

# Adolescents, digital media and romantic relationship

Cosimo Marco Scarcelli<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and Applied Psychology, University of Padova (IT)*

---

**Summary.** Digital media are an important part of adolescents' everyday life who use these platforms not only to increase their knowledge, but also to enlarge their social network that they construct outside digital spaces. Through the social network sites and the mobile media, the internet becomes the place where to speak about emotions, to play with them, to write about ourselves, to flirt, to define and redefine the seduction practices and the expectatives about the others: a potential partner or a friend. This paper presents and discusses the results of a sociological research. The work involved fifty-eight Italian boys and girls from the age of sixteen to the age of eighteen.

Passing through the digital and fiscal spaces with the help of the youth who took part in my research I tried to explore the role of the digital media in the online and offline dynamics connected to affectivity and love.

**Keywords:** adolescents, internet, love, flirt, seduction.

*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Cosimo Marco Scarcelli, Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and Applied Psychology, University of Padova (IT), Via Cesarotti 12, 35123 Padova (Italy), e-mail: [marco.scarcelli@gmail.com](mailto:marco.scarcelli@gmail.com)*

Received: 25.11.2015 – Revision: 14.12.2015 – Accepted: 30.12.2015

---

## Introduction

Digital media are changing people's experiential spectrum, modifying its characteristics (Ito, 2008; Pujazon-Zazik & Park, 2010). Communicative mediation is today a stable condition of youth life thanks

to the digital media that allow them to externalize their own emotions without incurring the risk of refusal or disavowal (Greco, 2008).

Compared to the past, one of the most important factors changing today is the one relating to the social actor and his capability «to become media (Boccia Artieri, 2006), a characteristic that digital media has contributed to emphasize with the process of interpersonal mass interaction (Boccia Artieri, 2009): a potentially continuous connection between individuals. In this process, the social relation is placed side by side with growing forms of auto-narration (Castells, 2009) that pervade digital spaces, equipping them with great possibilities for contact and interaction. It creates a continuum between “online” and “offline” and changes public and private spaces (boyd, 2007).

In adolescents’ everyday life these specific platforms are transforming into a social relation technology (Marinelli, 2004) useful to enlarge networks constructed outside digital spaces (Drusian, 2005; Giaccardi, 2010; Livingstone, 2009; Scarcelli, 2015). The «choice to subscribe to these platforms seems to have become especially for the young generations an indispensable investment that allows them to communicate, to join groups, to share interests and passions, in a word trying to avoid social exclusion and promoting social membership» (Tirocchi, 2012, p.16, translated by the author).

Digital media are becoming an important point of observation of social dynamics that do not finish in the so called “online” world but that move fluidly in the online-offline continuum. To look at new media in connection with romantic relationships means to observe the change in social relations and in the practices of identity construction, starting from feelings, passions and the meanings that adolescents attribute to them inside and outside the digital spaces of interaction.

## **Objective and methodology**

The research has two specific objectives: 1) to understand the sense dimensions that push adolescents to use (or not to use) online platforms in relation to romantic experiences; 2) to define the role of digital media in the experiential dimension of youth connected to affectivity, identity and their social construction.

To reach these goals the empirical work involved forty adolescents between sixteen and eighteen years old selected by theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), who were actively dragged into the process of definition of the research.

This research focused on meanings constructed by youth involved in empirical work, starting from everyday experiences. According to other works on this field (such as. Kauffman, 2009) I chose to do a qualitative study because it allows to researchers to explain and illuminate the character of a phenomenon and its meaning (Bovone & Mora, 1997; Flick 2008). In particular, I decided to use in-depth interviews using the dialogic modality described by Lamendola (2009) as a dance between interviewee and interviewer that permits the latter to better understand the meaning that people give to their action and choice.

The qualitative approach was chosen to study the phenomena and the experiences of adolescents from their own viewpoints (Lobe, et al., 2008). Theoretical traditions connected to symbolic interactionism and phenomenology have been used to reconstruct the youth's subjective experiences that give form to representation (Garfinkel, 1967).

This was not a research on adolescents but with adolescents (Delgado, 2006; Fielding & Bragg, 2003). I wanted to use an adolescent-centric approach where «methodologically and conceptually [adolescents] must be free from the process of containment that produces them as “other” and continues to silence them» (Caputo, 1995, p.33). The purpose was to focus mainly on adolescents' lives and to better understand the conditions of their usage of pornography.

## **Flirting online**

The research shows that adolescents often use digital media in relation to the affective sphere. They prefer mainly Social Network Sites and instant messaging services (cf. Lenhart, 2015). Platforms such as Facebook support adolescents during the first and embarrassing contact with the potential partner, proving advantageous to them, on the one hand, to show their own interest and, on the other hand, to understand if the attention is reciprocated. Therefore, for the adolescents digital media can become useful instruments that permit them to reduce the uncertainty connected mainly to the first phases of a face-to-face relation.

Usually after a first face-to-face contact, there is a friendship request on Facebook (or Instagram) by one of the two youths that shows the other his/her own interest.

*I knew that girl at school. She attended another class.  
During the break I asked a friend who knew her and she  
allowed us to know each other. She told me her name and*

*in the evening I looked for her on Facebook. There were two girls with the same name, but I had a common connection with her so I found her. Sometimes girls ask for connection on Facebook. If she asks for the connection you know that probably she is interested in you. But it is not sure (laugh).  
[Boy, 16]*

After the connection in the Social Network Site there is a more punctual request for attention that translates into what I define as the “*I like strategy*”<sup>1</sup>. It consists in putting a “like” on the post of the girl or boy to win him/her over in such a way as to get noticed. Later if the other person “likes” their own posts, it is possible to comment on specific posts and to arrive, in the end, at a chat session. This strategy has specific rules such as to prefer photos not too old, too recent or very appreciated by the other contacts. This permits showing the attention in a more incisive way.

*If I had to explain to you how it works, thinking about what happened in the past, I did something like this: Obviously, first of all you have to make a friend request to the girl. Then you start to look at her Facebook diary and if she posts something interesting, I don't know, photo, songs, etc. you put a “like” under them. Just to say “I am looking at you”. Then you could comment on some posts, but without exaggerating, you do not have to say to her that she is beautiful or something like this. You can joke, for example, depends on the individual case (laugh). Then if she “likes” some of your posts or comments on them... you can chat with her. You could start with something quiet: “How are you?”, “What are you doing?” ... Then if it works you start to know each other. You can partially understand from the chat if she is happy to speak with you or not.  
(Boy, 17)*

Usually comments on public posts are generic appreciations about a photo, a song, a quote, etc. Instead, in the chat, or in the private messages, the interaction is focussed on reciprocal knowledge. In this case Facebook becomes useful to understand the intention of the other person without losing face as it could happen when declaring one's own interest more or less explicitly in person.

*You can use it to not expose yourself too much... you can go gradually and understand if... if he is interested. Then, you cannot know it for sure... until he does not kiss you, you cannot know if he really likes you.*  
(Girl, 16).

It seems that chatrooms can create a sort of defensive shield and give the user an easier way to exit from the situation when the interaction shows that the other person is not interested in in-depth knowledge. It is a useful strategy that can support mainly the more timid subject who, thanks to these instruments, can better cope with the anxiety that could derive from an eventual refusal.

*If you start to write to a girl on Facebook, in the chatroom I mean, it is more simple compared to speaking with her face to face... I mean... sooner or later you have to speak in person with her otherwise (laugh). But, you know, when you share a couple of gags it is more simple. Then, when you know each other and you overcome the embarrassment, maybe you can do longer conversation face to face without seeming stupid (laugh).*  
(Boy, 17)

The exit strategy works also in the opposite way, permitting someone who is the subject of undesired advances to close the interaction, avoiding exposing too much or in an indirect way, or using an excuse that, if repeated, becomes a sort of explicit refusal.

*Also to say no to someone, I mean, to break with the chat becomes more simple. For example, a man writes to you and you do not like him. When you have this boy in front of you and he says "I like you" or "I want to have a date with you", etcetera, sometimes it is difficult, how can I say... to refuse. What can you say to someone that says to you, "I like you"? Can you say "No!?" It is embarrassing! But in this way you could give him a sort of hope and then it will become a mess. With Facebook the guy understands, unless he is stupid! If you do not answer, if you respond after 2 hours. Or, if he is not able to understand, you start to invent a million excuses. That you have to go outside, that your mom is calling you or*

*you can say to him that you are not interested, or you invent a boyfriend (laugh).  
(Girl, 18).*

According to the interviewees, to comprehend the interaction in the chatroom is very important. The answer, the time used in the mediated conversation, the way used to close the chat session or a message, etc, are considered as indicators to understand if the other subject is interested in an eventual in-depth knowledge.

*You could understand if someone is interested by how he behaves. There is the possibility to be an asshole also on Facebook... you are going to delete this word, aren't you? (laugh)*

*[interviewer: what do you mean when you say be an asshole?]*

*I mean that he does not care about you, I mean, he does not respond to your messages or he remembers to respond only after two hundred hours. Or he responds in a disdainful way. So you understand. So you stop writing to him to test him and if he decides to not write you, you have to manage the situation. If he does not look for you it means that he does not like you or that he is in love with someone else.*

*(Girl, 17).*

Having ascertained that the person who is on the other side of the screen could be curious about them, there starts the last phase of digital courting: a face-to-face date. The initial courting phase is composed of an alternation between “online” encounters, comments, “likes”, with face-to-face encounters that, frequently, happened in the presence of common friends or other people.

*[interviewer: so, you tried to understand if she liked you, through Facebook, you never met her before?]*

*No no! I mean... I try to explain... I speak with her by Facebook, I commented on some posts, then at a certain point I asked her... how can I say? To go out together... But in the meantime we do not stay at home. She was a friend of my friend. So, sometimes we have met, we have*

*spoken, sometimes we sent some messages, but easy.  
Then I ask her to go outside alone!  
(Boy, 16).*

Usually courting happens using the smartphone. It is considered the best medium to interact with other people about personal aspects because it is ever handy. Furthermore, it is considered a more intimate object compared to a computer that frequently is shared with the rest of the family. In this case adolescents prefer applications such as Facebook Messenger and, mainly, Whatsapp, considered by the interviewees as more comfortable and direct due to the easy way of using the app to share messages. Instant messaging applications are preferred not only because they are free of charge, but also due to motivations connected, in this case, to the uncertainty intrinsic in affective relations, mainly in their initial phase. In fact, the application installed in the smartphone permits the sender to see when the receiver reads the message or when she/he had the last access. It seems to be, according to interviewees, a double-edged sword because if on the one hand it ensures the acknowledged receipt of the message, on the other hand it creates a small form of “anxiety” connected to the waiting between the message reading and the answer. If it comes after a long time it is perceived as a symptom of little interest.

*I do not use SMS anymore. I mean... I used it just in case, for example with my father or if I finish my 3g connection. I use more Whatsapp or Facebook [...]. Then... one time when you wrote a message with the cell phone, the normal one I mean, that it happened that messages did not arrive or people told you this. Instead... today you can see that someone read your message, so there are no excuses! Then, maybe, they do not respond (laugh)... but you can see it or you can see when she connected last time and... you run the numbers! In fact sometimes I see the message, but I do not open it to not permit the other people to know that I read it (laugh).  
(Boy, 16)*

*When I want to text with a guy... I use Whatsapp! But sometimes... what an anxiety!!! Because you send a message and notice that he visualized it and you wait for an answer. You look at your smartphone, you properly stare at it because you wait for the blurb “he is*

*writing...” and he does not do anything... then after one hour, when you give up hope... “plim”! The answer arrives (laugh).  
(Girl, 17)*

According to the interviewees SNS are an instrument that works as help in the interpersonal relationship not only to avoid embarrassing moments<sup>2</sup>, but also to form an idea, even if superficial, about who they are speaking with. Many interviewees said that they knew a girl or a boy and asked them for a digital connection, the “spy”<sup>3</sup>, the other Facebook or Instagram profile. It is useful to collect information that could make first conversations in the chatroom more interesting, raising the contact points or, on the contrary, joking about some differences. To visit other people’s profile becomes a sort of preparatory chat before the real interaction. It allows making an initial idea about the other person and gives the possibility of having more information to outline an approach discourse potentially more efficacious and less boring; based on common interests and other characteristics that the profile should help to discover.

*I got to know a guy at a party in my school. You know, “what is your name”, “what class do you attend?”, the same old thing. Then, in the evening, he added me on Facebook and I accepted his request. So, because at the party we did not speak so much, it was full of people... I spied his profile, what he loved, also political ideas. If I find a Nazi... I run away! (laugh) Then you look at his photo, what kind of photo he makes, also to himself, if he acts the idiot, if he has lots of girls around him, his friend, etc. Then, it is obvious that you have to know him really! But you can have an initial idea about him.  
(Girl, 18)*

*It is logical that I look at her photo and sometimes at what she posts and from what she posted you can understand what she likes... the ice cream for example... so you in the chatroom will say to her, in some way, that you like ice-cream. Because, I mean, knowing someone at the bus stop and asking for the phone number is too fast as behaviour... you have to speak with her before, in my opinion. So you could use that information to speak about something interesting.*



(Boy, 17)

Experiences and knowledge about other subjects equipped itself with digital components become immediately accessible which could give to adolescents information about potential partners. Facebook photos, states, quotes, song recall by Youtube become part of identity expression that goes beyond the “here and now” and that maintains connected the past and the future in a path that can be explored thanks to digital media. Frequently adolescents have some information about the other that she/he never reveals directly but that he/she transforms into performative acts that find their expression on the Facebook diary or in the Instagram profile. Naturally it does not work as if mediated experience and direct experience are like two airlocks. Rather, the expressions integrate themselves, defining a public face which is sometimes more complex to manage because accessible in different ways. So, the creation of the profile follows specific informal rules about how to construct the mask that they will present to others through Social Network Sites. Interviewees described being careful in what they post to avoid being misjudged by other users and damaging their own reputation. The Facebook page is something very far from a mere virtual life. It is part of youth’s everyday life and of their way to find a place in the society and, mainly, in the peer group.

*It is obvious that you pay attention to what you post! You cannot disgrace yourself with everyone! And then... at the end your friends look at your profile and then you have to put who you are. Then someone writes everything he does... I do not like it.*

(Boy, 17)

Far away from the democratic discourses that surround new technology, research shows that a double standard remains present in youth everyday life. On the one hand, it imposes on girls a certain behaviour both in the digital representations, during the flirt; on the other hand, the double standard leaves boys more space to experiment with their own seductive capability. Gender roles remain crystallized into conventions according to which, for example, the first step in the request for a face-to-face encounter should be taken by the man; otherwise the girl could be labelled as “easy”.

*I never ask a boy out. You have to make it possible for him to understand that you like him, then it has to be him that has to come forward!*

*[Interviewer: why?]*

*Because, otherwise, people consider you easy, a girl that ask a boy out... it is like saying to everybody: "hey I am available for everyone!"*

*(Girl, 18)*

## **Telling love**

The Internet can be a support also when we talk about ourselves (Castells, 2009), to speak about our own sentiments, own emotions, to look for advice or to try to fix some doubts about sentimental situations.

Platforms that (potentially) enable this are various: from the blog, where the user can tell about himself/herself, to forums where more frequently there is a debate similar to open discussion, to Social Network Sites that, also in this case, are the platforms that adolescents prefer.

Using the blog seems not to be common, probably because lots of blogs have been substituted by Social Network Sites in their self-narrative function. A section of interviewees frequently did not have any idea of what a blog is; their knowledge about the internet in relation to it as a form of expressivity is connected simply to the use of social media.

To speak about adolescents' narrations, we have to make a division that involves the audience of the post online: specific friends or a broader audience composed of those who could have access to the profile. Even if the relevant public is defined in the mind of the author of the post, it is visible to everyone who could have access to that specific profile. Adolescents that I interviewed implement strategies that seek to defend the territory "not completely public" that posts generate. In this regard, interviewees affirm not to make specific references to particular goings-on when they post something in their Facebook diary, but to use a sort of code that permits only those who know the situation to understand the real nature of the post. It permits them to have a public post, legible to everyone, that in its deep content is private because it is not understandable, in its hidden meaning, to the majority. A strategy like this could also suffer some setbacks connected to the misunderstanding between users that interpret wrongly the message.

*Sometimes I am sad because my boyfriend does not care about me... So I write in Facebook something like "it is wonderful to be ignored". I do not do explicitly his name, but he knows that I am speaking with him! It happens*

*also with friends, when someone has wronged me, you want to blow off steam and I write down something and I tag some friends that could understand me because maybe they saw what happened or something else. Sometimes someone reads and writes something without knowing anything...but you write just to your friend so only they are able to understand, it is a trick.*  
(Girl, 16)

Another strategy to better define the relevant audience consists in tagging people involved who could take part in the sharing of a specific state of mind. This strategy allows the interested parties to avoid losing the status update because the Social Network Sites provide means to warn them. At the same time, it defines the borders of a communicative act open to the majority but referred to a restricted group of people. In this case, the user leaves the potential possibility for every contact to take part in the debate, but she/he closes the communicative flux, in an indirect way, to a specific group of people.

Sometimes posts work as a help request, also in this circumstance directed to precise people or to a more broad public. In this case Social Network Sites work as a sort of collective psychologist that could help, with the different contributions of people who are asking for help. According to interviewees, it can be useful to avoid the sense of loneliness and the feeling of being alone in front of their own problems. A way to draw the attention of the others to their own illness.

*Sometimes I write on Facebook to let everyone know that I am upset. I expect that my friends, my real friends, call me or care about me. Then... maybe who makes a comment is the one that you never calculate or the one that digs you and you do not care... But it is a way to express what you feel. At the end it is useful also to cheer you up and feel less alone.*  
(Boy, 17)

*I used Facebook also when I was not ok. So I wrote... So my friends could better understand me. Sometimes you do not want to say something, but then you are alone at home, you are down and you write it down. Some friend who loves you really, if they love you... they call you and ask what is happening.*

*(Girl, 16)*

Less frequently Social Network Sites are used to express explicitly one's own love for a person, usually the partner, to show to other people the existence of the relationship.

*It is useful also to reinforce the relationship, to show him that you like him so much... it is something that everyone sees... You are opening your heart in front of everybody. Then, obviously, to say it face to face is different. Writing a sweet quote in my boyfriend's diary or tagging him in some posts or photos where I am with him. It is also a way to say to everyone that he is mine!*  
*(Girl, 16)*

*Sometimes I write something in my girlfriend's diary. It is to make her happy and to keep the other little cock away from her (laugh).*  
*(Boy, 16)*

It is a behaviour that is less used when adolescents are older. In general interviewees share the idea that Social Network Sites could be used to speak about love, but it is something to do carefully, without transforming something private into something excessively public and without the necessity to make everything explicit. Whoever does not respect this kind of behaviour is labelled as deviant and is sanctioned symbolically. Staying together in a Social Network Site needs a management of the group that, as Castells et al. (2006) and Wellman (2001) affirm, show that individualism does not mean atomization. We are facing a sociality created on the individual with strategies that place side by side and substitute for the traditional form. The networks today are centred on the subject (Comunello, 2010). The game of the identity, as Buckingham (2008) remembers, dances between similarity and differences, the unicity of the individual that contemplates the relation with the social group. There is a social control and an auto-disciplining action of the group that shows a relational individuality that relegates the expressions connected to the private and affective within specific limits. Those who go beyond these limits are considered by the others as immature or, as the interviewees say, a loser.

*You are a kid if you stay on Facebook to show every time that you love each other. Internet should not be the place where you show your love, not the most important!*  
(Girl, 18)

*Some of my peers do it, they wrote those things to their girlfriends on Facebook. But we all think he is a loser!*  
(Boy, 18)

Even if applications such as WhatsApp are largely used by adolescents to speak with their friends, they underline their necessity to speak face to face with the friend about more intimate questions. The Internet and its platforms are considered places too cold to speak about love but that could be useful because they permit an immediate communication that is only a preamble to the complete discourse.

*When I want to speak... for example... about what I did with a guy that I like. For example, that we kissed, and I want to tell my best friends what happened, what I felt, if he is good at kissing or not, if he is one of them who immediately touch your ass, these things... I write it to my friend by Facebook Messenger. I tell it to my best friends, there are two of them. But I do not tell everything. Then I have to speak with them because, first of all, this is stuff that's too personal, then, if I write them by phone I feel as if I leave out the sentiment and the warmth that these sensations gave me.*  
(Girl, 16)

*You have to speak about things like this face to face. You better understand and explain and then you cannot say intimate things by the phone over the internet.*  
(Boy, 17)

## **Conclusions**

Research shows that the adolescents retain digital media as important places of confrontation mainly with the peer group. It happens by creating a Social Network Sites profile, by the comprehension of a shared thought created through discourses spread by these platforms, through the

management of the comments on their posts or of the answers of their interlocutors, etc. Digital media enter into and take part in a broader universe within which adolescents are meeting, dating, courting and closing the relationship with their partners. A universe that is an integral part of their everyday life experience.

Digital media are perceived as «places inhabited by people, emotions and sentiments that continuously intertwine with the ones present in the “real” life, that is about face-to-face relationship» (Tirocchi, 2012, p.22, translated by the author). In accordance with more important scholars like boyd (2014), Castells (2001) and Wellman (2004), what interviewees’ words drive us to affirm is that we do not have to think about youth as isolated subjects due to the digital media, but as individuals strongly connected in the social networks, both mediated and real.

In relation to love, the space offered by Social Network Sites is perceived by adolescents as a place where they are experimenting with their own seductive ability and testing their identity on an identity test bench. Identity is continuously being evaluated by users who have access to the information on social media. The identity game on the Internet is different compared to the past. In the past the Internet permitted «the management of forms of social relation more and more specific and personalized, less conditioned by the structured context of real life» (Marinelli, 2004, p.233, translated by author). Today the adolescent can discover himself/herself and the interaction with others through making an issue of social and individual identity in which Castells (2006) defines network sociability.

The image that subjects present through digital media is the result of a continuous negotiation between imagined and unconscious of their being inside and outside the Internet, between public and private spaces. Identity is continuously exposed to a bricolage work in which social media have an important position. In these spaces adolescents expose emotions and states of mind that, even if they take shape in the digital spaces, they gain strength in everyday life, of which the digital is a part. In other words, adolescents embody the technology offered by digital media to perform their own identity by durable performative acts (Latour, 2005). Inside these platforms performance leaves its marks on a memory not represented only by someone’s mind, but rather also by that materialized memory that the Internet records and makes available as identity discourses to other users.

Interviewees perceive digital media as instruments that permit them to rework the self, that have a high identity value and that are one of the different relational experiences with which youth can experiment. To get in touch with another individual through these platforms is like gaining access

to an involving communicative environment that could reveal the very intimate. It can permit the crossing of barriers connected to insecurity or embarrassment thanks to what Joinson (2001) defined as visual anonymity and thanks to a continuous negotiation of distance from the others.

So, the intrinsic nature of the relation is changing, taking the shape of what Boccia Artieri (2009) defines as digital intimacy: «a state that permits to live [...] strong emotive sharing without having to be a prelude of capability to breathe life into deep relations. It is a state of new experimentation of relation, in which a digital neighbourhood is produced without necessity of relational depth» (Ivi, p. 39). That does not mean that deep relations and durable affective bonds do not pass also through the digital media, finding in them, as it has been mentioned several times, a good support for the maintenance, or sometimes the start, of the relation itself.

## Notes

Paper presented at the CIRF Conference “Le emozioni in adolescenza. Un mondo di colori, chiaroscuri e ombre.” [Emotions in adolescence. A world of colors, chiaroscuro and shadows.], Padua, November 21th 2015.

<sup>1</sup> Frequently youth used the expression “strategic like”.

<sup>2</sup> Connected both to first approaches and to eventual refusals.

<sup>3</sup> “to spy” is a term frequently used by interviewees.

## References

- Boccia Artieri, G. (2006). Farsi media. Consumo e media-mondo: tra identità, esperienza e forme espressive. in E. Di Nallo E., R. Paltrinieri, Cum Sumo. Prospettive di analisi del consumo nella società globale. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Boccia Artieri, G. (2009). SuperNetwork: quando le vite sono connesse. In L. Mazzoli (a cura di), Network effect. Quando la rete diventa pop (pp. 21-40). Torino: Codice Edizioni.
- Bovone, L., & Mora, E. (1997). La moda della metropoli. Dove si incontrano i giovani milanesi Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- boyd, d. (2007). Social network sites: Public, private, or what. Knowledge Tree, 13(1), 1-7.

- boyd, d. (2014). *It's complicated. The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Buckingham, D. (2008). *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Caputo, V. (1995). Anthropology's Silent 'Others'. A Consideration of Some Conceptual and Methodological Issues for the Study of Youth and Children Cultures. In V. Amit-Talai, H. Wulff (Eds.), *Youth Cultures. A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Castells, M. (2001). *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Castells, M. (2009). *Communication power*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Castells, M., Fernández-Ardeevol M., Qiu J. L., Sey A. (2006). *Mobile Communication and Society. A global perspective*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Comunello, F. (2010). *Networked sociability*. Milano: Guerini Scientifica.
- Delgado, M. (2006). *Designs and methods for youth-led research*. London: Sage.
- Drusian, M. (2005). *Acrobati dello specchio magico*. Milano: Guerini e Associati.
- Fielding, M., & Bragg S. (2003). *Students as Researchers: Making a difference*. Cobridge: Pearson Publishing.
- Flick, U. (1998). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Edition 4. London: Sage.
- Garfinkel H. (1967). *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giaccardi, C. (2010). *Abitanti della rete. Giovani, relazioni e affetti nell'epoca digitale*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero.
- Greco, G. (2008). *La svolta comunicativa. Uno sguardo sull'universo giovanile*. Roma: Aracne.
- Ito, M. (2008). *Networked Publics: Introduction*. In K. Varnelis (ed.) *Networked Publics* (pp.10-28). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Joinson, A. N. (2001). Self-disclosure in computer-mediated communication: The role of self-awareness and visual anonymity. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 31, 177-192.
- Kaufmann, J. C. (2009). *L'étrange histoire de l'amour heureux*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- La Mendola, S. (2009). *Centrato e aperto. Dare vita a interviste dialogiche*. Torino: UTET.
- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the Social. AN Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lenhart, A., Duggan, M., Perrin, A., Stepler, R., Rainie, H., & Parker, K. (2015). *Teen, Social Media and Technology Overview 2015*. PewResearchCenter.
- Livingstone, S. (2009). *Children and the Internet: great expectations, challenging realities*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Lobe, B., Livingstone S., Olafsson K., & Simões J. A. (2008). *Best Practice Research Guide: How to Research Children and Online Technologies in Comparative Prospective*. London: EU Kids Online.
- Marinelli, A. (2004). *Connessioni. Nuovi media, nuove relazioni sociali*. Milano: Guerini e Associati.



- Pujazon-Zazik, M., & Park, M. J. (2010). To Tweet, or Not to Tweet: Gender differences and Potential Positive and Negative Health Outcomes of Adolescents' Social Internet Use. *American Journal of Mens Health*, 4, 77-85.
- Scarcelli, C. M. (2015). *Intimità digitali. Adolescenti, amore e sessualità tempi di internet*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- Strauss A., & Corbin J. M. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Tirocchi, S. (2012). Socializzando in rete. Riflessione sul ruolo dei social network sites. *MinoriGiustizia*, 4, 27-36.
- Wellman, B. (2001). The rise (and the possible Fall) of Networked Individualism. *Connections*, 24(3), 30-32.
- Wellman, B. (2004). The Three Ages of Internet Studies. *New media and Society*, 6(1), 123-129.