

Digital society: risk or opportunity?

The emergence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), such as Internet, mobile phone, tablets, digital TV and radio, calls for an urgent and critical reflection on **how to think and build inclusive digital societies for all** (Heeley & Damodaran, 2009; Van Dijk, 2005; Warschauer, 2004).

The profound digital transformation of our society not only forces us to think about how ICTs affect people's life and communities. But also, how it should and could benefit the most disadvantaged individuals and social groups?

Research aim & questions

Our thesis aims to close the gap in research about theorizing digital inclusion by investigating the **narratives of digital inclusion from the perspective of disadvantaged Brussels youth**. In particular:

- Whether, how and which narratives on digital inclusion are emerging?
- To what extent and how do disadvantaged youth communities construct collective and individual identities vis-à-vis these narratives?

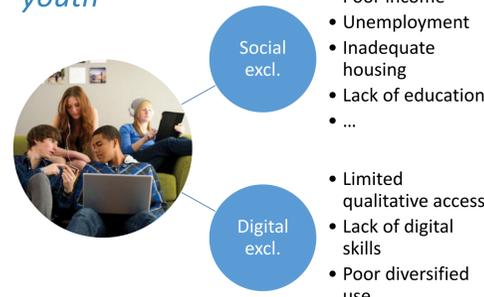
Theoretical framework

Digital Inclusion Studies

A substantial body of literature in Digital Inclusion studies explores these major societal challenges. Current research on Digital Inclusion can be addressed according three frameworks:

Digital Inequality Frameworks	Digital Practices framework	Digital Ethics Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is digital inequality? • Focus on material and cognitive conditions (access, skills, use) • Mossberger et al., 2003; • Livingstone & Helsper, 2007; van Dijk, 2005 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does digital inequality occur? • Focus on contextual conditions (social status, social context, etc.) • Haché et al., 2010, Helsper 2012; Jouët, 2000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is digital equality crucial? • Focus on the normative dimension and societal consequences (social justice, social recognition, etc.) • Doueïhi, 2011; • Granjon, 2011

Digital Inclusion & disadvantaged youth



- ⇒ Focus on the structural causes and consequences
- ⇒ The *discourse* and *experience* of digital inclusion under-research

Empirical framework

Narrative Inquiry Approach

Narrative inquiry is both a concept and method to **provide a 'VOICE' for those normally unheard** and explore problems by analysing the experiences and visions of an individual (Barusch, 2012; Clandinin 2006; Riessman, 1993, 2000).

Narrative analysis investigates on a comprehensive manner:

- *What* stories are articulated (themes)
- *The manner* stories are put together or constructed (structure)
- *The way thinking about the self in relation to others and how this changes are expressed through narratives* (reflexive)

Qualitative longitudinal diary studies

Ten respondents were selected to participate at a series of three consecutive interviews (n = 30) structured around diary entries and media logbooks. The interviews were conducted at a weekly interval.

Participant selection	Digital collection method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aged between 15 and 24 years at the moment of the interview • Involved in association or project aimed at Brussels disadvantaged youth communities • => Respondents were found by a "snowballing" technique. (Goodman, 1961) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured individual in-depth interview about the digital practices and digital inclusion • Diary entries on the world of young people, the relationship with their district and Brussels and digital media use • Media logbook entries on what media they use, where, when, why and with whom?

Expected results

From a research perspective

- An **updated theoretical framework** for understanding digital inclusion beyond the linear "social exclusion is digital exclusion"- model in general, and for disadvantaged youth in particular
- Redefining digital inclusion by developing an **innovative and new empirical approach** that consists of considering the narratives of digital inclusion from a micro perspective

From a societal perspective

- Contributing to a multi-voiced reality of digital inclusion, by **giving voice to the disadvantaged youth** communities to articulate what digital inclusion stands for.
- A well founded view on inclusion in the digital society can be **taken up by associative and public sector**

Acknowledgements

This thesis is conducted under the supervision of Prof. P. Vendramin (UCL) & Prof. L. Van Audenhove (VUB)