

7-2000

Teenagers and the fragmenting media environment in Asia: An Australian pilot study

J. Sternberg
Queensland University of Technology

C. George
Queensland University of Technology

J. Green
Queensland University of Technology

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/apme>

Recommended Citation

Sternberg, J.; George, C.; and Green, J., Teenagers and the fragmenting media environment in Asia: An Australian pilot study, *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 9, 2000, 59-76.

Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/apme/vol1/iss9/5>

Teenagers And The Fragmenting Media Environment In Asia: An Australian Pilot Study

This paper presents preliminary results from a survey of 15- to 17-year-old Australians, exploring television's place within a rapidly expanding multimedia environment. Inspired by Livingstone et al's 1998 pan-European study into young people and media use, the paper finds strong evidence for arguing that Australian youths' media use is currently in a state of flux. While young people generally have more access to a greater range of media than ever before, discussing youth media use involves mapping complex combinations of diverse media and the influences and outcomes of this use. The paper lays foundations for more comprehensive studies of youth media use in Australia that might contribute to international comparisons, particularly with other Asia-Pacific nations.

Jason Sternberg, Christina George & Joshua Green

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

If the 1990s can be characterised as a decade obsessed with images of youth and youth culture, then one of the forces driving this hype was the many labels given to young people such as Generation X, Generation Y, Generation T (for technology), the Nintendo Generation and Techno Teens. Throughout Asia, such names have also gained increasing currency, often with regional inflections (B1Gang 1998; Coupland 1992: 56; Tobin 1998: 109; Wark 1993: 78). Media literacy is central to visions of the various groups (McCaughan 1994; Ritchie 1995; Rushkoff 1994; Wark 1993). *Rolling Stone* media writer Jon Katz (1994: 31) notes: "No group of young people has ever had more choice to make regarding – or more control over – its own information, amusement and politics. Rock spawned one culture; TV, another; movies, hip-hop, computers, video games, still more". Young people today are characterised as media citizens (Brabazon 1998), manipulating imagery and information for their own ends, building their own identities and constructing politics "from the vast array of mediated bits and

©AsiaPacific
MediaEducator
Issue No.9
July-December 2000

pieces at ... [their] disposal" (Fenton 1998: 567).

The resulting vision of global youth culture arising from this media citizenship (Kelly 1989; Tully 1994) is more advertising-industry fantasy than McLuhanesque dream as "[t]rans-national niche marketing increasingly involves seeking out specific age bands irrespective of national or regional borders" (Lemish et al. 1998: 541). The discourses of recovery following Asia's 1998 economic meltdown involve advertisers and marketers increasingly suggesting media is the driving force in constructing youth in "Asia-wide psychographic segments that transcend national boundaries" (Ewing 1999) through which a homogenous 'Asian youth' is created. Popular constructions of Generation X and GenerAsian X (Ewing 1999: 9) emphasise similarities between the groups, portraying both as apolitical, materialistic hyper-consumers, unhinged from tradition and more attached to the Internet and mobile phones than to their parents. In this environment, Australia, as the major Anglo population centre in the region emerges as a contradictory site for examining Asian youth culture. Australian youth culture is itself open to the same transnationalist and globalising forces as other countries in the region, while at the same time operating as a temporary or permanent home for increasing generations of young Asians. These forces operate against of background of ambivalence in Australia and other parts of the region about Australia's status as part of Asia.

In this environment, discussions claiming to account for an entire generation's or region's media use should be treated with scepticism. Media literacy – as a form of cultural capital – depends upon access to media, the ability to use it and above all, the desire to use it. Gender, race and socio-economic position would all appear to play some role in influencing these factors.

This paper presents preliminary findings from an ongoing pilot survey into media habits of 15- to 17-year-olds in Australia and draws on the major pan-European study Children, Young People and the Changing Media Environment as its inspiration. Based on van der Voort et al's (1998) use of data from the European study, this paper seeks to provide a basis for mapping the current status of Australian youth's access and exposure to television, print and interactive media, focusing on the:

1. Time spent using media;
2. Availability and location of media;
3. Uses and gratifications associated with media.

Research on young adults' media habits is of importance to tertiary media educators because these age groups constitute a large percentage of their students. It is hoped this research might

eventually form the basis of broader surveys of Australian youth and young people in the Asia Pacific region. Work similarly influenced by Livingstone's study has been undertaken on 8- to 14-year-olds in New Zealand (Lealand 1999). However, the *New GenerAsians* research, conducted on 7- to 18-year-olds in 14¹ nations during 1998 and 1999 by AC Nielsen on behalf of pay TV provider Turner Entertainment, is rapidly emerging as a benchmark study of the media habits of the region's children and teens.

The survey discussed in this paper is part of a larger project also involving focus group discussions and ethnographic techniques exploring the media's role in the lives of 15- to 25-year-old Australians. The research focuses on the population of Pine Rivers Shire, a large urban and semi-rural local government authority just north of Brisbane, Australia's third largest city. The 767 sq.km. Shire has a population of about 114 000 (Pine Rivers Shire Council 2000), approximately 30 per cent of whom are aged under 30 (Wissler 1998). The Shire contains a higher percentage of low-income earners, a lower percentage of high-income earners and a higher percentage of trade qualifications compared to Brisbane City (Wissler 1998).

A total of 209 respondents completed surveys, which were carried out in two phases (September to December 1999 and January to March 2000) in order to avoid the summer school holiday period that may have produced exaggerated levels of media use. Subjects were recruited using non-probability "convenience" sampling techniques through schools, youth groups and centres, and a number of Queensland University of Technology students who volunteered to administer surveys to relatives and friends living in Pine Rivers Shire. In addition to questions generating data presented in this paper, the survey contained several items probing young people's television genre preferences and the role television plays in their everyday lives. The age and gender breakdown of the sample is presented in Table 1 below.

According to 1996 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data, this sample represents 4 per cent of Pine Rivers' 15- to 17-year-old population. The sample's gender distribution is moderately skewed in favour of females. Only statistically significant relationships are discussed in this paper unless otherwise indicated. All ANOVA, chi-square and post-hoc analysis results are significant at the 0.05 level.

Methods

Table 1: Breakdown of Sample by Age and Gender

		Age			
		15	16	17	Total
Male	Count	32	45	19	96
	% of Total	15.3	21.5	9.1	45.9
Female	Count	32	51	30	113
	% of Total	15.3	24.4	14.4	54.1
Total	Count	64	96	49	209
	% of Total	30.6	45.9	23.4	100

TV And Music As Default Media

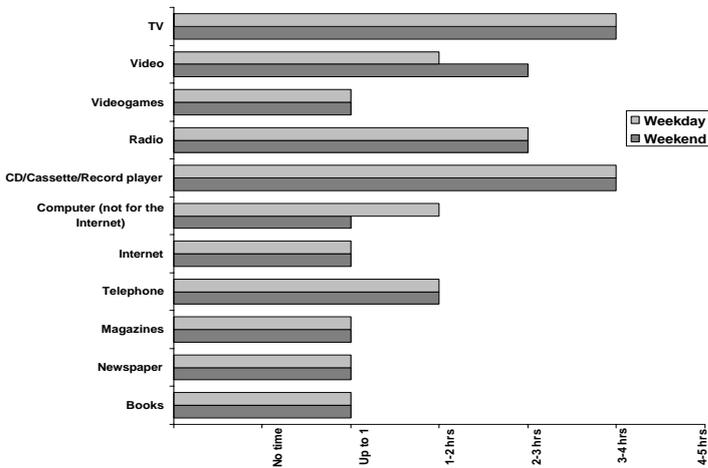
The majority of research suggests that despite much mythology surrounding teenagers and television, the 15- to 25-year-old age group actually consumes less television than at any other stage in the life cycle (Arnett 1995; Arnett et al. 1995; Bisnette 1990: 57; Dorr & Kunkel 1990; Emmison 1997; Johnsson-Smaragdi 1983; Larson 1995; McLeod & Brown 1976; Ricketson 1993: 21; Sachs et al. 1991: 17; Wakschlag 1982). The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) / Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC) report, *Families and Electronic Entertainment* found that amongst 8- to 17-year-olds, television consumption was lowest overall for subjects aged 15 to 17 years (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996: 16). Also, television consumption amongst teenage demographics has declined in recent years (Burton 2000; Cupitt et al. 1996). For example, in 1999 Australian 13- to 17-year-olds living in metropolitan areas viewed 2 hours 34 minutes per day, 10 minutes less than the 1991 average. Average viewing for 16- to 24-year-olds in metropolitan areas dropped 45 minutes during the same period (AC Nielsen 2000a).

AC Nielsen's *New GenerAsians* study found Australia had by far the smallest number of 7- to 18-year-olds who ranked watching TV as one of their favourite three activities. Only China and Taiwan had a smaller percentage of young people watching TV for more than two hours per day (Danielsen 2000), with young people in the Philippines and Thailand being the largest consumers of television (AC Nielsen 2000b). Watching TV did not figure in the group's list of top five best things about their lives (which included sport, friendship, family, employment, or toys for

children and holidays for teens) and was the least important thing they wanted to do more of (hanging out, going to the cinema, playing sport and shopping were all considered more important). These findings are consistent with the ABA/OFLC study (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996) which found that although TV was the most popular activity amongst 8- to 17-year-olds, respondents' leisure time consisted mostly of non-media related activities.

Although television undoubtedly still occupies a significant position in teenagers' lives (Johnsson-Smaragdi et al. 1998: 479; Suess et al. 1998: 526), during the middle teenage to young adult years, music becomes more important (Arnett 1995; Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996; Johnsson-Smaragdi 1983: 52; Larson et al. 1989: 584; Sachs et al. 1991). The results presented in Figure 1 suggest the 15- to 17-year-old age bracket in this study represents a transition period during which television competes with music as the 'default' medium for young people. Watching television and listening to CDs, cassettes or records are the most popular media activities for the sample, with the mean amount of time engaged in each on an average weekday and day on the weekend² being between three and four hours.

Fig.1: Mean Weekly and Weekend Media Use



When media are compared individually, there appears to be very little difference between time spent watching television and listening to CDs, cassettes or records. However, when radio is added, listening to music clearly emerges as the most popular activity.

Examination of video usage – which is relatively consistent across age groups for Australian children and teens

Digital And Print Media Use

(Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996: 16) – continues to reflect the competition between television- and music-based media for dominance in the 15- to 17-year-old age group. Mean weekend video consumption (between 2 and 3 hours) is equal to that of radio listening but is less during the week (between 1 and 2 hours). Videogames are played on average for up to 1 hour on both weekdays and weekends. That the usage figures for videogames presented here ultimately mean the sample spends more time engaged with television-based media³, reflects the fact that “[m]ore and more, television is becoming part of a combinatory of communication and information (mediating) technologies, requiring further choices and many further possibilities of use” (Silverstone 1990: 175).

The comparatively low videogame usage amongst the sample is consistent with previous research comparing 15- to 17-year-olds to younger age groups (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996: 16). Combined computer and Internet use on both weekdays and weekends does not approach levels of use for television- and music-based media. Apart from Monday to Friday computer use, which has a mean of between 1 and 2 hours, all other means for computer and Internet use are up to 1 hour only. This mean is the same for all other media except the telephone, which is used for between 1 and 2 hours (but has a modal usage of up to 1 hour) on both weekdays and weekends. Indeed, for each of the remaining media, modal usage levels fluctuate between up to 1 hour and no time at all.

Of particular interest is a comparison of the frequency distribution for reading books, magazines, and newspapers with other media. The findings obtained here are consistent with Meyrowitz’s (1985) suggestion of strong similarities between computer use and reading. Despite the audio-visual orientation of videogames, the computer’s expanding reliance on print through the growth of interactive services maintains its anchor in the realm of traditional literacy (Bisnette 1990: 59). All print and digital media have a median weekday use level of up to 1 hour. Also, most of the 15- to 17-year-olds surveyed spend no time at all playing videogames, using the Internet or reading, while the modal time spent using a computer and reading newspapers on an average weekday was up to 1 hour.

On average, the sample spends up to 1 hour reading books and newspapers, playing videogames, and using the Internet on weekdays and weekends. Computers are used on average for between 1 and 2 two hours on weekdays and up to 1 hour each day on the weekend. However, the median amount of time spent

reading magazines and newspapers and using computers on the weekend is up to 1 hour, while for all other print and digital media it is no time at all. Similarly, most of the 15- to 17-year-olds surveyed spend up to 1 hour reading papers and magazines on an average Saturday or Sunday, while most of the sample spend no time at all engaged with other print media and any digital media. Although it is not central in their media lives, young people still participate in print cultures. Using this sample as a guide, to argue otherwise suggests a slide into moral panic discourse.

One issue not simply appearing to be the object of a media panic (Boëthius 1995; Drotner 1992) is the gendered nature of the sample's digital media use. More recent research, while still pointing to differences between young males and females in videogame, computer and Internet use, suggests the gender divide is smaller than it once was (Coffey & Stipp 1997; van der Voort 1998: 470; Suess et al. 1998: 531). However, ANOVA results for the sample indicate large statistically significant differences for weekday and weekend male and female videogame, computer and Internet use.

Gender And Media Use

Table 2: Mean Media Use by Gender

	Weekday		Weekend	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
TV	3-4hours	3-4hours	3-4hours	3-4hours
Video	1-2hours	Up to 1 hour	2-3hours	2-3hours
Videogames	1-2hours	Up to 1 hour*	1-2hours	Up to 1 hour*
Radio	2-3hours	3-4hours*	1-2hours	2-3hours*
CD / Cassette / Record	3-4hours	3-4hours	2-3hours	3-4hours
Computer (not for the Internet)	1-2 hours	Up to 1 hour*	1-2hours	No time*
Internet	1-2 hours	Up to 1 hour*	1-2hours	Up to 1 hour*
Telephone	1-2hours	Up to 1 hour*	Up to 1 hour	2-3hours*
Magazines	Up to 1 hour	Up to 1 hour	Up to 1 hour	Up to 1 hour
Newspaper	Up to 1 hour	Up to 1 hour	Up to 1 hour	Up to 1 hour
Books	Up to 1 hour	Up to 1 hour*	Up to 1 hour	Up to 1 hour*

* significant at the 0.05 level

Similarly, ANOVA results indicate statistically significant differences between males and females in mean telephone use on weekdays and weekends (Suess et al. 1998: 531), with males using the phone for longer on an average weekday. This trend is reversed on the weekend. Such results are consistent with earlier

studies of gendered telephone use amongst Australian teenagers (Gillard 1996; Gillard et al. 1997: 144; Skelton 1989) dispelling notions that teenage boys do not use the phone for socializing. However, there is no statistically significant difference in male and female magazine reading (cf. van der Voort et al. 1998), bucking trends for the Australian youth magazine market (Burton 2000: 56).

As indicated in Table 2, most of the other differences between male and female media use means are non-significant. The only exception is for radio listening, with females listening more than males, which is consistent with Australian (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996) and US (Carroll et al. 1993: 170) research.

Media Ownership, Access And Location

Figures 2 and 3 show levels of ownership for and access to various media technologies and where these appliances are located (where relevant). These results strongly support claims media consumption is related to access and ownership for young people and support evidence of a bedroom media culture developing in the sample (Larson 1995; Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996; Livingstone 1998; Seuss et al. 1998; van der Voort et al. 1998). Moreover, results suggest that where such a culture exists, it influences media use.

Fig.2: Owership of and Access to Media

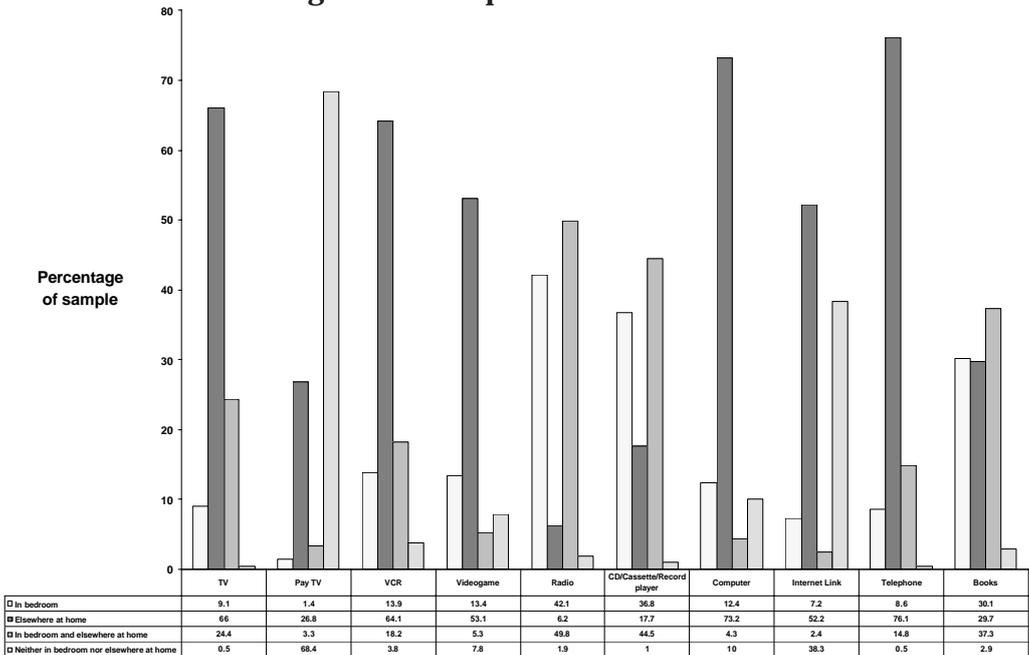
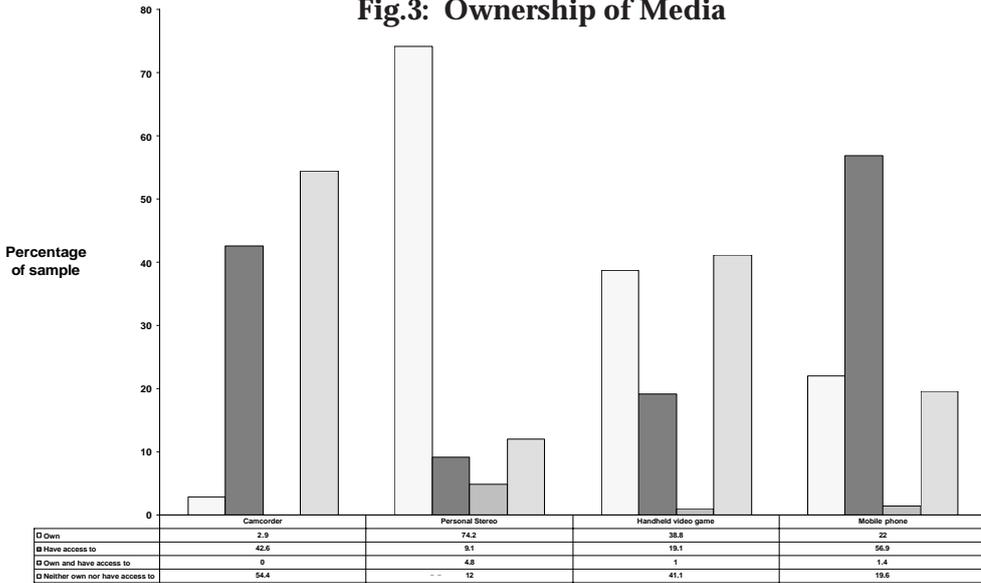


Fig.3: Ownership of Media



Ownership of and access to TVs, VCRs, radios, stereos, telephones and books is almost universal. Slightly more than 70 per cent of the sample have access to a videogame console, a figure consistent with the 75 per cent of 8- to 17-year-old Australians who own videogames in the *New GenerAsians* survey. This figure is higher than average for the Asia Pacific region (*B & T Online Features* 2000). At 31.5 per cent of the sample, access to pay television is considerably higher than the 14- to 17-year-old national penetration rate of 17 per cent for males and 20 per cent for females (Burton 2000).

About one-third of the sample have televisions (33.5 per cent) and VCRs (32.1 per cent) in their bedrooms. Only 4.7 per cent of the sample have access to pay TV in their bedrooms, but 18.7 per cent have a videogame console, and almost a quarter (23.4 per cent) have a telephone in their bedroom. More than two thirds of the sample (67.4 per cent) have access to books in their bedrooms. Adding to this notion of teenagers' bedrooms increasingly becoming a multimedia environment is the very high presence of radios (91.9 per cent) and stereos (81.3 per cent). This data is highly comparable with ABA/OFLC survey figures (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996) for Australian 15- to 17-year-olds that showed 89 per cent of the sample had a radio, cassette or CD player in their bedroom, 35 per cent had a stereo system, 35 per cent had a television and 16 per cent had a videogame console. However, the figure for VCR presence in the bedroom in this survey is significantly more than the 10 per cent of 15- to 17-year-olds in the 1996 survey (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996: 148), suggesting that

Gender, Media, Location And Use Patterns

even in the late 1990s, VCRs are still an emerging media presence in young people's bedrooms.

In this sample, males are no more likely than females to have a TV in their bedrooms. However, males are more likely to have access to pay TV in their bedrooms, but females are more likely to have pay TV access overall. TV in the bedroom (whether by itself or combined with a set somewhere else in the house) is related to increased television viewing on weekdays only. Pay TV anywhere in the house is related to increased viewing both during the week and on weekends (van der Voort et al. 1998: 464). Access to a VCR in the bedroom but nowhere else at home is related to increased television viewing during the week.

Males are slightly more likely to have radios in their bedrooms only and females are considerably more likely to have access to radios elsewhere in the house (M=41.7 per cent, F=56.6 per cent). However, radio access in the bedroom or anywhere else at home produces no statistically significant differences in music listening amongst this sample. The presence of a CD, cassette or record player in the bedroom only and in both the bedroom and somewhere else at home leads to increased levels of music consumption during the week and on weekends.

Telephones in the bedroom (both individually and in conjunction with a phone elsewhere in the home) are related to increased weekday and weekend use. Mobile phone access is high, with 80.3 per cent of the sample either owning a mobile phone, having access to one, or both. Research conducted by the Communications Law Centre found some respondents lived in households with up to four mobile phones (Funston & MacNeill, 1999:8). The AC Nielsen *New GenerAsians* survey found Australia had the highest level of mobile phone penetration for 7- to 18-year-olds in the region with 39 per cent of the sample owning one, compared with 20 per cent ownership amongst the demographic in Singapore (AC Nielsen 2000b). The popularity of mobile phones for this age group appears to be attached to their dual role as a "sign of dependency" (e.g. for security) and as a "symbol of independence" (e.g. a means of contacting the outside world), making them "a commodity firmly established among the key necessities of life for ... young people" (Funston & MacNeill 1999: 7).

Ownership of and access to computers and the Internet once again suggests some time before we can speak in terms of teenagers and young adults as part of a 'wired generation'. Despite high levels of ownership and access, most of the 15- to 17-year-olds surveyed do not spend much time using digital media

as a leisure activity. Computer access is very high, with almost 90 per cent of the sample having access to one at home. This figure is considerably higher than the 59 per cent of homes with 8- to 17-year-olds who had a computer in 1996 (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996). However, it is in keeping with AC Nielsen's finding that 82 per cent of Australians aged between 7 and 18 had home computer access (Danielsen 2000), with less than half the sample in Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, China and India having access to one (AC Nielsen 2000b). Around 50 per cent of 8- to 17-year-olds in India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam have never used a computer (AC Nielsen 2000b).

Almost 62 per cent of the sample has home Internet access. This figure is almost twice the national average of 31 per cent for Internet access in households with children under 18 (ABS 2000), and considerably higher than the 40 per cent home Internet access reported in the *New GenerAsians* research (*B & T Online Features* 2000). Regionally, although Australia had the highest overall level of Internet access, the Nielsen survey found young Australians trailed Singapore, Hong Kong and New Zealand youth in home Internet access (Danielsen 2000). Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore are the only nations where the majority of 7- to 18-year-olds surveyed claimed to have Internet access. In India and China – the world's most populated nations – 94.8 per cent and 86.3 per cent of respondents respectively claim never to have used the Internet. Even in affluent nations such as Japan and countries such as Malaysia that boasts of its developing multimedia super-corridor, 75.2 per cent and 55.1 per cent of 7- to 18-year-olds respectively claim never to have accessed the Internet.

However, only 16.7 per cent of the sample in this survey has access to a computer in their bedrooms and 9.6 per cent has bedroom Internet access. Males are more likely to have a computer in their bedroom (M=15.6 per cent, F=9.7 per cent). Although a small percentage of the sample overall, males appear far more likely to have a computer in their bedroom and access to one elsewhere in their home (M=7.3 per cent, F=1.8 per cent). Interestingly, results for location of Internet connections according to gender were not statistically significant. Males are far more likely to have access to a videogame in every part of the house, while 35.4 per cent of females do not have access to one at all.

Not only do computers and the Internet not yet occupy anywhere near as much time as music and television for young people, it appears they also occupy significantly different domestic spaces. Although the percentage of teenagers in this sample with bedroom computer and Internet access is much higher than for the 8- to 17-year-olds surveyed by the ABA/OFLC four years ago (8 per cent and 1 per cent respectively) (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996:

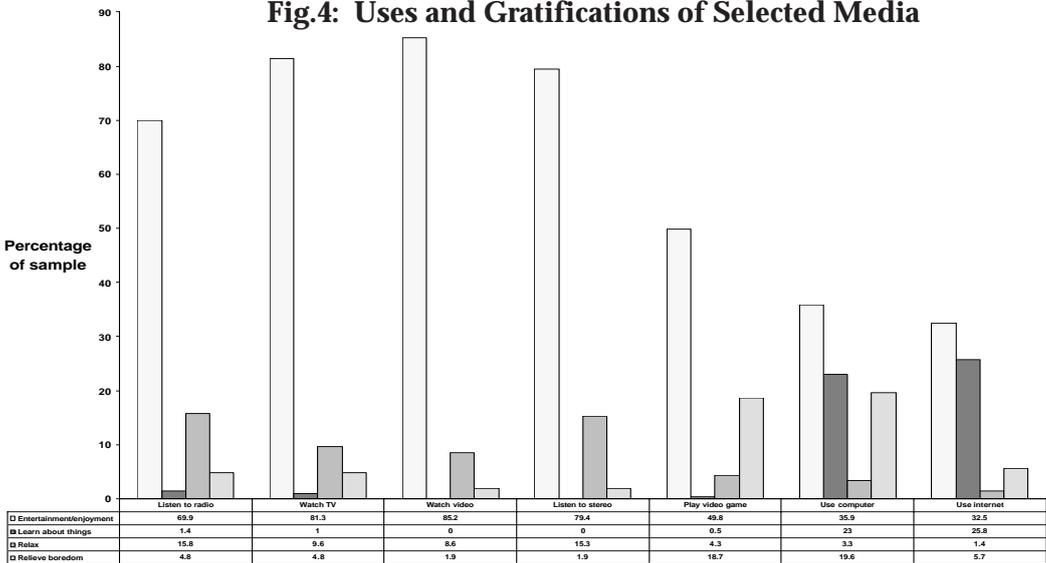
12), it appears overall trends have not changed and TVs and music equipment are still the most likely media appliances to be found in young people's bedrooms (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996: 12). Post-hoc analysis reveals that those respondents with computers in their bedrooms only had higher levels of Monday to Friday computer use compared to those who had access to a computer elsewhere at home. The presence of a bedroom Internet connection only is related to greater Internet use on weekdays and weekends.

Uses And Gratifications

Given the findings presented above, it could be argued one possible factor influencing and limiting digital media's use amongst teenagers is that computers and the Internet occupy different domestic spaces compared to television and the radio/stereo. Another issue appearing to limit digital media use is the purposes for which they are used.

Figure 4 clearly shows listening to the radio and stereo and watching TV and videos are used almost solely for entertainment and enjoyment. However, chi-square analysis suggests overall, males listen to the radio in order to satisfy a broader range of needs compared to females.

Fig.4: Uses and Gratifications of Selected Media



Johnsson-Smaragdi et al. (1998: 497-498) argue that while television is a leisure technology, computers are “a medium of integration”, connecting school and home, as well as leisure and work. Similarly, digital media in this survey are used for a more varied range of activities and it is the nature of the alternative

activities, rather than the percentage of the sample engaging in them that may be the important influence upon digital media uptake. Although the majority of the sample uses computers and the Internet for entertainment/enjoyment (Coffey & Stipp 1997: 63) around a quarter also use them to learn about things. Unlike questions probing media use, questions in this survey about why media is used did not specify respondents only base answers on leisure time activities. As such, it is possible to argue computers and the Internet are still primarily associated with education and formal learning by a large proportion of the sample.

The *New GenerAsians* survey showed young Australians are most likely to use the Net for general surfing, marking them as similar to their counterparts in New Zealand, Korea and Taiwan, but different from young Malaysians and Thais who are more likely to use chatrooms, and young people in China, Hong Kong and Japan who are more likely to play on-line games (AC Nielsen 2000b). The ABA/OFLC survey (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996) found 15- to 17-year-olds were more likely than younger teens and children to use computers for work (Cupitt & Stockbridge 1996: 16). To this extent, computers and the Internet continue to reflect claims made above by occupying a space between television and books in the uses and gratifications they serve, with 22.5 per cent of the sample reading books for entertainment or claiming to not read them at all, and around 17 per cent reading them to learn about things, to relax or relieve boredom.

The idea of the younger generation using the Internet to establish a global, wired teenage social space is also challenged by this sample. Only 7.2 per cent of the sample use the Internet primarily for social interaction (compared to 70.8 per cent of the sample who use the telephone for the same purpose (see also Gillard et al. 1997; Suess et al. 1998:531). Telecommunications continue to play an important role in teenage life, easing "a difficult transition time, when friends are important but much time is spent in a household with family members" (Gillard et al. 1997: 150).

Chi-square analysis indicates females are more likely to use the telephone for social interaction, although once again males use the phone to satisfy a greater variety of needs. These results appear to challenge UK research that stresses the importance of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) for young people as "a setting where respite can be achieved and issues explored in comparative safety" (Abbott 1998: 97). They also throw doubt on Gillard's (1999) extrapolations from this British research and similar claims made by Burton (2000: 60) that young Australians "are likely to be using the Internet for interactive and social purposes. Chat sessions on-line and sitting in groups of two or three, to offer advice to the person with the mouse is likely to be their preferred interaction" (Gillard 1999).

Although the growth of online subcultures in nations such as Malaysia is undeniable (Pawanteh 2000; AC Nielsen 2000b), evidence presented here suggests such claims may be unrealistic in Australia due to lack of interest and in other regions due to lack of access.

Another potential factor influencing the sample's computer and videogame use is that 18.7 per cent claim to use these media to relieve boredom. Once again, specific uses and gratifications are highly gendered. Chi-square analysis shows that at 30.3 per cent of the sample, females are almost five times more likely to use videogames for this purpose than males, who overwhelmingly play videogames for entertainment (M=70.5 per cent, F=33.9 per cent). Females are also about three times less likely to play videogames compared to males (M=11.6 per cent, F=31.2 per cent). Females (21.6 per cent) are more likely than males (17.9 per cent) to use computers in order to relieve boredom, while males are much more likely to use computers for entertainment (M=48.4 per cent, F=26.1 per cent).

Conclusion

Focusing on 15- to 17-year-olds in Pine Rivers, this paper has mapped young people's weekday and weekend media consumption, their level of ownership and access to media and the uses and gratifications provided by various media. It attempts to produce a clearer understanding of claims that the current generation of teenagers and young adults – particularly in the Asia Pacific region – are part of a globally media literate youth culture whose media habits increasingly centre on new media such as computers and the Internet. Although the sample was neither strictly representative of the youth population in the community under investigation nor the Australian population at large, results obtained are generally comparable to other studies conducted with young Australians, while also offering comparisons with international research. Results presented in this paper cannot serve as a benchmark for making broader claims about young people's media use in the Asia Pacific, but they do form a starting point for potential comparative research in the region.

The findings presented above indicate arguments attempting to either establish a strong bond between teenagers and new media or suggesting we can speak of 'Asian youth media use' which forms part of a global youth culture are misguided and run the risk of fetishising young people's media consumption at the expense of more complex understandings. We need to consider new media in the context of established media, media use in the context of leisure and leisure in the context of young people's everyday lives (Livingstone 1998: 435), which are

influenced by the home, schools, peer groups, workplaces, the community, the nation and the globe (Livingstone 1998: 448). Only by appreciating young people's perspectives in this way can we appreciate their complex cultural practices. These practices, in turn, are central to understanding how young people's activities contribute to the construction of daily life (Livingstone 1998: 448). Such understandings are particularly important for media educators – especially those teaching a young student cohort – to prevent them from falling for market-driven research falsely suggesting young media consumers can be identified through an homogenous, Internet-bonded culture.

NOTES

- 1 Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand were studied in 1998. New Zealand and Vietnam were added in 1999.
- 2 Weekday media use refers to time spent with media on an average day during the working week (i.e. Monday to Friday). Weekend media use refers to time spent with media on an average day during the weekend (i.e. Saturday or Sunday).
- 3 This measure for videogames makes no distinction between console-based use that requires a television for operation and use of hand held technologies such as Gameboys. ■

REFERENCES

- Abbott, C.** (1998), "Making connections: Young people and the Internet", In J. Sefton-Green (Ed.), *Digital Diversions: Youth Culture in the Age of Multimedia*, London, UCL Press, pp. 84-105.
- AC Nielsen.** (2000a), *AC Nielsen TV Trends 2000*, AC Nielsen.
- AC Nielsen.** (2000b), *New GenerAsians*, www.newgenerasians.com.
- Arnett, J. J.** (1995), "Adolescents' use of media of self-socialization", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Vol. 24, No. 5, pp. 519-533.
- Arnett, J. J., Larson, R., & Offer, D.** (1995), "Beyond effects: Adolescents as active media users", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Vol. 24, No. 5, pp. 511-518.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics.** (2000), *Household Use of Information Technology, Australia 1999* (8146.0), 6 June, Canberra, Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- B1 Gang** (1998), *The power of the "bardaka"*, <http://www.b1gang.com.ph/b1news.htm>
- B & T Online Features** (2000), "Youth report - Talkin' about my Generasian", www.bandt.com.au/archive/050500/feat%5Fmain.htm
- Bisnette, P. J.** (1990), "A new literacy for the young: Adolescent cross media use", *Australian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 55-66.
- Boëthius, U.** (1995), "Youth, the media and moral panics", In J. Fornäs &

- G. Bolin (Eds.), *Youth Culture in Late Modernity*, London: Sage, pp. 39-57
- Brabazon, T.** (1998), "Save Ferris: A guide to Xer media/citizenship", *Metro Education*, no. 14, pp. 9-13.
- Burton, L.** (2000), "The Options Generation: A discussion of young Australians' media use", *Australian Screen Education*, No. 20/21, pp. 54-63.
- Carroll, R. L., Silbergleid, M. I., Beachum, C. M., Perry, S. D., Pluscht, P. J. & Pescatore, M. J.** (1993), "Meanings of radio to teenagers in a niche-programming era", *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, Spring, pp. 159-176.
- Coffey, S., & Stipp, H.** (1997), "The interactions between computer and television usage", *Journal of Advertising Research*, April, pp. 61-67.
- Coupland, D.** (1992), *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, London, Abacus.
- Cupitt, M., & Stockbridge, S.** (1996), *Families and Electronic Entertainment*, Sydney, Australian Broadcasting Authority / Office of Film and Literature Classification.
- Cupitt, M., Ramsay, G. & Sheldon, L.** (1996), *Music, New Music and All That: Teenage Radio in the 90s*, Sydney, Australian Broadcasting Authority.
- Danielsen, S.** (2000), "The kids are all wired up", *Australian*, 16 March, p. M15.
- Dorr, A., & Kunkel, D.** (1990), "Children and the media environment: Change and constancy amid change", *Communication Research*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 2-25.
- Drotner, K.** (1992), "Modernity and media panics", In C. Schröder & M. Skovmand (Eds.), *Media Cultures: Reappraising Transnational Media*, London, Routledge, pp. 42-62.
- Emmison, M.** (1997), "Transformations of taste: Globalisation, generational changes and Australian cultural consumption", *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 321-343.
- Ewing, M. T.** (1999), *After the meltdown: Danger or opportunity for Asia Pacific Advertising*, Perth, School of Marketing, Curtin Business School, January, Report number 9902, <http://www.cbs.curtin.edu.au/MKT/RESEARCH/9902.htm>
- Fenton, N.** (1998), "Review essay: Media youth and technological futures", *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 566-571.
- Funston, A., & MacNeill, K.** (1999), "Mobile matters: Young people and mobile phones", *Communications Update*, No. 159, pp. 7-11.
- Gillard, P., Wale, K. & Bow, A.** (1996), *Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls: Gender and Telecommunications Services*, Melbourne, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Telecommunications Needs Research Group.
- Gillard, P., Wale, K., & Bow, A.** (1997), "The friendly phone", In S. Howard (Ed.), *Wired Up: Young People and the Electronic Media*, London, UCL Press, pp. 135-151.
- Gillard, P.** (1999), "The child audience: Who are they are how are they using TV and new media?" Paper presented at the *Children's Television Policy Forum and Reception*, Sydney, 22 July.
- Johnsson-Smaragdi, U.** (1983), *TV Use and Social Interaction in Adolescence: A Longitudinal Study*, Stockholm, Almqvist and Wiksell International.

- Johnsson-Smaragdi, U., d'Haenens, L., Krotz, F. & Hasebrink, U.** (1998), "Patterns of old and new media use among young people in Flanders, Germany and Sweden", *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 479-501.
- Katz, J.** (1994), "The media's war on kids: From the Beatles to Beavis and Butt-head", *Rolling Stone*, February, pp. 31-3 +97.
- Kelly, K.** (1989), "The global teenager", *Whole Earth Review*, Winter, pp. 2-35.
- Larson, R.** (1995), "Secrets in the bedroom: Adolescents' private use of media", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Vol. 25, No. 5, pp. 535-50.
- Larson, R., Kubey, R. & Colletti, J.** (1989), "Changing channels: Early adolescent media choices and shifting investments in family and friends", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Vol. 18, No. 6, pp.583-99.
- Lealand, G.** (1999), "New Zealand children and new media: Some preliminary conclusions", Seminar presentation delivered to the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, 25 July.
- Lemish, D., Drotner, K., Liebes, T., Maigret, E. & Stald, G.** (1998), "Global culture in practice: A look at children and adolescents in Denmark, France and Israel", *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 539-556.
- Livingstone, S.** (1998), "Mediated childhoods: A comparative approach to young people's changing media environment in Europe", *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 435-456.
- McCaughan, D.** (1994), *Generation 2000*, Sydney, McCann-Erickson.
- McLeod, J., & Brown, J. D.** (1976), "The family environment and adolescent television use", In R. Brown (Ed.), *Children and Television*, London, Collier Macmillan, pp. 199-233.
- Meyrowitz, J.** (1985), *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behaviour*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Pawanteh, L.** (2000), "'Who me? A cyberteen ...': A study of Internet usage and its implications on the everyday realities and identities of urban adolescents", Paper presented to *Communication Beyond 2000: Technology, Industry and the Citizen in the Age of Globalization, the 22nd General Assembly and Annual Conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research*, Singapore, 17-20 July.
- Pine Rivers Shire Council.** (2000), "About our shire", <http://www.prsc.qld.gov.au/home/about/default.asp>
- Ricketson, M.** (1993), *20 Twenty: A Clearer View of Today's Twenty Year Olds*, Melbourne, Clemenger.
- Ritchie, K.** (1995), *Marketing to Generation X*, New York, Lexington Books.
- Rushkoff, D.** (1994), "Introduction: Us, by us", In D. Rushkoff (Ed.), *The Gen-X Reader*, New York, Ballentine Books, pp. 99-101.
- Sachs, J., Smith, R. & Chant, D.** (1991), "How adolescents use the media", *Youth Studies*, May, pp. 16-20.
- Silverstone, R.** (1990), "Television and everyday life: Towards an anthropology of the television audience", In M. Ferguson (Ed.), *Public Communication: The New Imperatives*, London, Sage, pp. 173-189.
- Skelton, F.** (1989), "Teenagers and the telephone", *Australian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 15, pp. 21-24.
- Suess, D., Suoninen, A., Garitaonandia, C., Juaristi, P., Koikkalainen, R. & Oleaga, J. A.** (1998), "Media use and the relationships of children

- and teenagers with their peer groups: A study of Finnish, Spanish and Swiss cases", *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 521-538.
- Tobin, J.** (1998), "An American Otaku (or, a boy's virtual life on the Net)", In J. Sefton-Green (Ed.), *Digital Diversions: Youth Culture in the Age of Multimedia*, London, UCL Press, pp. 106-127.
- Tully, S.** (1994), "Teens: The most global market of all", *Fortune*, 16 May, pp. 24-29.
- Van der Voort, T. H. A., Beentjes, J. W. J., Bovill, M., Gaskell, G., Koolstra, C. M., Livingstone, S. & Marseille, N.** (1998), "Young people's ownership and uses of new and old forms of media in Britain and the Netherlands", *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 457-477.
- Wakschlag, J. J.** (1982), "Stability in the popularity of television programs among children and adolescents", *Journal of Broadcasting*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 711-6.
- Wark, M.** (1993), "Planet of noise", *Juice*, December, pp. 74-78.
- Wissler, R.** (1998), *Summary of QUT Pine Rivers Arts Project*, Supplied by project member.

JASON STERNBERG teaches Media Studies in the School of Media and Journalism at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). E-mail: j.sternberg@qut.edu.au

CHRISTINA GEORGE is a Masters student in the QUT School of Media and Journalism and was a research assistant for this project.

JOSHUA GREEN is a PhD student in the QUT School of Media and Journalism and was a research assistant for this project.

The authors sincerely thank:

- *Stephen Cox for advice on research design and statistical analysis.*
- *Sonia Livingstone and Moira Bovill for providing copies of survey instruments used in their Children, Young People and the Changing Media Environment research.*
- *Danna Dale for assistance in producing the graphs and tables appearing in this paper.*
- *The numerous schools, youth groups and QUT students that assisted in recruiting survey respondents.*

Funding for this project was made available through the Queensland University of Technology Early Career Researcher Grant Scheme.
