices (e.g., video-editing, playing videogames, and other creative practices).

Digitally Socializing and Communicating

Text messaging friends and family and participating in social networking sites (SNS) were common practices for 90.59% and 81.18% of youths respectively. For most remaining respondents, these practices were present in their lives (Table 10); only a small percentage (5.49%) did not engage in these practices. Common for over half (53.73%) and present for over a third (36.86%) of those surveyed, was sharing information using technology. For the remaining respondents (9.41%), this practice was absent.

While frequency data about texting friends and family, participating in SNS, and sharing information via technology reflected popular trends in youths' uses of technology, the distribution of the remaining digital socializing and communicating practices were scattered. Common among fewer respondents were emailing friends and family (29.41%), chatting online (22.36%), and posting/responding to SNS/blogs/message boards (38.82%). Less common among those surveyed were video chatting (16.47%), participating in an online community other than SNS (17.25%), and meeting new people online (14.51%).

Table 10

Frequency of Digital Socializing and Communicating

Digital Practice	Daily	Weekly	Common = Daily + Weekly	Occasionally	Rarely	Present = Occasionally + Rarely	Absent = Never
Text friends/family	88.63%	1.96%	90.59%	4.31%	3.53%	7.84%	1.57%
Email friends/family	12.16	17.25	29.41	32.16	26.67	58.82	11.76
Use social networking sites (e.g., MySpace, Facebook, Twitter)	68.63	12.55	81.18	7.45	5.88	13.33	5.49
Chat online	13.73	8.63	22.35	19.22	29.41	48.63	29.02
Videochat	7.06	9.41	16.47	27.84	23.14	50.98	32.55
Participate in an online community (other than a social networking site)	11.76	5.49	17.25	10.20	22.75	32.94	49.80
Meet new people online	5.88	8.63	14.51	23.53	27.84	51.37	34.12
Date online	0.39	0.78	1.18	2.35	8.24	10.59	88.24
Post/respond to blogs/message boards/a social networking site	18.82	20.00	38.82	17.25	14.90	32.16	29.02
Share information using technology (e.g., photos, links, files)	29.02	24.71	53.73	27.06	9.80	36.86	9.41
Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)							

Present in the lives of a notable number of respondents were emailing friends and family (58.82%), videochatting (50.98%), meeting new people online (51.37%), chatting online (48.63%), participating in an online community other than SNS (32.94%), and posting/responding to SNS/blogs/message boards (32.16%).

Dating online was absent for significant majority of the youth cohort (88.24%); 10.59% had some degree of exposure to it, while only 1.18% reported it as a common practice. In addition, almost half (49.8%) never participated in an online community other than a SNS; nearly one-third never video-chatted or met new people online, and 29% never chatted online or posted/responded to SNS/blogs/messages boards.

Confidence with Digital Socializing and Communicating. Most youths reported confidence with texting (95.29%), social networking (87.45%) and emailing (81.18%), with the remainder primarily indicating that they were somewhat confident with them. A majority were confident posting/responding to SNS/blogs/message boards (64.71%), sharing information (70.59%) and using technology to collaborate (58.04). Between 10-12% were not confident posting/responding (10.98%) or collaborating (11.76%), while less than 8% were not confident with sharing information digitally. The remaining respondents were somewhat confident with these three practices (Table 11).

Table 11

Confidence with Digital Socializing and Communicating

	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident
Texting	95.29%	3.92%	0.78%
Emailing	81.18	16.86	1.96
Using social networking sites (SNS)	87.45	9.80	2.75
Posting/responding to SNS/blogs/message boards	64.71	24.31	10.98
Sharing information using technology	70.59	21.57	7.84
Using technology to collaborate with others	58.04	30.20	11.76

Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)

Importance of Digital Socializing and Communicating in College and Their Futures. Emailing, sharing information, and collaborating via technology were deemed important in college by just over 75%, 62% and 63% of respondents, respectively. The importance of these practices in the their futures varied somewhat. In contrast, fewer (between 41-51%) considered texting, participating in SNS, and posting/responding to SNS/blogs/message boards relevant to college. More youths (between 59-72%) deemed these important in their futures. As summarized in Table 12, with the exception of emailing, which remained important to nearly the same number of respondents, all of the digital socializing and communicating practices were noted as important to their future by a higher number of respondents.

Table 12

Importance of Digital Socializing and Communicating in College and in the Future

	Important in College	Important in My Future Everyday Life and Work	Change in Importance: College vs. Future
Texting	50.59%	71.37%	20.78%
Emailing	75.69	74.90	-0.78
Using social networking sites (SNS)	42.75	61.57	18.82
Posting/responding to SNS/blogs/message boards	41.18	59.22	18.04
Sharing information using technology	62.35	69.80	7.45
Using technology to collaborate with others	63.14	69.02	5.88

Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)

Engaging in Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices

Highlighted in Table 13, listening to music (98.86%) and watching television (87.45%) were common for a majority of surveyed youths, followed by watching movies (73.73%) and online videos (71.76%). These four practices were present in the lives of almost all of remaining respondents, with the exception of under 1% who never watched television and 2.75% who never watched movies or online videos.

The frequency data for the remaining creative practices—digital game-playing; digital reading, writing and listening; problem-solving; and creating art or music—deviated from this pattern. Digital game-playing was common for less than 50% of respondents: 47.06% played videogames; 41.57% played games on cell phones; and 34.12% played games online daily or weekly. These practices were present for a similar percentage of respondents: 37.25% played videogames; 42.75% played games on cell phones; and

46.67% played games online occasionally or rarely. Between 15-20% reported never playing games via video, cell phone or online (Table 13).

Digital reading, writing, and listening practices varied. The most common reading practices were reading online websites for entertainment (47.06%) and news (44.31%). These same practices were occasional or rare for similar percentages of respondents, with 39.61% and 41.18% reading online websites for entertainment and news, respectively, and absent for 13-14% of respondents. Reading in either e-book or print form was not common for most youths. Only 29.02% reported occasionally or rarely reading e-books and 57.25% never read them, while more (48.63%) read print books and 23.92% never read them. Online writing was more prevalent than print writing but was not a common practice for most youths. Writing online was a daily or weekly activity for 31.37%; occasional or rare 45.88%; and absent for 22.75%. Writing in a paper journal was even less common than online writing with 15.29% reporting daily or weekly journal writing; 32.94% occasionally or rarely journal writing, and 51.76% never journal writing.

Problem-solving/experimenting using computer technology was common among 30.2% of respondents, present for 50.98%, and absent for 18.82%. Creating music or art using technology was common for 21.57%, present for 41.18%, and absent for 37.25%. The least common practice was

Table 13

Frequency of Engaging in Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices

	Daily	Weekly	Common = Daily + Weekly	Occasionally	Rarely	Present = Occasionally + Rarely	Absent = Never
Listen to music	93.33	3.53	96.86	1.57	1.57	3.14	0.00
Watch television	72.94	14.51	87.45	7.84	3.92	11.76	0.78
Watch movies on DVD, on demand or through video streaming	43.14	30.59	73.73	19.61	3.92	23.53	2.75
Watch videos online	45.88	25.88	71.76	18.43	7.06	25.49	2.75
Play videogames	26.27	20.78	47.06	18.82	18.43	37.25	15.69
Play games using cell phone applications	23.92	17.65	41.57	25.10	17.65	42.75	15.69
Play games online	20.39	13.73	34.12	20.39	26.27	46.67	19.22
Read online websites for entertainment	24.71	22.35	47.06	25.49	14.12	39.61	13.33
Read e-books	7.84	5.88	13.73	12.16	16.86	29.02	57.25
Read online websites for news	23.14	21.18	44.31	25.88	15.29	41.18	14.51
Read print books	13.73	13.73	27.45	25.88	22.75	48.63	23.92
Write online	14.90	16.47	31.37	18.82	27.06	45.88	22.75
Write in a private, paper journal	7.06	8.24	15.29	12.16	20.78	32.94	51.76
Listen to podcasts	3.14	3.92	7.06	15.29	20.78	36.08	56.86
Create music or art using technology	13.73	7.84	21.57	18.82	22.35	41.18	37.25
Solve problems or experiment using technology	16.08	14.12	30.20	28.63	22.35	50.98	18.82
Participate in activities that don't use technology (e.g., sports, extra- curricular, clubs)	38.43	30.98	69.41	13.73	10.20	23.92	6.67

Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)

listening to podcasts: Only 7.06% reported listening to podcasts daily or weekly, compared to 36.08% who listened on occasion or rarely, and 56.68% who never listened. Beyond engagement with technology for entertainment and creative practices, respondents reported active participation in activities that did not involve technology: 69.41% engaged in these activities daily or weekly; 23.92% occasionally or rarely; and 6.67% never.

Confidence with Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices. As indicated in Table 14, over 90% of youths were confident using technology to listen to music and watch television, and 87.06% and 72.94% were confident using cell phone applications and using videogame technology, respectively. Of these four practices, using videogame technology had the highest “not confident” response (9.02%).

Table 14

Confidence with Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices

	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident
Using cell phone applications	87.06%	10.59%	2.35%
Using videogame technology	72.94	18.04	9.02
Using digital technology to listen to music	91.37	7.84	0.78
Using technology to watch television/movies	91.76	7.06	1.18
Using word processing software	68.24	27.06	4.71
Using video-editing software	27.45	37.65	34.90
Using photo-editing software	43.53	35.69	20.78
Creating multimedia presentations	46.67	39.22	14.12
Using software to create music	25.88	32.55	41.57
Using spreadsheet software or other computer programs to solve problems	30.20	39.22	30.59
Using graphic/web design software	24.71	35.29	40.00

Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)

The distribution of confidence responses varied with using software that supported digital creative practices. A majority (68.24%) were confident using word processing software, while most of remaining respondents were somewhat confident (27.06%) and fewer than 5% were not confident. Less than half were confident using multi-media (46.67%) and photo-editing (43.53%) software, and still fewer were confident with using spreadsheets/problem-solving software (30.2%), video-editing (27.45%), creating music digitally (25.88%), and designing graphics/websites (24.71%). For most of these software-related creative practices, between 32-39% of surveyed youths reported that they were somewhat confident performing them. Between 30-42% of youths were not confident using spreadsheets/problem-solving software, video-editing, designing graphics/websites, or creating music using task-specific software practices, while over 20% were not confident photo-editing and 14% were not confident creating multimedia presentations.

Importance of Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices in College and Their Futures. As shown in Table 15, a majority of youths did not perceive using cell phone applications, listening to music, watching television and movies, and playing videogames important in college. Whereas between 43-45% did deem using listening to music and cell phone applications important, between 25-29% indicated that playing videogames and watching television and movies were relevant to college. All of these practices were noted as important to the futures of 50-67% of respondents.

In contrast, a majority of youths indicated software that supported three of the creative practices was important in college, but less important in their future everyday lives and work. Over 90% of respondents indicated that word-processing was important in college, but only 61.18% considered it important in their futures. Similarly, over 80% regarded creating multimedia presentations, and using spreadsheets or other computer programs to solve problems, yet fewer – 56.47% and 54.12%, respectively – deemed these practices important in their futures.

Table 15

Importance of Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices in College and in the Future

	Important in College	Important in My Future Everyday Life and Work	Change in Importance: College vs. Future
Using cell phone applications	44.71%	66.27%	21.57%
Playing video games	25.10	50.98	25.88
Listening to music	43.92	67.06	23.14
Watching television and movies	29.41	63.14	33.73
Using word processing software	90.59	61.18	-29.41
Using video-editing software	53.33	47.45	-5.88
Using photo-editing software	54.90	50.20	-4.71
Creating multimedia presentations	84.31	56.47	-27.84
Creating music digitally	36.47	40.39	3.92
Using spreadsheet software or other computer programs to solve problems	81.96	54.12	-27.84
Using graphic/web design software	59.22	42.35	-16.86

Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)

Between 52-60% deemed using software that supported graphic/web design, photo-editing, and video-editing important in college; fewer –between 42-50%– considered these relevant to their future everyday lives and work. Fewer (36.47%) considered creating music digitally as important in college, while slightly more (40.37%) noted that this would be important in their future.

Managing Life, Information, School, and Work Digitally

With few exceptions, surveyed youths actively managed their lives through a variety of digital practices. Common for over half of those surveyed was making sure their private information was secure (68.74%), figuring out directions (58.04%), seeking reliable information online (56.47%), and storing important information (52.55%). Nearly half (49.41%) reported seeking information about colleges and careers. Less than 6% indicated that they never engaged in these practices (Table 16).

Digital financial management, scheduling and job-seeking practices were disparate. Common life management practices for over one-third of respondents were banking online (42.75%), managing finances (36.86%), managing schedules (39.61%), and seeking employment (38.82%). These same four practices were present for just as many with 31.37% banking, 40.78% managing finances, 43.92% managing schedules, and 51.37% seeking employment occasionally or rarely using technology. However, over twenty-five percent (25.88%) never banked online; 22.35% never managed

Table 16

Frequency of Managing Life, Information, School, and Work Digitally

	Daily		Weekly		Common = Daily + Weekly		Occasionally		Rarely		Present = Occasionally + Rarely		Absent = Never	
	27.06%	14.51	29.41%	34.90	56.47%	30.20%	41.18	10.20%	40.39%	3.14%				
Seek reliable online information important to my life (e.g., health info, finances, events)	27.06%	14.51	29.41%	34.90	56.47%	30.20%	41.18	10.20%	40.39%	3.14%				
Seek information about colleges and careers online	14.51	14.51	34.90	34.90	49.41	41.18	7.45	7.45	48.63	1.96				
Seek employment using online information and resources	16.47	16.47	22.35	22.35	38.82	39.61	11.76	11.76	51.37	9.80				
Store information digitally that is important to me	28.24	28.24	24.31	24.31	52.55	35.29	7.84	7.84	43.14	4.31				
Figure out directions using technology (e.g., Google Maps, GPS)	24.71	24.71	33.33	33.33	58.04	34.12	5.49	5.49	39.61	2.35				
Manage my schedule using technology	24.71	24.71	14.90	14.90	39.61	24.71	19.22	19.22	43.92	16.47				
Manage my finances using technology	18.04	18.04	18.82	18.82	36.86	24.31	16.47	16.47	40.78	22.35				
Buy and/or sell items online	7.45	7.45	10.59	10.59	18.04	30.59	25.10	25.10	55.69	26.27				
Bank online	21.18	21.18	21.57	21.57	42.75	19.61	11.76	11.76	31.37	25.88				
Secure my private information	46.27	46.27	21.96	21.96	68.24	18.82	7.06	7.06	25.88	5.88				

Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)

finances using technology; 16.47% never managed their schedules digitally; and 9.8% never sought employment online. Related to financial practices, buying and/or selling items online was the least common practice, with only 18.04% buying/selling daily or weekly; 55.69% occasionally to rarely; and 26.47% never engaging in this practice (Table 16).

Confidence with Managing Life, Information, School, and Work

Digitally. Reflected in Table 17, over 90% incoming community college youths reported being confident or somewhat confident with managing life, information, school, and work digitally, with the exception of practices related to managing finances. Among those surveyed, 21.57% were not confident banking online, 16.08% were not confident managing finances, and 13.33% were not confident buying and/or selling items online. Between 6-7% were not confident seeking employment online, managing schedules digitally or

Table 17

Confidence with Managing Life, Information, School, and Work Digitally

	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident
Storing information digitally that is important	70.20%	26.27%	3.53%
Downloading/uploading files	78.82	17.65	3.53
Finding reliable online information	73.73	23.14	3.14
Seeking information about colleges and careers online	69.41	29.02	1.57
Seeking employment using online information and resources	61.18	32.55	6.27
Figuring out directions using technology	81.57	17.25	1.18
Managing my schedule using technology	60.78	32.16	7.06
Managing my finances using technology	46.27	37.65	16.08
Buying and/or selling items online	54.90	31.76	13.33
Banking online	53.33	25.10	21.57
Securing my private information	62.75	30.98	6.27

Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)

securing their private information. Less than 5% lacked confidence with digitally storing, downloading/uploading, and finding reliable information; seeking information about colleges and careers; and figuring out directions.

Importance of Managing Life, Information, School, and Work

Digitally in College and Their Futures. Highlighted in Table 18, a majority of respondents found all of the practices in this category important in college, with the exception of buying/selling items online (34.9%). Relevant to most were finding reliable information online (88.24%), seeking information about colleges and careers online (83.53%), downloading/uploading information (80.78%), storing important information (78.82%), managing their schedules (76.47%), and securing their private information (73.73%). Between 50-60% of respondents deemed seeking employment using online information and resources, figuring out directions using technology, managing finances, and banking online important in college.

With the exception of securing their private information, which remained equally important in college and in the future to almost 75% of respondents, the percentage of respondents who deemed other digital management practices relevant in college versus their future fluctuated as much as 37.65%. Results indicated a decline in the future importance of the following practices: seeking information about colleges and careers online (-35.69%), finding reliable information online (-31.37%), downloading/uploading information (-18.07%), managing their schedules

using technology (-12.16%), and storing important information digitally (-10.98%). In contrast, respondents regarded five digital practices more valuable in their future everyday lives and work, including buying and/or selling items online (+37.65%), banking online (+27.84%), figuring out directions (+25.1%), seeking employment using online information and resources (+23.92%), and managing finances using technology (+13.33%). The fluctuations in these data reveal discontinuity in importance attributed to these digital practices. This observation when converged with other patterns in the survey data is further theorized in the concluding analysis of this chapter.

Table 18

Importance of Managing Life, Information, School, and Work Digitally in College and in the Future

	Important in College	Important in My Future Everyday Life and Work	Change in Importance: College vs. Future
Storing information digitally that is important	78.82%	67.84%	-10.98%
Downloading/uploading information	80.78	62.75	-18.04
Finding reliable online information	88.24	56.86	-31.37
Seeking information about colleges and careers online	83.53	47.84	-35.69
Seeking employment using online information and resources	51.76	75.69	23.92
Figuring out directions using technology	52.16	77.25	25.10
Managing my schedule using technology	76.47	64.31	-12.16
Managing my finances using technology	60.78	74.12	13.33
Buying and/or selling items online	34.90	72.55	37.65
Banking online	50.20	78.04	27.84
Securing my private information	73.73	74.51	0.78
Numbers reflect percentage of respondents (N=255)			

Digital Differences among FCC Youths

Beyond the aggregate data about Frederick Community College youths' digital practices are data about the differences among their practices. These differences provide preliminary insight into the fourth research question of this study: *What are the patterns of difference in youths' digital practices, confidence levels, and the value they associate with these practices?* From the onset of this research an operating assumption has been that differences in habitus, as reflected in multiple dimensions of difference may shape, but not completely over-determine, youths' digital practices, confidence levels, and perceptions of value. Highlighted herein are digital differences between males and females and among youths with different racial and ethnic identities observed in the survey data.

Digital Differences between Males and Females. The following summarizes differences between male and female respondents' Internet access; technology ownership and usage; frequency of digital practices; confidence with digital practices; and value of digital practices in college and in their future everyday lives and work.

Technology Access, Ownership, and Usage. Internet access was the same between males and females; however, respondents' most frequent connection to the Internet did differ. More males connected to the Internet via a computer; more females connected using their cell phones. Further, females were more likely to have their own digital cameras, laptops, and e-books, while males were more likely to have their own videogame consoles.

Although reading e-books was not common for the surveyed cohort, females were more likely to read them than males.

Frequency of Digital Practices. In terms of socializing and communicating, six significant differences between males and females' practices were present in the data. Females more frequently texted, used social networking sites (SNS), and shared information using technology. Over one-third of males never videochatted or posted/responded to SNS/blogs/message boards, while over 40% of females never met new people online (Table 19).

Table 19

Differences between Males and Females' Frequency of Six Digital Socializing and Communicating Practices

	Common = Daily + Weekly	Present = Occasionally + Rarely	Never = Absent
Texting friends/family***			
Males	85.82%	13.48%	0.71%
Females	96.49%	0.88%	2.63%
Using a social networking site***			
Males	73.76%	18.44%	7.80%
Females	90.35%	7.02%	2.63%
Sharing information**			
Males	46.10%	41.84%	12.06%
Females	63.16%	30.70%	6.14%
Videochatting*			
Males	11.35%	53.19%	35.46%
Females	22.81%	48.25%	28.95%
Meeting new people online*			
Males	18.44%	52.48%	29.08%
Females	9.65%	50.00%	40.35%
Posting/responding to blogs/message boards/a social networking site*			
Males	31.91%	33.33%	34.75%
Females	47.37%	30.70%	21.93%

*p<.05, **p<.005, ***p<.0005

Reported in Table 20, gender differences in five digital entertainment and creative practices were apparent. More males played videogames and online games and watched online videos more often than females. Over 30% of females never played videogames or online games. More males used technology to solve problems daily or weekly. In contrast, females wrote online more frequently than males.

Table 20

Differences between Males and Females in the Frequency of Five Digital and Three Non-digital Entertainment and Creative Practices

		Common = Daily + Weekly	Present = Occasionally + Rarely	Never = Absent
Watching videos online***	Males	84.40%	14.89%	0.71%
	Females	56.14%	38.60%	5.26%
Playing videogames***	Males	70.21%	26.24%	3.55%
	Females	18.42%	50.88%	30.70%
Playing games online***	Males	43.97%	46.10%	9.93%
	Females	21.93%	47.37%	30.70%
Writing online**	Males	24.82%	45.39%	29.79%
	Females	39.47%	46.49%	14.04%
Solving problems or experimenting using technology*	Males	36.88%	48.94%	14.18%
	Females	21.93%	53.51%	24.56%
Writing in a private, paper journal*	Males	9.22%	29.08%	61.70%
	Females	22.81%	37.72%	39.47%
Reading print books***	Males	17.02%	56.74%	26.24%
	Females	40.35%	38.60%	21.05%
Participating in activities that do not use technology***	Males	80.85%	14.18%	4.96%
	Females	55.26%	35.96%	8.77%

*p<.05, **p<.005, ***p<.0001

Males and females' participation in entertainment and creative activities that did not involve technology also differed (Table 20). Reading print books and writing in private, paper journals, though not common activities for the group, were more frequently practiced by females than males. Males, however, participated in non-technology activities such as clubs and sports, more frequently than females.

Differences in the frequency of three practices related to managing life, information, school and work, were also present. Females more frequently managed their schedules using technology, banked online, and secured their private information (Table 21).

Table 21

Differences between Males and Females in Frequency of Three Digital Management Practices

	Common = Daily + Weekly	Present = Occasionally + Rarely	Never = Absent
Managing my schedule using technology*			
Males	34.04%	46.10%	19.86%
Females	46.49%	41.23%	12.28%
Banking online*			
Males	37.59%	38.30%	24.11%
Females	49.12%	22.81%	28.07%
Securing my private information*			
Males	63.12%	31.21%	5.67%
Females	74.56%	19.30%	6.14%

*p<.05

Confidence with Digital Practices. Confidence varied among young men and women for seven digital practices. The most significant difference was their confidence with playing videogames: most males were confident with this practice, while most females were somewhat confident or not

confident. Confidence levels were significantly different for using photo-editing software, finding reliable information online, figuring out directions using technology, managing their schedules using technology, and banking online. Of these practices, more females reported confidence with using technology to photo-edit, figure out directions, and manage their schedules, while more males were confident finding reliable information online. Confidence with banking online varied: most females either felt confident or not confident; males were somewhat confident with this practice (Table 22).

Table 22

Differences between Male and Female FCC Youths' Confidence with Five Digital Practices

		Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident
Texting*	Males	92.20%	6.38%	1.42%
	Females	99.12%	0.88%	0.00%
Using videogame technology**	Males	90.07%	7.09%	2.84%
	Females	51.75%	31.58%	16.67%
Using photo-editing software*	Males	36.17%	37.59%	26.24%
	Females	52.63%	33.33%	14.04%
Finding reliable online information*	Males	78.01%	17.73%	4.26%
	Females	68.42%	29.82%	1.75%
Figuring out directions using technology*	Males	76.60%	21.28%	2.13%
	Females	87.72%	12.28%	0.00%
Managing my schedule using technology*	Males	54.61%	39.01%	6.38%
	Females	68.42%	23.68%	7.89%
Banking online*	Males	48.23%	31.21%	20.57%
	Females	59.65%	17.54%	22.81%

*p<.05, **p<.0001

Importance of Digital Practices in College and Their Futures. Over 30% of males indicated that videogames were important in college compared to over 18% of females (Table 23). More significantly, however, was that over half of males deemed listening music important, compared to just over one-third of females. A greater percentage of males also indicated that creating music digitally in college was important. Further, a higher percentage of females (97.37%) deemed using computers important, compared to males (89.36%). In contrast, over 67% of males deemed cell phones important to college compared to over 53% of their female peers.

Table 23

Differences in Importance of Five Digital Practices in College between Male and Female FCC Youths

	Males	Females
Playing video games*	30.50%	18.42%
Listening to music***	51.77%	34.21%
Using a cell phone*	67.38%	53.51%
Using a computer*	89.36%	97.37%
Creating music digitally*	41.84%	29.82%

*p.05, **p<.005

As reported in Table 24, valuable to the future of more females than males were storing important information, managing their schedules using technology, and using social networking sites, and graphic design software.

Table 24

Differences in Importance of Four Digital Practices in Their Future Lives and Work between Male and Female FCC Youths

	Males	Females
Storing information digitally that is important *	61.70%	75.44%
Managing my schedule using technology*	58.87%	71.05%
Using a social networking site *	55.32%	69.30%
Using graphic/web design software*	36.88%	49.12%

*p<.05

Demographic Differences. In addition to digital differences between males and females, two differences between demographics characteristics were statistically significant: youths' primary reason for attending FCC and whether or not they had children. In addition to cost and location being important reasons for choosing to attend FCC, 15.78% of females indicated choice of major was important compared to 9.22% of males, while 6.03% of males responded that athletic recruitment was important, compared to 0% of females. In terms of parenting, 13.15% of females indicated that they had children compared to 4.25% of males.

Digital Differences among Youths with Different Racial and Ethnic Identities. The following summarizes the differences in Internet access, technology ownership, and usage frequency of digital practices, confidence with digital practices and value of digital practices in college and in their future everyday life and work among surveyed youths with different racial or ethnic identities.

Technology Access, Ownership, and Usage. Broadband was the primary home Internet connection for 81.96% for all youths surveyed, and

less than 1% had no access. A noted difference, however, occurred in those who reported their cell phones as their sole point of home Internet access: over 20% of Asian and Latino youths reported home Internet access via their cell phones, in contrast to 7%-16% of their counterparts.

Ownership of digital devices indicated no differences according to race or ethnicity with the exception of videogame consoles and laptops. Reported in Table 25, differences in videogame console and laptop ownership were prevalent. African-American and white youths reported the highest rates of videogame console ownership, 72.09% and 63.46% respectively, while Latino and multiracial youths report the lowest, 37.04% and 38.46% respectively. In contrast, 100% of Asian and between 76-85% of multiracial, Latino, and white youths owned laptops compared to slightly more than 59% of African-American and 57% of Indigenous youths.

Table 25

Differences in Videogame Unit and Laptop Ownership among Youths with Different Racial or Ethnic Identities

Race/Ethnicity (N=255)	Own a Videogame Unit	Percent	Own a Laptop	Percent
African-American (n=43)	31	72.09%	25	58.14%
Latino (n=27)	10	37.04%	21	77.78%
White (n=156)	99	63.46%	120	76.92%
Multiracial (n=13)	5	38.46%	11	84.61%
Asian (n=9)	4	44.44%	9	100%
Indigenous (n=7)	4	57.14%	4	57.14%

The frequency with which youths used cell phones and video cameras emerged for one or two racial or ethnic groups for each practice. First, cell phone usage varied slightly for Latino youths, wherein 3 out of 27

respondents (10%) of respondents did not use cell phones often. Second, over 57% of Indigenous and 38% of multiracial youths used video cameras often, compared to fewer of their counterparts.

Frequency of Digital Practices. Racial and ethnic identities were not factors in determining the frequency of digitally socializing and communicating and digital entertainment and creative practices of surveyed youths, with two exceptions: watching television and listening to podcasts. Compared to the 72.04% of youths who often watched television, 85.71% of Indigenous youths often watched, in contrast to 44.44% of Asian youths who rarely watched. Asian respondents were more likely to listen to podcasts than others.

Four differences emerged in practices related to managing life, information, school, and work. As distilled in Table 26, some youths with different racial or ethnic identities engaged in information-seeking and information-storing practices more commonly than others.

Table 26

Differences in Four Common Digital Information Practices among Youths with Different Racial or Ethnic Identities

Race/Ethnicity (N=255)	Seeking info about colleges and careers <i>n</i> (%)	Seeking employment using online resources and info	Seeking reliable info important to their lives	Storing important information digitally
African-American (<i>n</i> =43)	34 (79.07%)	27 (62.79%)	29 (67.44%)	29 (67.44%)
Latino (<i>n</i> =27)	12 (44.44%)	14 (51.85%)	11 (40.74%)	11 (40.47%)
White (<i>n</i> =156)	62 (39.74%)	47 (30.13%)	85 (54.49%)	80 (51.28%)
Multiracial (<i>n</i> =13)	8 (61.54%)	5 (38.46%)	8 (61.54%)	6 (46.15%)
Asian (<i>n</i> =9)	8 (88.89%)	5 (55.56%)	8 (88.89%)	6 (66.67%)
Indigenous (<i>n</i> =7)	2 (28.57%)	1 (4.08%)	3 (42.85%)	2 (28.57%)

Digitally seeking information about colleges and careers was a common (daily or weekly) practice among 88.89% of Asian and 79.07% of African-American youths, in contrast to 61.54% multiracial youths and fewer of their counterparts. Seeking employment using online information and resources was a common practice for a majority of African-American, Latino, and Asian youths in contrast to others in the cohort surveyed. Over 88% of Asian youths reported seeking reliable information online, in comparison to 40-67% of other youths. Less than half of multiracial, Latino, and Indigenous youths commonly stored important information digitally. In terms of non-digital practices, fewer than half of Asian (44.47%) and Latino (48.15%) youths indicated that they participated in sports, clubs, or extra-curricular activities on a regular basis, in contrast to an average of 69.41% for the overall cohort.

Confidence with Digital Practices. Variations in confidence among different youths emerged for five (5) digital practices: using cell phone applications, using digital technology to listen to music, using digital technology to watch television and movies, using video-editing software, using software to create music, and managing one's schedule using technology. A greater percentage of African-American (93.03%), white (88.46%), and multiracial (84.61%) youths were confident with their use of cell phone applications compared to Asian and Latino (77.78%) and Indigenous (71.43%) youths. A lower percentage of Asian (66.66%) and Latino (74.07%) youths reported confidence with using digital technology to listen to music, compared to Indigenous (100%), white (97.44%), African-American (86.05%),

and multiracial (84.62%) youths. Fewer multiracial (69.23%), Asian (77.78%), and Latino (81.48%) youths reported confidence with using technology to watch/stream television and movies, compared to over 90% of other surveyed youths.

Confidence with using video-editing software greatly varied, as reported in Table 27. Overall, only 27.45% of those surveyed reported confidence using video-editing software. Among those who reported confidence were 42.86% of Indigenous, 40.74% of Latino, and 39.53% of African-American youths, compared to 23.07% of white and multiracial youths and 0% of Asian youths. Over 77% of Asian youths were somewhat confident with this practice, while more than 61% of multiracial youths were not confident with it.

Table 27

Differences in Confidence with Using Video-Editing Software among Youths with Different Racial or Ethnic Identities

Race/Ethnicity (N=255)	Not Confident n (%)	Somewhat Confident	Confident
African-American (n=43)	15 (34.88%)	11 (25.58%)	17 (39.53%)
Latino (n=27)	5 (18.52)	11 (40.74)	11 (40.74)
White (n=156)	56 (35.90)	64 (41.03)	36 (23.08)
Multiracial (n=13)	8 (61.54)	2 (15.38)	3 (23.08)
Asian (n=9)	2 (22.22)	7 (77.78)	0 (0.00)
Indigenous (n=7)	2 (28.57)	2 (28.57)	3 (42.86)

Similarly, confidence with using software to create music widely varied, as reported in Table 28. Overall, only 25.88% of youths reported confidence with music-making software, yet over 44% of African-American and 33% of

Latino youths reported confidence. Over 76% of multiracial and more than 46% of white youths reported no confidence with this practice.

Table 28

Differences in Confidence with Using Software to Create Music among Youths from Different Racial or Ethnic Backgrounds

Race/Ethnicity (N=255)	Not Confident <i>n</i> (%)	Somewhat Confident	Confident
African-American (<i>n</i> =43)	8 (18.60%)	16 (37.21%)	19 (44.19%)
Latino (<i>n</i> =27)	9 (33.33)	9 (33.33)	9 (33.33)
White (<i>n</i> =156)	73 (46.79)	51 (32.69)	32 (20.51)
Multiracial (<i>n</i> =13)	10 (76.92)	0 (0.00)	3 (23.08)
Asian (<i>n</i> =9)	3 (33.33)	4 (44.44)	2 (22.22)
Indigenous (<i>n</i> =7)	3 (33.33)	3 (44.44)	1 (22.22)

Over 60% of surveyed youths were confident managing their schedule using technology. Confidence rates were highest for Asian (88.89%), African-American (74.42%) and multiracial (69.23%) youths, followed by between 55-57% of Indigenous, Latino, and white youths. The least confident were Latino youths with 22.22% reporting no confidence with this practice compared to between 0% and 7.69% of their peers.

Importance of Digital Practices in College and Their Futures. Among youths with different racial and ethnic identities, variation in the importance of seven digital practices was significant including seeking information about colleges and careers online, connecting to the internet, using a computer, using video-editing software, creating music digitally, using spreadsheet software or other computer programs to solve problems, and listening to music. Table 29 provides a visual overview of the number of youths who deemed each of these important in college.

Seeking information about colleges and careers online was important to 70-90% of all respondents, except Asian youths: only 44.44% of them reported this practice as important. Connecting to the internet in college was relevant for over 91.37% of the entire cohort; noted exceptions to this included 57.14% of Indigenous and 77.78% of Asian youths who indicated that it was important in college, compared to between 93-100% of multiracial, Latino, and white youths. Using a computer was important in college to 100% of Latino and multiracial, 94.87% of white and over 86% of Asian and African-American youths, in contrast to 57.14% of Indigenous youths.

Nearly 75% of African-Americans deemed using video-editing software important in college, compared to between 44-52% of all youths, with the exception of only 14.62% of Indigenous youths who indicated this practice relevant to college. Similarly, a higher percentage of African-Americans (58.16%) indicated the importance of creating music digitally, compared to 46.15% of multiracial and between 33-40% of other youths. Listening to music in college was important to over 76% of multiracial youths and far less important (18-47%) to their counterparts.

In terms of importance of practices in their future everyday lives and work, only one practice showed significant variation: playing video games. In contrast to 88.89% of Asian youths who thought playing videogames was important for their futures, 76.92% of multiracial youths indicated that the activity was not important. Between 42-59% of remaining youths deemed this digital practice important in their future everyday lives and work.

Table 29

Comparison of the Importance of Seven Digital Practices in College to FCC Youths with Different Racial or Ethnic Identities

Race/Ethnicity (N=255)	Seeking info about colleges and careers Q.(%)	Connecting to the Internet	Using a Computer	Using Video- editing Software	Creating Music Digitally	Using Spreadsheets / Computer Programs to Solve Problems	Listening to Music
African-American (n=43)	34 (79.07%)	37 (86.05%)	37 (86.05%)	32 (74.42%)	25 (58.14%)	36 (83.72%)	20 (46.51%)
Latino (n=27)	19 (70.37%)	26 (96.30%)	27 (100%)	14 (51.85%)	9 (33.33%)	21 (77.78%)	5 (18.52%)
White (n=156)	140 (89.74%)	146 (93.59%)	148 (94.87%)	79 (50.64%)	48 (30.77%)	128 (82.05%)	71 (45.51%)
Multiracial (n=13)	11 (84.62%)	13 (100%)	13 (100%)	6 (46.15%)	6 (46.15%)	13 (100%)	10 (76.92%)
Asian (n=9)	4 (44.44%)	7 (77.78%)	8 (88.89%)	4 (44.44%)	3 (33.33%)	6 (66.67%)	3 (33.33%)
Indigenous (n=7)	5 (71.43%)	4 (57.14%)	4 (57.14%)	1 (14.29%)	2 (40%)	5 (71.43%)	3 (42.86%)

Demographic Differences. Several demographic differences were present among surveyed youths with different racial or ethnic identities including social class, being a parent, age respondents began using a computer at home and at school, and age at which they began using the Internet. A higher percentage of Latino youths (62.96%) were working class, compared to 32-38% African-American, white, and multiracial youths, and 11-14% of Asian and Indigenous youths. A majority of Indigenous (71.43%), white (59.62%), and multiracial (53.85%) youths were either middle or upper-middle class, compared to Asian (44.44%), African-American (41.86%), and Latino (29.62%) youths. Influencing the social class variations were the number of youths who were unsure of their social class. Highest instances of uncertainty were reported among Asian (33.33%), African-American (25.58%) and Indigenous (14.29%) youths. In terms of parenting, over 25% of Latino youths had children compared to 7.69% of multiracial, 7.05% of white, 4.65% of African-American, and 0% of Asian and Indigenous youths.

Average ages at which respondents began using a computer at home and at school varied slightly, as did the ages at which they began using the Internet. Multiracial youths' average age for engaging in all three activities was between 8 and 9 years old; Asian youths' average age fell between 10 and 11 years of age; and the remainder of the cohort engaged in these activities between 8.5 to 10 years old.

(Dis)Connections between FCC Youth's Digital Culture, Their Differences, and Their Perceptions of College and Their Futures

Navigating through the abundance of data provided by the FCC Digital Practices Survey, the previous sections of this chapter described prominent patterns in FCC youths' digital practices, and confidence with and importance of them. These patterns form a series of narratives that highlight the intricacy of youths' digital culture and differences among them. The following complicates these narratives by elucidating the disconnections between youth's habitus, their practice, and their perceptions of community college and their future lives and work.

Diverse, dependent, and busy, incoming community college youths ostensibly chose to attend FCC because it was practical and affordable. The composite profile of incoming youths signifies a combination of class-oriented conditions influencing their choice to attend FCC, including financial practicality. Beyond planning to attend FCC and working, incoming youths were involved in myriad everyday activities: over two-thirds of youths participated in clubs, sports or other activities at least weekly, and many had family obligations including approximately 8% of youths who had children. Their activities included an average of 10 hours per day engaged in digital practices that supported their socialization, communication, entertainment, creativity, and management of everyday life.

With the exception of e-book readers and computer tablets, nearly 100% of incoming community college youths owned or had access to an

array of technologies; two key exceptions included lower rates of laptop ownership among African-Americans and videogame console ownership among Latino youths. Lower rates of laptop ownership potentially suggest limited mobility of Internet access and lack of mobile computer usage in a college classroom, yet ownership did not impede information-related practices. With the exception a higher percentage of Asian youths seeking information about colleges and careers, more African-American youths commonly engaged in all information-related digital practices compared to their peers. In terms of videogame console ownership, lower rates of ownership among Latino youths seemed to influence frequency of videogame playing. Yet, while ownership was highest for African-American and white youths, their frequency of usage aligned with that of their multiracial, Indigenous, and Asian peers who reported lower instances of ownership. This data suggests that playing videogames is an enculturated practice, rather than one overdetermined by access and ownership, an observation further reflected in another practice: television viewing. Nearly half of Asian youths rarely watched television, in contrast to between 67-86% of Indigenous and African-American youths who watched it often.

Next, youths' everyday digital practices did not consistently align with their confidence with a digital practice. For example, over 80% of surveyed youths reported confidence with email despite communicating via email less frequently than other forms of communication. Similarly, over 84% were confident posting and responding to social networking sites (SNS), although it

was a common practice for only slightly over 29% of youths. Playing videogames was common for only 47% of all surveyed youths and over 70% of males, yet over 50% of females reported they were confident playing videogames. And while only 21.57% of the surveyed cohort commonly created music or art using technology, over 44% of African-American and 33% of Latino youths were confident with creating music, and 39-42% of African-American, Latino, and Indigenous youths were confident using video-editing software.

Multiple divergences existed between incoming college youths' everyday digital culture and their perceptions of digital practices' value in college. Using email was deemed important by more than 75% of those surveyed; however, other digital socializing and communicating practices were not perceived as important in college by most surveyed youths. Between 49-59% indicated that texting, using SNS, and posting and responding to SNS/blogs/message boards, and between 36-37% indicated that sharing information, and collaborating using technology were not important in college. Despite the presence of music and other multimedia in their everyday lives, between 50 and 75% of incoming community college youths indicated that several digital entertainment and creative practices (e.g., watching television and movies, listening to music) were not important in college. That said, playing videogames was important for over 30% of males, compared to less than 20% of females; and listening to music was important to more than 50% of males and 76% of multiracial youths. Focus

group themes, discussed in chapter four, intimated that the importance of these two practices in college were associated with stress-relief and escape from other life priorities.

The digital practices many regarded as important in college reflected conventional ways of seeking and producing knowledge in the academy. A majority designated that using computers, connecting to the Internet, word-processing, creating multimedia presentations, and using spreadsheets and other computer programs to solve problems were important in college, as were practices related to finding and saving reliable, important information. However, their acknowledgement that a digital practice was important in college did not signify that youths were confident with performing it. In particular, over 30% of those surveyed reported being somewhat or not confident with word-processing software; over 50% were somewhat or not confident creating multimedia presentations, and 40% were not confident with using spreadsheets and other computer programs to solve problems.

In contrast, some survey respondents deemed particular digital practices important in college that conflicted with conventional ways of seeking and producing knowledge in the academy. Using task-specific software to create and edit photos, videos, graphics, and websites was important in college to 53-59% of incoming youths, even though only 24-28% were confident using this media-related software. Additionally, over 75% of African-American youths considered using video-editing software and 58.16% indicated digitally creating music important in college, compared to fewer of

their peers. The cultural prominence and relevance among different youths might influence the importance some assigned to consuming and/or producing these media in college, and their confidence with using media-producing software. Compared to their peers, significantly more multiracial youths deemed consuming music important in college, while significantly more African-American youths considered producing videos and creating music important. Further, more African-American, Indigenous, and Latino youths were confident using video-editing and music-producing software. While racial and ethnic identity did not overdetermine who assigned value to them in college or who had confidence performing them, these observations suggest differences in the symbolic value of these practices among youths as influenced by their habitus.

Other patterns in the data suggested gendered practices, but similar to racial and ethnic identity, gender did not necessarily overdetermine youths' practices and perceptions. First, females more frequently engaged in digital socializing, information-sharing practices, and literacy-oriented practices that included online and offline writing, and print-based reading practices; males more frequently engaged in online and videogame-playing and digital problem-solving practices. Second, while nearly 100% of surveyed youths had access to the Internet, males and females used different devices for their primary point of Internet access: over 65% of males used desktop computers and laptops, while over 50% of females used cell phones. Differences in primary point of Internet access imply a gendered narrative that females may

be more inclined to consume and produce information that supports socializing and communicating, in contrast to males who may be more inclined to consume and produce information that supports online game-playing and problem solving.

This gendered, binary narrative overshadows complementary data about males and females. In terms of socializing and communicating, nearly 74% of males commonly used social networks and more males frequently met new people online compared to females. With regards to literacy-oriented practices, approximately 25% of males commonly wrote online; males consumed online news with the same frequency as females, and read online for entertainment more frequently than females. Between 18-22% of females commonly played videogames and solved problems using technology, and both played games on their cell phones with similar frequency. These data suggest that practices are not wholly engendered.

A disparity between the percentages of females and males who deemed using computers and cell phones important in college further confounds gendered narratives about digital practices. While a gendered narrative that may speculate that the importance of these practices would align with the frequency with which each used cell phones and computers in their everyday lives, data indicated the opposite: over 97% of females compared to over 89% males deemed computers important, while over 67% of males compared to over 53% females deemed cell phones important in college. This contrast may indicate that differences between female and male

youths' shift the symbolic value they attributed to cell phone and computer usage in college.

With the exceptions of using a computer, connecting to the Internet, and using a cell phone, which remained central to most youths' everyday lives and similarly important in both college and their futures, some variations in the relevance of particular digital practices in college and in their futures contradicted with youths' everyday practices. For example, although a majority of respondents deemed digital socializing, communicating, digital entertainment, and creative practices important to their future lives and work; fewer actually deemed them important when compared to the number who commonly engaged in these practices in their everyday lives. Noticeable fluctuations of importance between college and future occurred among practices related to using software that supported creative practices and several digital management practices. These future-related data suggest that respondents' perceptions of the importance of digital practices in their futures were informed by the cultural discourses about the relevance of digital practices and delineation between their lives and constructions of "adult life." Fluctuations in youths' perceptions of the importance of digital practices in college and in their futures indicate a gap in youths' perception of the relevance of producing knowledge in the academy to their future everyday lives and workplaces. Further, youths' perceptions of the future value of digital practices may be influenced by practices modeled by adults' everyday practices, rather than informed by constructions of futures that integrate

youths' current digital practices and those they perceived as important in college into their everyday lives and workplaces.

In terms of youths' habitus, the multiple gaps between incoming youths' digital practices and their perceptions of the value of these practices in college and in their futures indicate that they have internalized the legitimacy of their digital practices and assigned symbolic value to particular practices based on their perceptions of and experiences in the field of education and constructions of adult life and work. Left unattended, these gaps have the potential to create and sustain digital disconnections with material consequences for community college youths. The implications of these disconnections and methods for addressing them are theorized in the final chapter. Prior to this undertaking, the following chapter extends community college youths' digital experiences beyond the survey data through an exploration of themes from focus group interviews involving twenty-five first-year students.

Chapter 4: Listening to Community College Youths’ Conversations about Digital Culture

Media and technology allow me to do a lot of things instantly. From texting to banking online, I use technology to get things done. I think technology will enhance my life and career. My generation is taking the nation in a different direction. We are the future leaders. Everyone else needs to adapt or get left behind.

–Tyri, a 22-year-old African-American female FCC student

Chapter three revealed the complexity of Frederick Community College (FCC) youths’ digital culture through a description and analysis of data from the FCC Digital Practices Survey. To elaborate on the intricacy of their digital culture, this chapter shares information gathered from first-year students who participated in focus group conversations about their digital experiences.

In spring 2013, I conducted three focus group interviews, comprised of a total of 25 FCC students between the ages of 18 and 24. Collectively the focus groups were diverse: between the ten male and fifteen female participants were one Asian, eight African-American, two Latino, ten white, and four multiracial youths. Primarily from working and middle class families, all of the participants but one were financially dependent on their parents; they cited cost and location as the principal reasons they attended FCC. Twenty-two participants planned to transfer to four-year institutions, while the

remaining three intended to pursue a career after completing their associate's degree.

When I introduced myself to each group as a researcher and professor interested in learning about their digital experiences and understanding the influence of digital technology on their lives, participants enthusiastically shared their stories and thoughts. They responded verbally to open-ended questions, and in writing to several questions that I asked intermittently as youths transitioned between topics. The verbal-written response combination afforded participants more than one method of contributing their input. Details about the focus group interviews' design, sample, administration procedures, and coding methods are included in Appendix B. The open-ended structure of the focus group structure provided a means for participants to share their digital experiences. The guiding questions I used reflected a series of underlying preconceptions that served as a means to prompt youths' discussion. As a reflexive researcher, I acknowledge that the questions were influenced by my study of American youths and digital culture. Still, I strived to ask questions that supported the elaboration of participants' ideas, and to produce a synopsis of their experiences that maintains their presence in the text.

Conversations among all three focus groups suggest that community college youths' grasp of digital culture is more mature than we digital immigrants might have imagined. To begin, their discussions transcended superficial ruminations about technology's impacts on their lives including

exchanges about conflict management, identity management, intentional disengagement from digital practices, and the development of digital expertise. Next, variation in the topics discussed within each group exposed digital differences among FCC youths' production and consumption of digital culture. Finally, from their conversations emerged a series of messages about the disconnections between their digital culture, adults' perceptions of their culture, and their community college learning experiences. The chapter begins with a description of focus group themes, differences, and messages, and then reflects on their implications for rethinking of youths' digital culture.

Life Management: Productivity and Digital Dependence

I have two part time jobs, including tutoring, and I'm going to school full time, and, you know, a lot of the time, you just don't have time to relax. You just have to kind of keep going, keep going, keep going, and then collapse in your bed. And then wake up and do it all over again until the semester ends.

–Aaron, 20-year-old white male

Focus group participants juggled multiple priorities: Over 75% worked at least part-time, and 84% attended college full-time. Many felt that American culture pressured them to produce quickly. Johanna, a 22-year-old white female, shared:

I think because [of] how society is, we have so much to do. Everything that we have to do it has to be done fast...[We] rely on technology to get those things done quickly so we can move on to the next step.

Focus group participants averaged 12 hours per day engaging in some type of digital activity. Their digital activities were infused into the pace of their everyday lives. Twenty-one year old multiracial female, Kyra shared, “I am doing so many things at once; I can knock them out quicker with technology: I can submit papers; I can type papers; I can write a quick email instead of calling a person. It speeds things up.” Many focus group participants used technology features, such as cell phones calendars, to track deadlines and commitments. Other technology-enhanced, time-saving measures included searching for quick information online that helped them solve problems in their everyday lives and complete course research, and using spell check and other software features to help them communicate quickly and complete assignments on time.

The efficiency of completing tasks using technology was not perceived as helpful for some, however. Ally, a 21-year-old white female, shared, “[Technology] makes me stressed out because I can't work fast enough to keep up with the demands. ...[T]eachers, I am going to say, they expect more time, and they expect more out of all the papers.” Others shared Ally's sentiment that the presence of technology resulted increased pressure to produce more in their everyday lives and in school.

Intertwined among conversations about the pace of life and pressure to be productive were multiple admissions that they were dependent on technology to get through their days. To help them solve problems, they regularly used technology to assist with spelling, grammar, vocabulary, simple calculations, advanced math, figuring out directions, and remembering information. Some worried about the consequences of their dependence on technology. Nikki, a 21-year-old white female, acknowledged:

I'm too dependent on it. My cell phone has made me dependent on dictionary.com and GPS. I believe my use of technology will affect my future, life and career, because I don't memorize information as well or feel the need to, and I'm not as confident as a result.

One impact of technological dependence was lacking confidence in performing simple everyday tasks. For example, Dana, an 18-year-old white female, admitted that her lack of confidence making change without a computer was embarrassing for her. Others echoed this sentiment, citing reliance on GPS and other software applications to perform simple everyday tasks.

Despite their digital dependence and concerns about technology's negative impacts, FCC youths perceived the integration of technology into their everyday lives a beneficial necessity. For Chad, a 22-year-old white male, and his focus group peers, technological changes and usage was less about dependence and more about adaptation. As an example of this

adaptation, Chad proposed the effect of on-demand, as-needed access to information via the Internet on memorization:

I find it very, very pointless to have to memorize stuff. ...I'm a programmer, and my language that I really know the best is Java. ...That is an immense amount of documentation. ...There is no way that you can memorize it all. And none of the instructors here memorize it all. We look at the documentation— as we need it.[M]emorizing terms or memorizing whatever you have to memorize for any sorts of tests, unless you use it on a day-to-day basis, you're not going to have it in your head, period.

His peers agreed with Chad's assessment that having access to information instantaneously reflected an adaptation that was beneficial, but many voiced the need to memorize information for their courses despite the futility of it. Another focus group suggested that the negative impacts of technology, like digital dependence, were about the learning curve associated with adaptation. For them, the negative impacts of technology were temporary and reflective of a cultural shift similar to the one America experienced during the Industrial Revolution.

Digital Communication (Dis)Connections and Conflicts

Digital dependence extended beyond organizing their lives, completing daily tasks, solving problems, and accessing information. All focus group participants relied heavily on their cell phones. The prominence of cell

phones in participants' everyday lives reflected the cultural centrality of communicating. Cell phones and Internet communication technologies drew many FCC youths closer to family and friends. As 22-year old white male, Jonas stated:

Like my family lives out in California, and I don't get to visit them very often ... but we both have Skype, and so like I get to see my family even though I'm not right there... My little brother has an Ipad...now he sends me message almost everyday. I get to be a part of his life in a way that I really wasn't able to throughout high school. So for me, it's actually enhanced a lot of my interactions with people: when I go away on trips or when my girlfriend goes away on trips, we still get to talk on Skype. We still get to communicate via text messages. I think [technology] has made us a much more communicative society.

Interacting with family from afar was common among young students, as was communicating with friends and family locally who were not part of their everyday lives. Regardless of these connections, Ally, like many participants, voiced concern about the distance that technology created between people:

[I]t damages the communication because we don't get the face-to-face time as much. I have seen more and more people preferring to text rather than just, like, meet up or call. ...And sometimes I notice when people do meet up but like in person, it's awkward because they don't know how to talk in person, but text instead.

Twenty-four year old white female, Tanya directly asked her peers, “Do you guys feel like the increased use of technology is like decreasing the connection that people have with each other and nature?” She shared:

I feel more comfortable and relaxed when I'm in nature or hanging out with people without technology in the middle of it, but also, when I'm talking to people, and...they are on their phones, looking at their phones the whole time. And it's really hard for them to focus and it's hard for me to focus. ...And I feel like a lot of people I'm talking to have a lot more social anxiety than they used to before texting and the Internet got really big.

Chad agreed, “Maybe on a similar note, I don't know, but I find out a lot of times when I text, conversations die out more quickly than if you are in person.” Monique, a 20-year-old white female, replied, “Sometimes you just want to connect more and people are like, ‘Eh.’”

Accompanying communication disconnections were conflicts prompted by texting and other digital communication practices. Misunderstanding of tone and emotion was the primary culprit, particularly in the absence of nonverbal gestures. As 22-year-old white male, Jonas decisively declared, “There is no sarcasm font.” To avoid conflict, some youths engaged in the emoticon practice heavily; others appeared to have internalized the idea that emoticons were childish. Still, several participants, like Kevin, a 20 year-old Latino male, were aware of the cultural differences in emoticons:

Yet, surprisingly while we do use emoticons, different countries use different emoticons. A good example would be Japan...[T]hey use actually different characters like a horse face or someone that is bowing down, like a bunch of other things. Like the LOL here is a W over there. And how they write 'okay' is different.

Peers in Kevin's group discussed the cultural relativity of emoticons and the impacts on miscommunication they could have. They agreed that understanding people's cultural perspectives were important.

Communication conflict occurred regardless of awareness of cultural differences and emoticon usages. Focus group participants experienced conflicts with significant others, friends, family, and acquaintances based on misinterpretation of texts and other written comments such as status updates. Even the use of proper English did not counteract misunderstandings, according to Eliza, a 20-year-old white female:

Sometimes there are confusions. Sometimes they [result in] actual arguments, because they can also interpret the wrong emotion. Like sometimes I'll write plainly, because I spell everything out; I use punctuation and stuff, so if I write something very plainly, they will be like, 'Are you mad?' And I'm like, 'No, I'm busy, and I'm just writing.'

In general they agreed that the conflict was more about communication style than texting or the technology used. Monique articulated, "It's your writing style. It doesn't matter what medium you are writing in. ...[I]f someone doesn't necessarily have that same style, there's going to be...a little bit of

confusion. The medium doesn't matter." When communication issues arose, FCC youths often resolved their conflicts face-to-face. Several female participants indicated that sometimes they preferred to text or write, because they needed to reflect on what they wanted to communicate prior to interacting with someone with whom they experienced conflict.

Social Networking Practices, Purposes, and Perceptions

Even for the busiest students, interacting with friends and connecting to culture through social networking sites were central to most FCC youths' everyday lives. Prominent among all three focus groups were conversations about their usage of Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

Among self-declared Instagram users, sharing images and quotes with friends offered motivation. Nikki shared, "It inspires me. It's like your life in pictures. It's visually pleasing." Corey agreed, "It is inspiring. Cause some people have like outfits and fashion accounts. And I like fashion-inspired pictures and also I like nice clothes." Users like Nikki and Corey discussed the visual appeal of Instagram and its simplicity in conveying messages through pictures.

For participants who used Twitter, the social networking site supported connecting with friends and finding out information about peers. Further, one's presence on Twitter was also an indicator of popularity. Tyri, a 20-year-old African-American female, asserted, "You can see who's cool."

Beyond maintaining social connections and social status, Twitter was a medium for tracking celebrities. The extent to which youths tracked celebrities on Twitter varied among participants in the first focus group, who discussed this practice at length. A few were enthusiastic followers: Corey smiled, “I love Beyoncé. I love to follow celebrities.” For Corey, a 21-year-old African-American male, following celebrities appeared to be more than just an entertainment distraction; he was also interested in fashion design. Others were quick to discern that they only followed one or two specific celebrities. Twenty-three year old African-American male Reg shared, “I only follow one. And that’s because I know him. I know Joe Hadyen personally, so I follow him.” Several criticized following celebrities and declared disinterest in doing so. Korwin, a 20-year-old African-American male, asserted, “There’s no point following famous people. They’re not going to follow you back or tweet you...[I]t’s a waste of time.” The range of reactions to following celebrities reflected the utility of the practice as it related to individuals’ particular interests.

Similar to tracking celebrities, different posting activities—shout outs, hashtags, over-posting pictures, particularly selfies—met with criticism from focus group participants. Shawn, a 19-year-old African-American male, shared,

A lot of people shout a million people out all the time. It gets on my nerves. Shout outs is, like, when people just be, like, ‘Oh, follow my

friend.’ And they have a million hash tags: Hashtag Sunday, hashtag hater, hashtag Aeropostale, hashtag my best friend, hashtag bff.

Criticisms, such as Shawn’s, implied unwritten rules regulating acceptable posting activities. Nikki shared, “The only time I think a shout out is ok is if someone likes a whole bunch of your pictures and you're like, ‘Shout to so and so. Thanks for the love.’” These regulations extended to posting of selfies: many youths judged the extent to which people posted selfies as a reflection of attention-seeking and low self-esteem. Shawna, a 21-year-old African-American female, commented, “It's crazy because it's so desperate.” In contrast, some participants who posted selfies regularly declared that they were just a means of self-expression.

FCC youths conveyed that social networking sites as well as other websites were their main conduits for accessing information, information that, at times, influenced them. For Twitter users, the medium was a primary means for keeping apprised of current events. Tyri offered, “Twitter let’s you follow all kinds of information. Frederick County: they have a Twitter, and they, like, put everything on there, like accidents, arrests, anything.” Tyri’s peers agreed that Twitter and other social networking sites were their connection to the news. Further, their social networking influenced their global awareness and understanding of conflicts around the world.

Some participants indicated that social networking conversations, posts, and pictures influenced them to become socially and politically aware. Gabby, a 23-year-old multiracial female, shared, “I think that people got really

involved with voting this year through social networking. Everyone voted and posted pictures...of their 'I voted.' stickers.” Korwin responded that the sharing of voting information was a form of propaganda, which was not necessarily a bad thing. His peers agreed that information posted on social networking sites had the potential to influence their behavior.

Peers and perceptions of purpose seemed to shape the extent to which participants used different social networking sites – specifically, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. However, not all used these sites evenly. Conversations among the focus groups suggested a racial and ethnic divide in social networking usage: All of the participants who identified as Asian, African-American, and multiracial and a few who identified as white had migrated to Twitter and Instagram, while the two Latino youths and most white youths continued to use Facebook as their primary social networking site. Maintaining some presence on Facebook was common, even among social network migrants: most used the site when required to communicate about school or club activities, and occasionally to connect with family or make plans with friends. Only two participants, both white females, used other sites such as Tumblr and Pinterest sporadically.

Those who had migrated to Twitter and Instagram regarded Facebook as socially passé. Twitter and Instagram users cited that they had switched social networking sites because the sites were more interactive and their peers used them. Korwin disagreed with his peers' reasons:

I think...that people are just doing what's hot. What everyone is doing. How everybody was on Facebook then comes Twitter, and then Instagram. Now everybody's using that and don't use Facebook no more.

Throughout the focus group discussion, Korwin remained steadfast in his belief that popular culture trends and marketing influenced youths' social networking participation. Comments by several of his peers and members of other focus groups indicated that some youths actively resisted switching to these sites because of their trendiness.

Another reason Twitter and Instagram users found Facebook less desirable was adults' presence on the site. The group agreed that parents and other adults monitored their Facebook postings. Nikki pronounced:

I have Facebook but I post different stuff than what I put on IG [Instagram] or Twitter. I present myself different on Twitter than on Facebook, just because it's a different group. I have different friends. Like on my Facebook, it's more family, teachers; people I should be trying to impress. But on Twitter, it's another story.

Corey followed up on Nikki's comment, "Yeah, like, one is for show, and the other, I can go crazy!" As discussed in the next section, similar comments by their peers indicated that youths presented themselves differently on social networking sites based on their perceptions of the sites' audiences.

Self-Regulation: Digital Identity Management and Intentional Disengagement

Interwoven in all focus group conversations were indications that FCC youths regulated their digital practices. Regardless of sex or racial or ethnic identity, participants actively managed their online identity and recognized the implications of not doing so. While some managed their online presence only after posting something they regretted, most learned by observing the online posting mistakes of others. In addition to sharing vignettes about friends and acquaintances that posted inappropriate information, they cited popular news stories about teens getting in trouble for underage drinking and nudity and people being cyberbullied and committing suicide.

They monitored their presence, particularly on Facebook, by posting information, pictures, and status updates about themselves and friends that would be considered socially acceptable by their parents and other adults.

Kyra, a 20-year-old multiracial female, divulged:

I don't really post stuff on social networks because I'm paranoid. I know anybody here can probably see what's on my Facebook and that kind of stuff, so I don't want people to look at me differently. I have, like, sent a text message to a friend, like, being upset and being like, 'Oh shit, why did I just send that?' Nothing crazy...but after I regretted it, so I think I have done that a couple times, but never on social networks.

Participants were aware that employers and college administrators could monitor their social network profile. Johanna, a 22-year-old multiracial female, shared, “I know some employers want to access the people on their Facebook page to look over and make sure there is nothing there that can look bad on their business.” Kyra worked for a company that did just that:

I work for [local business] and they won't ask you for your password and that kind of stuff, but they'll ask you, like, 'Do you have Facebook?' And I know a couple of the people who work there I have [friended] on Facebook, but they periodically will check and make comments about it, so I know I can't have certain things on there. And I tell my friends, 'If we go out, don't tag me in anything. Don't put anything up crazy, because that's my job.' ... [I]t could potentially prevent me from working.

In addition to believing that inappropriate postings could threaten their jobs or get them into legal trouble, youths avoided “ranting” online and posting negative comments about others; they stated that such postings reflected poorly on a person’s character. They were critical of both adults and peers who used social networking postings as a means of avoiding face-to-face confrontations with people. Some voiced an understanding of the sense of freedom, anonymity, and safety that accompanied being online but were quick to chide those who used social networking to bully or undermine others.

Beyond managing their online identity and posting practices, most FCC youths monitored their privacy, sharing personal information within

“appropriate circles” of friends. They were wary of the social networking sites’ access to their personal information and the permanence of their information on the Internet. Several expressed the dangers of sharing private information with strangers and strongly decried online dating not only as something old people did but also as an unsafe, “creepy” practice that could result in being stalked and/or physically harmed.

Participants also intentionally disengaged from specific digital practices for myriad reasons. For example, listening to music was a daily practice for almost every focus group member. Music relaxed them or provided an escape from daily pressures, as Kyra shared:

If I'm really stressed out or having a bad day, my phone won't be on, but I have to have music. That's kind of like my get away in a way, because it's like I'm working two jobs. I go to school full time so sometimes I need that thing to like to get me back in my own zone kind of a thing.

Some were inspired and motivated by music. Azura, a 20-year-old multiracial female, shared that music was very personal, “It’s just there when you need it: When you’re happy at a wedding, when you’re sad at a funeral, when you need motivation and inspiration to workout. It does everything for you.” While many youths agreed that music augmented their lives, others shared that music and other connections to media detracted from being alone and experiencing inner emotions. For Eli, an 18 year-old white male, not listening to music was important:

I'm a runner. Music kind of gets rid of the validity of the feelings of running. You get to think if you don't have music. You have a song on and maybe you always like the song and you start singing it... but when I go for a run, it's like if I have nothing on, I can just let my mind wander. I can go into my own world pretty much. It's sort of like a meditation for me.

Jonas, a 22-year-old white male, echoed Eli's sentiment:

When I am in an extreme emotional state, whether it's angry or sad or happy or anything, I try to disengage myself from technology because I think it dampers that emotional state or it manipulates that emotional state, because you can be like extremely happy and listen to a sad song and then all of a sudden you're sad, or read a sad story online or something like that and it manipulates your mood in that way. So when I'm really angry or really happy or something, I try to focus on the internal and eliminate external stimuli.

For Eli and Jonas, disengaging from music allowed them to focus inward on their thoughts and emotional states. Related to emotions, Azura stopped using Instagram because others' posts were affecting how she felt:

I realized in two months of using Instagram, most my time was consumed by going and looking at what other people were doing and it was kind of negative. As opposed to like right now, you know, being at school or work or with my friends. And I'm barely on the phone. I'm more like free.

By turning away from the negativity she experienced on Instagram and disengaging from technology, Azura liberated her time and her emotions.

For many, intentionally disengaging from music and other digital activities was necessary to concentrate on school and work. Gabby shared:

At the beginning of the semester I would be on Twitter but then with my classes and work, I just don't have time for it. And now that I'm second semester, my classes are really hard. I don't have time to, like, really get on Twitter and worry about what other people are doing.

Like Gabby, many youths reprioritized the time they spent engaged in digital activities to focus on school, especially once their assignments required more of their time and attention. Others, however, changed a digital habit only after realizing that it directly interfered with school. Corey revealed:

When I was in class I used to be on my phone all of the time. And now I'm not, and I see how much of a difference it makes. I wasn't even hearing what the teacher was saying. I was like, 'Huh?'

While Corey found that texting and checking Twitter were distracting him during class, Eli realized that his "hyper-focus" on playing the online game

Legal Legends affected his health and grades:

Sometimes I try to stay hydrated, but sometimes I won't drink anything while playing these videogames...or I won't eat and all of the sudden it will be 9:00 and it's like, 'Oh, I need to eat dinner.' ...I just recently quit so that I could finish school. I have three more weeks and I'm probably

going to get back into it when summer starts. I told myself I had to disengage because I was losing time to study.

For Corey and Eli, disengagement—if only for short durations—occurred after they had experienced the negative effects of their digital activities.

Many youths actively resisted engaging in a particular practice. About Twitter, Eliza passionately declared:

I don't even want to know about it. I still have friends that want me to and I'm like, 'No! I have no interest in getting on Twitter.' I would hate myself if I got on Twitter. I don't need it.

Other participants echoed Eliza's resistance to adopting in a new practice, such as tweeting, because it was not pertinent to their everyday lives. Jesse, a 20-year-old Latino gamer, shared, "Well, the reason I don't have a Facebook is because it's become too mainstream and the thing is...I like to do things alternatively." Jesse's choice to opt out of Facebook was driven by his resistance to mainstream culture; among his gaming peers, online messaging was more prevalent than connecting with friends through popular social networking sites.

Technology Ownership: Pressures and Practices

Overall, participants indicated that they had regular access to the Internet and owned myriad, although sometimes outdated, technologies including cell phones, laptops, and desktop computers. To varying degrees,

money, peers, marketing, and specific practices influenced the technology that they owned.

The influence of cost on technology ownership was most prevalent in conversations about cell phones. Twenty out of the twenty-five participants owned smart phones. The five without them said smart phones were too expensive. Among those with smart phones, three did not have data plans or unlimited texting because they were too expensive; instead, they used Kik, a Wi-Fi cell phone application. Most youths were aware of the cost of cell phone packages between different carriers, suggesting that they actively researched cost.

Most participants rejected the idea that their friends influenced which technologies they owned, particularly cell phones. Yet, when asked if they knew peers who owned technology because it was popular, one focus group in particular discussed at length peers who owned smart phones they could not afford. This group shared stories about friends who were embarrassed to use older technology. Some admitted making fun of their friends. Lanh, a 20-year-old Asian female, shared:

Yeah, my friend's phone broke and he had to use a flip phone but we still made fun of him for it. Like he couldn't do anything, like half of the things we can do.

Lanh's peers admitted that they judged others by the technology they owned. Gabby, a 23-year-old multiracial female, declared: "Yeah, like if a guy walked up to me with his flip phone out and ask me for my number, I'd be, like, 'That's

not happening.” Gabby’s comment sparked conversation among her peers about the pressure to keep up with trends. Reg, a 22-year-old African-American male, observed:

Yes, like some people feel the need to get the Iphone and the Ipad. So it's as if you have something like technology or name brand clothes...that make you look cooler or more like high class.

Perceptions of coolness and social status influenced some participants to buy certain types of technology, as did technological enhancements such as cell phone applications. Not all focus group participants owned app-friendly phones, despite the popularity of cell phone applications. They recognized how this limited their access, but many shrugged off their limited access for unvoiced reasons. Several rebuked technology companies’ manipulation of technologies and the market, manipulation that eventually required them to purchase new technology—phones and computers in particular.

One focus group discussed at length how their knowledge of the applications of specific computer technology influenced what they owned. This group, comprised of mostly FCC youths who were self-named “techies,” declared that the differences between MACs and PCs influenced their technology ownership decisions. For them a primary driver of ownership was based on uses that extended beyond socializing and communicating and into other applications of technology, including writing papers, playing games, making music, designing graphics, and creating programs. An observed distinction among focus group participants was the extent to which some

youths' ownership and practices focused on game-playing, creative activities, and problem-solving, in contrast to those whose ownership and practices focused socializing and communicating. These differences are further explored in the next section.

Digital Differences: The Sneakerhead, the Fashionistas, and the Techies

Beyond the prevalent practices of listening to music, surfing the Internet for entertainment and news, and watching television, focus group participants shared a common set of digital practices they believed they had enough expertise to be able to teach others. These practices included texting, emailing, shopping online, downloading music, setting up social networking profiles, conducting internet research, creating multimedia presentations, seeking information about colleges, and using word-processing software. Some described expertise with particular practices that were less prevalent among their peers, such as blogging, making music, using Photoshop, modifying videogames, developing computer programs, and playing videogames.

For nine particular individuals developing digital expertise originated in a particular interest and evolved into gaining recognition for their expertise—in the form of social status, and in some cases, money. To explore the digital expertise of these nine youths, the following invokes cultural figures that reflect the cultural production of these youths – the sneakerhead, the fashionista, and the techie. These figures reflect cultural underpinnings of

their interests and illuminate the shifts in symbolic value of their practices between the field of digital culture and education.

The Sneakerhead. Reg, a 22-year-old African-American male used online social networking to connect with others who shared his interest in sneakers. Through his connections he gained recognition:

I take pictures of my shoes and post them. I have sneakerhead status. And I get like updates on the shoes that are coming out. Like in Maryland, it's got its own group where everybody in Maryland and we trade and sell shoes. And they have welcomed me into that group because of my shoe status.

As a self-proclaimed sneakerhead, Reg located himself with a subculture anchored in sports and hip-hop culture, and deeply embedded in constructions and commodification of cool, urban African-American culture (M. Dyson, 1993; Brace-Govan & de Burgh-Woodman, 2008). Within this subculture, Reg developed a digital social network and leveraged his interest into capital by identifying, purchasing, and reselling rare sneakers. He expanded his interest beyond collecting sneakers to selling them through his network. Reg explained the process: "I buy shoes and then flip them. I can buy a pair of \$150 shoes and sell 'em for like \$250 to \$300. ...[P]eople will pay the extra just to have it first before it's sold out." Reg leveraged his interest in sneakers to gain recognition within a subculture and transformed that status to economic gain.

The Fashionistas. Friends Shawna, a 19-year-old African-American female, and Corey, a 21-year-old African-American male, developed a fashion blog based on their interest in fashion design and celebrity styles. Shawna described how the blog came about: “Me and Corey started a fashion blog and now it's like people always ask, ‘What's going on with it? Let's see your blog.’ We started it kind of like a joke, but it became popular very quickly.” Their mutual interest in fashion design, coupled with the popularity of their blog, resulted in a fan following. Soon after, people sought their styling advice and were willing to pay for it.

Similarly, Tyri, a 20-year-old African-American female, used Instagram to promote her makeup artistry:

I do makeup. And I took pictures of people I've done make up for. I posted [them] on Instagram, and I got, like, people asking me to do their make up. So I have appointments for proms coming up and a list of people who want me to do their stuff. And I do it. Not for free. I'm going to make money, and now I have a business. I didn't do it on purpose; it just happened.

Corey, Shawna, and Tyri developed their digital social network and net presence as a means of promoting their style expertise. The interests of these young African-American male and females are embedded in the cultural production of style influenced by the prominence of fashion in American culture. The symbolic value of the services they offered – fashion consulting, and hair and make-up styling – are intertwined with constructions

of class, gender, and race embedded in style trends (Lynch & Strauss, 2007). For these three fashionistas, what began as hobbies grew into ventures that occurred unintentionally through social networking platforms that promoted their interests. Their descriptions of their experiences with gaining recognition suggested that they did not necessarily seek recognition much less expect economic gains.

The Techies. A diverse group of eleven youths voiced that they regularly played videogames, sometimes for hours on end. All enjoyed the social interaction, escape, and the challenges videogames provided. Among these eleven youths emerged a group of five techies – three white males (Jonas, Eli, and Aaron) and two Latinos (Jesse and Kevin) between the ages of 18 and 22 – for whom gaming was more than a social and entertainment outlet.

Three of the five young men mentioned were videogame modders, individuals who modified the codes of existing, often commercial, videogames to change various aspects of the games. For 22-year-old Jonas, developing technical skills was motivated initially by the challenge of taking advantage of game glitches. He worked with friends to develop glitching methods that earned him notoriety among *Halo II* players. His game code alteration skills evolved into figuring out how to bypass other software limitations such as music piracy-prevention software. Jonas admitted that, while he enjoyed playing games and gaining recognition for his wily activities, his interests in

videogames and music downloading were how he connected socially to others, particularly his girlfriend.

Jesse, a 20-year-old Latino, also modified videogames. He began by investigating the coding of Nintendo-based videogames and then experimenting with character modifications. He described the impacts of this practice as he began sharing his work with other gamers:

I remember before I even registered for FCC, ...I actually went to campus, and I actually saw a bunch of people [playing videogames]. I was like, 'Oh, I want to join in this.' ...and eventually I actually started bring my own modding in and we had fun. ...I actually had to do something to actually change up everything so they [would] completely see this game change into something else. And what I did was I put some skins on, and they were, like, 'Wow.' A whole bunch of people [were], like, 'Oh, can I play next? How do you do this?' ...I literally had a sign that said, 'Please wait for all questions after the match.'

Among a well-developed group of gamers who regularly played videogames in the FCC student lounge, Jesse had developed a reputation as a modder and an accomplished gamer. Familiar with the work of Jesse and his brother, Jonas vouched for their expertise:

[T]he modding is phenomenal: they do everything from like character skin mods to like complete game play alteration. ...Oh yeah, him and his brother are widely considered the two best players in the game...

And I want to say, I can hold my own against Jesse, but he still kicks my ass on a fairly regular basis.

Although he had won \$20 in a gaming tournament, Jesse admitted that his interest was not about the money, but rather the creative challenge of modding and, like Jonas, connecting with others who had similar interests. Unlike Jonas who considered some of his activities less than legitimate, Jesse and Kevin, Latinos, advocated for a more positive view of gaming modification and other acts of hacking. Kevin explained:

I'm pretty sure a lot of people consider hacking as illegal, something you can get in trouble with.... It's actually not exactly true. Hacking basically is kind of like, you know, in 6th grade you had to dissect a frog and you had to take different pieces from it. You just look in like the files and you kind of extract it to understand what it does. ... [Y]ou can even edit it with like an artistic editing program like Photoshop so you can change it into something different. You can incorporate that and in the game and it will have the appearance of what you had imagined. [Hacking] actually leads to some artistic creativity.

For Kevin, hacking was a creative, problem-solving practice directly related to his career interest in computer programming. He explained that he used his hacking skills to design graphics, computer programs, multimedia presentations, and alter visual layouts for course assignments.

The other techies, Eli and Aaron, used their digital skills in different ways. Eli honed his gaming skills through the game *Legal Legends*. After

gaining recognition as an accomplished player, Eli competed in several team tournaments and won several notable monetary prizes. He expressed that he never thought he would be able to play something he loved for money. For Eli, playing games was about problem solving, a skill that he said overlapped with math, his college major. Aaron observed a similar overlap between playing videogames, problem solving, and his interest in computer programming:

I was a big video game person when I was young and you know, I was like, 'How do I beat this?' And I was just determined to beat it. I figured it out and I kind of developed a mindset for problem solving, so yeah. I mean videogaming has helped.

In addition to majoring in computer science, Aaron had developed cell phone applications, tutored student struggling with computer programming and math, and had secured a NASA internship. Like Jesse, Aaron saw his computer programming as an art form:

[I]t shouldn't be called computer science; it should be called computer art, because it really is an art form. 'Programming,' I say this to my [tutoring] students all the time, 'is pure creation.' ...And then when you create it, you have to test it and make sure it runs properly; that's where a lot of problem solving comes into play.

With the exception of a few comments from the other participants in their focus groups, the techies dominated the conversation about gaming. In addition to sharing specific gaming information, they each shared the role

gaming played in their lives, particularly during their younger years. Eli shared his experience:

But coming from the middle school years and the freshman year of high school, I really was...like a recluse. ...I was one of those kids that everybody knew even though nobody really liked me; let me put it like that. And so like it was the only way I could get joy out of doing what I wanted to do was just to play video games and it became that I played video games for my life. ... It's generally where my love for video games came from was I was forced to be that person. I love playing MOORPGs....[O]nline games, I think, are the games for me because I could talk to other people. You know, it was like these people don't even know me. I could probably talk to them about anything I want. ...if I actually needed something—an answer to something, I would ask people online.

Eli's comments exemplified a bond four of the five techies formed as they shared a similar set of circumstances that drew them to gaming: For these self-proclaimed middle school outcasts, playing games provided an alternative to social exclusion, an escape from middle school life, and a community that accepted them.

For the techies, social networking sites were not a primary means of connecting with others in their younger years, which may perhaps explain why none of them appeared to use social networking sites as a major conduit for connecting with others or the world. This observation about their digital

practices stands in contrast to a cadre of other FCC youths for whom texting and social networking were central to their daily lives. Also, in contrast to the sneakerhead and the fashionistas whose social networking expertise resulted in gaining status for a non-technological interests, the techies gaming and programming skills were central to the various forms of recognition they experienced. These variations in youths' particular forms of digital expertise suggest they are influenced by the cultural constructions of gender, race and ethnicity intertwined in their habitus.

Further substantiating cultural divergences in youths' practices and the value of these practices were individual assertions of confusion during focus group exchanges. During each focus group session, at least one participant would declare that he or she did not understand what was being discussed. The topics being discussed during these declarations involved Twitter, videogames, and operating systems.

During a conversation about social networking, three white females decided they did not understand Twitter. When Tanya confessed that she did not understand tweeting, Monique asked, "You're blissfully in the dark?"

Tanya replied, "Yeah, I'm just like, 'It's too much. Whatever.' I stay away from stuff like that because I think it's overwhelming."

Tanya intentionally avoided the practice of tweeting. She purposefully limited her social networking to Facebook, using it to stay in touch with friends and organize volunteer activities at the college. Other participants, mostly

white males and females and the two Latinos, expressed similarities in their lack of usage of Twitter and Instagram.

During a fifteen-minute exchange among four techies—three white males and one Latino, the other focus group participants, one white and two multiracial females, interjected occasionally but for the most part, listened intently to the stories the gamers shared. When gamers delved into an exchange of technical game-playing terminology, Kyra, a 20-year-old multiracial female, interjected:

It's really weird because I don't know what he's talking about. I'm not into, like, video games or anything like that, so I'm sitting here looking at him, like, 'What is he talking about?' That's the thing; I'll go as far as my phone, computer, and my iPod and that's about it when it comes to technology, which is really weird because I'm pretty sure a lot of people in here know exactly what he's talking about. I'm just sitting there looking at him going, 'Huh?'

When Eli responded that each video game has a language of its own and that sometimes people feel like outsiders when they are around his friends and him, Kyra replied, "Yeah, I'm sitting here like duh, duh, duh. Feeling dumb."

Similarly, during a conversation about how limited upgrade options on certain computers and phones forced consumers to buy new products, Chad and Kevin had an exchange about the "hackability" of Android. The rest of the group listened intently. Chad complained that he could not upgrade from Ice Cream to Jellybean, versions of Android's operating systems.

Some appeared puzzled until Monique, a white female, interrupted, “I have heard of them. I know they are referring to the operating system, but I don't know what that is.”

Tanya, another white female, laughed, “Really? I thought it was a metaphor. I had no idea what he was talking about.”

Juxtaposing comments about confusion or misunderstanding with the various forms of digital expertise some youths developed unveils differences among youths' habitus. These differences in habitus appear interfused with gendered and racialized notions that seemingly impact youths' digital practices, their perceptions of relevance of practices, and possibly their subsequent development of expertise. Discussed in the final chapter, when repositioned within the field of education, these differences have multiple implications for community college youths.

Adults Just Don't Get It: Misconceptions about FCC Youths' Digital Culture

Instagram: it's just fun to post pictures, and my dad doesn't understand that. He's like, ‘I don't understand why you are taking so many pictures.’ Well you don't need to understand, it's not your life.

—Monique, a 20-year-old white female majoring in art

Focus group participants directly voiced differences between their digital culture and adults' perceptions and uses of technology. Each focus

group responded to this question: What is it that others do not understand about what you do with technology? The tenet that resonated throughout the groups: adults, particularly parents, do not understand their digital culture and value of their digital practices. FCC youths' conversations generated three common messages.

The first message was about the necessity of their uses of technology. Participants used technology and multi-tasked out of necessity to keep up with the pace and pressure of life – to complete work, keep in touch with others, and maintain balance by using music and other forms of entertainment to relieve stress. The second message focused on the value of particular digital practices. For most youths, social networking was not a waste of time: beyond staying in touch with one another, it helped them participate in volunteer activities, organize events, become activists, and connect to what was happening in the world. For those who played videogames, videogame playing was less about escapist entertainment and more about creative problem solving, reaching a goal, connecting with friends, and, for some, finding a place they belong. The third message focused on their parents. FCC youths believed that their parents relied on them too much for help with technology; they recognized that some of their parents needed to develop more technology skills in order to remain competitive in the workplace.

Of the three messages, the one that generated the most conversation in two of the three focus groups was parents' understanding of technology.

Parents' overestimation of youths' digital expertise and their reliance on youths' technology skills concerned participants. Eliza expressed:

My parents...think I'm an expert at everything, like, all the technology—fixing computers and stuff—just because I grew up with it. ...I can do basic stuff like [remove] viruses..., prevent viruses, and fix little problems. But, like, they take it to me to fix everything, and I'm like, 'I can't do that.' Just 'cause I grew up with it, and I'm okay with it doesn't mean I'm an expert at it. I can't fix everything.

Eliza and her peers voiced tolerance of their parents' reliance on them for technology help but were critical of their parents' lack of knowledge about simple technology tasks. Dana shared, "My mom...didn't know how to create a folder, and so she's freaking out. ...eventually I [say], 'See this button that says: new folder? You click that.'" Chad responded:

You know, I feel your pain, I really do because I am always the go to person in my family for when a tech calamity occurs. ...[W]hen I was really young, maybe 10 years old, I was the one that was standing next to the Geek Squad person that came by our house to fix our computer, because my mom didn't know anything.

In addition to admonishing their parents' inability to perform simple tasks, FCC youths worried about the impacts of their parents' technology deficits. Tanya relayed that her father, who had recently been laid off, was struggling to find a job because he had not kept up with technology:

My dad, he's an older guy and he's in marketing. He was, like, laid off, and then got a job and got laid off, 'cause [of] the crazy economy.

And when he was looking, the places that were hiring were looking for, like, experience...like social media and just newer technologies.

Tanya's focus group peers imparted at least a dozen vignettes about their parents' lack of technological knowledge coupled with underlying concerns that their parents' skill deficits would affect their job performance and their everyday lives. What resonated throughout youths' stories were their attempts to teach their parents about technology and their emphasis on the importance of different technology skills. Monique shared that her mother was currently stressed in her new job, because she did not heed Monique's "warning" to learn the computer skills she tried to teach her mother:

Now she's at this new job where they do everything that they can electronically. And now she's asking me a lot of questions. [!]f you actually paid attention to what I was saying, like I recommended to you, then you actually would not be in this mess that you are in now, freaking out, trying to get to deadlines.

Examined further in the next section, the underlying concern that adults often lacked requisite technology skills to effectively perform everyday and work-related tasks was mirrored in FCC youths' discussion about faculty's uses of technology in their community college courses.

(Dis)Connections between Youths' Digital Culture, Learning, and Their Community College Experiences

FCC focus group youths' expressed a complex awareness of the influences on their digital production and consumption of culture. Their average 12-hour per day engagement in digital practices encompassed not only the common entertainment activities of listening to music, watching television, social networking, and playing videogames, but also communication and life management activities such as texting with family and friends, scheduling deadlines, completing research and coursework, and keeping up with current events. In other words, they used their digital practices to keep up with the pace of everyday life. They recognized the benefits and consequences of their digital practices, admitting digital dependence, experiencing connections and disconnections with people, negotiating communication conflict, monitoring their online identities, intentionally disengaging in digital practices to focus on other priorities, and voicing confidence in their abilities to teach others and adapt to different digital demands.

Although many rejected the idea that peers and marketing influenced their individual technology ownership and practices, they agreed collectively that they felt culturally pressured to participate in digital culture and keep up with technology. While most accepted this pressure, they experienced digital culture differently, engaging in practices that resonated with their habitus. Three observations support this. First, not all FCC youths felt equally

empowered to engage in some practices. Confusion about the purposes and relevance of specific technologies, and the language that accompanied particular practices prompted some youths to intentionally turn away from particular practices. Second, for some youths, the development of digital expertise resulted in the accumulation of social capital in the form of recognition and as well as economic capital for a few. Finally, participation in conversations centered on social networking practices in contrast to those focused on playing videogames suggest that the symbolic value of digital practices overlapped with variations in FCC youths' habitus. The differences in conversations about these practices, while not exclusively embodied by individual youths' gender, racial or ethnic identity, overlapped with culturally-influenced perceptions about acceptable behaviors and interests that appear gendered and racialized. The agency with which FCC youths' intentionally disengaged in digital practices, developed expertise, and attributed symbolic value to different practices that aligned with cultural constructs of gender, race, and ethnicity indicate that their habitus and the field of digital culture mutually constituted the extent to which youths may have found a practice productive. Theorized in chapter five, the differences among FCC youths' intentional disengagement, expertise, and valuation of digital practices when repositioned within the field of community college education have multiple implications for youths.

Foreshadowing these implications were scenarios common among most focus group participants that illustrate the conflict and disconnections

between their digital practices and their educational experiences, particularly with their learning in the classroom, and faculty's uses of technology. FCC focus group participants appeared rather confident with finding reliable information on the Internet. They actively used Google, Google Scholar, and FCC's library databases as conduits for finding reliable information. However, they were conflicted about the legitimacy of Wikipedia. Some rejected using the site for reasons that included the ability for people to edit Wikipedia pages and include incorrect information on the site. Others advocated its usage, suggesting that the monitoring of the information on the site had evolved as an appropriate starting point for gathering information about a topic. One group traced the trajectory of Wikipedia legitimacy in their middle school through college classroom and contrasted its advancement with the conflicting messages they received from different instructors.

In addition, every focus group conversation included comments about digital practices' enhancement of their learning outside the classroom. FCC youths were aware of their preferred learning styles, and sought sources that fit their preferred styles such as videos, audio files, and online texts. They agreed that the Internet provided increased access to information that permitted them to conduct research for classes and pursue topics of personal interest. Some youths bypassed buying books for their classes, opting to do independent research on sites such as YouTube, Wikipedia, and the Khan Academy. Jonas confessed:

Technology has granted me the ability to grow and develop as I see fit, learn about what I want. I'm in a biology class right now. I haven't bought the book. I have never taken a single note. Never studied for a single test. I Have 110 percent in that class right now, because I took the time prior to learn about some of the topics on YouTube and Wikipedia some of the topics.

Independent Internet research also supplemented course content. When some youths thought that the information conveyed during class and in their textbooks was not substantial enough for them to grasp concepts, they conducted independent research outside of course requirements in order to gain the requisite knowledge needed to complete assignments and understand concepts.

Next, while youths recognized that e-books and Ipads were becoming more prevalent in their courses, participants were wary of the effects on their learning. Even though many expressed adeptness at using computers and reading information online, almost all preferred print books to the e-alternatives. Some discussed that, despite being digital natives, their generation had not progressed enough to give up printed texts. Among those who had used e-books, many used them occasionally, as needed and indicated that they would have used a print book more frequently.

Finally, paralleling the critique of their parents' lack of technology skills, FCC youths cited multiple examples of faculty's inadequate uses of technology. Watching and listening to faculty read directly from PowerPoint

presentations was a common experience among FCC youths. Kevin advised, “And you don't read off from bullet points. You should at least either memorize some of the stuff or have some note cards.” Many preferred that a faculty member lecture rather than read from the presentation. They critiqued this practice as a demonstration of a faculty's lack of teaching ability and dysfunctional perspective on the uses of technology. In addition, several remarked that faculty rarely used the smartboards in their classrooms and contrasted this observation with their high school teachers who actively integrated smartboards into their teaching. Further, they were critical of instructors' overreliance on a medium such as video as a replacement for teaching. Overall, they believed that faculty needed to incorporate technology into the classroom by striking a balance between lecture, classroom interaction, and technology uses.

Participants' observations of faculty's uses of technology when coupled with the messages they have for adults and their concerns their parents' technological adeptness suggest that they collectively value digital practices differently than their adult counterparts, and recognize the disconnections between their digital experiences and those they observe in the classroom and in the workplace. Theorized in chapter five, their observations when incorporated into their habitus have potential implications for the various ways youths project both the symbolic values and purposes of digital practices into the field of community college education and their future lives and workplaces.

Chapter 5: (Im)Mobilization of Youths' Digital Culture in Community College Education

I've seen how technology has moved to the forefront of our everyday life and now we pretty much can't live without it. We have to use technology to work, and work in school, to get through most daily functions. Being a digital native— I'm proud of it. I use technology intuitively, and am proud of my knowledge of how many pieces work. I know, though, eventually I will be surpassed by the next generation in technological prowess, and that technology will grow to an even larger part of our life.

– Ally, a 21-year-old white female student

The intention of this study was to locate Frederick Community College (FCC) youths in conversations about American youths' production of digital culture by exploring their experiences and differences at the juncture of digital culture and community college education. As members of America's digital nation, FCC youths expressed profound understanding of the influences of digital culture on their everyday lives. Cognizant of their dependence on technology, focus group participants embraced the digital native label freely but not naively. While they actively participated in digital culture through social networking, listening to music, watching television, playing videogames, and engaging with other media, they recognized the residual

effects of living in a digital world. Not only did youths feel pressured to adapt to new technology, they also intentionally disengaged from technology when it interfered with other priorities or, for some, influenced their thoughts and feelings. They managed their lives using digital tools, resolved digital communication conflicts, monitored their online identities and privacy, and observed the impacts of adults' struggles with technology.

Although FCC youths were connected to the Internet and owned an array of technologies, survey data of incoming youths indicated a few signs of a material digital divide among them. Nearly all had Internet access at home via broadband, and mobile access outside the home via cell phones or laptops. However, connectivity at home varied: Most females and a fifth of Asian and Latino youths connected to the Internet at home via their cell phones, compared to their peers who connected via computers. In terms of cell phone ownership, focus group conversations about cell phone costs suggested that some youths were constrained economically and monitored their plans. Several owned outdated cell phones and voiced awareness of the negative affects of their ownership on communication, social networking, and information access. In contrast to the prominence of e-books and computer tablet in the mainstream market, very few youths owned or used them. Compared to their peers, fewer African-American and Indigenous youths owned laptops, and fewer Latino and multiracial youth owned videogame consoles. As reflected in survey data, with the exception of e-

books and computer tablets, technology ownership did not wholly determine frequency of or confidence with enacting specific practices.

FCC youths performed an amalgam of digital practices to communicate, socialize, engage in entertainment, create, and manage their everyday lives. Texting, social networking, listening to music, and watching various media were daily or weekly practices for a significant majority of youths. For at least half of those surveyed, sharing, seeking, and storing information; figuring out directions; and securing private information were also common activities. This collection of popular practices combined with focus group themes not only mirrored trends in American youths' media consumption but also reflected cultural messages about the importance of staying connected, informed, and safe. Youths voiced awareness of market-driven and peer influences on their digital practices, and while many rejected being influenced by such pressures, they acknowledged that participating in particular aspects of media culture, staying connected with friends and family, finding important information, knowing what is happening in the world, and securing their privacy and safety were important to them.

The extent to which youths participated other digital activities fluctuated. For example, less than half of youths commonly played videogames, posted to a social networking site (SNS), or banked online. Under one third regularly emailed, created art or music digitally, or solved problems using technology; even fewer met new people online, participated in online community other than a SNS, wrote online, videochatted, chatted

online, or listened to podcasts. Females more frequently engaged in digital socializing, information sharing, and literacy-oriented practices, while males more frequently engaged in digital game-playing and problem-solving. In addition, females managed their schedules using technology, banked online, and secured their private information more frequently than males.

Several data variations in digital practices aligned with differences in youths' race and ethnicity. In terms of digital entertainment, a greater percentage of Indigenous youths watched television often, in contrast to over forty percent of Asian youths who never watched television. In terms of social networking, focus group conversations indicated that a majority of youths of color and several white female youths had migrated to Twitter and Instagram, while most white youths continued to use Facebook as their primary SNS. Furthermore, playing videogames was more central to the conversations of white and Latino males and a few females but less prominent in conversations among youths of color.

Additionally, information-related practices varied for youths with different racial and ethnic identities. In contrast to their peers, Asian and African-American youths more frequently sought online information about colleges and careers. Asian, African-American, and Latino youths more frequently sought employment using online information and resources. Over 88% of Asian youths commonly sought reliable information online, in comparison to 40-67% of other youths. Less than half of multiracial, Latino, and Indigenous youths commonly stored important information digitally.

As detailed in chapter four, over one-third of focus group participants developed of some form of specific digital expertise not represented in survey data. The sneakerhead and three fashionistas promoted their talents through blogging and social networking. Among the five self-declared techies, four played videogames competitively, two hacked, and one created computer programs. Collectively, these youths' expertise resulted in the accumulation of social capital in the forms of gaining recognition among peers, in a subculture, or in a social network. Some of these experts realized economic gains, while others leveraged their skills in their learning or translated them into a related academic major.

While most youths were confident performing popular digital practices, survey data and focus group themes demonstrated several contradictions between youths' everyday digital practices and their confidence with performing them. To begin, few youths commonly used email or actually posted to a SNS, but most expressed confidence doing so. Fewer females commonly played videogames compared to males, yet a majority of females were confident playing them. And, despite the low number of youths who created music or videos, more African-American and Latino youths were confident creating music, and more African-American, Latino, and Indigenous youths were confident using video-editing software.

In addition, FCC youths' everyday digital practices were not congruent with the importance they assigned them in college. With the exception of email, other digital socializing and communicating practices were not

perceived as important in college by most surveyed youths. Focus group themes suggested that texting and social networking were not considered valuable in their courses but rather viewed as distractions. Between 50 and 75% of surveyed youths did not consider watching television, movies, and videos; listening to music; or playing videogames important in college. Exceptions included the importance of playing videogames for over 30% of males and under 20% of females, and the importance of listening to music for more than 50% of males and 76% of multiracial youths. According to focus group participants, the extent to which they engaged in some of these practices were related to whether or not they interfered with other priorities, specifically completing course work.

Next, a majority of surveyed youths thought that using computers, connecting to the Internet, word-processing, creating multimedia presentations, digital problem-solving, and information-related practices were important in college. However, their assignment of importance to a digital practice did not necessarily match their confidence performing it. In particular, over 30% and over 50% of those surveyed were only marginally confident or not confident with using word-processing software and creating multimedia presentations, respectively. More than 40% were not confident with digital problem-solving software. Similarly, using task-specific software to create and edit photos, videos, graphics, and websites was important in college to 53-59% of incoming youths, even though only 24-28% were confident using media-related software. Significantly more African-American

youths deemed producing videos and creating music important in college, compared to their peers, with 39-44% reporting confidence using related software.

Finally, survey data revealed multiple shifts between youths' perceptions of practices' importance in college and importance in their futures. Compared to the majority who deemed the following practices important in college, less than 50% of youths considered using software that supported graphic/web design, photo-editing, and video-editing relevant to their future everyday lives and work; slightly more than 61% considered word-processing important in their futures; and approximately 54-57% indicated that creating multimedia presentations and digital problem-solving were important in their futures. In terms of digital management of life, information, school, and work, several practices declined in future importance, including seeking information about colleges and careers online; finding downloading/uploading, and storing information; and managing their schedules. In contrast, more respondents regarded buying and/or selling items online, banking online, managing finances, seeking employment information, and figuring out directions as important in their futures.

Viewed through the intersectionally-infused Bourdieusian framework informing this study, the heterogeneity of youths' digital practices and perceptions of digital culture when juxtaposed with constructions of race, class, and gender interwoven in their habitus revealed gaps between their digital experiences and the importance they ascribed to digital practices in

community college and in their future everyday lives and work. The remainder of this chapter theorizes the influences of these gaps on community college youths and methods for rethinking the youths' digital practices as a means of disrupting the reproduction of social inequity in community college education.

Digital Dissonance and Immobilization

The previous convergence of survey data and focus group themes elucidates the complexity of FCC youths' everyday digital cultural consumption and production. When repositioned within the field of education, differences in youths' production of digital culture expose gaps between their everyday digital practices and the symbolic value of these practices in the academy. These gaps have the potential to generate what Clarke et al. (2009) termed *digital dissonance*, unresolved tensions between learners' uses of social media and technologies inside and outside formal learning contexts. When resituated within the framework of this research, the term is useful for theorizing how these gaps affect community college youths' agency.

The extent to which youths resolve digital dissonance are influenced by their habitus, the types of capital they have accumulated through their digital practices, and the effectiveness with which they use this capital as reflected in positions of agency youths take up within these fields. In the field of education, shifts in the symbolic value of digital practices accompanied by

the restricted position of student that youths occupy in the field affect their digital practices. For example, digital socializing and communication was prominent among surveyed youths and a majority of focus group participants, yet the digital medium through which they engaged in these practices varied according to gender and racial and ethnic identities. Most youths of color, and several white females had migrated to Twitter and Instagram, in contrast to most white youths who continued to use Facebook. Perceptions of the difference between the sites among youths of color indicate that peers, practices, and perceptions of status influenced their migration. Being active in these digital realms and negotiating the regulatory practices of their peers offered youths of color the means for accumulating social capital. For some, the accumulation of this social capital involved the development of social networking expertise that resulted in gaining recognition and making money for talents and interests they had developed.

In contrast to the symbolic value and social capital many assigned to social networking, a notable number of surveyed youths did not consider digitally socializing and communicating important in college. Focus group conversations indicated they had differentiated between the symbolic value of texting and social networking in their everyday lives and in the context of community college. The shift appeared to be mutually negotiated and reinforced through youths' perception of these practices' interference with learning and how practices were legitimized in the classroom.

This logic of differentiation of symbolic value between fields, however, was and is not applied evenly to digital practices or equally among youths. Not all practices or youths experienced deleterious effects of the shift or similar positions of constraint, for digital productions and producers are unevenly valued in the field. Some focus group participants sensed a direct overlap between their digital practices, particularly tech-specific skills such as programming and creating multimedia, and their learning. These youths actively leveraged these practices in their classes to produce knowledge. Differences in the degrees of success with which community college youths negotiated these shifts in the symbolic value suggest that they resolved the tensions between their everyday digital practices and their value in the academy unequally.

Consider the potential impacts of unequal negotiation on their learning. If the gap between FCC youths' everyday digital practices and the digital practices they experience in the classroom is wide enough and they struggle to negotiate the shift in value, they may experience *digital stagnation*, inactivity resulting in a lack of continued development of the technological competence and creativity required to thrive in a digitally-driven economy and culture. Combined with conflicting messages about the symbolic value of digital practices in the academy, such as using Wikipedia or social networking, community college youths may experience *digital immobilization*, forgoing engagement in digital practices that may enhance their lives,

learning, and future in an effort to avoid the possible punitive consequences of enacting them.

Left to reconcile digital dissonance independently, some FCC focus group participants circumnavigated digital stagnation and immobilization by engaging in acts of subversion, such as reading course content online instead of buying the books or taking notes, finding the video or audio version of a text, conducting Internet research to clarify concepts presented in their courses, and altering font settings in word-processing documents to give the illusion that an academic paper meets the length requirements. These acts of subversion suggest that some youths worked beyond the constraints of legitimized practices and converted their skills into some form of capital that resulted in knowledge production in community college.

Yet, the extent to which individual youths may attempt to traverse the gap between their everyday digital practices and their college learning experiences are disproportionate, given the differences among FCC youths' digital practices and the uneven symbolic valued assigned to them within and beyond the academy. Youths' resolution of the gaps in value and leveraging their skills are intertwined with various positions they occupy in community college. These positions are mutually influenced by their habitus and rules that regulate these positions within and beyond the field of education. The rules of regulation are applied unevenly to digital practices, and therein, differences in digital practices among FCC youths have the greatest potential to reproduce social relations of inequity.

For youths who have engaged in digital practices and/or developed digital expertise that directly overlapped with producing knowledge in the academy, resolving the dissonance and avoiding immobilization may be enacted more readily, for their practices are legitimized in the field of education. A visible example is gamers leveraging their gaming skills into problem-solving skills. Members of the group of all male, white and Latino, techies recognized a direct influence of their gaming on their college majors; the overlap between their digital skills and production of knowledge in the academy was apparent to them. They had managed to transform their skills into academic capital.

By comparison, resolving digital dissonance may be more challenging for those whose prominent practices and digital expertise had a less visible overlap with producing knowledge in the academy. Consider, for example, prominence of social networking among young women and most youths of color. With the exception of using Facebook to communicate in some classes, focus group conversations about social networking's affects on the classroom and learning centered on faculty prohibiting texting and tweeting in the classroom. While anecdotally these practices may be integrated into learning by individual faculty, they are not departmentally or institutionally legitimized.

The cumulative effects of unresolved digital dissonance and lack of legitimization of particular practices are the marginalization of youths' digital practices, and potential marginalization of youths themselves. This

marginalization not only impacts community college youths as a classed aggregate, but at the micro-level of digital practices and perceptions, some females and youths of color. Locating digital dissonance in the general education curriculum further exposes the impacts of marginalization of practices on youths.

A Closer Look at Digital Immobilization: Technological Competence in FCC's General Education Curriculum

Tracing the presence of digital practices in the general education curriculum offers additional insight into the contradictions between youths' digital practices and legitimization processes at work in the academy that may lead to digital stagnation and/or immobilization. Accreditation standards for higher education require that all degree-seeking students complete a requisite number of general education courses that build students' college-proficiency in a number of areas, including technological competence (MSCHE, 2006). While demonstrating technological competence is a general education goal, its learning outcomes are vague. According to a description of FCC's technological competence learning outcomes (FCC, 2014), students will:

- a. Demonstrate effective and appropriate uses of technology in academic, professional, and personal contexts.
- b. Use technology appropriate for a specific discipline or program of study.
- c. Analyze the roles of technology in society. (p. 45)

The degree to which these learning outcomes are or are not defined within academic disciplines has the potential to affect youths' agency by eliding their digital practices and their expertise. Consider, for example, the positions of agency available to the sneakerhead and the fashionistas to leverage and develop their social networking expertise in the general education curriculum, in contrast to the techies. While the techies voiced an overlap with their college learning, the sneakerhead and the fashionistas voiced none. Also consider that among the sneakerhead, the fashionistas, and the techies are not only distinctions in symbolic value and presence of their digital productions in the curriculum but also differences in the gender, racial, and ethnic identities of the producers.

Two questions arise from these contrasts. Specifically, how is the digital expertise of the sneakerhead and fashionistas cultivated in the general education curriculum? More broadly, what are the effects on the agency of these youths when considering that they are all youths of color? These questions become even more complex when expanded to encompass data indicating that a notable percentage of youths of color, particularly African-Americans, perceived video-editing and creating music as valuable in college. Although these creative practices may be integrated into particular communication and arts courses and anecdotally into others, collectively they contradict with traditional ways of producing knowledge in the academy. In other words, overall, they are not legitimized in the core curriculum.

What emerges is not only the potential for digital stagnation of the development youths of color's expertise, but also immobilization of those whose perceptions of the value of video-editing and creating music contrast with traditional knowledge production in the forms of writing, speaking, and testing. This not to suggest that youth of color lack agency to seek out courses that recognize and develop their video-editing and music making skills; these courses exist, but many are not designated general education courses. It does suggest, however, that a lack of legitimization of these specific practices in core courses may result in students bypassing the development of their skills in order to complete a four-year degree with efficacy, or changing their educational goals to develop them. Either way their education goals, their degree completion time, and their development of particular digital skills may be affected. These effects, when repositioned within broader discourses about college completion among community college students, take on new meaning. National data indicate that only 17.1% of students who began at a two-year institution completed a four-year degree within six years (Shapiro, Dunder, Zizkin, Yuan, & Harrell, 2013). Completion rates among youths of color, particularly those who begin at community colleges, are markedly less (NCES, 2012). How youths of color experience the relevance of their digital practices in their community college learning may contribute to the multiple factors affecting their degree attainment.

Tracing specific patterns of practice and perception throughout the data also reveals opportunities to directly address youths' skill deficits in the general education curriculum. The most prominent example is the contradiction in data related to managing finances. While 72-78% of survey respondents perceived digital financial practices as important to their futures, managing their finances digitally, buying/selling items, and banking online were not common practices for most of those surveyed. Further, 46-53% of surveyed youths reported that they were only somewhat or not confident performing these practices. And, for approximately 40-50% of respondents, managing their finances digitally and banking online were not important in college. Repositioned within discourses about the college costs, student loan default rates, returns on investment in a college education, and the ongoing transitions to electronic financial management, youths' digital financial practices and perceptions signify the need to address youths' financial literacy.

The intersection of data about youth, faculty, and the general education curriculum exposes additional gaps that may lead to digital dissonance. First, some youths' indicated low confidence levels with and attributed no importance in college to digital practices that are legitimized in the curriculum (e.g., using spreadsheets, creating multimedia presentations, digitally collaborating with others and sharing information). Second, a survey of FCC faculty indicated that many made broad assumptions about their students' technological competence (Huff, 2011). Third, data from FCC's

general education program review indicated that the assessment and development of technological competence within the curriculum was sequestered to two general education computer courses, neither of which are core requirements, and only sparsely addressed in other general education courses (FCC, 2014). At the intersection of youths' confidence and perceptions of value, faculty presumptions, and the intermittent presence of technological competence in the general education curriculum is the possibility of digital dissonance that could impact youths' academic performance.

Finally, while general education provides a foundation of skills and knowledge that augment those developed in two-year and four-year degrees, its mission also supports life-long learning and active participation in an ever-changing world (FCC, 2014). The extent to which the general education curriculum develops technological competence for youths' future everyday lives and the workplace is worthy of scrutiny. Why? FCC youths' concerns about their parents' digital deficits coupled with their critique of faculty's technological awkwardness suggest that they recognized technological competence as necessary for successfully navigating their adult lives. Watching adults struggle with technology was and is part of youths' habitus. They recognized how technological incompetence interfered with their parents' performance of everyday tasks and, in some instances, parents' careers. The effects of the skill deficits they observed at home and in the classroom when contrasted with FCC youths' productive digital engagement

in everyday life illustrate another potential form of digital dissonance. Incorporated into their habitus, these observations may influence their constructions of their future adult lives and the workplace, in effect, replicating the digital deficiencies and struggles they observed in their everyday lives.

Signs of this replication are present in the data about the importance of digital practices to youths' futures. For example, one-third of youths did not think that word-processing and managing their schedules digitally would be important in their future everyday lives and workplaces. An additional 30% did not perceive sharing information and collaborating digitally as important either. Youths' observations of adults' struggles combined with these data stand in stark opposition (1) to constructions of a technologically literate millennial workforce that is equipped to bypass antiquated workplace technologies in order complete their work (Mitchell, 2013), and (2) U.S. labor data that consistently reinforces the need for advanced technological competence in the workplace and skilled workers in burgeoning technology sectors (Henderson, 2012).

Given the life-long learning tenets of institutional and curricular missions of community colleges, the disconnections between youths' perceptions of value and workforce realities need to be addressed in the curriculum. Otherwise, these disconnections, combined with youths' practices, perceptions, and differences as well as the obscure presence of technological competence in the general education curriculum could have material consequences for youths. Overlooking these contrasts supports

institutional complicity in the reproduction of social relations through a hidden curriculum that educates students according to their social class and other dimensions of difference (Apple, 2013). Advocating for intentional reform that focuses on rethinking youths' digital culture is a conduit for interrupting reproduction.

Rethinking the Value of Youths' Digital Practices: Implications for Reform and Research in Community College Education and Beyond

Engaging in a project of advocacy for community college youths' digital practices, perceptions, and differences requires a systemic look at digital culture's overlap with education through what Davidson (2011) termed unlearning: "Unlearning is required when the world or your circumstances in that world have changed so completely that your habits hold you back" (p.19). In regards to the faculty-student relationship, Davidson's words could be revised to state that unlearning is required when *our* collective worlds and circumstances have changed so completely that *our* habits hold *them* back. Central to a project of "unlearning" is developing a theoretical framework informed by critical education, which advocates for agency, focuses on differences, addresses oppressive power structures, and rethinks the role of pedagogy in supporting individuals' development (Freire, 1970; Giroux 1992, 2013; hooks, 1994). Anchoring reform in critical education relocates youths' agency to enact their digital practices, recognizes differences among youths and the impacts of marginalization, and repositions the value of youths' digital

culture in the teacher/student dichotomy, within the field of education, and broader discourses about youth, technology, and education. To effect change that addresses youths' digital culture in the field of education, theoretical and practical applications of unlearning reside in intentional reform enacted across the spectrum of learning, from the curriculum and the disciplines, to faculty development, the institution, and broader policies in higher education.

Faculty engagement is central to curriculum and discipline-specific reform. Initiating cross-disciplinary conversations that define technological competence fosters an understanding of how, when, and where it is developed and evaluated across the general education curriculum, in other courses and career programs, academic support services, and throughout the institution. These conversations offer faculty the opportunity to identify presumptions about students' competence that may affect students' academic performance. By exposing faculty to data about FCC youths' overall digital engagement and the disparities in practices and perceptions among males and females, and youths with different racial and ethnic identities, faculty can attend to their presumptions, and undertake reform that resolve gaps between youths' digital culture and the curriculum.

To avoid replicating the disparities youths observed between their digital practices and adults' practices, reform efforts should focus on developing youths' digital potential based on projections of the technological competence they will need to thrive in their future everyday lives and

workplaces. Reform that advances curricular policies that support youths' digital practices and develops their technological competence for the future must also intentionally reconsider how digital culture overlaps with disciplines, teaching, and faculty expectations of students. Halberstam (2012) explained that such as undertaking requires faculty to "learn to unlearn" by

learning how to break with some disciplinary legacies, learning to reform and reshape others, and unlearning the many constraints that sometimes get in the way of our best efforts to reinvent our fields, our purpose, and our mission. (p.10)

Central to this undertaking is institutional commitment (1) to support faculty in rethinking the role of digital culture within and beyond their disciplines and (2) to fund professional development that evolves their technological competence and their understanding of digital culture's impacts on our students, our culture, and the workplace. Institutional commitment, however, must extend beyond curricular reform and faculty development to encompass a review of the underlying assumptions about students' technological competence and technological infrastructures that permeate the institutions operations and inform its policies.

These approaches to reform are not meant to undermine current efforts underway at Frederick Community College, but rather to intentionally enhance them. Throughout the institution are signs that faculty, staff, and administration are committed to addressing the impacts of digital culture on learning (Huff, 2011; FCC, 2014). In addition to implementing technological

practices that support teaching and learning, FCC offers technology-focused faculty development in addition to direct support for students to develop their skills outside the classroom through academic and technical support services. There are signs of shifts in expectations for student to produce knowledge differently in the classroom. Individual faculty and groups are incorporating various learning technologies into their courses. However, the extent to which these shifts are informed by student data is uncertain. This uncertainty exposes the need for conversations about the overlap between institutional and faculty efforts, and everyday digital experiences of students; otherwise reform may result in the unintentional reproduction of inequity.

While this study may serve as an impetus for change at Frederick Community College, its implications transcend this institution and its students. Given the presence of technology in American culture, and variations in youths' and adults' engagement with digital culture, advocacy through intentional collaboration across higher education institutions is needed to assure that policies not only reflect the technological competence students need within and beyond academia, but also support institutional efforts to empower them to succeed. To begin, the theoretical framework and methods applied in this study can be duplicated at other community colleges and with other populations. Replicating this study at community colleges with more diverse demographics will enable more decisive advocacy and reform that address youths whose perspectives were underrepresented in this study. Conducting similar research with adult and immigrant students also assures

that policies and practices encompass their engagement with digital culture and technological competence. Next, collaboration among faculty and policymakers can prompt the modification of outdated state-level education policies. In Maryland, for example, current higher education policies require general education curricula to develop students' information literacy, while only distance education courses must specifically address students' technological competence (MHEC, 2013). More broadly, the themes and messages observed in the data have the capability of spawning research into youths' digital culture across the K-16 education spectrum. K-16 research has the potential not only to illuminate youths' digital development in formal education contexts but also to offer opportunities to combine scarce resources to address marginalization occurring throughout youths' digital educational experiences.

Finally, to engage American Studies scholars in research that focuses on community college youths' digital practices and differences has the potential to further expound on how the overlaps and contradictions among community college youths' habitus, their experiences with, and perceptions of digital culture promote or impede their agency within the field of education and in other cultural contexts. American Studies theoretical constructions and studies of difference, when applied to community college youths and their practices, can further illuminate how power operates to sustain digital divides at the level of everyday practice among males and females and youths of color. In addition, converging American Studies research on youth popular

cultural consumption and production, studies on subcultures like those of the sneakerhead, gamers, and hackers, and the themes and messages in this study can promote further understanding of how both advocacy and marginalization of youths' practices and differences operate in the workplace, the home, communities, various commercial spheres, societal networks, and geographic locations (e.g., urban, rural, international). Given the complexity of community college youths' digital culture revealed in this study, my hope is that the combined efforts of educators and American Studies scholars motivate tenacious, critical reform and research that mobilizes the promise and potential of youths' digital practices in community college and in their future everyday lives and work.

Appendix A: FCC Digital Practices Survey Documents

Survey Design

I designed the FCC Digital Practices Survey to gather data about youths' digital practices, perceptions of confidence with, and value of digital practices, and their demographic information. Table 30 provides an overview of the sections and their alignment with specific research questions. Sections one and two of the survey addressed the procedural administration of the survey. Section one, Voluntary and Informed Consent, provided detailed information, per University of Maryland Internal Review Board guidelines, about the purpose of the study and investigator, human subjects rights, and procedures related to the administration of the survey and the security of confidentiality of information. Participants had the choice to agree to consent to participate or opt out of participation. Section two, Student Identification and Year of Birth, recorded the student identification number and year of birth of the participant. This data was used to confirm that participants were enrolled at Frederick Community College and fell within the definition of youths utilized for this survey, 18 to 24 years of age.

Sections three through seven were designed to address research question one: *How are Frederick Community College youths accessing and using technology in their everyday lives?* Sections three and four, Technology Access, Ownership and Usage, focused on gathering data about students

access to, ownership of and frequency of uses of specific technologies.

Access and ownership questions were designed to assess particular types of

Table 30

Overview of FCC Digital Practices Survey Sections

Sections	Survey Content
1	Voluntary and Informed Consent
2	Birth Year
RQ1: How are FCC youths accessing and using technology in their everyday lives?	
3 - 4	Technology Access, Ownership and Usage
5 - 7	Frequency of Specific Digital Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitally Communicating and Socializing • Engaging in Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices • Managing Life, Information, School and Work
RQ2: What are FCC youths' perceptions of their confidence with specific digital practices?	
8 - 9	Confidence with Specific Digital Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitally Communicating and Socializing • Engaging in Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices • Managing Life, Information, School and Work
RQ3: What are FCC youths' perceptions of the value of specific digital practices in college and in their future?	
10 - 11	Value of Digital Practices for College and in Future Life/Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitally Communicating and Socializing • Engaging in Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices • Managing Life, Information, School and Work
12	Background Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male/Female • Race/Ethnicity • Dependence Status • Number of Children • Hours of Work • Enrollment Status • Parent/Guardian(s) Occupation(s) • Reason(s) for Enrolling in FCC

Internet access, and the personal and family ownership of eleven (11) common digital technologies. Follow up frequency questions asked participants to rate the frequency of usage of the eleven (11) common digital technologies using a four-point Likert scale of often, sometimes, rarely, and never. Two additional open-ended questions included estimating the daily hours of media use and exposure, and reporting the initial age of access to everyday digital technologies.

To provide insight into the everyday digital culture of participants, sections five through seven focused on gathering data about the frequency with which respondents engaged in specific digital activities that align with these categories: Digitally Communicating and Socializing, Engaging in Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices, and Managing Life, Information, School and Work. These three categories were adapted from the research of Kalmus, Realo and Siibak (2011), wherein digital practices were categorized according to primary motivations for their usage: social; entertainment and creative practices; and work, school, and information. The digital practices for each included a range of common practices within each category. For each digital practice, participants reported frequency of use by selecting from a five-point Likert scale of daily, weekly, occasionally, rarely, and never. Sections five through seven were comprised of an inventory of 34 digital practices and 3 non-digital practices. Section five, Digitally Communicating and Socializing, included 10 practices; section six, Engaging in Digital

Entertainment and Creative Practices included 17 practices; and section seven, Managing Life, Information, School and Work included 10 practices. Three (3) non-digital practices in the Engaging in Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices category were included for the purposes of analytical comparison: reading print books, writing in a paper journal, and participating in activities that did not involve technology.

Sections eight and nine focused on measuring research question two: *What are Frederick Community College youths' perceptions of their confidence with specific digital practices?* Focusing on confidence, these sections included an inventory of 31 digital practices that meld youths' everyday digital culture with the field of education. For each practice, participants chose from three Likert scale responses: confident, somewhat confident, and not confident. To maintain general continuity between survey sections, three of the four categories in this section aligned with the categories in sections five through seven – Digitally Socializing and Communicating, Engaging in Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices, and Managing Life, Information, School and Work. Some of the particular practices from sections five through seven, however, were reconfigured. First, the practices in Digitally Socializing and Communicating were reduced to 6 practices. Three practices (participating in and online community other than a social networking site, videochatting and chatting online) were combined into one – collaborating with others using technology, and the practices of meeting new people online and dating online were removed.

Second, by combining several practices and re-categorizing others into a new category Specific Technologies and Task-specific Software, the practices in Engaging in Digital Entertainment and Creative Practices were reduced from 17 to 4 practices: using cell phone applications, using technology to listen to music, using technology to watch television or movies, and using videogame technology. Third, one practice – downloading and uploading information – was added to the original digital practices in the Managing Life, Information, School and Work category. Finally, a fourth category, Specific Technologies and Task-specific Software, was constructed to include 10 items: 3 items about general internet, computer and cell phone use, and 7 items about task-specific software skills. The task-specific software skills align with the International Society of Technology in Education's definition of students' technological competence (ISTE, 2012). The reconfiguration, combination, and omission of practices possibility created unintended consequences for the implications of the outcomes of this study as several of the skills defined in this section did not correspond to digital practices in other sections.

Sections ten and eleven were designed to provide insight into research question three: *What are Frederick Community College youths' perceptions of the value of specific digital practices in college and in their future?* For continuity, these sections mirrored the same inventory of 31 items and the categories used in sections eight and nine. For each inventory item, participants chose yes or no when asked whether or not a specific practice or

skill was important in college, and yes or no when asked if it was important to their future life and work.

Section twelve, Background Information, gathered demographic information using standardized responses to questions about race, gender, dependence status, work hours, and enrollment status. Several open-ended options provided survey respondents alternative responses to demographic information. To estimate students' social class status, participants were also asked to list their parent/guardians' occupations.

After the design was finalized and programmed into Survey Monkey, the survey was piloted with a group of fifteen volunteer students. The purpose of the pilot was to assure that the survey completion did not exceed twenty minutes, that the survey mechanism worked appropriately, and that there appeared to be no obvious discrepancies with the construction of the content of the survey and its clarity of direction. The pilot group provided supportive feedback. First, the average completion time was 14 minutes, below the twenty-minute threshold for survey questionnaire fatigue (Rathod & LaBruna, 2005). Second, the survey programming mechanism in Survey Monkey worked smoothly. Finally, volunteer pilot respondents indicated a clear understanding of the questions and reported no obvious glitches, contradictions, or omissions in the content of the survey.

Survey Sample and Administration Procedures⁷

With the focus of this research on incoming community college youths' digital practices, the criteria for inclusion during the survey phase were participants who were between the ages of 18-24 and were enrolling in Frederick Community College (FCC) for their first semester. To assure that the sample size of incoming youths met the 95% confidence interval, two hundred and fifty (250) completed responses were needed, based on the previous fall enrollment numbers. The survey was administered to incoming community college youths during a common experience in the enrollment process for nearly all freshmen: placement testing. With the support of FCC administration and the Testing Center staff, 289 volunteers completed the survey during their placement testing from June 19, 2012 through August 29, 2012.

The survey was administered to participants at FCC's Testing Center on computers using the professional version of Survey Monkey. As students entered the Testing Center for placement testing, they were introduced to the placement testing process. As part of this process, potential participants were asked their name and age as a matter of standard protocol in obtaining their consent to receive transcripts from other education institutions (e.g., high school, college). If they met the age criteria, 18-24, the Testing Center staff presented potential subjects with a verbal overview of the study, asked them

⁷ The research sample and all administration procedures used in this research and described herein received Human subjects approval, per University of Maryland policy. All required IRB documents were submitted for approval via IRB Net. Approval to proceed with the research was received on May 18, 2012 (see Appendix C).

if they were interested in participating, and then provided them with an overview of the voluntary and informed consent procedure. For students who agreed to participate, Testing Center staff presented the online, voluntary and informed consent form, section one of the survey (see Appendix A).

Upon reading the form and checking the consent box, subjects proceeded to the survey questions. The survey prompted participants to complete questions and then click the “Next” button to go to the next page. To assure voluntary consent, the option to exit the survey was available throughout the survey. At the end of the survey, participants clicked “Done.” They were thanked for their participation and then continued with their placement testing.

To assure the confidentiality and security of the survey data that was collected using the professional version of Survey Monkey, the data was password-protected and stored on secure server. Only the researcher had access to the data. The survey data used a unique identifier provided by FCC. The subject identifier solely was used exclusively for the purposes of confirming survey respondents’ enrollment status in the college. The survey data was exported from Survey Monkey and imported into SPSS. The data was stored on a secure FCC computer and on a research flash drive in password-protected files. The director of FCC’s Testing Center, who assisted with importing data into SPSS, and I were the only two people with access to this data.

Data Assessment Methods

Data were analyzed using SPSS software. Once raw data were imported into SPSS, individual surveys were reviewed to assure that all respondents met the criteria for inclusion outlined above and to assure the completion of the survey. Of the 289 surveys completed, 34 of them did not meet the criteria for inclusion or were incomplete. The remaining 255 surveys were determined to be valid, according to the criteria for inclusion and the completion of the survey; this number exceeded the required 250 that were required to assure that the sample size reflected the general population of incoming youths with 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error.

Statistical analyses of the data included frequency measures and tests of significance. First, frequency calculations were applied to all standardized items in the survey, from which emerged descriptive statistical measures. Open-ended question responses were analyzed for their content and recoded according to pre-existing categories, with one exception: parent/guardians' occupations. To estimate the social class status of respondents, each occupation was assigned social class code based on the occupational prestige work of sociologists Beveridge and Weber (Tse and Werschkul, 2005). Social class codes included lower class, working class, middle class, upper-middle and upper classes. Once the codes were entered, they were tabulated for frequency using SPSS. Twenty-three survey responses to the parent(s) occupation questions were coded "not sure" because the responses were blank or the responses were indecipherable.

For each inventory item and corresponding test statistic contained in sections three through ten, the Chi-square test for goodness of fit was applied to assure it met the threshold of distribution required for validity. All measures met these parameters. Data in these sections were assessed to determine trends in usage, access, ownership, frequency of practices, confidence measures, and perceptions of value in college and in future life and work for the entire cohort.

To address the fourth research question of this study: *What are patterns of difference in FCC youths' digital practices, confidence levels, and the value they associate with them?*, two independent variables were analyzed: gender and race/ethnicity. The dependent variables included all of the inventory items in sections three through eleven of the survey as described in the "Survey Design" section of the this chapter. Crosstab analyses of gender and race/ethnicity were performed for these survey items. To test for the patterns of significant differences among participants, null hypotheses were formed for each crosstab and each survey inventory item. Chi-square tests were then applied to these crosstabs and items. Patterns of significance with a p-value equaling $<.05$ or less were determined to be significant. The results, including limitations of data results, are delineated in chapter three.

Because survey participants included a small numbers of Indigenous ($n=7$); Asian ($n=9$); and Multiracial ($n=13$) youths, determining precise statistical significance of digital differences among survey respondents with

different racial and ethnic identities was challenging. In instances when n values for racial and ethnic categories have been deemed too small to assure statistical significance, differences in digital practices are observed categorically without the assignment of statistical significance. The small number of Indigenous, Asian, and Multiracial youths surveyed prevented a combined cross-tabbed analysis of differences among males and females with different racial and ethnic identities. Despite this limitation, which affects the generalizability of results across Frederick Community College youths, patterns of difference in digital practices were observable among youths with different racial and ethnic identities and are discussed within the context of the surveyed cohort. Data patterns including differences between males and females, and among youths with different racial and ethnic identities are described in chapter three.

Voluntary and Informed Consent Form

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

1. Informed and Voluntary Consent Form

FCC Digital Practices Survey

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about young adult community college students' access to and uses of digital technologies in their everyday lives, their confidence with using digital technologies for specific purposes, and their perceptions of the importance of digital technologies in college and in their future. This research is being conducted by Kelly Trigger of University of Maryland, College Park, at Frederick Community College.

We are inviting you to complete this survey because you are an incoming student at Frederick Community College between the ages of 18 and 24.

This survey is beginning given on the computers in Frederick Community College's Testing Center and typically takes about twenty minutes to complete. Reading this online consent form is the first step in the survey. Should you agree to participate by clicking on the "I Agree" box below, the survey will begin. Each page asks multiple choice or short answer question(s). Once you have answered the question(s) on each page, you will click on the "Next" button at the bottom of the page to proceed. At the end of the survey, you will click "Done." Then you are finished!

No one will contact you for further questions; however, there is a second part of this study that seeks to interview students, ages 18-24, about their experiences with digital technology.

There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project. Questions have no right or wrong answers.

While the information you share in this survey may not benefit you personally at this time, the results of the survey will assist the investigator and Frederick Community College with creating learning environments that more directly consider you and your peers' diverse experiences with and perceptions of digital technology, and developing courses that will prepare students to participate in technologically-oriented everyday cultures and workplaces. This information will help researchers, scholars, and faculty understand community college youths' digital culture.

All information you provide in this survey is confidential and contained on a secured server in password-protected files. Every effort will be made to keep your identity confidential. Your name will not be included on the surveys or in any reports or article written about this research project. Your identification number will be placed on the survey and through the use of an identification key, the researcher will be able to link your survey to your identity. Only the researcher will have access to the identification key.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized in anyway. Your academic standing at Frederick Community College will not be affected by your participation or non-participation in this study.

If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator:

Kelly Trigger
Frederick Community College
7932 Opposumtown Pike
Frederick, MD 21702
Email: ktrigger@frederick.edu
Telephone: 301-846-2402

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:

University of Maryland College Park
Institutional Review Board Office
1204 Marie Mount Hall

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

College Park, MD 20742
E-mail: irb@umd.edu
Telephone: 301-405-0678

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

1. By clicking on “I agree” below, you confirm that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

A printed copy of this consent form is available for your records.

If you agree to participate, click “I agree” below.

- I agree.
- I do not agree.

FCC Digital Practices Survey

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

2. Background Information: Student Id & Year of Birth

2. My student identification number is...

Student ID:

*3. I was born...

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

3. Technology Use

The following questions ask how you use technology in your everyday life and how you feel about different digital practices (or uses of technology). There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer honestly and thoughtfully.

*4. How often do you use each of these technologies?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Cell phone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Landline phone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Digital Camera	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video Camera	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video gaming unit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desktop Computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Laptop Computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MP3 Player/Ipod	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TV	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E-book reader (like the Kindle)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ipad or similar computer tablet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*5. At what age did you first...?

own a cell phone	<input type="text"/>
use a computer at home	<input type="text"/>
use a computer at school	<input type="text"/>
use the internet	<input type="text"/>
watch TV	<input type="text"/>
play videogames	<input type="text"/>
listen to music of your own choosing	<input type="text"/>

*6. I connect to the internet at home...

- With a dial-up modem
- Through a broadband connection (e.g., Comcast, Verizon)
- Through my cell phone
- I don't have internet access at home
- I'm not sure

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

4.

***7. I most often access the internet on...**

- A home computer
- My laptop wherever I happen to be, provided there is a Wi-Fi connection
- My cell phone using Wi-Fi
- My cell phone using a data plan that connects to the 3G/4G network
- A computer at school, the library, or another place

***8. Which of the following do you own personally? Which do your family own?**

Check all that apply.

	I own personally	I don't own but my family owns
Cell phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landline phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital Camera	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video Camera	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video gaming unit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Desktop Computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laptop Computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MP3 Player/Ipod	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E-book reader (like the Kindle)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ipad or similar computer tablet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

***9. How many hours per day, on average, do you interact with and/or use some form of digital technology? This includes all types of technology: television, mp3 players, computers, cell phones, etc.**

Hours

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

5. Communicating and Socializing

*10. How often do you...?

	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Text friends/family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email friends/family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use a social networking site (e.g., MySpace, Facebook, Twitter)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chat online using instant messaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video chat (e.g., Skype, Facetime)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participate in an online community (other than a social networking site)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meet new people online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Date online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Post/respond to blogs/message boards/a social networking site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Share information using technology (e.g., photos, links, files)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

6. Leisure and Entertainment

*11. How often do you engage in the following activities for pleasure or entertainment?

	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Listen to music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch movies on DVD, on demand or through videostreaming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch videos online (e.g., YouTube videos)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Play videogames	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Play games using cell phone applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Play games online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read online websites for entertainment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read e-books	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read print books	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read online websites for news	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Create music or art using technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Solve problems or experiment using technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write in a private, paper journal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listen to podcasts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participate in activities that don't use technology (e.g., sports, extra-curricular, clubs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

7. Managing Life, Information, School and Work

*12. How frequently do you...?

	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Seek reliable online information important to my life (e.g., health info, finances, events)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seek information about colleges and careers online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seek employment using online information and resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Store information digitally that is important to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Figure out directions using technology (e.g., Google Maps, GPS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Manage my schedule using technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Manage my finances using technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buy and/or sell items online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bank online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make sure my private information is secure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

8. Confidence with Digital Practices

*13. How confident do you feel about doing each of these digital activities?

	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident
Texting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emailing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using a social networking site (e.g., MySpace, Facebook, Twitter)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Posting/responding to blogs/message boards/social networking sites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing information using technology (e.g., photos, links, files)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using technology to collaborate with others (e.g., through wikis, chatting, videoconferencing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

***14. How confident are you with each of the following technologies or software applications?**

	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident
Using a cell phone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using a computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connecting to the internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using cell phone applications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using videogaming technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using digital technology to listen to music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using technology to watch television and movies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using word processing software	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using video-editing software	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using photo-editing software	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating multimedia presentations using computer software	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using software to create music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using spreadsheet software or other computer programs to solve problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using graphic/web design software	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

9. Confidence with Digital Practices 2

*15. How confident do you feel with each of the following digital activities?

	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident
Storing information digitally that is important to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Downloading/uploading files	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding reliable online information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeking information about colleges and careers online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeking employment using online information and resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Figuring out directions using technology (e.g., Google Maps, GPS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing my schedule using technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing my finances using technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buying and/or selling items online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Banking online	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making sure my private information is secure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

10. Value of Digital Practices

***16. Which digital practices do you believe will be important in college? Which will be important in your future everyday life and work? Check all that apply.**

	Important in College	Important in My Future Everyday Life and Work
Storing information digitally that is important to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Downloading/uploading information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding reliable online information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeking information about colleges and careers online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeking employment using online information and resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Figuring out directions using technology (e.g., Google Maps, GPS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing my schedule using technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing my finances using technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buying and/or selling items online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Banking online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making sure my private information is secure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Texting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emailing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using a social networking site (e.g., MySpace, Facebook, Twitter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Posting/responding to blogs/message boards/social networking sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing information using technology (e.g., photos, links, files)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using technology to collaborate with others (e.g., through wikis, chatting, videoconferencing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

11. Value of Digital Practices 2

***17. Which digital practices do you believe will be important in college? Which will be important in your future everyday life and work? Check all that apply.**

	Important in College	Important in My Future Everyday Life and Work
Connecting to the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using a cell phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using a computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using word processing software	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using video-editing software	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using photo-editing software	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating multimedia presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating music digitally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using spreadsheet software or other computer programs to solve problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using graphic/web design software	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using cell phone applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playing video games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watching television and movies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What other forms of technology will be important to you in college and in your future?

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data**12. Background Information*****18. Sex:**

- Male
 Female

***19. Race/Ethnicity**

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
 Asian
 Black/African-American
 Caucasian: Hispanic or Latino Origin
 Caucasian: Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino Origin
 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 Multiracial

***20. How many hours per week do you work?**

- Full-time: 35 hours/week or more
 Half-time: 20-34 hours/week
 Part-time: up to 20 hours/week
 I do not work.

***21. Describe your parents' (or guardians') occupations.**

If one or both of your parents (or guardians) are not employed, please write "not employed."

Mother's Occupation:

Father's Occupation:

***22. Dependence Status: Which of these best describes you?**

- I live with my parent(s)/guardian(s) and am dependent on them for financial support.
 I do not live with my parents/guardians but am dependent on them for financial support.
 I live on my own and am financially independent.

FCC Digital Practices Survey: Dissertation Data

***23. Do you have a child or children?**

Yes

No

If you answered, "yes," how many children do you have?

***24. I enrolled at FCC for the following reasons [Check all of the reasons that apply]:**

Cost

Location

Choice of Major

Athletic Recruitment

Not sure what I want to do

Other (please specify):

***25. The primary reason I enrolled at FCC [Check one]:**

Cost

Location

Choice of Major

Athletic Recruitment

Not sure what I want to do

Other (please specify):

***26. Do you plan to attend FCC...**

Full-time, taking 12 or more credits

Part-time, taking less than 12 credits

***27. Right now, my goal for enrolling in FCC is to...**

Take several courses that will transfer to a 4-year college or university.

Earn an associate's degree and then transfer to a 4-year college.

Earn an associate's degree that will prepare me for a career.

I'm not sure.

I have a different goal:

Appendix B: FCC Focus Group Documents

Focus Group Interview Design

I designed the focus group interviews using the combined recommendations of Barbour and Kitzinger (1998), Morgan (1996), and Creswell (2007): Focus group sessions were planned for two hours to permit for sufficient time for the interview. To encourage in-depth responses and conversational interaction among participants, sessions were limited to 6-12 participants. Three focus group sessions were scheduled with the goal to interview approximately 24 participants.

Each interview session was semi-structured, employing emergent methodology outlined by Morgan (1993). The structured portion of the focus groups included a set of thematically common, open-ended questions used to begin each focus group session. Reflective of the primary research questions of the study, these common questions focused on participants' uses of technology in their everyday lives, the relevance of these practices, their confidence with digital practices, and the value they perceived in these practices. To complement the core questions asked verbally, paper and pencil responses were gathered as well. This written option provided a means for participants to expand on their contributions and a method that supported contribution by participants who may have been reticent to speak (Creswell, 2007). Beyond time estimated for responding to the core questions, the remainder of the interview was intended to be flexible and

participant-driven. Spontaneous follow-up questions were asked based on participants' contributions and interests.

In addition, themes that emerged in the first focus group shaped several questions asked in the second focus group, and subsequently, themes from the second groups shaped several questions asked in the third focus group. According to Morgan (1993), this funnel approach provides flexibility to adapt focus group questions based on the emergent themes and issues that arise from participant conversations, yet maintains a certain level of comparability across groups. At the end of each focus group session, participants completed a paper and pencil survey of demographic information using the demographics section of the FCC Digital Practices survey (see Appendix A, Sections 11 - 12). This information provided a means for comparing similarities and differences among the participants.

Focus Group Sample and Administration Procedures⁸

Participants for the three focus groups shared the common characteristics of age, 18-24, and their statuses as active enrollees. To assure the pool of interviewees reflected the diversity of FCC youths in the survey, a sample of convenience of volunteers were recruited through FCC's Center of Student Engagement and Multicultural Student Services Program. Both of these offices work extensively with incoming students ages 18-24.

⁸ The research sample and all administration procedures used in this research and described herein received Human subjects approval, per University of Maryland policy. All required IRB documents were submitted for approval via IRB Net. Approval to proceed with the research was received on May 18, 2012 (see Appendix C).

Recruitment flyers and electronic announcements were posted to students to solicit interest. As an incentive, students who participated were offered the opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate for the FCC Bookstore. The directors of the Center for Student Engagement and Multicultural Student Services shared the research study opportunity with the groups of student with whom they interacted and announced the opportunity to the entire student body. Twenty-five FCC students, ages 18 to 24, participated: The first focus group was comprised of 12 participants; the second had 7 participants; and the third had 6 participants. As reported in chapter four, participants had diverse demographic characteristics that generally reflected the diversity among FCC students of similar ages.

Procedurally, each focus group was conducted in a private room at Frederick Community College. Each session began with an explanation of the research project and voluntary and informed consent. After participants completed their consent form, each was assigned a pseudonym to assure anonymity. Then, as explained in the design section, the focus group discussion was initiated with a series of predetermined open-ended questions. Students contributed verbally, and for several questions, were asked write down their thoughts as well. At the end of each session, participants completed a demographic survey. Participants' written responses and demographic survey were collected. Each session was taped and lasted approximately two hours. After the completion of each session, audio recordings were sent to a professional service for transcribing.

To assure anonymity, personal identifiers were used only to communicate with participants to schedule the focus group sessions. Each participant received a pseudonym. Password-protected file of contact information and pseudonyms were maintained on a secure computer. Only pseudonyms were used during the actual interviews. Focus groups were audio-recorded and then transcribed by a professional transcription service. The audio recordings identified the subjects by their pseudonyms only. All recordings and print transcriptions were secured in a locked file; electronic transcriptions were password-protected on a secure home computer, which is used for academic purposes only.

Coding Methods

Transcripts, written responses that accompanied the focus group questions, and collected demographic information were entered into a spreadsheet and subsequently organized and coded using the following methodology.

Initial coding of the data included a combination of structural, holistic, and attributes coding, that according to Saldana (2009), are particularly suited for interview data analysis. The first coding, structural coding, provided a beginning set of categories that mirrored the content of the survey. Structural coding “applies a content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that relates to a specific research question used to frame the interview” (MacQueen et al. in Saldana, 2009, p. 66). These

codes allowed the interviews to be broken into chunks of text that could corroborate and/or contradict the themes in the survey data. The primary structural codes included technology access and usage; socializing and communicating; entertainment and creative practices; management of life, information school, and work; confidence with digital practices; value of digital practices. Next, holistic coding was employed during the initial coding phase of the focus group transcripts to assure that coding was not limited to the categorical structure of survey. Holistic coding delineated participant responses not encompassed by the structural codes determined prior to data analysis, allowing themes to emerge from the data. These codes included conflict, miscommunication, adults' misunderstanding of digital practices, peer influence, differences in practices, intentional disengagement, identity and privacy management, learning, connection/disconnection, digital dependence, digital expertise, gaining status or reward from digital practices. Finally, interview responses were coded for attributes. Demographic information collected at the conclusion of each focus group was combined with the data set as a means of observing similarities and differences in responses among male and female interviewees and among those with differing racial and ethnic identities.

Pattern coding (Saldana, 2009) was used during the second cycle of coding. Specifically, magnitude coding and affective coding were applied to the data as a means of recognizing patterns in the digital practices participants discussed during the focus group interviews, the value they

attributed to these practices, and the attitudes they conveyed toward them. Magnitude coding quantified and qualified the frequency or intensity of a response (Saldana, 2009, p. 60), and codes that discerned the presence or absence of digital practices in participants' everyday lives and codes that indicated whether digital practices that were familiar or unfamiliar. Codes related to the value and attitude about digital practices included positive and negative, important and unimportant, and productive and unproductive. Pattern coding encompassed an analysis of structural and holistic codes for their frequency. Variations in frequency and the patterns of magnitude and value and attitude about digital practices as they pertained differences among males and females and participants with different racial or ethnic identities were coded.

At the conclusion of initial and second cycle coding, I organized the themes that emerged from participants' contributions during the focus group interviews. I also noted absence of themes and idiosyncratic vignettes that elucidate the complexity of community college youths' digital culture. These themes, differences, and messages observed in the focus group analysis are described in chapter four.

Voluntary and Informed Consent Form

Project Title	FCC Digital Natives: Digital Practices and Perceptions of Confidence and Value among Frederick Community College Youth Phase II: Focus Groups
Purpose of the Study	<p>The purpose of this focus group is to gather information about young adult community college students' access to and uses of digital technologies in their everyday lives, their confidence with using digital technologies for specific purposes, and their perceptions of the importance of digital technologies in college and in their future. This research is being conducted by Kelly Trigger of University of Maryland, College Park, at Frederick Community College.</p> <p>We are inviting you to complete this focus group because you are a student at Frederick Community College between the ages of 18 and 24.</p>
Procedures	<p>The focus group, consisting of approximately eight to twelve participants, will take place in a private room at Frederick Community College. An audio recording device will be used to record the focus group discussion. During the focus group, a note-taker who is assisting the investigator will take notes on the discussion.</p> <p>To begin, the investigator will provide an overview of the purpose of the research project and guidelines for participating a focus group discussion. Next, she will share research information about young peoples' digital culture. Then, she will ask the group a series of open-ended questions about their experiences with digital activities and technologies, differences between who uses which types of technology and for what purposes, confidence with doing digital activities, and feelings about the value of different digital activities as they relate to college and their future. The investigator may ask follow-up questions to clarify responses and prompt further discussion. In addition, she may ask you write down some of your responses prior to answering questions. At the end of the focus group discussion, she will ask you complete a brief survey about your background (e.g., age, sex, race, hours of work, number of credits you are taking, reasons for attending FCC). Finally, focus group participants may voluntarily submit their names and contact information to be entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift card.</p> <p>At any time during the focus group, you can ask questions to clarify your understanding. The focus group should take no longer than two to three hours. Only in cases where clarification of your responses is needed will the investigator contact to you for a brief follow-up conversation.</p> <p>After the focus group is over, the audio recording will be transcribed and any written notes and background information will be collected. A printed transcript will be available at your request, so that you may comment on your responses. Any comments you make will be noted in any reports or articles that include information from the focus group.</p>
Potential Risks and Discomforts	<p>While the investigator will make every effort to assure your confidentiality, including discussing with the group that the information shared during the focus group discussion is to remain confidential, the loss of confidentiality is a potential risk. Some participants may feel uncomfortable answering questions about their experiences with technology or their background, especially in a group setting. Should you feel uncomfortable, please let the investigator know. The focus group questions have no right or wrong answers. You may elect not answer questions that make you uncomfortable.</p>

Potential Benefits	This research is not designed to benefit you personally, but the results may help the investigator and Frederick Community College with (a) creating learning environments that more directly consider your and your peers' diverse experiences with and perceptions of digital technology, and (b) developing courses that will prepare students to participate in technologically-oriented everyday cultures and workplaces. In addition, this information will help researchers, scholars, and faculty understand community college youths' digital culture.
Confidentiality	All information you provide during this focus group is confidential and your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. The investigator will explain to the group that the information shared during the focus group discussion is to remain confidential. During the focus group you will be identified by a pseudonym. Your name will not be collected on any written responses, background survey, or transcripts. Only a pseudonym will be used. Through the use of an identification key, the researcher will be able to link your identity to the pseudonym. Only the researcher will have access to the identification key. The identification key, the audio recording, written responses, background survey, and printed transcripts of this focus group will be secured in a locked cabinet in the researcher's locked office and typed transcripts will be secured on the researcher's computer in password-protected files. Any reports or articles about this research project will use a pseudonym to protect your identity. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized in anyway. Your academic standing at Frederick Community College will not be affected by your participation or non-participation in this study. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator: Kelly Trigger Frederick Community College 7932 Opposumtown Pike Frederick, MD 21702 Email: ktrigger@frederick.edu Telephone: 301-846-2402
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, MD 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678 This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read

Consent	this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form. If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.	
Signature and Date	Name of Participant [Please Print]	
	Signature of Participant	
	DATE	

Introductory Script

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. I am conducting research about the digital practices of Frederick Community College students ages 18-24. By digital practices I mean the different activities a person does with technology like texting, playing videogames, and looking for information online.

The purpose of my research is to gather information about (a) how young people are using digital technology in their everyday lives, (b) how confident they feel about different uses of technologies, (c) how valuable they think different digital activities technology are for college and for their future, and (d) what cultural factors, if any, have influenced them. In the fall, over 250 of your peers at Frederick Community College took a survey related to this research. The results of this research showed me that, as a group, young people coming to Frederick Community College are doing all kinds of things with technology. The results also showed me some differences in what your

peers do with technology, how confident they feel about certain digital activities, and which they think are valuable.

The purpose of this focus group is to follow up on the survey to see if your thoughts and ideas are similar to your peers. In short, this focus group helps me to determine whether some of the information in the survey is similar to your experiences with and thoughts about digital culture.

Do you have any questions so far?

This how the focus group works: I present you with some of the information from the survey and will ask the whole group a series of open-ended questions. For some of these questions, I will ask you to write down some short responses, share them with the group and then we will discuss them.

Based on our conversation, I will ask follow-up questions. At the end of the discussion I will ask you to complete a brief survey about your background. The survey information combined with our discussion will help me better understand the role different technologies play in your life and your perspectives on them.

To help me keep an accurate record of this discussion, I will be recording our session. This recording will help me to precisely recall the group's discussion. Rest assured that there are right or wrong answers to any of the questions. Also know that, if I were to quote or refer to your responses directly in my research, I would use a pseudonym and not your real name.

Prior to beginning, I ask that you read the form I have given each of you. This is Voluntary and Informed Consent Form, which describes my research and discloses your rights as a volunteer in this focus group. It also provides me with your official agreement to participate in this research. [Distribute consent form.]

If you have questions, feel free to ask them at any time. Are you ready to begin?

To assure that everyone feels comfortable sharing his or her perspectives, I ask that you follow these guidelines (adapted from Mark Hicks' "Guidelines that Promote Generative Cross-Cultural Dialogue", 2009).

- Listen respectfully when others are speaking.
- Respect and validate other people's experiences.
- Withhold unsolicited personal judgments.
- Ask questions out of curiosity as opposed to arguing or debating.
- Keep the information others' share in the group confidential.
- Speak from personal experience; avoid generalizing. Use "I" statements when sharing experiences, feelings and opinions.
- Set your own boundaries for personal sharing. How much do you want to tell?

Moderator Question Guide

1. How many hours per day, on average, do you use or are exposed to some form of technology or digital media?
2. Which digital activities do you do most often? Why?
3. Does anything or anyone in particular influence your digital activities?
4. Which digital activities are not important in your everyday life?
5. Does what you own influence what you do with technology?
6. Have you experienced any problems/conflicts from doing different things with technology (e.g., communicating, getting something done)?
7. Have you every gained something from your digital activities (e.g., praise, money, status)? Do you know anyone who has?
8. Which digital activities do you think are important as a college student?
9. Which digital activities will play a role in your future? In your career?
10. What digital activities do others do that you do not?
11. What do believe has influenced your others' digital activities?
12. Are there any digital activities or skills that give some people an advantage over others?
13. What is your reaction to the following statement? "According to researchers who have written about young people and technology, you are a digital native – a young person who has grown up in a media-filled culture, surrounded by technology, and this has affected what you do everyday, how you learn, and how you will live and work in the future."

Participant Background Information Survey

Session # _____

Participant Pseudonym: _____ Year of Birth: _____

Sex:

- Male
- Female

Race/Ethnicity:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- African-American/African-American
- Caucasian: Hispanic or Latino Origin
- Caucasian: Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino Origin
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Multiracial

How many hours per week do you work?

- Fulltime: 35 hours/week or more
- Halftime: 20-34 hours/week
- Part-time: up to 20 hours/week
- I do not work.

List your parents' (or guardians') occupations. If one or both of your parents (or guardians) are not employed, please write, "not employed."

Mother's Occupation: _____

Father's Occupation: _____

Dependence Status: Which of these best describes you?

- I live with my parent(s)/guardian(s) and am dependent on them for financial support.
- I do not live with my parents/guardians but am dependent on them for financial support.
- I live on my own and am financially independent.

Do you have a child or children?

- Yes
- No

The primary reason I enrolled at FCC [Check one]:

- Cost
- Location
- Choice of Major
- Athletic Recruitment
- Not sure what I want to do
- Other (please specify):

Do you attend FCC...

- Fulltime, taking 12 or more credits
- Part-time, taking less than 12 credits

Right now, my goal for enrolling in FCC is to...

- Take several courses that will transfer to a 4-year college or university.
- Earn an associate's degree and then transfer to a 4-year college or university.
- Earn an associate's degree that will prepare me for a career.
- I'm not sure.

Attention FCC Freshmen Ages 18-24: Share Your Views about Digital Culture and the Relevance of Technology in Your Life

Associate Professor Kelly Trigger is conducting research about digital activities and youth culture. She seeks FCC freshmen volunteers between the ages of 18 – 24 willing to talk about their views about technology in their everyday lives.

Sharing your views helps us...

- ✓ Understand how technology is integrated into your everyday lives
- ✓ Reflect on differences in how young people use technology
- ✓ Create learning environments that more directly consider your and your peers' diverse experiences with and perceptions of digital technology
- ✓ Prepare you to participate in technologically-oriented cultures and workplaces

What's involved?

Participating is easy. Volunteers meet with Professor Trigger for a two-hour focus group discussion on campus. All of the information shared is confidential. Three focus groups will be scheduled. Food and drinks are provided. All volunteers completing the focus group will enter a drawing to win a \$50 bookstore gift card.

Interested?

Contact Kelly Trigger at ktrigger@frederick.edu or 301.676.0046. Or visit her in her office, H235.

Appendix C: IRB Approval Documents



1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, MD 20742-5125
TEL 301.405.4212
FAX 301.314.1475
ib@umd.edu
www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB

DATE: May 18, 2012

TO: Kelly Trigger, M. Ed.
FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [328656-1] FCC Digital Natives
REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: May 18, 2012
EXPIRATION DATE: May 17, 2013
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure which are found on the IRBNet Forms and Templates Page.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of May 17, 2013.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 or irb@umd.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB's records.



1204 Marie Mount Hall
 College Park, MD 20742-5125
 TEL 301.405.4212
 FAX 301.314.1475
 irb@umd.edu
 www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB

DATE: May 8, 2013

TO: Kelly Trigger, M. Ed.
 FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [328656-3] FCC Digital Natives
 REFERENCE #:
 SUBMISSION TYPE: Continuing Review/Progress Report

ACTION: APPROVED
 APPROVAL DATE: May 8, 2013
 EXPIRATION DATE: May 16, 2014
 REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 6 & 7

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure which are found on the IRBNet Forms and Templates Page.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of May 16, 2014.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 or irb@umd.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB's records.

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