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# **Risky Opportunities: Developing Children's Resilience through Digital Literacy in Thailand**

A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of  
**Doctor of Philosophy in Screen & Media Studies**  
at  
**The University of Waikato**  
by  
**SUJITTRA KAEWSEENUAL**



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*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

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## ABSTRACT

### **Risky Opportunities: Developing Children’s Resilience through Digital Literacy in Thailand**

This project develops a case for defining appropriate concepts of risk and opportunity in the digital domain for children in Thailand; it explores what the consequent balance is between, regulation/policing of this domain on the one hand, and active user empowerment on the other. It defines “digital literacy”, in a way that is appropriate for Thai society, while bearing in mind international good practice. This is achieved on the basis of detailed, in-depth fieldwork in Thai schools, using an Action Research methodology. The Participatory Action Research framework for this study positions children as subjects who have their own power and competence to influence the study, and ultimately the development of digital literacy education. By using three schools, in two stages of fieldwork, the theorization of digital literacy is thoroughly grounded in a comparative study of different practices. At the centre of this method is the development of a classroom “module” – a set of learning activities designed as both a research tool and a practical intervention in the pedagogical process. My study argues that the contest around the notion of the ‘good child’ has shaped children’s experiences of online use, in Thai society. In the offline world, the digital literacy classroom practice has been dominated by singular ideologies (a restricted code) around both the seniority value embedded in Thai society and neo-liberal prescriptions for developing ‘citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> century’. So the piloted digital literacy module was neither successful nor unsuccessful, in itself, for “promoting” an enhancement of digital literacy because, in the end, it exposed a flaw in this way of thinking about education. In such complex situations, no set of teaching and learning tools can be separated from the codes and hidden curricula that determine their effectiveness. In the online world, many Thai children regularly take responsible risks, and build resilience for themselves. Digital literacy education needs to be transformed to liberate children from overly rigid, and risk-adverse, classroom practice, thus contributing to the development of ‘grown-up-ness’ in Biesta’s term (2013) which, in turn, contributes to the ‘formation’ of the person. Therefore, the desirability of building digital resiliency has emerged from this project as a better way of thinking,

where resiliency is a complex capacity to respond openly, within situations where risks and opportunities may be interwoven, and these situations may include the classroom itself, as well as personal, familial, and other social spaces and situations.

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Education means guiding and promoting persons to progress in learning, thinking, and performing according to their own ability. The ultimate aim should be for each individual to be able to make the best use of his or her potential, to benefit themselves and others in harmony and without conflict or harassment.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Aims and Objectives

This project will develop the case for defining appropriate concepts of risk and opportunity in the digital domain for children in Thailand; it will explore what the balance might be between the regulation/policing of this domain on the one hand, and active user empowerment on the other. Furthermore, it will seek to define ‘digital literacy’ in a way that is appropriate for Thai society, while taking into consideration international good practice. A presupposition of the research, from the outset, is that many of these terms may themselves need to be re-thought during the process of exploring this interrelated set of topics. However, a fundamental intention is to achieve this on the basis of detailed, in-depth fieldwork in Thai schools, using an Action Research methodology. By employing this, the theorization of digital literacy will be thoroughly grounded within a comparative study of different practices. At the centre of this method will be the development of a classroom ‘module’ – a set of learning activities designed to be both a research tool and a practical intervention in the pedagogical process.

In summary, the research project will investigate appropriate definitions of digital literacy for Thailand, and the practical means for its achievement with children and youth; this will include a pilot ‘module’ for classroom use. The results of the study will contribute to the ongoing creation of a concrete body of knowledge regarding the development of children in relation to the evaluation, management, and use of digital media in Thailand. This should contribute to learner empowerment in digital media use, as well as contributing to Thai social development more generally.

### 1.2 The Significance of the Research Topic

The swiftness with which children and young people are gaining access to online, convergent, mobile, and networked media is unprecedented in the history of technological innovation. Online media have a self-evident impact on children and

youth, not least since they can be so rapidly and easily accessed. This is a situation that is raising concerns as well as expectations. The number of Internet users worldwide grew more than 500% between 2000 and 2012, when this research was first proposed. It had increased by more than 900% by 2017 Miniwatts Marketing Group (2017). One key indicator is that Asia not only has the largest Internet population, but is also the fastest growing, by quite some margin.

### Internet Users in the World by Regions - 2017 Q1

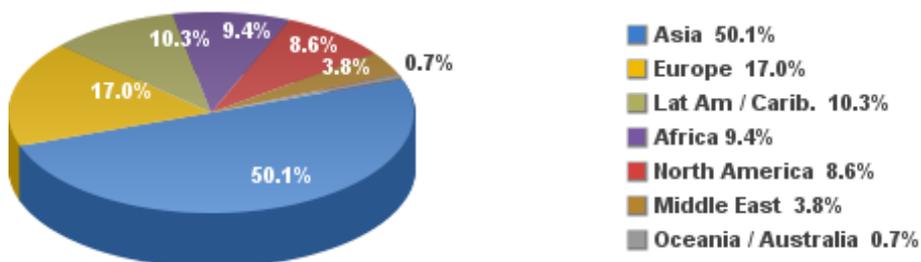


Figure 1.1 Share of Internet population growth, 2000-2017 by Internet World

Source: Miniwatts Marketing Group (2017) (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2017)

In wealthy parts of the world, children live wholly surrounded by media of one kind or another. European children’s use of the Internet continues to grow. In the EU 70% of 6-17 year olds used the Internet (Livingstone & Haddon, 2009). In the UK four fifths of 7-16 year olds have Internet access at home, and over half of the 5-10 year olds go online (Livingstone, 2009), according to the figures when the cited study was undertaken. In the United States, the proportion of children with home access to computers has increased steadily, from 15 % in 1984, to 76 % in 2003, and to 85 % in 2012. In addition, the children who use the Internet at home rose from 22 % in 1997, the first year for which such estimates are available, to 42 % in 2003, and to 57 % in 2012. Nevertheless, Internet usage at home, and computer ownership, declined steadily from 79% to 57% (Child Trends Data Bank, 2015).

Although we do not yet have exact figures for Thailand, some mirroring of these global trends can be anticipated; notwithstanding their being some differences in the levels of infrastructure access. This point raises questions regarding social inequality in developed and less developed nations.

### **1.2.1 Online Opportunities and Risks**

Online media are perceived as having the potential to generate both positive and negative effects, leading to complex arguments regarding 'effects'. From a positive perspective, new media technology brought with it a great promise of social and educational benefits such as; educational tools, entertainment, civic political participation, technological productivity, etc.

The EU Kids Online project influenced the original concept of this research. It conducted research in 2010 with youths in the 9-16 years age group, and their parents, in 25 European countries. It was found that children engage in a range of diverse and potentially beneficial things online: 9-16 year-olds use the internet for school work (85%), playing games (83%), watching video clips (76%) and instant messaging (62%) (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2010).

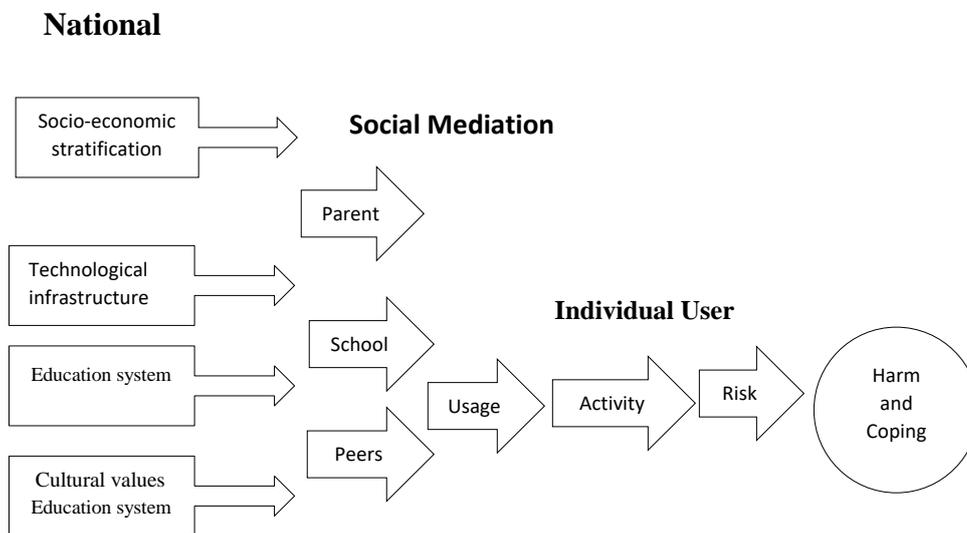
Regarding the negative perspective, digital media may contain inappropriate and harmful content and behaviours, for example cyber bullying, extreme or sexually violent content, and biased or misinformed information (Fake News), etc. The EU Kids Online project also found that 12% of European 9-16 year olds reported they had been 'bothered' or 'upset' by something they had encountered on the internet, and a significant minority of European 9-16 year olds (39% overall) had encountered one or more of these risks (Livingstone et al., 2010). Thailand is not likely to be immune from such problems, even though we currently have less detailed statistics.

Significantly, risk, as reported by children, does not always result in harm. Being bullied online, by receiving nasty or hurtful messages, is the least common risk but is the most likely to upset children. Sexual risks, seeing explicit sexual images and receiving sexual messages online, are more frequently encountered but they are apparently considered as being harmful by only a few of the children who are exposed to them (Livingstone & Haddon, 2009). The children's perception of harm from online media is related to their online circumstance, gender, age, the nature of the risk, social context, the strategies for coping, and their level of understanding at their specific age.

The purpose of looking at international findings is to provide a comparative context and to raise questions about the situation in Thailand.

## 1.2.2 The Staksrud Model and its Implications

It is necessary to understand the varied causal assumptions which shape online risks and opportunities. The literature review in Chapter 2 includes recently published work by Elisabeth Staksrud (University of Oslo, Norway) that reinforces these perspectives and has greatly influenced the approach taken here. Staksrud's model is included in this introduction in order to set out more clearly the conceptual framework from which this present research originated.



*Figure 1.2 Analytical model of factors shaping children's experiences of online activity*  
(adapted by Staksrud from Hasebrink, Livingstone and Haddon, 2008)

Elisabeth Staksrud uses this model to pull together some of the most insightful perspectives of the topic, especially that of a national 'system' (left) of socio-economic, technological, educational and cultural factors that frames every notion of digital literacy. These factors are then channeled through specific forms of social mediation, parents, school, peers, with the end point of usage not as 'risk' (or its corollary, opportunity), but rather as a dynamic field of possibilities for 'harm or coping', where harm is not inevitable in any straightforwardly causal sense (Staksrud, 2013, p. 53).

In particular, several studies in Chapter 2 point out that risk does not always result in harm, as reported by children. The children's perception of harm from online

media is related to their online circumstance, gender, age, the nature of the risk, social context, strategies for coping, and the level of understanding possible at a specific age. In addition, more recent studies such as Third, Forrest-Lawrence, and Collier (2014) and Wojniak and Majorek (2016) assert that children need to encounter some degree of online risk in order to exceed their coping capacity and to become more resilient.

In Thailand, most work in this field assumes that digital media can present major risks to children's well-being, particularly regarding sexuality. However, I raise questions about definitions and vocabulary of online risk, such as "obscenity", "addiction", "threat", "harassment", etc., in the Thai context, particularly the risks as seen from the Thai children's point of view.

### **1.3 Recent Growth in Thai Usage and Evidence of Risk**

Most Thai children are now growing up taking the Internet for granted, and increasingly they expect instant mobile access to it. Thailand, therefore, has been an ideal setting for the type of research undertaken for this thesis. Being for the most part, a culturally conservative society, the example of Thailand brings into sharp focus the question of adult perceptions of the child and how these perceptions affect educational attitudes and practices, especially towards the extension of literacy education into the digital media domain.

During 2012-2016, mobile phone use grew dramatically, by 50%. In 2016 most Thai people used mobile phones to connect to the Internet (85%). Considering Internet usage by age group, youth aged between 15 and 24 years used the Internet the most, at around 86%, next was the 25-34 year group, at about 74%, followed by children aged 6-14 years, at around 61%. The majority of users of the internet were members of the younger generation in Thailand (Thai National Statistic Office, 2016).

There are other reported findings that indicate the current situation in Thailand. Data revealed that the number of Thai children classified as 'addicted' to games significantly increased from 14.4% in 2006 to 49% in 2009, and many youths under 15 years old remained in gaming establishments until 8pm. Those aged from

15-18 could stay until 10pm. The Thai police state that in 2011, the number of legal gaming cafés around Bangkok was about 1,700 locations (Polyotin, 2012). Problems of definition aside, there is growing evidence of *perceived* problems here in Thailand.

Furthermore, more than half of the students who studied in secondary school in Bangkok had seen or heard of cyber-bullying occurring to their friends and they had seen or heard of violence-orientated messages, such as online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language, more than 6 times per month (Songsiri & Musikaphan, 2011).

Moreover, an ABAC/KSC Internet poll in a report for ECPAT ‘Our Children at Risk Online: The Example of Thailand’, conducted in April 1999, demonstrated that around 75% of respondents used chat rooms to meet new contacts online, and about 45% of children said that they went to meet their online friends in person. The report concluded that young people did not seem to be aware of what this practice may lead to (Michelet, 2003). The recent report from Telenor Group or DTAC (2014) referred to the finding of ECPAT regarding online risks: the first danger for Thai children is chatting online. 24% of Thai children with access to the internet have arranged to meet, face-to-face, with previously unknown online friends. 71 percent of child internet surfers have used the internet to visit websites with sexually explicit images, and 52% feel no regrets about it. When children encounter hazards online, nearly 50% tend to keep the problem to themselves. As a result, some individuals and groups decided that it is necessary to protect children from online harm, educating them in how to understand signs of danger, and handle problems that they have encountered by online use ("dtac/Telenor promotes safe internet for Thai children," 2014).

All of these statistics, from local and International organizations, raise implicit questions around the definition of terms such as: ‘addiction’, ‘danger’, ‘threats’ and ‘harassment’; particularly in terms of risks from the perspective of Thai children, which appears to be a limitation of studies in Thailand. Definitions are often not made explicit. Especially, the risk definition indicates how online risks are approached by public perception, researcher, policy maker, parent, and teacher.

### **1.3.1 Government Legislation**

Notably, the way that the Thai government has attempted to approach the perceived risks of online media has been by using legal measures to control and arrest content producers. In 2004, the ICT Ministry started managing online games ratings by providing a labeling of the level of violence to help parents, guardians, and teachers make informed decisions about children playing games. For example, there were five ‘dangerous games’ (*Hitman*, *300*, *Killer 7*, *Hitman: Blood Money*, and *50 Cent: Bulletproof*) that were officially banned in 2008 (Brett, 2008)

In 2007, Thailand imposed the Computer-Related Crime Act, B.E.2550, focusing on IT safety and monitoring the content of websites that contain obscene material or child pornography (Prommajul, 2008). The other safety regulation is the Film and VDO Act 2008, which mandated that youth under the age of 15 could only remain in gaming establishments until 8pm. There are also initiatives based on software for screening inappropriate content, such as Youth Health Reinforcement project, Browser Whale project, Thai Parents Net website, White Internet project for youths, Good Net project, ICT Program project, and ICT Housekeeper. These measures are consistent with a report from the National Statistical Office concerning the need for the government to control the use of information and communication technology, and also the proportion of households wanting the government to control pornographic websites (52.3%), and control Internet café/online games (27.4%) (Thai National Statistic Office, 2013).

The newly-amended Computer Crimes Act (No. 2) B.E. 2560 (2017) declared that if people enter information into a computer system that could cause damage to the public, create panic, or cause harm to public infrastructure, national security, public security or economic security, it is henceforth illegal .

In the meantime, Thailand’s government has been attempting to provide digital opportunities under the ICT national policy for young citizens. For example in 2005, SchoolNet Thailand, a computer network for Thai schools was an educational scheme; in 2012 there was the One Tablet per Child Policy (OTPC). A recent project of the Thai government is ‘Thailand 4.0’ that came from four objectives: enhancing Economic Prosperity, Social Well-Being, Raising Human Values and Environmental Protection. The policy aims to transform Thais into

“competent human beings in the 21st Century” (Royal Thai Embassy, 2015).

However, the concept of preserving online safety by imposing laws to protect children, and people in general, from risks has been extensively used in Thailand. However, some have questioned whether the top down policy might impact on academic performance as much as expected, including media literacy in Thailand.

### **1.3.2 Media Literacy in Thailand: Penetrating the Private Sphere**

In 2004, UNESCO’s branch in Thailand, along with scholars from Thai universities, commenced a media and IT literacy education project for secondary school students. UNESCO also lobbied the Ministry of Education to consider a national based media and information literacy curriculum (Langer & Dounghummes, 2009). UNESCO also provided a background to the conceptual convergence of information and media literacy to promote this proposal (UNESCO, 2011). At present, there are many and various groups attempting to promote media literacy in Thailand, for example Thailand Media Literacy Centre, Thai Health Promotion Foundation, Makhampom Theatre Group, Foundation of Child Development (Langer & Dounghummes, 2009) and Child and Youth Media Institute. The recent Media Literacy concept from UNESCO brings together media literacy and information literacy in a framework called Media and Information Literacy (MIL).

Nevertheless, the achievements of digital literacy education in Thailand have been criticized by several studies. The teaching programs and curriculum development lack consistency and follow-through by the policy makers (e.g. responsible Education officials). Teacher resistance has also been a problem; teachers tend to see the possibility of such programs as an additional burden for their already demanding workload, and they lack an understanding of media education value as being something new (Langer & Dounghummes, 2009). A study from Thailand Development Research (TDRI) suggested the Ministry of Education should stop monopolizing teacher training and decentralize the role to schools (Saengpassa, 2013).

The report ‘UNICEF’s Child-Friendly Schools in Thailand: A Case Study’

reported that effective implementation depends upon the quality of assistance for facilitation provided by people from outside the school community. There is a danger that media literacy will become a project rather than a process, i.e., it will involve a few activities carried out once, rather than become a long-term school reform (UNESCO, 2011). So, the universalist initiatives cannot *necessarily* penetrate in to private areas, particularly the family, and the informal cultures around schooling. This might be because of the different conditions surrounding children and youths as well as various socio-economic and cultural contexts. The western concept of individualism also may seem less relevant in other cultures, where the community is far more important. In the absence of a social welfare system delivered by the state that backs families in precarious situations, which is the case in many developed countries in the world, community is most important for people's survival strategies (Noëmi, 2008).

Therefore, we have to be very careful about making universalist assumptions. The purpose of looking at such international findings is to provide a comparative context and to raise questions about the situation in Thailand. These two factors open up the possibility of school-based curriculum and teacher development work, of the sort that the Action Research method will engage actively with.

This research will need to position itself within these local contexts while remaining aware of international initiatives and the promoted models of good practice. What has also been discussed in this introduction is that: (a) there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the digital lives of children in Thailand have been expanding exponentially, and in roughly parallel fashion to international growth; (b) Thailand's MIL framework for digital literacy is comparable to international approaches in intention but also shares, therefore, a blind-spot of assuming access to the private sphere where digital lives are mostly lived; (c) this often inaccessible private sphere is where culturally specific notions will be operative; and (d) such notions connect in powerful ways with what the Thai that Puey (personal communication, February 27, 1974) termed 'Thai ideology'.

So, the digital opportunities in learning are clearly not only about technology diffusion, but also about the skills and strategies that a teacher deploys in using technology to enrich learning and enhance instruction. Even more fundamentally,

there appear to be limited studies regarding the way that Thai children perceive online risk, the benefits from digital media in education, and in other areas of their lives. More importantly, the consequences for this project are clear. The project will need to:

- access grassroots views about the actual situations of digital media/ICT use, rather than accept that the intended consequences were achieved as expected
- talk to children, parents, and teachers in order to access their views, and observe them in actual situations (therefore the chosen Action Plan methodology – see Chapter 3)
- avoid technological determinism in thinking about opportunities – it is not just about access to technology
- Remain sensitive to socio-economic and geographical differences that impact on technology use and the understanding of ICT's potential, especially at the level of particular communities.

Over and above these specific imperatives for the research, it will be necessary to develop an integrated picture of online/offline risks/opportunities. In light of the situation outlined here, it can be argued that 'risks' and 'opportunities' are not entirely separate ways of thinking about ICT, but instead are interconnected ways of interpreting the complicated situations of actual ICT use. The same might be said about 'offline' and 'online' aspects of children's lives: these are not completely separate things which can be studied in isolation from each other.

For these reasons, the proposed Action Research method was decided on, as it focuses on actual situations, and on the various participants working with the researcher, to understand these situations more fully.

#### **1.4 Research Topics, 'Merged Capabilities' and Transformation**

This proposal, in its first form, included four original research topics, namely;

- 1) To investigate the concept of risk in digital media use by Thai children.

- 2) To investigate the existing levels and forms of coping, safety awareness, regulation and empowerment in relation to this field, in Thailand.
- 3) To recommend and identify effective procedures for digital literacy enhancement for Thai children.
- 4) To ask, what is the consequent balance between regulation/policing and active user empowerment, in a way that is appropriate for Thai society?

The four research topics remain the same. However, ideas about merged capabilities, e.g. not just IT skills on their own or information-finding skills as a separate activity. Regarding various concepts of digital resilience, and concerning the contextual nature of definitions, of both “risk” and “opportunity”, all influence upon both the choice of an Action Research method for the research and the subsequent analysis of fieldwork data in schools. If we think of the “good” child as also being an exploring child, then some risks are a consequence of facilitating exploration and the meaningful opportunities for exploration. This insight, derived from Staksrud in particular, makes it necessary to understand these things more fully from the child’s perspective. There is also, however, a much wider social perspective.

## **1.5 Thesis Contribution**

- 1) The project contributes to analytical models of factors shaping children’s experience of online risks and opportunities. I observed that online activities are experienced in relation to the dominant meaning of ‘childhood’ in Thai culture, and thus depend on the power relationship between children and seniors in the Thai context. This study argues that the tension around the ‘good child’ ideology, between local and international agencies, inflects the hegemonic discursive framing of digital literacy in Thai education. There is a gap between the actual risks and challenges associated with actual children’s’ digital media practices, and the ways their schooling approaches teaching digital literacy, where such teaching takes place at all, because classroom practice has been dominated by childhood ideologies around both the seniority value of adults and the

neo-liberal prescriptions for building ‘citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> century’. Accordingly, because of the gap between children’s experiences and the formal digital literacy education they receive, it has proved difficult to enhance online resilience among children in educational settings, in Thailand.

- 2) The project points out that ‘resilience’ contributes to ‘grown-up-ness’ (Biesta, 2013a) which contributes to the ‘formation’ of the person. When children are encountering online risks or a challenging situation, they are exercising their own rights to develop their existing identities, to position themselves and speak on their own terms. I found that they define online risks in their own ways and use their existing capabilities to expand their coping capacity in risky situations, often by consulting with their peers, and in the process become digitally resilient. However, this study argues that online risks in an educational setting are currently shaped and expressed in relation to the dominant meaning of the ‘good child’ ideology. Thus, education relating to online worlds needs to be transformed to liberate children from an overly rigid and risk-averse education, so they can then take reasonable risks to afford themselves resilience. Subsequently, this will result in a better balance in digital literacy learning between the offline and online world.

## **1.6 Thesis outline**

This section discusses the overall outline of this thesis, which comprises 6 chapters. The remaining chapters of this thesis are introduced as follows.

Chapter 2. *Risks and Resilience*, this presents the theoretical framework of ‘Risky Opportunities: Developing Children’s Resilience’. In this section I consider eight key bodies in theorizing the notion of the good child and the perception of online risks and opportunities that are linked with digital literacy and resilience. These are: (1) binary thinking about risks and opportunities is framed by a binary conception of childhood and adulthood; (2) a protectionist approach restricts children to the status of members of a ‘weak category’; (3) online opportunities offer a liberal space for constructive autonomy from the governance of public agencies; (4) the ‘competent child’ is a product of effective learning, namely

‘media literacy’ education; (5) however, recent work by Biesta (2013) argues that children are restricted by being schooled as ‘competent children for the 21<sup>st</sup> century’. (6) Post development studies argue that the ‘effective learning’ promoted by international agencies is a form of neo-colonialism in the digital era. Instead, children should be liberated in order to encounter; (7) risky opportunities so they can define their own identities to be (8) digitally resilient. Education in the offline world should emancipate children to experience risk, and then they can grow-up to be resilient with the responsibility that comes with such freedom.

In Chapter 3. *Waking the Monster*: I raise the Pokémon Go phenomenon to explain how childhood is conceptualised within the seniority society of Thailand. The chapter discusses the tension around the ‘good child’ of international agencies such as UNESCO and OECD, and the concept of ‘dek dee’ in the Thai seniority-culture. The chapter then highlights the renegotiation of a new understanding of the good child, in the Thai context. The contribution from Puey Ungphakorn’s legacy, in so far as it persists in the present research, is the inclusion of learner and citizen autonomy in this vision of transformative literacy in Thailand.

Chapter 4. *Research Methodology*: discusses the data and methodologies used in this thesis. The project uses Action Research methods, and collaborative or participatory work with people in various fields, for example media education, medical, psychological, and legal professions as well as social workers and child development workers, all of whom contribute to the construction of interdisciplinary research methods in media development for children and also add to the regional focus of the work. In this chapter, children are positioned as ‘active’, not just functionally active, but as active, critical thinkers. The Action Research method uses children’s voices, talking about their experiences and ideas about digital activities to challenge the hegemonic discourse of the governing agencies regarding child development, which dominate research studies in Thailand. The choice of method allows the transformative power of children, as actors in their own lives, to operate through the open space of participatory action research.

Chapter 5. *Fieldwork in Thailand Number 1: Listening to ‘Girl 9’*. This chapter provides space for Thai children to express their knowledge and opinions about online risks and opportunities. This chapter concludes that the definition and

translation of online risk is contextualized and links with the notion of the good child in Thai society. Especially, I discuss an unanticipated discovery from ‘Girl 9’, who urges us to listen to Thai children’s voices and to take them seriously in constructing their own identities in developing digital literacy for children.

Chapter 6. *Fieldwork in Thailand Number 2: the proscriptive & the proactive*: this chapter demonstrates the results of the digital literacy implementation, comparing public and private schools. The participatory action team research (PAR) method was employed to develop the digital literacy modules in the schools. Additionally, details of the classroom sessions were observed by various methods, field notes, interviews, video records and pictures of digital literacy classes were used to capture and analyse the findings. The evidence: classroom dialogues, photographs and interviews, demonstrated the discursive framing of the digital literacy module framed by the ‘good child’ ideology that underpinned teaching, in both schools, to help us see the whole picture in this sample taken from Thai education. The chapter concludes with the argument that both hidden curricula tend to underestimate the value of letting ‘a child be a child’, in an un-idealized sense.

Chapter 7 *‘Many men, many minds’ (Na-na-jit-tang)*: The concluding discussion chapter makes some observations about the role of teachers, different teaching/school paradigms, and the relationship between teachers and students. The suggestion is the potential transformation of the ‘good child’ through educational setting. The study revisits the ideas of Thai thinker Puey Ungphakorn who reminded us that everyone is unique, as in the Thai proverb ‘many men many minds’ (Na-na-jit-tang). Consequently, seniors who control public spaces such as the State, family, school and the media in Thailand have to seriously consider sharing the power with those younger than themselves, especially in relation to the online world, with children, and to liberate them so as to encounter and benefit from coping with risk, which then develops their ‘cognitive responsibilities’, both for themselves and for the world around them.

The next chapter, which is the literature review for this project, focuses, as a consequence of the argument just summarized, on the child as a discursive construction, rather than beginning with the child as a ‘given’ identity that can be enhanced with digital skills but also protected from digital risks. Viewed

discursively, the child will become visible as an ideologically contested terrain where a digital literacy initiative has to negotiate its intentions with care.

## CHAPTER 2:

### RISKS AND RESILIENCE

#### 2.1 Overview

Children may be unable to act in any other way simply because they have not had the opportunity to do so. It is in this sense that *discourse in general can be said to produce behaviour* [emphasis added] rather than simply reflecting it. One implication of this, of course, is that *children will only be able to become competent if they are treated as though they are competent* [emphasis added]. Indeed, it is hard to see how they might become competent if they are not at some stage given the chance to engage in the activity in question. (Buckingham, 2000, p. 8)

The main premise that will emerge from this literature review is that children have to be treated as if they have the competence to be digitally resilient, and that underpinning such treatment is the necessity of talking, thinking and theorizing about children as if such treatment is not somehow barred by an anticipated lack of competence. Where such anticipation occurs, it tends to be on the grounds that children are passive and at-risk subjects who need protection. In this section, eight key bodies of literature have come together: **(1) Binary thinking about risks and opportunities**; the traditional concept that online media simply cause separate positive or negative impacts on children. Where such anticipation occurs, it tends to be on the grounds that children are passive and at-risk subjects who need protection. **(2) The protectionist approach** which is designed to save children from major risks and protect them on the grounds of their vulnerabilities. Several studies in these areas of research actually argue against the dominant thinking, using some version of the idea that moral panic about effects may actually prevent children from becoming competent learners and achieving autonomy as critical digital citizens.

This is because **(3) the Internet provides opportunities for children to operate autonomously from adult power**. In the online world, children are able to discover their own autonomy. In the offline world, especially in a society like

Thailand, a 'good' child is often constructed by adult culture, e.g. through family, school, media, and State, as a discursive object of protectionist policy and of pedagogical good intentions that do not trust the child to function autonomously in a world conceived as too dangerous for this to be possible without extensive preparatory 'training'.

The literature on media education move, therefore, to an empowerment approach that aims to develop digital literacy. In a dominant vision of digital literacy development, children should be 'trained' to develop their competency in technological skills and to use the Internet as responsible digital practitioners. Therefore, **(4) children are trained to be competent in digital literacy**. However, several studies have argued that digital literacy is not neutral but is always already shaped by the social construction of learners' identities and their related cultural practices; by socially determined notions of what 'risks', 'opportunities' and appropriate behaviours are. Consequently, literacy is not an objective phenomenon but a constructed meaning within what we can consider as the childhood ideologies of different cultures.

Furthermore, there are recent studies arguing that online risks do not simply translate into harm but the definition and investigation of online risks is itself a complex phenomenon. Some of these recent approaches suggest that children should be provided with **(5) risky opportunities** to expand their coping capacities so they can develop **(6) digital resilience**. This vocabulary of 'coping' does not set up so starkly the at-risk child versus the risk-saturated online world that the child cannot cope with by virtue of simply being a child, and the discursive construction of 'coping' does not require a protectionist stance as its inevitable corollary, in the way that the discourse of 'risk = harm' does. In this literature, children are not usually positioned as passive victims of online risks; conversely, they are regarded as *potentially* competent to navigate many risks and opportunities by themselves. Exposure to risk does not *inevitably* mean harm, from this perspective, as children have the potential to mobilise their own coping strategies and related cognitive proficiencies, in order to develop resilience as a result of exposure to risky opportunities. Even though adults do have responsibilities to guide children in managing online risks, it is important not to slip into simplistic, risk-avoidance strategies but to allow children to face risks and learn from the experience. As a

result, children can enhance their capacity to cope by themselves, thereby constructing aspects of their own identities in the process of building digital resilience, which is thus a subtly but significantly inflected version of digital literacy.

However, some studies claim to show that not all children can be resilient in this way. Therefore, attention should be paid to what may be culturally determined researchers' assumptions, cultural differences, and the effects of the children's concrete circumstances, particularly as these influences how the social institution of the school is being understood and how learner potential and achievement is being judged. For instance Biesta (2013a) has argued that **(8) without risk, education itself disappears**, so that vulnerability to risk is the very condition that makes education possible. In this view, education should emancipate children to be active subjects who engage with the world as responsible citizens.

There remains a risk of neo-colonialism in the promotion of some of these First World models, according to **(7) post development studies**. The influence of digital literacy schemes sponsored by international development organizations with the goal of developing competent children should not be permitted to become one-size-fits-all models. Instead, capacity building intentions derived from the First World should take the local contexts and cultural uniqueness of the developing countries into consideration (Thailand is still classified as 'developing' by international organisations such as the World Bank, with a primary indicator being national shortfalls in technological access and capability, according to international standards). The education should not turn into one based on the singular, standardized model from the first world.

## **2.2 Binary thinking about risk and opportunities**

Online media are assumed to have a self-evident impact on children and youth since they can be accessed rapidly and easily, and offer a broad and typically unregulated range of content and connections; a situation that seems always to be raising concerns as well as expectations. As outlined in Chapter One, from the perspective of adults considering children, it is often assumed that there will be unacceptable risks associated with Internet use. On the one hand, new media technology brought

with its great promises for social and educational benefits such as educational tools, entertainment, civic participation or technological enhancement of other activities, and so forth. On the other hand, digital media also support what can be deemed inappropriate and harmful content and practices; for example, cyber bullying, extreme or sexually violent content, bias, and misinformation. In a virtual world, children learn socialization and a sense of community; however, they also encounter these negative things in online environments, including antisocial behaviour (Tuukkanen, Wilska, Iqbal, & Kankaanranta, 2013).

Children who have existing socio-economic benefits typically gain greater benefits from online use than those who do not (Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2016). However, Internet 'addiction' has been found to be high among adolescents in Asian countries and Internet use there is frequently characterized by risky cyber behaviours (Mak et al., 2014). That the Internet presents risks is becoming increasingly evident; therefore, according to some research, there should be interventions via policy, law, technology and education to mitigate online harm to children (Guan & Subrahmanyam, 2009).

However, in the literature reviewed, there are often complex arguments over the meanings of the term 'effects', especially supposedly harmful effects, and around the ways in which this term positions the child as a potential victim. In a broader perspective, the child is more of a rights-holder. For example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child declared that a rights-based approach requires a paradigm shift towards respecting and promoting the human dignity and the physical and psychological integrity of children as rights-bearing individuals rather than perceiving them *primarily* as 'victims' in any context, whether through social disruption (e.g. by conflict), exploitation, or in terms of exposure to risk-bearing communications (Lee & Svevo-Cianci, 2011).

However, the notion that media education is a largely defensive enterprise, aiming to protect children from the hazards of unregulated media consumption, remains persistently present. The technological skills for protecting children and ensuring their careful engagement in digital use need to both provide protection and also opportunities to access digital information as a part of their right to self-development. It is seen as the responsibility of adults such as parents, teachers and

policy makers to provide interventions such as restriction and supervision in ICT use for children. Generally however, children are positioned as a weak category because of their biological immaturity and limited life experience and they need to be protected from vulnerability online.

## **2.2 The protectionist approach: children are a ‘weak’ category**

The concept of preserving online safety by means of law has been used by governments in numerous countries. For example, the European Commission, one of the main links of the European Union institutional system, is interested in maintaining regulations to protect children and youth from the dangers to which they may be exposed by online media (Wojniak & Majorek, 2016). Children may be deceived into producing intimate images of themselves or engaging in online sexual interactions. Children may also be groomed online. Some children, as a result, have been abducted, killed or trafficked for sex. Consequently, there is a governmental responsibility to safeguard children by enacting protective legislation (Milliken & Campbell, 2015).

For such reasons, the Federal Communications Commission in the USA initiated the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) which was passed by Congress in 2000 to address concerns about children’s access to obscene or harmful content on the Internet (Consumer and Governmental Affairs, 2017). Thailand has also imposed a Computer-Related Crime Act, B.E.2550, focusing on making the Internet safer. The law enforcement agencies in countries with these legal remedies are expected to be proactive in dealing with cybercrimes by monitoring the content of websites that contain obscene materials or child pornography (Koanantakool, Udomvitid, & Thuvasethakul, 2009). The international organization UNICEF reported that the internet increases children’s vulnerability to risks and harm, including misuse of their private information, their potential to access harmful content and the risk of suffering cyber bullying. *Many children are less supervised in online access, who are potentially more at risk?* As a result, it is important to protect children from online harm and to safeguard children’s privacy and identities online (UNICEF, 2017). Frequently, there is also deployment of Internet filtering and other technical approaches with an aim to ring-fence children from online risks and from the perpetrators of online exploitation.

However that these debates involve often unacknowledged power relationships between young people and adults, where adult perspectives dominate. Buckingham (2013b) asserted that:

There are difficulties here in identifying what is considered to count as a “panic,” as opposed to a measured or rational response; and in some accounts, there is also an implication of political manipulation -- a suggestion that panics are always ‘necessarily’ about something other than what they appear to be. (pp. 56-57)

To protect the ‘good child’, Tesar et al (2016) mentioned that in the real world, parents are worried about children and that they protect them, nurture them, and see them through the developmental stages of childhood (Tesar, Farquhar, Gibbons, Myers, & Bloch, 2016). This innate concern for developing children’s critical judgement towards potentially negative content in online media, in the process empowering children to enhance their well-being, is the reason why protective discourses are the dominant discourses around media literacy for young children.

While this care for children is important to the survival of the human race it also, when carried to extremes, gives rise to binary and hierarchical power relationships where the child is subordinate to the adult and becomes the ‘other’ in adult governance. Robinson (2013) also argues that in the discourse of human development, the adult/child binary constitutes childhood in opposition to adulthood, with the child viewed as inherently different from adults. In relation to the digital realm: if a child has always done all that was expected of them by adults, they may have become somewhat ‘weak’ when they reach the developmental stage where they encounter the risks of digital life.

In addition, the term ‘childhood’ does not refer simply to a human being’s biological age, but is a specific structural and cultural construction in many societies and cultures and is analysed in diverse ways. Aries (1973) asserted that the age in life does not correspond simply to biological phases but also to social factors (as cited in Buckingham, 2000, pp. 6-7). In addition, the perception does not refer simply to their developmental stage, but to the actual moral and practical conceptualizations employed in such contexts. Childhood, as distinct from biological immaturity, is neither a natural nor universal feature of human groups

but appears as a specific structural and cultural component of many societies. Fleming, for instance, argued that “the adult construction of the child” is what has ultimate power over children’s culture (Fleming, 2008, p. 61). Tesar et al. (2016) stated that “Childhood is understood as being a social construction and childhoods are produced within societies and cultures, through many varied technologies and analysed in diverse ways” (p. 171). This is in accord with the notion that childhood is codified by values, norms, laws and policies that reproduce forms of behaviour.

Thus, understandings of childhood are not the same everywhere, but change according to the societal context. The school and other social institutions, family, religious, media and others have taken on themselves the responsibility to reproduce the kind of ‘good children’ that society wants.

So, the perception of a ‘good child’ allows adults to exercise their own power to shape the definition of online risks and to decide how to approach those risks. But the Internet provides the power for children to contest traditional socializations that perpetuate their positioning as recipients and passive subjects of adults’ top-down structure. Children have the space to challenge and contest the established ideological settings from governing systems such as the family, school and state systems, etc. Children can potentially have influence over, act differently towards, challenge and contest the meaning of themselves as belonging to a weak group as defined by adults in relation to the online world.

### **2.3 Changing relationships of power and authority**

Several studies have furnished evidence that children can have a strong sense of their own autonomy and authority as competent learners. When they are accessing the Internet, they can develop autonomous skills and understandings, not only for more effective learning but also for developing their own sense of identity. The most recent data of this sort was summarised by the Young Minds Project which reported that children can exercise greater autonomy than ever before when accessing and exploring online environments on their own (Day, 2016). As a result, the recommendation was that adult attitudes should move away from creating restrictions to empowering children’s confidence in managing online opportunities and risks (Bush & Russell, 2016). Milliken and Campbell (2015) asserted that

online opportunities provide a chance for children to gain autonomy and to realize their own competencies. Parents should respect the children's digital competencies. This is a new ground for fostering their future capacities for autonomy and independent relationships.

Howarth (2013) pointed out that protective measures seem to be part of the arsenal of the 'moral entrepreneurs', such as states, religious institutions, and school systems who can see themselves as having a mission to label behaviours in order to regulate them. This preserves the power of the 'moral entrepreneur' who has the self-appointed responsibility to protect values against perceived moral threats. (Since the term 'moral entrepreneur' was first coined by American sociologist Howard Becker, it has proved useful in identifying the 'campaigning' nature of these rule setters' and enforcers' practices). Children easily get caught up in these missions undertaken to rectify some perceived moral threat to a society.

“The positioning of children in relation to these zealous campaigns on their behalf, also has the consequence of treating children as a homogeneous category, enshrined in schooling and policy” (Buckingham, 2003, p. 21). So, the restrictions put on children are often based on adults' perceptions of 'children' as an imagined and largely undifferentiated category. This kind of demonstration of the adult power to define may not be educationally effective for many actual, various and differentiated groups of children and individuals, especially across cultural boundaries.

The ready-made risk narrative is where adult power develops, but it is a blunt instrument in helping actual children in coping with challenging situations on the Internet. In effect, children, unknowingly, are engaged in a complicated negotiation between their actual selves and themselves as characters, as it were, constructed by adults within this kind of narrative (Drotner, 1999). As we will see later in Chapter 3, Thai children are very conscious of how they will be seen, and what adults will think of them if they deliberately enter risky situations.

Moreover, fear inevitably enters any discourse regarding risk and, with a degree of inevitability, is then involved in producing protective mechanisms through policy, law, filtering technology, etc. Studies on the operation of moral panics show that

‘technological determinism’ is evoked (e.g. the technology has made this happen) to disguise a kind of discursive determinism (fears have produced ‘solutions’ to fears): this may deprive children of the right to be any more than characters in an adult-constructed narrative (Lewis, 2014).

Perhaps adults should accept that the power relations between adults and children are changing because of the Internet. A recent study by Hope (2015) debated the e-safety policies of the UK and the US in the school systems, and the underpinning risk discourse. Its results showed that students might already be resisting some of the strategies of governmentality that have been brought to bear on the problematising of their experience. (French philosopher Michel Foucault coined the term governmentality to identify the will to govern that is manifested through many levels of society.) Hope suggested that children's digital rights to recognition as autonomous beings, not just governable subjects, need to be more prominent in e-safety policies.

So, media education should be more than simply protecting children from the dangers of digital media and should seek to encourage young people’s critical participation as cultural participants in their own right and develop children’s understanding of the media culture around them (Buckingham, 2000). The purely protectionist approach is out of date and should no longer be considered as an effective way to build digital literacy in children.

## **2.4 Children as ‘competent children’ from digital literacy learning**

Since the mid-1990s, keeping children safe online has been the subject of policy debates regarding protection (O’Neill, Staksrud, & Mclaughlin, 2013). Media education moves children from passive recipients to active participants, with rights of participation. In the sequencing of these approaches, children who used to be perceived as prototypical media consumers are now regarded as participating potential citizens. This concept concerns developing children’s critical judgment towards potentially negative content in the media, and empowering them to enhance their well-being by accessing the positive resources provided by media. This student-centred perspective has been increasingly promoted by many organizations

such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the European Commission. But often contradictory perspectives occur around what constitutes digital literacy, even where there has been this shift towards notions of the active, critically engaged user.

However, media education, as commonly practiced, develops appropriate behaviours in children, or elicits in them ‘correct’ attitudes according to adults’ expectations, but it has been less good in reflecting the potential and contextually-sensitive competencies of children (Buckingham, 2000). Fleming (2008) asserts that “there are ambiguities, then, in the adult’s imagining of the child – e.g. as good, as willing to learn – but also as a controllable object” (p.62).

In the offline world, the centre of the power to control or manipulate childhood ideologies is located with adults. In the most recent study of EU Kids Online, Byrne and Burton (2017). argued that “there is a persistent tension between what children do online, what they like doing, and what policy-makers think they should do” (p. 47).

Schooling is a social institution that effectively constructs and defines what it means to be a child – both childhood ideologies and schooling, in various ways, serve to reinforce and to naturalize particular assumptions about what children are and should be (Buckingham, 2000). This assertion accords with Green who argued that children’s digital literacies are contested spaces: around and between the child and adults, and a whole society (Green, 2014). Livingstone (2009) argued that “media literacy initiatives tend to be evaluated, so far as the teaching materials are assessed in practice, but children’s potential transcending of the given learning outcomes is harder to identify” (p. 189).

So, the adult authority to choose what is right or wrong for children cannot provide solutions to all educational challenges. Children are focused on becoming, rather than being shaped by the effective curriculum of digital literacy classes.

Biesta (2013a) pointed out that:

The task of schooling is more and more being constructed as the effective production of pre-defined ‘learning outcomes’ in a small number of subjects

or with regard to a limited set of identities such as that of the good citizen or the effective lifelong learner. (pp. 3-4)

So, the children are constructed in accordance with a singular ideology associated with the strong and predictable production of digital literacy. Students are positioned as objects that have to learn and achieve, based on effective production and learning outcomes.

Fleming (2008) argued that “this is part of the larger ‘mismatch’ between adult expectations and how children feel themselves to be” (pp. 62-63). Thus, literacy is not a neutral and universal phenomenon, but rather is shaped in context by the learner’s identity and cultural practices.

The evaluation of digital literacy is, therefore, complex and involves more than identifying a universally agreed set of abilities. The ‘literacy’ involved comprises a set of culturally regulated competencies that specify not only what is known and can be done, but also what is normatively valued (disapproved and approved of) in context and through adults’ perceptions. Mascheroni and Ólafsson (2014) pointed out that digital literacy is more than a set of Internet skills that children may or may not possess, but is also the integration of knowledge, competencies, and attitudes, within actual social practices. Therefore, the technical skill set of literacy is defined by the terms of adults’ perceptions and expectations, rather than in relation to learners’ identities and needs (A. M. Bjørgen & O. Erstad, 2015; Green, 2014; Livingstone, 2009; Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2014). Consequently, literacy is not primarily an individual achievement since it depends on the pedagogic and social contexts in which the provided ‘tools’ of literacy are used. What happens with any technology of communication depends not only on people’s intentions and efforts but on the social context that shapes those intentions and efforts (Buckingham, 2013a).

Relatively recent research by Green (2014) has shown that children’s digital literacies, which nest within broader social and cultural determinants, do so in ways that reflect age, gender and the socio-economic positioning of the parties involved. As a result, it is of importance to consider the variables of socio-economic circumstances that may shape learning to use digital media (Livingstone & Haddon,

2009). Diverse digital practices are connected, in often complex ways, with the diversity of identity construction across such circumstances (A. M. Bjørgen & O. Erstad, 2015). Sefton-Green, Nixon, and Erstad (2009) reviewed the concept of digital literacy across a range of research projects in Europe and Australia. The authors concluded that, for digital literacy to exist as a workable concept, it needs to be defined against *digital illiteracy*, and consideration given to those excluded from participation in digital cultures, e.g. for socio-economic reasons.

While the online world allows children to create their own terms to challenge the hegemonic discourse of the good child from protectionist approach and competent child from digital literacy learning. Digital literacy reproduces the standard risks/opportunities formulation framed by typical childhood ideologies from particular cultures. On the one hand, children are seen as belonging to a weak category who therefore have to be protected from online risks to be a good child. On the other hand, children are positioned as competent citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and therefore should master digital technologies in a manner that fits with educational production and culture. The ‘good child’ and ‘competent child’ are both hegemonic discursive framings of children, shaped by governing agencies employing the binary concept of online risks and opportunities. Therefore, the achievement of digital literacy comprises a set of culturally regulated competencies that specify not only what is known, but also what is normative, valued as disapproved or approved of.

Staksrud (2013) raised questions about the hypothesis of internationalized government agencies based on the perception of children as a weak group who are considered as a homogeneous group when it comes to exposure to Internet-related-risks. The children are seen as simply potential victims from online harm, which is the traditional discourse on children and online risk. However, public discussion on what constitutes online risk is complex and culturally framed. Not only is defining and investigating online risk a complex process where definitions vary according to culture, ideologies, norms, nationalities and languages, but it also varies by age, resulting in a direct challenge between children and adults such as parents, teachers and policy makers.

Several studies demonstrated that adults attempt to protect children from online risks and define a fixed meaning of risk. But in the online world, children are exercising their own power to define what is risky or not risky.

## **2.5 Risky Opportunities to build digital resilience**

The most recent concept of online risk argues that risk does not simply translate to harm, but that the occurrence of harm depends on the interaction between the child user and the socio-technological environment. Online risks and opportunities, however, are often studied and discussed separately (Livingstone & Helsper, 2010), which can limit the scope for non-binary thinking and for more conceptually sophisticated approaches in the relevant debates. Several studies found out that online risks vary between children and adults, and between socio-cultural perspectives. The conditions under which risks result in harm are complex. Online risk can translate to harm in some situations, but in others, encountering risk may facilitate digital resilience.

### **2.5.1 Risk and harm, from the child's perspective**

That risk does not automatically mean harm is an increasingly acknowledged perspective in the more sophisticated approaches to digital literacy (Lewis, 2014). But the recent studies outlined below note that online risks have so far largely been conceptualized within the framework of technological innovation. Technology's impact must also be considered carefully in relation to country-specific variations and the roles of parents, teachers and policy makers, as well as media coverage of risks (e.g. 'moral panic'), agenda-setting, and other factors. Children's susceptibility to harm and their capacity to realize opportunities are related to online circumstances, gender, age, nature of risks, social contexts, coping strategies, and possible levels of understanding at certain developmental stages.

While adults think risk means harm, risk does not automatically represent harm in children's perception. Livingstone and Smith (2014) reviewed the evidence regarding children's exposure to online risks including; cyber bullying, contact with strangers, sexual messaging and pornography. It was demonstrated that risk experiences affected less than one in five adolescents in the various research samples they reviewed.

Another report of the EU Kids Online project revealed that online risky experiences do not necessarily result in harm as reported by children. Only 17% of Flemish children said they had encountered something online that had bothered them. Less than half of the children who received sexual messages, and of those who have seen sexual content, have been bothered or upset as a result. Only one in three children were upset when meeting new contacts online who turned out to have suspicious intent (Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2014). While self-reporting of emotional reactions is not, of course, an objective measure, this is none the less data that needs to be taken into account.

However, these studies of Holmes' view (2009) that policy makers have been overly prone to extrapolate from particular cases (e.g. of online predators). This is the line with Livingstone and Haddon (2009) finding that being bullied online, by receiving nasty or hurtful messages, is the least common risk but it is most likely to upset children. Sexual risks – seeing sexual images and receiving sexual messages online – are more frequently encountered but they are apparently considered as being harmful experiences by fewer children. Seeing sexual images and receiving sexual messages online are encountered by one in eight children, but they are generally not considered to experience harm, except by a few children. Ólafsson, Livingstone, and Haddon (2013) also pointed that being bullied online, by receiving nasty or hurtful messages, is still relatively uncommon, experienced by one in twenty children, but it is the type of risk most likely to upset them.

An interesting and under-researched perspective emerges from this material that victimization (either to self or witnessed in others) is a significantly disturbing thing for many children, when encountered online, more so than 'explicit' sexual content (where perhaps the latter looks consensual and, therefore, surprising and even distasteful to some, but not inherently harmful). Slavtcheva-Petkova, Nash, and Bulger (2014) showed that there is little empirical evidence of actual harm in most children's experiences, indicated in a ten year study. The authors point out that what exactly most children need protecting from is something that tends to get extrapolated from a small number of cases.

While public perception has assumed that all children are vulnerable to sexual, online harm, in a survey of 10,000 Europeans aged from 9 to 16 years old, it was

reported that the top concern regarding risk experiences related to violent and victimizing content. Many children said that they are ‘shocked’ and ‘disgusted’ by aggressive and gory online content, particularly graphically represented violence against vulnerable victims. Cyber bullying is also experienced as upsetting, and is another instance of victimization. However, public policies continue to give the first priority to sexual content (Livingstone, Kirwil, Ponte, & Staksrud, 2014).

The identification of online risk does not simply imply that harm will result, a qualification that the debates regarding online harm to children have to take into account. An interesting and under-researched perspective that emerges from this material is that victimization (either of self or as witnessed of others) is a significantly disturbing thing for many children when encountered online, more so than ‘explicit’ sexual content. Kitzinger (2004) this is in contradistinction to the media’s tendency to amplify risks, framing them as threatening the innocence of children (as cited in Livingstone, 2013, p. 24).

As we can see from these reports, adults seek to eliminate risk to save children from being vulnerable. However, several studies have demonstrated that risk does not simply translate to negative consequences in a child’s perception. The protection against risk again just frames children in an innocent and weak category. In addition, the translation of online risks and opportunities into predictable outcomes is impossible since each encounter can result in positive and negative consequences, according to the different shaping of the socio-cultural perspective. Therefore, the risk and risk-free approaches that mediate the relation between risk and harm must be rethought.

### **2.5.2 Online risks contextualized**

According to the research literature reviewed, the definition of online risk varies according to the socio-cultural and sociological perspectives (or frames) being brought to bear. Much of the research cited to this point is in accord with Staksrud’s overview, in which the author argues that how matters of concern are framed, is derived from specific contexts (cultures, ideologies, norms, nationalities, languages, etc.) and that children’s and adults’ perspectives occupy an often contested space (Staksrud, 2013). Livingstone and Smith (2014) reported that risks

of cyber bullying, contact with strangers, sexual messaging ('sexting') and pornography generally affect fewer than one in five adolescents. Not all online risks result in self-reported harm. There are several factors that link harm with personality indicators (sensation-seeking, low self-esteem, psychological difficulties), social factors (lack of parental support, peer norms) and digital factors (kind of sites, apps, etc.).

An interesting point from Tsaliki, Chronaki, and Ólafsson (2014) found that, while society has long been worried about children's exposure to sexual content, such as pornography, the perception of sexual content reflects what adults frame as such and also what is framed by the political and social context. The meaning of sexuality differs across cultures, but this is seldom taken onto account in discussions of a supposed problem.

This has developed into a theoretical model of individual and country level factors that frame children's experiences, from which online risks can be conceptualized. It is noted that when children encounter online risks, the translation of risk to harm regarding the moral visions of childhood innocence, frame their perception in various contexts.

So, there is no universally accepted view of what is meant by appropriate or inappropriate content for children; but defining online risks is not an easy task since it depends on the interaction between users and their socio-technological environment, as well as the ways in which this interaction has been framed. As we can see, the existing evidence has demonstrated that the 'risks' have been defined in different ways, by different agents, in different contexts. Whether risk factors result in actual harm has emerged as a question to be explored rather than a conclusion to be assumed (Livingstone, Mascheroni, & Staksrud, 2015; Ólafsson, Livingstone, & Haddon, 2014). Buckingham (2000) rejected the classical explanation of risk outright. He argued that children can no longer be excluded or protected from the adult world until 'ready' because the media environment already exposes them to it. Accepting such an argument, in an authority-based society such as Thailand, presents very great challenges.

According to the recent study by a Thai scholar, the negative effects of digital media on Thai youngsters can be divided into eight categories: 1. deceptions; 2. inappropriate content; 3. online mischief; 4. dissatisfaction caused by inflated digital media expectations; 5. misunderstanding or being misled by digital content; 6. unconstructive use of time; 7. violation of laws; 8. inappropriate behaviour caused by digital media. As a result, the Foucauldian notion of governmentality comes very much into play – with calls for top-down responses to mitigate the negative effects of these eight categories through concrete and ‘official’ remedial actions (Karuchit, 2016).

In light of this literature review as a whole, we immediately have to ask about the taken-for-granted meanings of the eight key terms here: deception, inappropriate, mischief, dissatisfaction, misunderstanding, unconstructive, violation, inappropriate. These are dimensions of an overall framing of the ‘problem’ and each depends on specific interpretations of actual situations and then on generalizations around those specifics. Listed separately, this set of terms seems more emotionally charged and motivated than objectively determined. But, until now, there are no research studies, in Asian contexts such as Thailand, which begin by making the contextual framing of such key terms explicit.

Social agencies such as family, school, and state exercise their top-down power over children to define risk and how to manage online risk. Nevertheless, several studies discovered that without experience of adversity, a child may be prevented from becoming resilient. So, it is important to allow children to be exposed to some degree of online risk, and to learn how to take calculated risks, so they can design their own coping capacity to fit with their own circumstances. Risk taking is important to encourage young people to become resilient.

## **2.6 Digital resilience: balance as a key concept**

### **2.6.1 Defining an approach**

The discussion of online risk should not only revolve around where and how often children are exposed to risk, but also how well they cope with risk experiences and their practical and emotional ability to cope with risks. In this approach, children

are positioned as competent learners who must encounter some degree of risk, though not risk which exceeds their capacity to cope, in order for them to become resilient in their specific life context (d'Haenens, Vandoninck, & Donoso, 2013; Livingstone & Smith, 2014; Third et al., 2014; Wojniak & Majorek, 2016). This definition of an approach, underpinned by findings from the preceding sections of this literature review, is the distinctive perspective from which the present research will embark on fieldwork in Thai schools and then on theory building and recommendations, based on the research results. Several further matters have been raised by the literature review, which may help us to fine-tune the concept of resilience and see it in a broader perspective.

When some children are exposed to online risks, they are able to deal with it without feeling bothered or upset, as we have seen from the relevant research. This is an indication of a higher level of resilience. In other words, children who do not feel bothered after risky experiences online are considered to be more resilient. For instance, when children encountered online bullying and sexting, those higher in self-efficacy employed more proactive coping skills. In addition, deleting unwelcome messages and blocking the sender are practices used most often by resilient children when dealing with contact risks, such as online bullying – this is their resilience in action (d'Haenens et al., 2013). Resilient children are more likely to use positive coping strategies to solve online difficulties, especially proactive strategies (versus avoidance).

More than a decade ago, Renn (2004) claimed that the positive side of risk can be seen in entrepreneurship, active citizenship, 'the excitement of edgework' and in testing personal capabilities where excitement is the dominant motivator. People take a risk in order to test their own strengths and to experience accomplishment, especially around the 'edges' of the permissible. Similarly, Lupton (1999) mentioned that risk takers in work might be portrayed as creative people (as cited in Staksrud, 2016, p. 62), as developing self-knowledge through going beyond the safe, implying that they might be 'healthy risk takers' who demonstrate productive curiosity. From this broad perspective, resilient children would be able to challenge adverse situations in a problem-focused way, and to convert negative emotions into positive feelings of accomplishment. They would learn how to cope adequately with adversity. This should be as applicable online as off- (d'Haenens et al., 2013;

Livingstone et al., 2010; Third et al., 2014). Livingstone et al. (2010) asserted “this is vital for children if they are to learn to cope with the adult world” (p. 2).

The overly simplistic idea that children should always fear risk and adults should always attempt to protect them from it is, therefore, rejected. A recent study by Wisniewski and her colleagues suggests that risk prevention is a barrier to building resilience and that alternative solutions need to be proposed to foster children’s resilience (Wisniewski et al., 2015).

Children, then, need not always be restricted to comfort zones defined by adults. They can participate in finding their own ‘edges’ or boundaries. However, universalizing the concept of ‘children’ itself may lead us to underestimate how much variance exists.

### **2.6.2 Digital resilience is not technological determinism but social determinism**

Societal and cultural contexts and established cultural practices lead to international variances in how children’s online experiences are understood, including by children themselves (Hasebrink, 2014; Livingstone et al., 2015)

The project EU Kids Online III studied children in nine European countries: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The authors found that local factors do need to be taken into account (Smahel & Wright, 2014).

This is an important indicator for the present research. While the starting point is an approach defined in section 2.7.1 above, the intended fieldwork will test this approach, in situ, in Thailand where it will be crucial not to erase local specifics in the interests of a universalized – not to say idealized – notion of the resilient child.

### **2.6.3 Local specifics and the scope for variance from an ideal**

The internet is not intrinsically risky – everything depends on the interaction between users and their online environment, and the ways in which this interaction has been framed. For example, caregiver mediation strategies have been found to be vital in determining the kinds of resilience that children can display (d’Haenens

et al., 2013; Duerager & Livingstone, 2012; Livingstone & Smith, 2014). Papatraianou, Levine, and West (2014) studied how girls can manage risky situations and develop resilience (e.g. in response to bullying and cyber bullying) but the study found that the supportive resources, where present, of family and school have a significant determining effect on *how* this might be achieved. Moreover, some studies found that school social contexts affect resilience development in profound ways (Renn, 2004), and this reflects the larger influence of school cultures on children's lives (Little, 2009). Marklund and Dunkels (2016) studied the digital play at a Swedish preschool and they suggested that it is important that the preschool teacher consider the contemporary context of children's play and learning.

So the two periods of fieldwork reported in following chapters will be undertaken with due sensitivity to the question of school cultures, as well as, where appropriate, parental attitudes. Schools will be carefully chosen for the fieldwork in order to explore school-level cultures and resulting variances.

#### **2.6.4 Freedom of risky play: freedom of learning, freedom of knowledge**

The concept of 'risky play' has arisen in order to explain how young children develop such capacity (Hammond & Cooper, 2015) and the kinds of learning environment that support it (Lavrysen et al., 2017). For instance, a U.S. longitudinal study provides evidence that the freedom to engage in risky play outdoors can provide the opportunities to develop coping skills. Risky play, the tool a child possesses, constitutes a substantial safety barrier in itself. However, this prompts a need to understand children's personalities and the levels of risks they are comfortable with (Brussoni, Olsen, Pike, & Sleet, 2012). If adults prevent children from taking risks, they deprive them of making accurate risk judgements (Wyver et al., 2010) from risky play in public space.

So, children need to be given opportunities to explore and encounter risks and develop their coping capacity in order to be resilient. They will learn to assess challenging situations themselves, and then build their confidence and self-reliance as capable learners.

Fleming describes the risk-competent child (where the dominant meaning is ‘risk-incompetence’) as one aspect of the child’s ontological ‘otherness’ to the adult (Fleming, 2008). Children have the ability to surprise adults with their capacity to be independently ‘other’... He argued that

...not because they have some unexpectedly clever capacity to resist dominant meanings, but precisely because the child is always already one of these others itself before becoming fully socialized (or positioned by hegemonic articulation, in another vocabulary) into forgetting, repressing or unlearning its own otherness. (p. 69)

According to these studies, the public space of the Internet provides freedom for children to challenge and contest the governing ideology and seek their own competence and identity by becoming more resilient from engaging in risky play. The children should be free to encounter online risks, in the online and offline space. However, the education in the offline world is always predicable and tries to be risk free at all levels; a judgment which is a criticism of education in the offline world (Biesta, 2013a, p. 2).

## **2.7 Giert Biesta’s The Beautiful Risks of Education**

Biesta (2013) claims that there can be a positive side to risk in education. He argued that without risks, education itself disappears and social production –the insertion into existing orders of being, doing and thinking, takes over. This is because the students ought not to be positioned as object to be moulded and disciplined, but as subjects of action and responsibility.

The current dominant perceptions of education and the desire to make education strong, secure, predictable, and risk free produces standardization. A strong education is typically associated with effective production of pre-defined learning outcomes and with a limited identity for children.

Biesta also argued that the effective production of education is a fundamental misunderstanding of what education is about. He said that the educational way is ‘the slow way, the difficult way, the frustrating way and the weak way’ (Biesta, 2013a, p. 3) so the outcome of this process can neither be guaranteed nor secure.

The important idea is that when an individual resists existing identities and identity positions, and speaks out their own terms, then **subjectification** has occurred (Biesta, 2013a).

Biesta (2013b) explained ‘Subjectification’ as:

This domain.... has to do with the interest of education in the subjectivity or “subject-ness” of those we educate. It has to do with emancipation and freedom and with the responsibility that comes with such freedom...therefore, is not just about how we can get the world into our children and students; it is also, and perhaps first of all, about how we can help our children and students to engage with, and thus come into, the world. (pp. 4-5)

If children are shaped by a fixed identity when education takes a singular form, as a result, genuine education will disappear. Furthermore Biesta (2013a) emphasized that “If we take the risk out of education, there is a real chance that we take out education altogether” (p. 1)

In his lecture, *Redefining the Basics: What really matters in education*, at Brunel University, London in March 19, 2015 (Biesta, 2015), I summarize his lecture here. Risk taking is an important aspect of the formation of ‘grown up’ (time stamp, 58:29 sec) people. He also rejected the dominant discourse of developmentalism in which education prepares children from childhood to adulthood. For example, he sees education as supporting the child’s development and letting the children develop all of their talent or reach their full potential. Education should encourage and emancipate “children to come into the world” (time stamp, 11:07 sec) and into a worldly form which requires that we also give a place to what is out there, called “world centred education” (time stamp, 11:51 sec).

In addition, developmentalism believes that children have to be educated in order to have ‘full potential’ but Biesta notes that every child has talent for doing right and doing wrong; “morality and criminality are both the outcome of a development process” (time stamp, 55:39 sec). So, “children should not develop their full potential” (time stamp, 55:15 sec). Education should transform someone from

“ego-centric or infantile, to others-centred and grown-up in their way of engaging and being in the world, without being the centre of the world” ( time stamp, 57:35 sec). Biesta therefore challenges the models of both traditional and progressive education. In progressive learning, children are cultivated to exceed their full potential, but to be self-centred. But education should contribute to the ways in which children and young people can become subjects of action and responsibility, but do not become selfish or self-centred. Instead, they are always understood as being responsible in relations with other human beings, and by extension, with the natural world more generally.

Thus, children should therefore be liberated to take risks in both online space and educational space: as a result they can learn to achieve “grown-upness” (time stamp, 1:02 sec) and to be resilient, as discussed in other sections of this literature review.

## **2.8 The Post Development: the hegemonic discourse of competent child**

However, one factor that shapes children’s experience of digital literacy education is the standardization pressures from international organizations. In some contexts, what is quality and what is a good standard for children is determined by international agencies. Biesta (2013a), pre-defined learning outcomes, sought by international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank, are limited to identities such as that of the good citizen or the effective lifelong learner (pp. 1-2). Smith, Tesar, and Myers (2016) also criticized the policies and practices of OECD, as influential drivers for shaping early childhood education in many countries. Their input determines what is considered quality and what good standards are, and how they are linked with the notion of a productive citizen. Schooling is defined by learning process and outcomes to enhance the citizen from an underdeveloped nation to become a productive citizen for a digital society.

Nevertheless, several studies have demonstrated that context-specific socio-cultural dynamics should be priorities in development. When international development organizations provide assistance to enhance capacity building in different contexts,

for example with technical resources, they should be sensitive to cultural differences. The international agencies' discourse, however, is often based on universalist assumptions. As a result, one-size-fits-all models are often promoted which may not fit with all contexts because they are based on universalist thinking about development, human capacities and productivity.

In a study published in 2016, Teimori and her colleagues studied the validity of the Western measurement of online risks to children, in Asian contexts. The author assessed nine scales of online risks to children. These were derived from studies carried out in Europe and the United States. The study, comprising 420 Malaysian students, demonstrated that the scales were in many respects specific to Europe and the United States. The scales, from the European EU Kids Online survey and the American Youth Internet Safety Survey, were not wholly suitable to Asian contexts and needed to be modified (Teimouri et al., 2016). So the singular terms, based on western standardization, have to be transformed to fit a local context. Furthermore, Oxeham and Chabers (1978) have argued that providing technical assistance and technical cooperation, designed by outsiders, is a way that international influencers reinforce authoritarianism through promoting the authority of imported professional expertise (as cited in Smillie, 2001, p. 18). Rahmema (1984) stated that "the development assistance derived from wealthy countries has even been seen as perpetuating an 'infantilization' of the supposedly underdeveloped population" (as cited in Smillie, 2001, p. 9)

For example, Martinez-Reyes, who studied from a 'post development' perspective the discourse of conservation in the Maya Forest, claims that the reason for the failure of two major forest wild life management projects was a residual neo-colonialism by wealthy donor countries that undermined local participatory autonomy (Martinez-Reyes, 2014). Donors and outside experts elaborated their theories and made their assessments and observations, and designed their programs, from privileged institutional sites in order to solve problems at a distance. Benevolent on the surface, such practices can still involve a high degree of social control and an overriding of context-specific socio-cultural dynamics (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997).

So we will have to be cautious about the now widespread international interest in digital literacy as part of a broader development agenda. Thus, it is very important to look at context-specific factors, including how child development is differently conceived in various contexts. The challenge is now for international researchers to study and identify the relation of digital risks and opportunities for children, *in particular contexts*, and then to design effective interventions in that light, rather than from the perspective of ‘knowledge superiors’ whose perspectives claim to transcend the local.

It achieves this, importantly, after a strong acknowledgment of the importance of attending to context. Particularly, the tension connected with constructions of childhood in certain societies, a tension that could link to existing policies of protection and media education in that culture (Byrne & Burton, 2017).

Livingstone and Bulger (2014) pointed out that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is framed in Universalist terms. However, the notions of benefits, harm, resilience and well-being are culturally specific. Their study suggested that research and policy about children’s rights in the digital age must be considered both globally and locally. The universalising approach cannot penetrate into private areas, particularly the informal cultures around schooling, because of different conditions for children and youths, as well as different socio-economic and cultural contexts.

My research, as it relates to Thailand, will need to position itself within local contexts while deriving critically assessed conceptual insights – rather than universal truths – from international research that serves the development agenda.

## **2.9 Latest research into educational values in Thailand**

The proposed sensitivity to local contexts (see previous section) is not just negatively defined (as a critical stance in relation to Universalist thinking, e.g. within the ‘development’ agenda) but is also about local specifics being crucial in themselves. So the final element of this literature review chapter is an acknowledgement of the relevant current thinking about educational values in contemporary Thailand.

Boontinand (2016) demonstrates that parts of the education sector in Thailand have begun transforming their educational philosophy and approach from traditional concepts to pedagogical progressivism. She reports in her study, which employed ethnographic methods, on an 'alternative' Thai school and its formal and 'hidden curriculum' during 2011-2012: the author concludes that the hierarchical power relations embedded in Thai social structures are significant barriers to progressivism, which aims to develop autonomous learners and ultimately citizens who are not held back by adherence to overly conservative Thai cultural norms and practices, e.g. of unquestioning respect towards hierarchy and authority. Despite progressive intentions, however, Thai schools still often indoctrinate learners in seniority values which can be observed at work in their 'hidden curriculum': the values embedded in the school environment, school administration, and student-teacher relationships. Boontinand (2016) asserted that:

Schools which follow a progressive education approach may be seen as instilling democratic citizenship. However, since education and schooling in Thailand – as in other Asian societies – is embedded in localized values and norms, the way in which pedagogical progressivism is used to promote the construction of democratic and autonomous citizens is not without its contradictions. (p.9)

This is in line with Sinlarat et al (2013) who demonstrated that conservative Thai culture is the most significant influence on the kinds of learning that can occur in schools Sinlarat, Rachapaetayakom, and Swatevacharkul (2013). Moreover, the relationship between school leadership and the students and teachers pose an important challenge for the achievement of democratic educational values in schools. According to Mulder (2000), “the Thai cultural concepts of hierarchy and necessary inequality constitute an important challenge for practicing democracy in schools and developing autonomous citizens in the Thai context” (as cited in Boontinand, 2016, p. 33).

At the time of writing, the recent Thai education policies and reforms are seeking explicitly to produce people who are capable, competitive and critical citizens but who also have a disciplined service mind, oriented towards the public interest and are proud of Thai traditional values according to current Thai education policies and reform (Office of the Higher Education Commission Thailand, 2015). Carr

(2003) states, this tension between progressive and conservative aims can be presented as a necessary balancing act for Thai society, but there are educational theorists who see such a balance as always being compromised by education's *reproductive* function, where education is considered as an 'instrument by which a given community ensures the continuity of its way of life' (as cited in Boontinand, 2016, p. 20)

In relation to classroom practices, Boontinand demonstrated that the student-teacher relationship may seem to be based on a student-centred approach, allowing students to have confidence to express their own opinions, but the seniority value can be strongly, if subtly, reinforced in the school through everyday interactions and arrangements. For example, a teacher was observed saying that the 'good child' (dek dee) has to know the appropriate manner (Kaala-thesa) to give respect to seniority (Boontinand, 2016, p. 36). And this school had an open election of student council members, but she found that the student council had no real freedom of participation, but rather served as the eyes and ears of teachers in order to control students' actions (Boontinand & Petcharamesree, 2017), a clear example of the hidden curriculum in action.

In these kinds of ways, children are taught that to be the 'good child' (dek dee) is to be authentically Thai – that is to honour the monarchy, Buddhism and the nation (Boontinand & Petcharamesree, 2017, p. 3). The public concept of childhood is elaborated in this context, revealing the ideological and institutional apparatus deployed by the Thai state in its attempt to construct an approved childhood (Bolotta, 2016). Kulapichit, Boonyasavat, and Laungsuwon (1996), who studied the development of Thai education from 1946 to 1995, concluded that Thai education focused largely on instruction for children to be this 'good child', through curriculum, learning activities, educational tools, and evaluation methods. The more recent work by Boontinand and Petcharamesree (2017) suggests that, even where progressive aims are now being articulated and pursued, there is still a 'hidden' weight of institutional, interpersonal, and cultural baggage around such instruction

## 2.10 Summary

Fleming (1996) stated that:

To be always making children's culture for them, because they cannot make it for themselves, is to run the risk of recognizing that they always grow up to be us, in any case. Their culture is merely what we want it to be. (p. 3)

Since what 'we' want is a complex socio-culturally specific matter, this research will have to negotiate its way around a number of potential conceptual and procedural pitfalls. The preceding literature review has produced the following major insights (which will still need to be critically handled when the fieldwork data comes in):

- In the approach mandated by the best previous research, as summarized here, children will be positioned as competent learners who must encounter some degree of risk, though not risk which exceeds their capacity to cope, in order for them to become resilient in their specific life context. Further complications arise from the interdependencies among opportunity, risk-taking, resilience and vulnerability with hegemonic discursive framing of childhood ideology.
- This will involve, on the part of the researcher, a resistance to binary thinking; risks versus opportunities connected with childhood and adulthood and universalist pronouncements, in favour instead of articulating global research findings with local contexts.
- Local contexts are not just a matter of national socio-cultural characteristics, but also of specific 'cultures', e.g. within schools.
- These specifics, as recent work by Boontinand suggests, may be increasingly characterized in Thai schooling by a deep contradiction between the growing occurrence of progressive intentions and the weight of conservative values, where an effective balance cannot easily be achieved in practice, given that schools function more as agencies of social reproduction than of change.

- Methodological sensitivity to ‘cultures’ in this sense will be vital (perhaps even down to the level of specific classroom cultures).

In summary, risks and opportunities are not entirely separate ways of thinking about ICT, but instead are interconnected perspectives for interpreting the complicated situation of actual use. The same might be said about ‘offline’ and ‘online’ aspects of children’s lives: that is, these are not completely separate things which can be studied in isolation. According to the preponderance of contemporary studies, in the online world, children can grow their resilience by encountering and dealing with online risk situations. Nevertheless, these more optimistic views of children’s capacities are still challenged by current digital literacy norms which claim that children are a weak and vulnerable category and that the best that can be done is to produce competent children for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By contrast, Biesta (2013a) has pointed out that education should not turn into a project of effective production of pre-defined learning outcomes, with a limited set of identities available for children. Education should engage with risk, with openness and unpredictability as children encounter them in both offline and online worlds. In this sense, children can exceed their own right to be competent digital citizens, which authorities in many territories concede that they have to develop beyond their existing identities and current positions in order to speak on their own term as literate and resilient.

The next chapter will present the factors that shape online risk experiences in Thai contexts, particularly those associated with the notion of the ‘good child’ and the ‘competent child’. Their influence in Thai society will be examined by using the example of the *Pokémon Go* Phenomenon. The chapter will demonstrate various casual assumptions, which shape conception of online risks and opportunities and intensify the challenges of building digital literacy, let alone resilience, in Thailand.

## CHAPTER 3

### WAKING UP THE ‘MONSTER’ ‘DEK DEE’ and ‘COMPETENT CHILD’

#### 3.1 Introduction

Most of the existing work on media literacy in Thailand has claimed that Thai children lack the necessary critical abilities and self-reliant competencies to cope with online risks without ‘paternalistic’ interventions. The report from the Media & Information Literacy (MIL) curriculum project supported by UNESCO claimed that Thai children do not display, in class, the kinds of good judgement needed to use media effectively and responsibly (Nupairoj, 2013; Siricharoen & Siricharoen, 2012). The recent report *Reviews of National Policies for Education in Thailand, an OECD UNESCO Perspective, 2016* claimed that Thai students have not yet fully attained the levels of computer, information processing, and related communication skills required for the 21st century. Thai students have reportedly less confidence and fewer abilities in the use of ICT than those in most other countries<sup>1</sup>. In addition, their teachers were found to lack confidence and capacity in the use of ICT in the classroom, even if they had attended many workshops about Internet use in education. So, the report recommended adoption of the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers as a training tool.

This picture of massive growth in connectivity, counterbalanced by underdevelopment in competency, has to be judged against the background of post-development studies’ critique of the ‘international expert’ paradigm, as discussed in Chapter 2. Especially, Thai children are expected to become competent citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> century through receiving an effective education (based on guidelines)

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<sup>1</sup>In 2013, Thailand participated in the International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS), which tested the digital skills of 14-year-old students in 23 countries (Box 6.1; Fraillon et al., 2014). Thai students finished second from the bottom on the study, above only Turkey. Among Thai students, 64% scored below the lowest level of ICT proficiency, 23% scored at the lowest level (Level 1), 11% scored at Level 2 (the proficiency level of most students in other participating countries), 2% scored at Level 3 and none reached Level 4, the highest level (OECD/UNESCO, 2016 p.252).

from International agencies such as OECD and UNESCO. This is not to say that the 2016 report is deliberately misleading, but rather that it does not sufficiently acknowledge the ‘Thai culture’ and ‘classroom culture’ phenomenon, which, as we will see, strongly determines what can happen in Thai schools. The competence of children and teachers is shaped and constrained by both these local and international ‘cultures’ of childhood ideology, which in turn reflect the values of the society as a whole. More training, on the international model, will not necessarily allow more or different competencies to show themselves at classroom level.

In order to understand what we might now think of as the cultural constraints on competency, it may be useful to consider an example of a specific convergence of digital practices and technology, to see what it tells us.

## **3.2 The *Pokémon Go* Phenomenon**

In this short case study the ‘Pokémon Go’ phenomenon will be used to explain the Thai context, especially aspects relating to perceptions of online risks and opportunities in Thailand.

### **3.2.1 *Pokémon Go* around the world**

Pokémon Go is a mobile phone game that combines a classic 20-year-old toy and animated TV franchise with augmented reality (AR). Players walk around real-life places, search out and capture digitally ‘revealed’ Pokémon cartoon characters on their Smartphones, so they can train the Pokémon for battles. Pokémon Go has been released in more than 30 countries, reaching Asian countries, for example Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Japan, India and Thailand, in July 2016.

Faced with a popular phenomenon that spread quickly, the authorities in many countries have been worried about related issues such as the impact on cultural values. Consequently, Pokémon Go has been banned in several countries, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Russia, Indonesia, Iran and Malaysia because it is claimed that it has the potential to cause damage to social values, including religious standards. For example, in Malaysia, Islamic leaders in Kuala Lumpur said that

Muslims should avoid playing Pokémon Go because it could ‘lead to gambling’, which is contrary to religious discipline (Sambandaraksa, 2016).

But the perceived risks were also frequently less profound, and included the disrupting of traffic and the potential for accidents. The news that illustrates the enthusiasm of players focusing on hunting the monster and ignoring the real world is demonstrated below:

Pokémon Go, the ultra-popular augmented reality game, was released in Taiwan three weeks ago. Only a couple days after its debut, 349 Taiwanese drivers were fined for playing and driving. While nobody has fallen into a river (yet), huge mobs of gamers have been spotted in northern Taipei, obstructing traffic and blocking streets. (2016 para.1)



*Figure 3.1 One mob stampeding across the street to catch a Snorlax, which was reportedly seen in Beitou, Taiwan*

Source: Shanghaiist website (2016). (Used with permission)

One widely reported case was of two men from San Diego in the US falling off a cliff while trying to catch monsters (Lyer, 2016). As a result, many countries, for example Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam, imposed zoning policies, issued guidelines on how to play the game with safety, and restricted players from going onto private properties and restricted areas (Leung & Munoz, 2016). Thailand imposed a ‘No Go Zone’ policy to limit the locations for playing Pokémon. In short, this particular phenomenon exposed, in an often fairly extreme form, the underlying balance between conservative and liberal instincts in many of these societies. Media coverage tended often to be alarmist, triggering the protectionist agenda that is

inherent in the governmentality of more conservative societies. For these reasons, we can use this particular example of popular internet use to clarify how Thailand's conservatism makes itself apparent in responding to questions of digital 'risk'.

### **3.2.2 *Pokémon Go* goes to Thailand**

Srimaneekulroj a reporter with the Bangkok Post online newspaper reported that:

Ever since its release on August 6 [2016], Pokémon Go has taken Thailand by storm, prompting hordes of enthusiastic players, of all ages and genders, to take to the streets in search of these virtual critters.. (Srimaneekulroj, 2016 para 1)

As Pokémon Go fever is now spreading like an epidemic with people, both youths and adults, taking to the streets, public parks, shopping centres, local government offices, temples, tourist locations, scouting for rare Pokémon characters. ("Pokémon Go fever spreading like an epidemic in Thailand," 2016 para.1)

Sukya, a reporter of City Life Chiang Mai News online magazine reported that:

Mostly known for its vibrant nightlife, it is no surprise that Nimman is crawling with Pokémon hunters, dropping incense (that attracts Pokémon) and lures (attracting Pokémon to pokéstops). (Sukya, 2016 para.7)

One reason for the fast growth of the game and its spread around the world was clearly because the game tightly integrates the real world and the virtual world via the Smartphone. This lack of separation already plays into instinctively alarmist responses, exacerbated by one-off stories of negative consequences, which are typically presented as exemplifying the whole phenomenon, rather than as exceptional incidents: The Nation online newspaper reported that the Pokémon game was the cause of a college student's injury in a motorcycle accident. This was because she "looked at her friend's mobile phone to see a newly-caught Pokémon monster while she was riding the motorcycle" ("Student injured in motorcycle accident related to Pokémon game," 2016 para.1).

In addition, The Nation online newspaper informed that: “Interactive augmented reality game Pokémon Go finally landed in Thailand earlier this week and quickly brought pedestrian traffic to a standstill as residents of all ages took to the streets to locate and capture the virtual creatures” (Saengmanee, 2016 para.1).



*Figure 3.2 Teenagers who catch Pokémon while riding a motorcycle*

Source: MGR Online ("Playing Pokémon while riding, you will be arrested," 2016).

(Used with permission)

The default language in all these stories is informed by the basic discursive formula of ‘society v. the new phenomenon’. There is little if any suggestion of society being the entity represented by the horde of players; rather they are seen somehow as ‘other’ and as deviating from social norms and standards. So there is no accommodationist perspective in relation to the latest digital ‘danger’, but rather a default danger-limitation or protectionist, and risk management discourse. We can see this failure to find an accommodationist perspective when we look more closely at reactions in Thailand.

### **3.3 Responsibility as a key concept**

#### **3.3.1 Protecting against unregulated pleasure**

Three days after Pokémon Go launched in Thailand, policy makers, lawyers, police, teachers, employers and doctors were reported in the media as expressing anxieties about the negative consequences of playing this AR game. For example, a psychiatrist warned players using Smartphones about the risk of getting addicted and urged the authorities to regulate the game (Rujivanarom, 2016).

The Bangkok Post online newspaper reported that the Thai Prime Minister said in an interview that ‘what makes me worried is the safety of the players. They could face possible dangers such as robbery or rape if they play Pokémon Go in deserted or risky areas’ (Tortermvasana, Sattaburuth, & Mahitthirook, 2016)

Thailand then imposed a No-go Zone policy by issuing a formal letter from the government to tell the developers, Niantic, to keep Pokémon away from ‘no-go’ zones, namely royal palaces, hospitals, schools, government offices, religious places, private property and dangerous areas such as waterways, railways and canals. Mr. Thakorn Tanthasith, the secretary general of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (NBTC), then gave an interview for Hindustani Times, online newspaper, saying that Thailand now had an official policy of restricted zones. The Deputy Prime minister said “People need to be careful while playing the game in public places to avoid accidents and violating the rights of other people,” (“Thailand to draw ‘play zones’, set limits on Pokémon Go players,” 2016, August 10 para.11)

Thai PBS, a news broadcasting service in Thailand informed that:

Police are to enforce traffic law against Pokémon Go gamers while driving or while walking on public roads, shoulders of roads or sidewalks in a way which may block traffic or which may cause accidents. (“Police to act against Pokémon Go gamers while driving,” 2016 para.1)

The Nation online newspaper reported that:

Between August 10 and 20, 243 motorists were caught using their cell phones in the capital, with many of them apparently playing Pokémon. (“Pokémon busters target motorists,” 2016 para.4)

Labour Ministry deputy permanent secretary Suradej Waleeittikul yesterday made it clear that the ministry's officials must not play Pokémon at work. "It's for safety and order," he said, "Why would they spend work time playing a game? It would only damage the labour Ministry's image. (“Pokémon busters target motorists,” 2016 para.8)

Nation online TV reported that:

One of the schools in Nakhon Ratchasima banned catching Pokémon in the school. For the students who break the rule, their mobile phones will be seized for 7 days. ("The students from Korat province in Thailand abide with the school's rules not to play or 'catch' Pokémon during lessons in class.," 2016 para.3)

What is especially interesting, when we sift through these kinds of reporting and sort them into categories, is that the 'zoning' starts to take on the appearance of a kind of social mapping that summarizes and presents the cultural background and practice with the visual ethnography of governmentality, as follows.

- **State Zone (Army):** One of the military zones put up the sign: 'Don't catch Pokémon in this area.'



*Figure 3.3 No Go Zone: State Zone (Army)*

Caption: 'The 14th Cavalry Battalion, Khon Kaen Province, forbidden to capture Pokémon in military zone. Imprisoned 3 days per monster if disobey the order'

Source: Morning news website (*"Catch Pokémon in the military zone will be in jailed 3 days for each monster collected," 2016*). (Used with permission)

- **State Zone (Police):** The Metropolitan Police Bureau is implementing the ‘Pokémon Traffic No Go’ policy.



Figure 3.4 No Go Zone: ‘Pokémon Traffic No Go’

Caption: ‘Playing Pokémon while riding, you will be arrested and fined. D-day is this Monday 22 August 2016’ Source: The Nation online newspaper, 22 August 2016. ("Pokémon busters target motorists," 2016). (Used with permission)

- **State zone (Bureaucracy):** Some state offices put up signs asking staff not to play the game around the offices

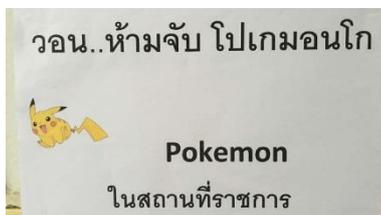


Figure 3.5 No Go Zone: State zone (Bureaucracy: official area)

Caption: ‘Please don’t catch Pokémon in official areas’

Source: Thairath online newspaper, 9 August 2016. ("Pokémon Go No Go Zone !," 2016).

(Used with permission)



Figure 3.6 No Go Zone: State zone (Bureaucracy: state office)

Caption: ‘The sign put in front of a state office to warn people’

Source: Thairath online newspaper, 9 August 2016. ("Pokémon Go No Go Zone !," 2016).

(Used with permission)

- **School zones:** Some Schools declare No-Go zones to restrict students from playing Pokémon.



*Figure 3.7 No Go Zone: School zones*

Caption: ‘The sign put in front of a teacher’s office, ‘Don’t hunt Pokémon in teacher’s office’

Source . Thairath online newspaper, 9 August 2016. Peke

("Pokémon Go No Go Zone !," 2016). (Used with permission)



*Figure 3.8 No Go Zone: Learning zones*

Caption: ‘The lecturer at a university shows this slide while teaching ‘Do not catch Pokémon in the classroom. If you do, your Pokémon balls will be deleted’

Source: Thairath online newspaper, 9 August 2016. ("Pokémon Go No Go Zone !," 2016).

(Used with permission)

- **Religious zones (Temple):** A temple used the sign ‘the temple is an animal sanctuary’. By contrast with signs in other places this is an amusing way to ‘police’ the situation, re-classifying the game’s virtual creatures as safe from being hunted there.



*Figure 3.9 No Go Zone: Religious zones (Temple)*

Caption: A monk puts up the sign ‘this is an animal sanctuary, don’t catch Pokémon’

Source: Thairath online newspaper, 9 August 2016 ("Pokémon Go No Go Zone !," 2016) .

(Used with permission)



*Figure 3.10 No Go Zone: Religious zones (Shrine)*

Caption: ‘Animal sanctuary, don’t catch Pokémon Please play with awareness. Take care’

Source: New Freelance, 9 August 2016 ("Security guard in Chachoengsao province put the sign

'Don't catch Pokémon Go'," 2016). (Used with permission)

This basic exercise in a visual ethnography of governmentality is quite revealing in its own way, and provides some useful signposts for our eventual formulation of conclusions here.

First, while an explicitly protectionist and conservative reaction is clearly evidenced, and a socially widespread one at that, this reaction is not undifferentiated. The ‘State’ zone is humourlessly insistent in its banning of the activity; the Public sector is more reliant on appealing to people for their own good; while the ‘Religion’ zone (although clearly this is a very small sample of responses) is accommodationist in the specific sense of re-coding the activity, and re-negotiating its meaning, in order to integrate it into its own frame of reference.

This hint of an accommodationist approach perhaps suggests a way forward for practices within a conservative society that want to avoid authoritarian re-framing of the activity concerned, based on a re-coding of its meaning that does not necessarily position the activity as deviant. We will come back to this idea, before we do, it is important also to note the implicit fear revealed by even this simple case study: fear of the popular passions and collective enthusiasm as well as fear of individual behaviour, especially where these are being displayed by young people who, therefore, are made to appear potentially *unruly*.

### **3.3.2 ‘Dek dee’ in seniority society: using authority to control unregulated pleasure**

The value of seniority is embedded in Thai culture. Bhattarakosol (2007) noted that “Thai society is a seniority society, or hierarchical society, in which older persons are given higher priority than the younger ones. Ethics and morality are taught to kids without question, and they usually believe what they have been taught” (p. 2761). Thai children are taught to show respect for seniors. Thai ‘good children’ -- ‘dek dee’ -- should be obedient to seniors such as their parents, teachers, doctors and other professionals and elders. In Thailand, as elsewhere, the adults have responsibility to tell their juniors what is appropriate or inappropriate and it is assumed that children will be *unquestioningly* obedient to the power of adult authority. This is reflected in a Thai saying ‘Doen tam phu yai ma mai kat’ (เดินตามผู้ใหญ่หมาไม่กัด), which literally means that one will not be bitten by a dog if

one walks after an elder. ‘Aab ngam rgan ma kean’ (อาบน้ำร้อนมาก่อน) means ‘children should listen to the words of adults’ because adults will know more of the world. Thailand has a revealing and familiar colloquial concept of ‘good’ children that has been represented by the popular song ‘dek dee’ or ‘Ten Regulations to be Good Children’ (Culture Surveillance Bureau, 2013). The song was composed in 1995 to promote the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that Thailand was ratified since 1992.

However, Bolotta who has worked with Thai scholars regarding ethnography of religious, humanitarian and state institutional politics for poor children in Thailand argued that the song that reports of ten duties that help one to be considered as a ‘good child’ positions children as the subjects of duties, rather than being subjects of rights. The duties of a Thai citizen, as someone who is ‘dek dee’, are to uphold Buddhism, to keep Thai traditions, to be grateful, and to obey parents and teachers. These desirable characteristics are also demonstrated in the current National Curriculum (The Ministry of Education, 2008). In May 2014, a military coup by Thai army chief general Prayuth Chan-ocha refreshed and introduced the ‘twelve key values (khaniyom) of Thai-ness’ enjoining good children to preserve and worship the sacred triad of monarchy, religion and nation, and to show the gratitude of children to parents and teachers. The coup introduced a new nationalistic ritual for students to be performed daily in all the country’s schools: before classes, students have to sing a new national song on the “twelve key values (khaniyom) of “Thai-ness”.

‘Dek dee’ or the template for a good child has been a powerful colloquial concept since the 1950s, as we can see from its continuing presence in both rituals and the educational policy in Thailand.

### **3.3.3 The transition from ‘dek dee’ to the ‘Competent Child’**

While persisting, in itself the concept of ‘good child’ or ‘dek dee’ in Thailand was also augmented by the concept of the ‘competent child’ in response to the challenges of globalization and internationalization in the 20th century. In the early and mid-1990s, another attempt at educational reform emphasized Thailand's need to adapt to the challenges of globalization and internationalization.

The basic premise was that for Thailand to be internationally competitive, it needed to internationalize its educational system to prepare its young people for an increasingly intercultural global era. Thailand mandated these reforms because after the Asian economic crisis in 1997, educational reform and decentralization were seen as necessary to immunize Thailand against further such shocks. The country carefully and critically examined the educational reform experiences of other countries around the world, such as Australia, New Zealand, France, and China (Bigalke & Neubauer, 2009, p. 170).

In 1999, the Thai Education Act took an implicitly child-centred approach that promoted children's participation, critical thinking and the right of self-expression in school settings. One of the key elements of the reform initiative was therefore to promote the learner-centred model of pedagogy (Naruemon, 2013). In this way, childhood education has been influenced by rapid economic and social change together with scientific and technological advancements that link with the notion of a 'productive citizen' within Thai culture. Thai children are cultivated to be 'competent children' who can compete in global markets. Therefore, curriculum development, at all levels from national to school levels, must exhibit the qualities that are prescribed in the learning standards and indicators. Smith et al. (2016) have argued that education often plays the role of producing competent citizens in response to international economic indicators. These economically-referenced discourses determine what is quality and what are good standards, and how they are linked to the notion of a productive citizen (p. 1).

This is the major contemporary transformation of the notion of the good child in Thai society. The teacher-centred model, in hierarchical terms, is transformed into horizontal terms that highlight children as being central to these processes of the formation of the competent child.

However, some critics have argued that Thailand has surrendered to international educational patterns such as decentralization, student-centred learning, and the promotion of technology in education without ensuring that they are appropriate to Thai societal condition. Furthermore, even though many Thai teachers and educators have adopted a progressive learning approach, still some schools use traditional methods that position students as passive learners (Fry & Bi, 2013).

Boontinand (2016) disputed that Thailand experiences a tension between the teaching of critical thinking and adherence to Thai values, traditions, and religious beliefs including those of filial piety, obedience. As we can see, the Basic Education Core Curriculum 2008 places emphasis on producing morality, a preference for Thai-ness, skills in analytical and creative thinking, technological know-how, capacity for teamwork, and the ability to live in peace and harmony in the world community (The Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 11). This national curriculum is aimed at educating learners to be competent citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, with critical abilities and technological skills. Meanwhile the desirability of Thai citizens, of any age, to be ‘dek dee’ or ‘good child’ in a seniority-based culture, is still very important.

Thai children are therefore theoretically subordinated to adult governance as part of a homogeneous ideology promulgated by both local and international government agencies, albeit one updated to include new competencies. However, in my own research, and in the example of Pokémon Go. I have found that children are challenging the authorities’ power to define online risks by expressing their own terms, with ‘contrary’ behaviour. This took the form of resisting the ‘No Go Zone’ policy.

### **3.4 Waking up the ‘monster’: a new understanding of the child in the Thai context**

The Bangkok Post online newspaper, reported that children still gathered to catch monsters in schools, during break time, after the announcement of the ‘No Go Zone’ policy. One child said “you're hanging out with your friends, going to different places together to achieve a common objective. That's probably the best aspect of the game” (Srimaneekulroj, 2016 para.8) .

Another young player said in an interview, ‘I come to gather in this public park because there are a lot of Pokémons to catch. Someone can catch more than 40 monsters within one hour. I know how to play and how to be safe. (Srimaneekulroj, 2016) .

The Bangkok Post also reported children resisting the adult imposition of zoning. ‘An incredulous Bodindecha (Sing Singhaseni) school student checks ‘Pokémon Go’ on his phone right in front of the poster banning ‘Pokémon Go’ on school premises (Tortermvasana et al., 2016) -- supposedly to ensure they won't be distracted from their studies in school.



*Figure 3.11 Bangkok Post publishes representations of contrary behaviour*

Source: The Bangkok Post online newspaper 10 August 2016 (Tortermvasana et al., 2016).

(Used with permission)



*Figure 3.12 More contrary behaviour*

Source: Bangkok Post online newspaper 10 August 2016 (Tortermvasana et al., 2016).

(Used with permission)

Seniors, the state, school, and societies expect Thai children to be ‘dek dee’ and also competent in the modern world. However, some children are challenging the meaning of good child by their contrary behaviour. The child acts differently, challenges and contests the established ideological governing system. Children are produced as rebel subjects through the Pokémon Go phenomenon, which takes place partly outside the hegemonic spaces such as school.

Tesar (2017) stated that

the resistance may be called ‘naughty’ or ‘inappropriate’ behaviour but that the children are sharing the common idea of engaging in secrecy and knowledge that is inaccessible to teachers and other adults. (p. 25)

The resistant behaviour can also be seen as telling seniors that children need free space to develop their own definitions of ‘good child’ and ‘competent child’. Resistance should be understood in the sense that Thai children attempt to share their own power/voices to resist the homogeneous ideology of the good child. Children may need periodic freedom from hegemonic spaces that organize them under a dominant ideology. If adults are able to take their voices seriously, and to understand the motivations for this apparently ‘contrary’ behaviour, this may, in time, transform Thai education to enhance both digital literacy for Thai children and their education experience in general.

So, a common situation is that policy makers and teachers, for example, assume the responsibility to regulate people’s capacity to take responsibility on their own behalf. The Pokémon Go reaction demonstrated this all too clearly, whatever the actual risks to public safety. But we need to remind ourselves that the pleasure of absorption in Pokémon Go was what drew so many people to it, so the ‘dek dee’ and competent child, we might conclude, is not allowed to exhibit unruly or unregulated pleasure of this kind. User absorption in internet-connected mobile phone culture in general, may therefore inherently trigger this will to regulate as the default reaction in a society such as Thailand.

An economic reporter from Thairath online newspaper reported the interview of Varoth Chotipittayasunan, a Thai psychiatrist:

We should use Pokémon Go to start thinking how to transform the perception of digital technology that will be much more complex in the future. We can’t deny that the business sector will design games or applications to engage people’s enthusiasm. In my opinion, banning is a way to reduce our competency, because we cannot then educate people to have a capacity to flourish with digital technology. So, we should change “risks” to “opportunities” and construct a new norm about digital life in Thailand. (Economic Reporter, 2016 para 37)

This is one of the clearest articulations of an accommodationist approach to have come out of recent public debate about the matter in Thailand.

So, the important conclusion that we can reach here is that ‘dek dee’/ ‘competent child’ is not an entirely uncontested normative construction in Thailand. Its recent mobilization, in response to a highly visible surge of public enthusiasm for digital opportunities and engagement (in the form of Pokémon Go), has been useful for the purpose of this research because it reveals a spectrum from authoritarian to accommodationist reactions, rather than a monolithic governmentality in reaction to people, especially young people, becoming passionately absorbed in a ‘risky opportunity’.

### **3.5 Negotiation as a key concept**

Here are related thoughts shared by several players, both seniors and juniors that Srimaneekulroj the reporter from the Bangkok Post online newspaper reported:

*Seniors;*

Kai aged 51 is a parent and she was introduced to Pokémon Go by her adult daughter:

“I’m always excited when I find a new Pokémon. It’s like finding a coin on the street. You just feel like you’re such a lucky person.” (Srimaneekulroj, 2016 para.33).

Grom, a 56- year-old father:

He plays the game with his grown-up daughters, and says that the game has now dominated most of their conversations, which has allowed him to spend even more time with his family. “We’re always sending each other pictures of the Pokémon we find through Line” (Srimaneekulroj, 2016 para.31).

Khaochad online newspaper informed on the voices of the juniors:

*Juniors;*

“I know how to manage the time to play the game responsibly” (boy, Mattayom 5, Amnat Charoen School), ("Amnat Charoen school do not ban Pokémon Go," 2016 para.3)

In the beginning, my parents did not allow me to play Pokémon Go because the media reported the negative impact of the game. I talked with my parents and told them they don't need to worry about my study; I know the limits and my parents understand. (girl, Mattayom 5, Amnat Charoen School), ("Amnat Charoen school do not ban Pokémon Go," 2016 para.4)

What emerges from this reporting, which was widespread at the time, is that it was a ‘zone’ that was unanticipated by the authorities – what we can term a ‘zone of negotiation’. The opening up of this zone allowed further accommodationist perspectives to develop. What is being negotiated here is the extent of the child’s competence and rational decision-making capacity, negotiated in the context of the senior’s concerns, but not from the default position of the child’s supposed passivity. Children can enter the adult world and are able to develop their rationality, consciousness and capability to cope. Therefore, this development can be the basis for changing relations of power and authority between children and adults in a seniority-based society like Thailand. Otherwise, the persistence of the seniority value system would be a significant barrier to advocating for digital resilience perspectives in the structure, policy and practice of the Thai educational system.

However, a distinguished Thai thinker across many fields, Peuy Ungphakorn, has in fact provided for, and argued for, allowing a liberty for the young generation from the ideological governing system of seniority value, since 1973. He allowed the transformative power for children to challenge the homogeneous ideology. He also implemented his ideas into practices that have had significant influence to wake ‘real’ capacities in real children (‘monsters’) that can perhaps effect the transformation of democracy in the educational sphere in Thailand.

### **3.6 Puey's legacy: a senior thinker who could 'wake up the monster'**

Puey Ungphakorn (1916-1999) was an economist who anticipated some of the concerns of the present study when, as Dean of the Faculty of Economics at Thammasat University in the 1960s, he worked with the Rockefeller Foundation to upgrade the training of Thailand's future technocrats: a project intended to combine the best of Western thinking with Thailand's specific values and cultural needs. (Puey, who had a doctorate from the London School of Economics, was also the longest serving Governor of the Bank of Thailand.) What is especially pertinent here is that Puey (1974) came to recognize the contested and ideological nature of thinking about Thai identity:

If we consider "national ideology" or "Thai ideology", I think the authoritarian can use this concept to exercise their power to force people to think and act in the same way and call that "unanimity". I am afraid that this is dangerous for our nation, to construct people within a singular ideology. It is impossible because this myth ruins the ideal of individual autonomy and it is dangerous. Instead, the ideal comes from thinking abilities and the capacities of the human mind... Nature created humans to have different minds (mental competences) so that the Thai proverb says "many men, so many minds" (Na-na-jit-tang). So we have to support people to have freedom of thought and not fear that their unique expressions of that thought will distort our society. (as cited in Sombatpoonsiri, 2016, pp. 163-164)

Puey went on to say:

We must begin to learn that discipline means self-discipline, not rules and regulations or decrees imposed by the people in power. We must get into the salutary habit of challenging authority whenever the latter is arbitrary and lacking in justice and decency.... There should be unity without forced uniformity; there should be room for the non-conformist, the unique, the idealist, even the cranky.... Human dignity and freedom are each individual's sacred due, however humble he [sic] be. Let us all work towards this end and transform the ideal into a reality. (Ungphakorn, 1974, pp. 5-6)

Peuy argued that the term 'good citizen' should not have a fixed meaning or be a blueprint of the duties of the Thai citizen. Peuy believed that each human is different and unique, so Thai people should be liberated from this homogeneous discourse. He challenged the system of seniority value by using the metaphor of awakening the young generation from being the obedient child to be a 'monster', which means the young generation can realize their own power and construct their own real competence and identity. In 1974, when he was the chair of the government's Economic Advisory Council, Peuy proposed revising the constitution to decline the voting age from 25 years old to 20 years old. Initially, the cabinet rejected his proposal; they said that the young generation was too immature to vote in elections because they were governed by their parents and family. Peuy argued that in a popular uprising in 1973, the young citizens had, in fact, demonstrated their power and competence to direct the future of the Thai country. He rejected the hierarchical assumption that young people were innocent and incompetent. Peuy put the young generation at the centre and made it possible to think about giving children power over their own lives, as we can see that the voting age eventually was lowered to this age.

When Peuy was the Dean of Thammasart University, he provided opportunities for children to criticize and improve the educational curriculum, thus levelling the hierarchical system. The voices of juniors were being heard by seniors, policy makers and educators. The student council emerged in this period. Younger Thai people were the part of the seniority structure and not positioned as junior, but they could make their own judgement and direct their own futures, autonomously. Peuy liberated the young generation to function independently from the social agencies in educational setting and State power. Peuy rejected the discourse of adult/child binary, senior is inherently different from junior. The young people could act in a diverse way because they were provided with the opportunity to do so.

In the final period, Peuy attempted to propose an idea to transform the meaning of 'The duties of Thai citizen' in the draft constitution B.E.2517 (1974). He believed that Thai people should not be limited by a singular ideology of what constitutes a good citizen in the manner of the 'The duties of Thai citizen'. Instead, Thai people should have the freedom to define their own identity, to be autonomous but also

respect different opinions. However, over forty years later and these words still present a challenge to a Thai researcher interested in whether concerns about the digital realm are reflecting an impulse towards enforcing ‘dangerous’ unanimity, in Peuy’s terms, or an interest in fostering transformation in a seniority society.

I would like to finish this section with a quote from a young Thai Pokémon Go player from The Nation Newspaper, Veena Thoopkajae who wrote:

We all have responsibilities to ourselves and to society. We have to take care of ourselves and of others. The Pokémon creatures might not be genuine monsters, but we humans are... Pokémon Go might just wake up the monsters residing inside us. We’re the ones who have to take control of the game, not the other way around, just like we have to be in control of our “bad” behaviours in general. Please declare though, that I’m not turning into a monster myself, and I intend to keep it that way. (Thoopkajae, 2016 para.11-12)

Clearly Veena Thoopkajae, quoted at the end of the previous section, is not content with such exclusion. Whether there is an accommodationst approach to schooling in Thailand that can open up more space for her enthusiasms (‘waking up the monster’) is the crucial question here. However, we can see the idea of a liberal space from Peuy’s legacy can function as a light to enhance digital literacy in Thailand.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have used the Pokémon Go phenomenon to demonstrate the notion of good child in Thai society. The children are typically positioned as incompetent innocents who are vulnerable to risks, so adults need to have the power over children to define appropriate behaviour. As we can see from the ‘No Go Zone’ policy, it was implemented in various zones, state, school and religious areas that protect children from online harm and control unregulated pleasure.

Peuy Ungphakorn demonstrated that one could challenge the homogeneous discourse of the good citizen in Thai society and that Thai people could emancipate themselves to define their own identity with their own rights and participation. Peuy left the valuable legacy that Thai seniors have a responsibility to provide a liberated

space for children to define risk/appropriation in their own terms. However, the way in which the Pokémon Go phenomenon was handled in 2016 demonstrates that the seniority value is still strongly embedded in Thai society and provides a challenge when anyone in the education system wants to enhance digital literacy and resilience for Thai children.

In the next chapter I will present a methodological framework, Participatory Action Research, for the research design that base on collaborative work between children and adults and is sensitive with the context of the participants.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participatory Action Research will be used to implement and examine actual classroom activities based on a causal-comparative research method. In the study, the actual learning and assessment outcomes will be measured and the results from a public school and those from a private school in Thailand compared.

This study aims to identify possible causal assumptions around risks and opportunities, primarily by using Action Research methods. The research approach fosters group reflection, joint inquiry, shared debriefing and cooperative action planning in an equal and collaborative way with the Participatory Action Research team. The self-reflection of participants will be used to produce recommendations about digital literacy concepts, policies and practices in Thailand.

The research problem concerns the development of practical, Thailand-appropriate digital literacy principles and educational practices; however, it is necessary to identify the balance required between reducing online risks and maximizing online opportunities for children. If we over-minimize the risks, it may impact on the availability of online opportunities, and if we maximize opportunities, it will impact on risks as well. This is a central conceptual challenge that the research will explore.

#### **4.1 Research Area**

The research site is Chiang Mai province, Thailand, for the following reasons: namely the number of digital media users; ICT education policies; and the review from OECD-UNESCO for education policies in Thailand.

##### **4.1.1 The number of digital media users**

Thailand is a country with a high proportion of mobile users. Its position was, at the time of writing, number 21 in the world's Smartphone ranking reported by the Global Mobile Market Report (2017). In addition, the statistics from the Thai National Statistical Office reported that 85% of the Thai population were mobile

users, equalling about 50 million people in 2016 (Thai National Statistic Office, 2016).

Chiang Mai is a province that has one of the highest proportions of mobile users in the north of the country with 80% of people using mobile phones.

#### **4.1.2 ICT Educational Policies**

In addition, Thailand has education policies intended to fully prepare all Thai schools, teachers and students for the 21st century. According to the Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) (The Ministry of Education, 2008). Thailand needs to develop learners' competencies as 21st century citizens will require five key competencies, identified as (1) communication capability; (2) thinking capability; (3) problem solving capability; (4) capability in applying life skills; and (5) capability in technological applications (Soparat, Arnold, & Klaysom, 2015). Therefore, the ICT competency standard, which depends on all five general competencies, is one of the educational missions of all schools in Thailand.

#### **4.1.3 The review from OECD UNESCO of education policies in Thailand**

Moreover, the most recently reported OECD-UNESCO project (2016) recommended reforms for Information and Communication Technology learning in Thai National Policies. It was carried out by two international organisations, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO, which spent several months conducting research in Bangkok, Chang Mai and Kanchanaburi.

The review recommended the establishment of effective, efficient, and transparent curricula that cover four domains including: curriculum; student assessment; teachers and school leaders; and information and communication technology. The reason for this policy proposal was based on PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results, indicating that Thailand was lagging behind its neighbouring countries. The report suggested that Thailand had to invest in wireless

connectivity, particularly for schools in rural areas, and provide consultation about ICT competencies for teachers (OECD/UNESCO, 2016).

As discussed in the literature review, international agencies' discourses and policies are often based on international assumptions that are not a good fit with Thai contexts and, moreover, work with a limited set of identities, such as that of the good citizen for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So, this research was carried out in Chiang Mai province, Thailand, against the background of these national and international policy imperatives.

## **4.2 Participatory Action Research**

The project uses Action Research methods, based on collaborative work with participants in various fields; for example, media education, psychology, legal profession, social workers, and child development workers. The team was composed of members with varied experience, qualifications, and skills to contribute and support a study of digital literacy in Thai education. The team also had child participants who worked collaboratively with adults to recommend and identify the determinants in children's online usage, and to make recommendations about constructing the digital literacy module in Thailand.

This study will contribute to the understanding of interdisciplinary research methods in developing educational media products and programmes for children. One of the earliest Western philosophers to contribute a foundation for Action Research in education was John Dewey (*How We Think*, 1933) who developed a progressive method. Dewey (1993) called the classroom a democratic community and claimed that educators should be sceptical of top-down teaching on its own and concerned about reflection and self-improvement (as cited in Tomal, 2010, p. 308).

O'Brien (1998) offered a definition of Action Research as 'learning by doing', a democratic community of people who identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again (O'Brien, 1998). This, broadly, is what my method will seek to do.

The Participatory Action Research framework for this study positions children as subjects who have their own power and competence to influence the study and ultimately the development of digital literacy education in Thailand. The children were asked what they do with digital media, how they interact with others, both online and offline around digital media and what, in their opinions are the benefits and challenges of these forms of communication. The information they gave was often unexpected but informed the next stages of the research. Therefore, the use of a Participatory Action Research method in Thailand shifts the power from seniors to children and gives voice to their opinions as a central part of decision-making. Adults have the responsibility to listen and to share the power with children in this method. This kind of project challenges the established ways in which young children are often conceived of in research projects.

#### **4.2.1 The Participatory Action Research Teams**

This study employed an Action Research method with two different teams: Chiang Mai PAR team and the expert advisory team (or ‘national team’). I worked closely as a team member of both teams. The national expert team provided support as an advisory panel for the research. These two teams also helped in protecting the child participants from any possible negative impacts which might otherwise occur, with procedures approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, University of Waikato.

During the first six months of work, strong trust and bonds between the team and the researcher were established. My role with the team was similar to being an insider-researcher, rather than an outsider. This meant that I could better understand specific contexts from the inside, which is an important aspect of the research.

The two adult teams, and their roles, will be presented in detail in the following sections.

#### **4.2.1.1 The Chiang Mai Action Research Team**

##### **1) Role of the team**

The action research team worked together, from an initial diagnostic assessment of digital media environments for children, through to an evaluation of digital literacy initiatives in Chiang Mai province.

##### **2) Composition of the team**

The Chiang Mai team consisted of a mixed panel of 16 people: 1 parent, 5 school administrators, 1 police representative, 1 psychologist, 1 policy maker, 4 academic scholars, and 3 research assistants. All members had abundant experience of matters relating to children's development, education, child protection, and media.

These experts and participants were a crucial means of providing objective checks and balances, on an ongoing basis, thus protecting the children from any unanticipated eventualities, such as emotional distress due to any disclosures they might make about negative online experiences. The proposed team could address locally specific issues because all the members live in Chiang Mai.

In the first stage, I was the facilitator for the action research team to provide timely communication with all the members, the focus of the change effort, and helped provide reinforcement for the team's effectiveness. I also kept the team on task, developed meeting agendas and minutes, and acted as the communication link within the Action Research team.

##### **3) Responsibilities of members in the team**

1. The team will provide advice on the research design, collaboratively focusing on the objective and ensuring that adequate attention is paid to the children's interests.
2. This team will provide support to deal with any problems that may arise.

The members of the Chiang Mai Action Research Team are described in the table below.

Table 4.1 Members of Chiang Mai Action Research Team

<b>Members</b>	<b>Categories</b>
<b>Consultants</b> (7)	1. CM member 1: social worker 2. CM member 2: police 3. CM member 3: psychologist 4. CM member 4: senior lecturer 5. CM member 5: senior lecturer 6. CM member 6: senior lecturer 7. CM member 7: ICT lecturer
<b>School Administrators</b> (5)	8. CM member public school A 9. CM member public school B 10. CM member public school C 11. CM member private school A 12. CM member private school B
<b>Parents' representative</b> (1)	13. CM member 8
<b>Research Assistants</b> (3)	14. CM member 9 15. CM member 10 16. CM member 11

#### **4.2.1.2 The Expert Advisory Team (National team)**

##### **1) Role of the expert team**

This team's function is as a general advisory panel for the research. All members had been working in child development fields, for a long time.

##### **2) Composition of the team**

This team consisted of 8 members: 2 children's representatives, who assisted in developing the research instruments for the digital literacy modules, 1 children's rights expert, 1 psychiatrist and policy maker, 1 child and family development expert and 3 media development scholars.

### 3) Responsibilities of the members in the team

#### 3.1) Children's representatives

They contributed their ideas to the pre-testing of the research instrument, the educational tools and actual classroom activities for the digital literacy modules.

#### 3.2) Expert Advisory team

3.2.1) the team collaborated in providing advice on the research design, designed the objectives, and ensured that adequate protections were provided.

3.2.2) this team provided support to deal with any problems that arose, such as emotionally distressing disclosures, with a view to minimising the chance of recurrence as the project proceeded.

The profiles of the members of the expert team are summarized below,

Table 4.2 Members of the Expert Advisory Team

Categories	Names and experiences of experts
<b>Children's representatives</b> (2)	1. PAR Expert 1 2. PAR Expert 2
<b>Children's rights</b> (1)	3. PAR Expert 3
<b>Psychiatrists and policy maker</b> (1)	4. PAR Expert 4
<b>Child and Family Development expert</b> (1)	5. PAR Expert 5
<b>Media Development scholars</b> (3)	6. PAR Expert 6 7. PAR Expert 7 8. PAR Expert 8

The mixed panel consisted of voluntary members with an interest in digital literacy education. They could participate in the action research because they were *a part of digital literacy development*: as a result, they are co-producers of the research process. They were positioned as a part of the team, they were not 'objects' of the Action Research Method but 'subjects' who work together with the researcher. As the mix panels of my PAR team, they contribute the real situation of digital literacy

in education in Thailand, as demonstrated in the Fieldwork Number 1 and 2, in chapter 5-6.

### **4.3 Research design and methods**

Action Research is based on planned, continuous, systematic and iterative procedures to improve current practice (see the proposed phases of the project below). Kemmis (n.d.) has developed a simple model of the cyclical nature of a typical action research process. Each cycle has four steps: plan, act, observe, and reflect (See figure 1) (as cited in O'Brien, 1998). Meanwhile, according to Riel (2007), the Action Research model takes participants through four steps in each cycle: planning, taking action, collecting evidence, and reflecting (as cited in Mertler, 2012, p. 15).

The current project has four phases of this kind, following the basic PAR principles as described. Phase one was refinement of the research topic and questions, which is the first major step in any such process. Phase Two involved identifying possible causal assumptions around 'risks and opportunities' that the research would test. This was followed by the implementation phase (Three) which was designed to develop and implement an action plan (based on developing a practical classroom 'module'). The last phase (Four) was following up and assessing the results of action in order to improve the means of generating digital resilience. The methods and procedures for each phase are outlined below.

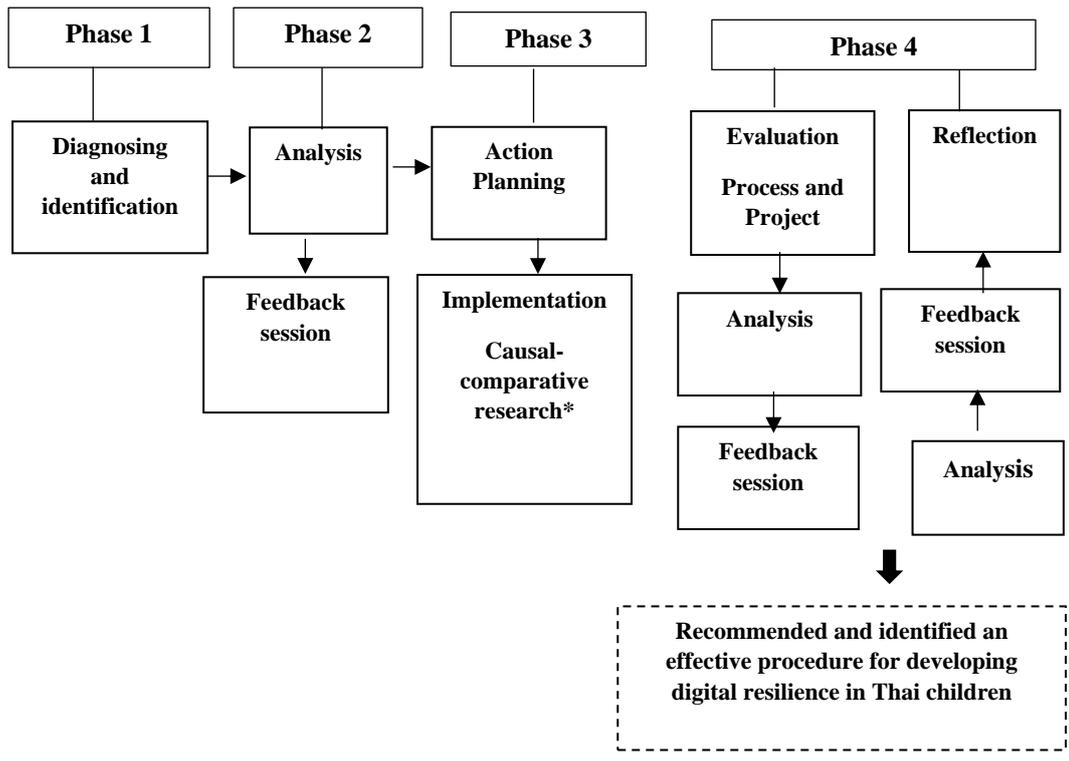


Figure 4.1 The action research process of this project

Note: here\*, 'causal-comparative' means exploring the determinants and responses in children's behavior, not necessarily direct cause-effect linkages)

Table 4.3 Research design and methods

Topics	Fieldwork Number 1 – Chapter 3		Fieldwork Number 2 – Chapter 4	
	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<b>Research Objectives</b>	Identifying the causes of online media risks and opportunity-barriers	Analyzing the results of the survey by the Action Research team	1) Action Planning Implementation 2) Testing of the digital literacy activities	1) Evaluating the results of the effectiveness of the digital literacy procedures 2) Collecting feedback from students, teachers and stakeholders
<b>Research Area</b>	Chiang Mai in Thailand			
<b>Research Participants</b>	1) 376 13-14 year-old children (213 girls, 164 boys) who were studying in secondary school grade 2 in 2 private schools in urban areas and 2 public schools, one in an urban area and one in a suburban area in Chiang Mai, Thailand 2) Children interviews - 54 3) Group discussions with children -70 4) Teachers interviews - 3 5) Administrator interviews - 4 6) Interviews: scholars and experts - 4	1) PAR team with 16 members 2) the expert advisory team with 8 members	1) 2 schools Children 9-10 year old 39 students of a public school in a suburban area 45 students of a private school in an urban area 2) 2 facilitators (module and non-module group) 3) 2 school administrators	1) The children who studied digital literacy modules 2) 2 facilitators 3) 2 school administrators (module and non-module group) 4) 1 administrator 5) 1 child and family development worker
<b>Research Method</b>	Three Methods 1) Survey research (open-ended questions) 2) Face-to-face interviews 3) Group discussion	1) PAR team meeting 2) Consultation meeting with the national experts	Implementing digital classroom learning with two schools	Two Methods 1) Classroom observation with two classes in two schools 2) Open-ended questions with 84 students

				<p>3) In-depth interviews with 2 administrators</p> <p>4) Visual Ethnographic – online interviews with 2 facilitators, 1 school admin and 1 child development worker</p>
<b>Others</b>	<p>1) Meeting with the PAR team</p> <p>2) Group meeting with 13 parents – 10 from private schools, 3 from public school in a suburban area.</p> <p>3) Documentary sources e.g. policy documents related to these issues</p>	<p>1) Children research assistants assisted to design and test digital literacy modules before use with schools</p>		<p>1) Mini conference with schools, NGO, experts and policy makers</p> <p>2) Investigating documentary sources. e.g. policy documents, news reports and articles related to these issues</p>
<b>Data Analysis</b>	<p>Data Analysis</p> <p>1) Qualitative: inductive analysis: Coding and Mind Map</p> <p>2) Quantitative: <i>Statwing</i></p>			

## **4.4 Research design and methods (in Thailand)**

There were two phases of data collection in Thailand which are Fieldwork Number 1 and Fieldwork Number 2. Fieldwork Number 1 had as its objective to identify the causes of online media risks and opportunity-barriers. Fieldwork Number 2 had a practical classroom digital literacy module which was developed as a collaborative result by teachers on the research team. This module focused on investigating the teaching and learning of digital literacy in schools. Particularly, it looked at context-specific factors, including how child development is differently conceived in different contexts, between public schools in suburban areas, and private schools in urban areas.

### **4.4.1 Fieldwork Number 1: Identify the causes of online risks and opportunities**

The research process here is a collaborative exercise where the PAR team can help to develop the focus of the study. In this phase, I assessed two important topics in relation to digital media in Thailand. The first topic is the risks to children in the digital environment. The second topic is barriers to children fully realizing their opportunities in the digital environment. These issues were explored with children and stakeholders who were concerned about this problem. In addition, some ideas were solicited to design the digital literacy module with the PAR team, in this process.

I spent a considerable amount of time during the first six months, building necessary partnerships, from October 2014 – March 2015.

The data collection can be demonstrated as below.

#### **1) Children as participants**

Children aged 12-14 years were studying in secondary school from level 2 (Matthayom 2): 2 private schools, one public school in an urban area and one public school in a suburban area. According to the National Statistical Office in 2013, this age group used the Internet most, at 91.5%, compared to other age groups in the population. I cooperated with the schools to recruit students and they could refuse

to participate if they felt uncomfortable about doing so. The data collection, with the children as participants, is shown in detail as follows.

### **1.1) Questionnaire**

Sample sizes: The questionnaires were delivered to 376 children, comprising 212 girls and 164 boys, 191 were from private schools and 185 from public schools. 375 children answered and only one refused to answer.

Detailed questions: the questionnaires had two parts. The first part was a survey regarding Internet usage, such as when, where and how they used the Internet and online activities. The second part was open-ended questions about online risks. I did not label or define ‘risks’ or ‘opportunities’, it was up to the child to self-define if they wished to talk about such experiences. The questionnaires were sent to PAR team members, who made sure that the children would understand the questions.

Pilot surveys: A survey with 2 children of the same age to provide feedback on whether they could understand the language, and if they felt comfortable to answer the questions in the survey.

Period: The survey was administered at school during November 2014. It took the children 15-20 minutes to answer the questions. They could refuse to answer if they were not comfortable to do so.

### **1.2) In-depth interviews**

Sample sizes: In-depth interviews with 54 children from 4 schools were conducted. The children in this group were drawn from those who completed the questionnaire.

Detailed questions: The question set had two parts. In the first part, detailed questions were about Internet usage, each type of risk that the children had encountered, and how they coped with them online. Each child was asked similar questions; however, greater expansion and clarification were found with some children than with the others. The children could refuse to take part in the interview sessions if they were not comfortable to do so.

Period: The interviews were administered at school during December 2014-January 2015. I used a Smartphone to record their voices, instead of traditional recorders. Every child was told that if they did not want to be recorded on the Smartphone, only notes would be used to collect the interview data.

The interviews were administered at school: The school provided a room for interviewing the children. The children could ask parents and teachers to stay with them in the room. The original plan was to conduct the survey research and interviews at their homes, and children could choose one adult family member to stay with them during the interview. However, most parents informed the school that they preferred that the survey take place at school and they believed that the teachers could help, on their child's behalf, if some uncomfortable situations occurred. However, before the project started, parental meetings were arranged at each school to inform them about the project, but only 18 parents attended the meetings. The school therefore helped by sending a letter and consent forms to all parents.

### **1.3) Group discussion**

Group discussions with 70 students were carried out, 44 students from private schools, 16 students from public schools in an urban area, and 10 students from the suburban area. Group process techniques were used with the children, such as brainstorming and games to encourage the children to show their own opinions about digital literacy learning in classrooms. Some questions for prompting and probing were:

At which age should children learn digital literacy?

What would you like to learn from using the Internet?

What kind of activity would you like to do in the class?

The activities were arranged at each school during February 2015, and lasted for around 30 minutes.

## **2) Adults as participants**

**2.1) Interviews with teachers:** In-depth interviews were conducted with computer teachers, 1 from a public school in a suburban area and 2 from a private school. All three were computer teachers because they held the key responsibility of teaching digital competency. In addition, based on the suggestion from the PAR team in a meeting, digital literacy should be incorporated in computer subject teaching.

In the interviews, their thoughts and opinions concerning risks and opportunities from the Internet, and how they acted as instructors and ‘gatekeepers’ for children’s Internet use were elicited. Questions relating to digital literacy learning in the computer class were also discussed. The interviews lasted 30 to 45 minutes each and took place during February 2015.

### **2.2) Interviews with experts and policy makers**

These people had been working to promote media literacy in the Thai National Curriculum: 1 policy maker, 3 media development academics and experts. The key questions in the interviews concerned the challenges of promoting media literacy, in mandatory education in Thailand, and the ways digital literacy initiatives were implemented as a national policy in Thailand. The interview took around 1 hour during March 2015.

Consequently, the results of the survey were analysed by the PAR team. The Action Research team worked together to review the problem statement, analyse data, and identify possible causes. Next, the PAR team and I designed a pilot digital literacy module for classroom use. The meeting with the PAR team is demonstrated in the pictures below,

**Fieldwork Number 1:** Identify the causes of online risks and opportunities,  
October 2014 – March 2015.

**Meeting and discussion with PAR team**

The research process here is a collaborative exercise where the PAR team can help to develop the focus of the study.



*Figure 4.2 The 1st meeting with the members of Chiang Mai Action Research team*

Faculty of Information and Communication, Maejoe University Chiang Mai

(Used with permission; photo by Mr. Anon Mahitti, research assistant)



*Figure 4.3 The 2nd meeting with the members of Chiang Mai Action Research team*

Faculty of Information and Communication Maejoe University Chiang Mai

(Used with permission, photo by Mr, Anon Mahitti, research assistant)



*Figure 4.4 Meeting with the PAR expert team*

College of Interdisciplinary Studies Thammasat University, Bangkok

(Used with permission, photo by Ms. Dararat)

#### **4.4.2 Fieldwork Number 2: Digital Literacy Module implementation**

Causal-comparative research and a group comparison design between the ‘Literacy Module’ group and ‘Non-Module’ group were used, in 1 public and 1 private school, in order to investigate cause-and-effect assumptions in digital literacy practices. The objective of this phase was to investigate relevant cause-and-effect assumptions, then recommend and identify effective procedures for digital literacy enhancement for Thai children. The participants of the digital literacy module were from one public school in a suburban area and one private school in an urban area.

##### **1) Participant Schools**

Both schools are administered by the Ministry of Education based on the National Core Curriculum 2008. They are large size schools, having more than 500 students. The background of the two schools is as follows.

##### **1.1) Public school**

A large school located in a suburban area, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand. The school has a strong emphasis on providing a safe and secure environment for children, especially through cooperation between the school, parents, local officials, and the community as a whole.

## **1.2) Private school**

A large private school located in an urban area, Chiang Mai Province. The school has a pedagogical framework called Brain Based Learning (BBL) for students at every level. The objective of this is that the teacher should construct learning that relates positively to brain function. The school has its target to develop its own BBL model to maximise the effectiveness of teaching management and learning development.

The schools volunteered to try out the offered digital literacy modules because digital literacy is not integrated in the current compulsory curricula. I was assisted by the PAR team in gaining access to these schools in order to carry out the project.

## **2) Student Participants**

The participants of the present study were 39 students of the public school (20 girls and 19 boys) and 45 students of the private school (21 girls and 24 boys) aged 9-10 years old and in elementary year 4. The decision to recruit this group was based on the opinions of children from Fieldwork number 1 that students should learn digital literacy at the age of 9-10, or elementary year 4. This is because they suggested that this group might have had their first online experiences and used social networks such as Facebook. The teacher helped in enrolling students to attend the class voluntarily.

## **3) The digital literacy module**

The digital literacy module was designed based on the findings from Fieldwork Number 1. The educational features were also based on suggestions from the students' opinions from this phase. The questionnaires were delivered to 376 children in Chiang Mai, Thailand and there were in-depth interviews with 54 children. Group discussions were also carried out with 70 students to encourage the children to show their own opinions about digital literacy learning in classrooms.

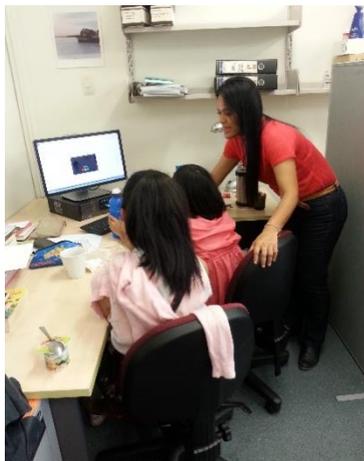
### **3.1) Educational tools**

The initial classroom activities were responses to group discussions with the children from Fieldwork Number 1, and the children who were research assistants. They helped me to understand their opinions with educational tools and classroom activities. They suggested that classrooms should include play and they liked 2D

cartoon animation. The PAR team and I worked together to design prototypes of actual classroom and educational tools, based on engagement with the kinds of ‘fun’ material that the children said they liked learning from. The process of working with the children’s research assistant is demonstrated below,



*Figure 4.5 Group discussion with children about digital literacy learning, Chiang Mai*  
(Used with permission, photo by researcher)



*Figure 4.6 Working with the children, the research assistants.*

They gave their feedback to design media and activities for the digital literacy module  
(Used with permission: photo by Neda)

The educational tools and classroom activities used true stories from risk experiences that most children had encountered. There were four lessons, with 10 case studies, designed as cartoons. They were accessed on a website designed by myself and the research assistant, web programmer Mr. Peerawick Phaknonkul, and Mr. Panothan Chartamphai, animator.

The lessons were:

Lesson 1: Online friends or strangers: meeting new contacts online

Lesson 2: Online violence: online conflict and teasing online

Lesson 3: Think before clicking: Pop ups online and data misuse

Lesson 4: Online opportunities: The benefits of online media

Website traffic lights were used as a key technique to facilitate children to think, ask questions and express their own opinions about the online situations. I was a member of Common Sense Media, which is a non-profit organization to promote digital citizenship for children. It was considered that the traffic light technique, which that organization already used, would be useful for this research too, so permission was obtained from the organization to adapt the website traffic light technique for this research. The technique facilitates children to think, ask questions, and express their own opinions about the online learning situations. The meaning of the traffic lights is shown in the table 3.4 below:

*Table 4.4 The meaning of traffic lights adapted from Common Sense Media organization*

<b>Colour</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Red means “Stop”</b>	A site that is not right for you
	A place you might have gone to by accident
	Filled with things that are for older kids or adults
	The inappropriate behaviour that you shouldn’t do online
<b>Yellow means “Caution”</b>	A site you are not sure is right for you
	One that asks for information such as who you are, where you live, your phone number or email address, etc.
	Place where you are can communicate freely with others
	A situation that will lead to harm and you should ask for help from trusted adults, such as family and teachers
<b>Green means “Go”</b>	A good site for kids at your age to visit
	Fun, with things for you to do and see
	Has appropriate words
	Doesn’t let you talk to people you don’t know

**3.1.1) 2D cartoon animation:** The 2D cartoon animation was designed as a draft in a Thai version, based on the children’s opinions from Fieldwork Number 1. The video clips were designed and posted on the purpose-made website named [www.samartkid-d.com](http://www.samartkid-d.com) for the teachers to use in their actual activities in their classrooms. The children could play a series of scenes and click to choose the colour of the traffic-light to judge each situation, the teacher used the situations as case studies to facilitate discussion in the classroom, which was observed by me.

The following illustrated table provides some idea of the materials used.

Table 4.5 Example of 2D animation used in classroom learning

Topics	Process
<b>Lesson 1: How to be safe when encountering sexually explicit content</b> <b>(2 video clips)</b>	
<b>Video clip 1</b> <b>Situation 1</b>	<div> </div> <p>Situation 1: While you are using Facebook, someone sends you requests to add him/her as a friend</p> <div> </div>



Hello (Sawaddee)



Please add me to be your friend.



Mr. Smile sent request to you : Yes / No



Have I known him long enough?



Why would he like to be my friend?



Red : Risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green : Safe/  
appropriate

The learning modules could be changed and redesigned in collaboration with the schools.

### 3.2) Classroom activities

The classroom activities were arranged over 4 weeks, in the public school, during the period from November 2014 to December 2015. The private school arranged 4 week classes during October 2015.

Table 4.6 The classroom teaching in two schools

Topic	Public School	Private School
<b>Subject</b>	Computer subject	Life Skills subject
<b>Facilitators</b>	Computer teacher: Key facilitator Classroom teacher: support the key facilitator to manage the class	Life Skills teacher: key facilitator ICT teacher: supported ICT facilities
<b>Length of time</b>	9-11 am. (2 hours) 4 sessions	8.40-9.30 am. (50 minutes) 4 sessions
<b>Educational Tools</b>	- Video clips about 10 situations on <a href="http://www.samrtkid-d.com">www.samrtkid-d.com</a> - The tools for actual classroom activities	- Video clips about 10 situations on <a href="http://www.smartkid-d.com">www.smartkid-d.com</a> - The tools for actual classroom activities
<b>Actual classroom activities</b>	<u>Lesson one:</u> Game: Behind the online mask <u>Lesson two:</u> Role Play: If I were you, I would <u>Lesson three:</u> Game: Think before clicking <u>Lesson four:</u> Brain storming: The circle of opportunities	<u>Lesson one:</u> Game: Behind the online mask <u>Lesson two:</u> Brain Storming: If I were you, I would <u>Lesson three:</u> Game: Think before clicking <u>Lesson four:</u> Brain storming: The circle of opportunities
<b>Learning Process</b>	Individual and group process	Individual and group process
<b>Number of students</b>	39 students; 20 girls, 19 boys Aged 9-10 years Elementary grade 4	45 students; 24 boys; 21 girls Aged 9-10 years Elementary grade 4

After consultation with the two schools, the private school decided to teach the digital literacy module in its Life Skills subject. The public school taught the

module in its Computer subject. The implementation of digital literacy, in the actual classrooms in the private school and public school, is demonstrated below.

*Table 4.7 Lesson 1: 'Online friends or strangers'*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public School</b></p> <p><b>Date: 27 November 2014</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Private School</b></p> <p><b>Date: 8 January 2015</b></p>
<p><b>Warm up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students play the website about traffic lights in two situations (cartoon animation based on the topics)</li> <li>- Teacher explains the lesson and activities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Warm up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students play the website about traffic lights in two situations (cartoon animation based on these topics)</li> <li>- Teacher explains the lesson and activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Asking/Expression/Coping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students do the activity ‘behind the online masks’.</li> <li>• Teacher encourages students to express their own opinions by using traffic lights.</li> <li>• Students discuss ‘What they can do if someone who they have never met face to face before asks them to be a friend on Facebook?’</li> <li>• Students present their own ideas to the whole class.</li> </ul> <p><b>Wrap up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher summarizes and demonstrates answers and solutions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Asking/Expression/Coping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students do the activity ‘behind online masks’.</li> <li>• Teacher encourages students to express their own opinions by using traffic lights.</li> <li>• Students show their own opinions about how to solve the problems they encountered</li> <li>• Teacher shows more situations and encourages students to think of the solutions.</li> </ul>

Table 4.8 Lesson 2: Online violence

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public School</b></p> <p><b>Date: 4 December 2014</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Private School</b></p> <p><b>Date: 15 January 2015</b></p>
<p><b>Warm up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher explains the lessons and learning activities</li> <li>• Students play the website about traffic lights in three situations (cartoon animation based on the topics)</li> <li>• Students choose traffic lights in response to online situations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Warm up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher explains the lessons and learning activities</li> <li>• Students play the website about traffic lights in three situations (cartoon animation based on the topics)</li> <li>• Students choose traffic lights in response to online situations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Asking/Expression/Coping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After watching video clips, teacher encourages students to express and share their own opinions by using traffic lights</li> <li>• Children role-play</li> <li>• <i>‘If I were you, I would.....’</i></li> <li>• Students role-play in front of the whole class</li> <li>• Teacher encourages students to share their own opinions for the situation during the role play</li> </ul> <p><b>Wrap up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher demonstrates answers and solutions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Asking/Expression/Coping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After watching video clips, teacher encourages student to express and share their own opinions by using traffic lights.</li> <li>• Students discuss in groups based on the topic <i>‘If I were you, I would....’</i>.</li> <li>• Teacher raises more situations and encourages students to think of the solutions.</li> <li>• Students present their own opinions to the whole class.</li> </ul>

Table 4.9 Think before clicking

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public School</b></p> <p><b>Date: 11th December 2014</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Private School</b></p> <p><b>Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015</b></p>
<p><b>Warm up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher explains the lessons and learning activities</li> <li>• Students play the website traffic lights in three situations (cartoon animation based on the topic)</li> <li>• Students choose traffic lights in response to online situations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Warm up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher reviews the previous lesson about online violence by using up-to-date case studies</li> <li>• Students play the website about traffic lights in three situations (cartoon animation based on the topic)</li> <li>• Students choose traffic lights in response to online situations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Asking/Expression/Coping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After watching video clips, teacher encourages students to express and share their own opinions by using a traffic light for the online situations.</li> <li>• Students play a game '<i>Think before Clicking</i>'</li> <li>• Teacher encourages students to think and share their own opinions</li> </ul> <p><b>Wrap up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher demonstrates answers and solutions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Asking/Expression/Coping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After watching video clips, teacher encourages students to express and share their own opinions by using a traffic light for the online situations.</li> <li>• Students play a game '<i>Think before Clicking</i>'</li> <li>• Teacher encourages students to think and share their own opinions</li> </ul> <p><b>Wrap up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher summarizes the children's ideas</li> </ul>

Table 4.10 Lesson 4: Online opportunities

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public School</b></p> <p><b>Date: 18 December 2014</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Private School</b></p> <p><b>Date: 29 January 2015</b></p>
<p><b>Warm up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher explains the lessons and learning activities</li> <li>• Students play the website about traffic lights in three situations (cartoon animation based on the topic)</li> <li>• Students choose traffic lights</li> </ul>	<p><b>Warm up:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher reviews the previous lessons, from 1-3</li> <li>• Students play the website about traffic lights in three situations (cartoon animation based on the topic)</li> <li>• Students choose traffic lights</li> </ul>
<p><b>Asking/Expression/Coping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After watching video clips, teacher encourages students to express and share their own opinions by using a traffic light for the online situations</li> <li>• Students do the activity <i>'Circle of Opportunities'</i></li> <li>• Students brainstorm the topic <i>'Circle of Opportunities'</i>.</li> <li>• Students present their own ideas to the whole class.</li> </ul> <p><b>Wrap up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher demonstrates the answers and the solutions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Asking/Expression/Coping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After watching video clips, teacher encourages students to express and share their own opinions by using a traffic light for the online situations</li> <li>• Students do the activity <i>'Circle of Opportunities'</i></li> <li>• Students brainstorm topic <i>'Circle of Opportunities'</i>.</li> <li>• Students present their own ideas to the whole class.</li> </ul> <p><b>Wrap up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher summarizes the students' ideas</li> </ul>

### **3.3) Evaluation of classroom teaching**

- **Children's opinions**

The results were evaluated with various methods as follows.

1) Open-ended questions were used to elicit the answers. 39 students from the public school (20 girls and 19 boys) and 45 students from the private school (21 girls and 24 boys) responded to these questions. They revealed their attitudes about the modules, what they learnt from classroom activities and offered some suggestions – they did this in the last session, which lasted for about 15 minutes.

2) Pilot surveys: Questions with 18 children of the same age to provide feedback on whether they could understand the language, and if they felt comfortable to answer the questions in the survey. The teacher helped manage the class.

3) Classroom observation: Note taking, video recording, and photos were used to record the facilitators' activities, classroom environment, and students' responses. For the video recording, I used a Smartphone to shoot videos instead of using cameras, to help participants feel less scrutinized. Moreover, it was a very convenient way to collect data in the field as no other equipment was required.

- **Adults' opinions**

4) Visual Ethnographic method: Visual Ethnographic method was utilized by showing the video footage of classroom teaching. The facilitators watched the video footage from their own and others' classes, with everybody's permission, and gave their own opinions. The footage was also shown to the school administrators. The child and family development experts were also informants in this method.

I also collected data while back in New Zealand during June 2015. The footage of two classes was uploaded on YouTube; privacy settings were set allowing only selected participants to see them. Interviews continued this way (via social media messaging and conferencing). These interviews lasted for 20 to 30 minutes for each person.

### **3.4) other evaluation and reflective debate**

A mini conference: The researcher presented the digital literacy procedure and results at a mini conference for the PAR team, policy makers, academicians, and stakeholders in Chiang Mai, Thailand. This method provided opportunities to listen to the opinions of participants in a more ‘debate-orientated’ context that encouraged depth of discussion and reflection.

## **4.5 Summary of methodological choices and justifications**

### **4.5.1 Identifying possible causal assumptions:**

The Action Research process diagnosed and identified online risks and opportunities with the participation of children who were engaged both in their own online activities and in digital literacy learning. As the researcher I did not label and define ‘risks’ or ‘opportunities’ but asked the children to self-define and evaluate their experiences, as demonstrated in the Fieldwork Number 1. The questions were open-ended so the children could reflect their own perceptions about online risks and opportunities. The result achieved in Action Research has not come up with definitive right or wrong answers, but rather answers and solutions came from the children’s own diverse views.

The children were not positioned as the ‘objects’ of study, but instead were active in thinking about and discussing their own situation. They had the power to express their own opinions about the practical improvement of the digital literacy module that they would later use. They could therefore contribute equally to the research and be self-critical among children who shared their own interests. The children could then share their decisions with seniors in the PAR team. I summed up and presented the findings to the adult members, assuming the position of a bridge to narrow the gap between the two parties of children and seniors, so that they worked together to decide on a desirable direction for the future.

### **4.5.2 Implementation process**

In this phase, the self-reflection came from both parties: children and teachers. Opinions were collected from all adults and children in order to design a digital literacy module. They concurrently collaborated with members of the system to

change by moving things in what they regarded as the desirable direction. So it is seen that this method can share the power in decision-making, between adults and children. For example, in the initial plan, the adult team suggested choosing children in the 13-14 years old age group to attend the experimental digital literacy class. They gave the reason that children of this age were ready to use their critical abilities according to their developmental stage. However, from information gained from initial interviews and brainstorming, the children suggested to the team that an appropriate age to learn digital literacy should be 7-8 years old, or at primary school (Pratom) level. It was necessary for the team to recruit one new public school for digital literacy implementation because all the original school members had students only at the older, secondary level. Thus, the children's recommendation about the best age to discuss digital literacy with students was a major influence on the subsequent shaping of the project. The accomplishment of Action Research is the active cooperation of researchers and research subjects in co-learning and they contribute equally in the research to provide practical concern and to further the goal.

#### **4.5.3 Action planning:**

The collaboration between members of the system was also demonstrated in the digital literacy module design process. After collecting the ideas of children to decide the digital literacy module, two children acted as research assistants who gave their opinions to develop the educational tools and actual classroom activities. A draft of educational tools and actual classroom activities was made, and then refined with the two schools that form the module group of the research.

In this stage, the PAR team comprised the teachers from public and private schools. As demonstrated in the implementation process above, the practical classroom learning fitted within the context of a group. So the digital literacy module was brought to a meeting with the teacher team who discussed and agreed on ways to improve the module to fit with each school environment. I was not an outsider, but conducted the research through creating the digital literacy module with them; an activity which also involved empowering each other to improve digital literacy education. As Schmuck (2006) says action Research is *Practical*: insights that you get from data lead to practical changes in the situation. It is *Participative*: you and

your ‘community’ collect data about a real situation. *Empowering*: all of you together can influence and contribute equally to the research. It is *Interpretative*: the social realities of your situation are determined collaboratively. Additionally, it is *Tentative*: inquiries do not result in coming up with definitive, right or wrong answers, but rather with tentative solutions based on participants’ diverse views. And finally *critical*: you and other participants act as self-critical change agents.

As we can see from the table of classroom activities, there were slightly different activities used in the public and private school because the action planning emerged from the school’s participation and self-reflection to fit with their own environment. However, in this stage, the educators and administrators remained the central power in deciding and managing aspects of the classroom learning such as timetable, classroom activities, and teaching methods. The persistence of the top-down managing and teaching style is clearly seen in each school, the educators over the children, in chapter 6, Fieldwork Number 2. The children who had been the key agents in discussing classroom teaching were not provided with the chance to participate and reflect in the implementation stage. They were positioned as passive participants in the digital literacy schooling: I did not have the ability to implement much change at this stage of the process.

#### **4.5.4 Evaluation and reflection:**

This part asked the participants, both children and adults to evaluate and reflect on the digital literacy module. The team decided to use open ended questions for children to reflect on what they had learnt from the class. Obviously, the reflection from children and adults had taken place throughout the whole Action Research process. For instance, in the first phase those children reflected on their own perceptions about online risks.

In summary, the Participatory Action Research in this study did not decide on right or wrong solutions. But the key achievement of this method is self-reflection, self-critical thought and discussion, and self-improvement and participation from the team. The principle is that all persons have their own voices and competencies. Particularly, the Participatory Action Research Method is the way to share power and have equality, at some stages in the process, between the members of the team

and between children and adults. Spaulding (2013) insisted that Participatory Action Research requires a partnership approach to be taken throughout.

## **4.6 The forms of analysis**

### **4.6.1 Quantitative data**

Excel was used to assemble a raw data set plus data analysis software called Statwing<sup>2</sup> was employed to analyse the data set from the survey research.

## **4.7 Summary**

In summary, this chapter has provided a detailed description of the research method used. Participatory Action Research was the key method that was employed. Importantly, the children were positioned as potentially competent people in this research framework, not just passive providers of data. In addition, the prolonged engagement and well-established trust between the researcher and the participants were the major means for the researcher to elicit real opinions, insights and reflection from the respondents. Particularly useful ideas were gained through the active participation of the local people in the PAR team.

The PAR-based research design detailed in this chapter was conceived and fine-tuned, in consultation with my Chief Supervisor, as a methodological response to the requirements that emerged from the literature review. These were, a research design that:

- places children at the centre of the research and gives them significant participation
- worked with teachers, education experts and parents in research set-up
- is sensitive to complex socio-culturally specific contexts
- produces data from procedures that do not presuppose binary thinking (e.g. risks versus opportunities) or universalist concepts

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<sup>2</sup> See in details at <https://www.statwing.com/>

- engages with ‘cultures’ at a micro as well as macro level, e.g. within schools and classrooms

Overall, the methodological distinctiveness is of the belief that the research is an intervention into a community of practice where meanings get co-created. The overlapping sub-communities engaged by this research design (from classrooms to expert panels) give the data collection a deliberately multi-faceted character.

### 4.7.1 Qualitative data

Inductive analysis was used by coding to clarify the results from qualitative data and a ‘mind map’ to organize and categorize data for discussion.

**Coding:** The Three Cs: Coding, Categories, and Concepts were used to assemble the raw data into meaningful concepts

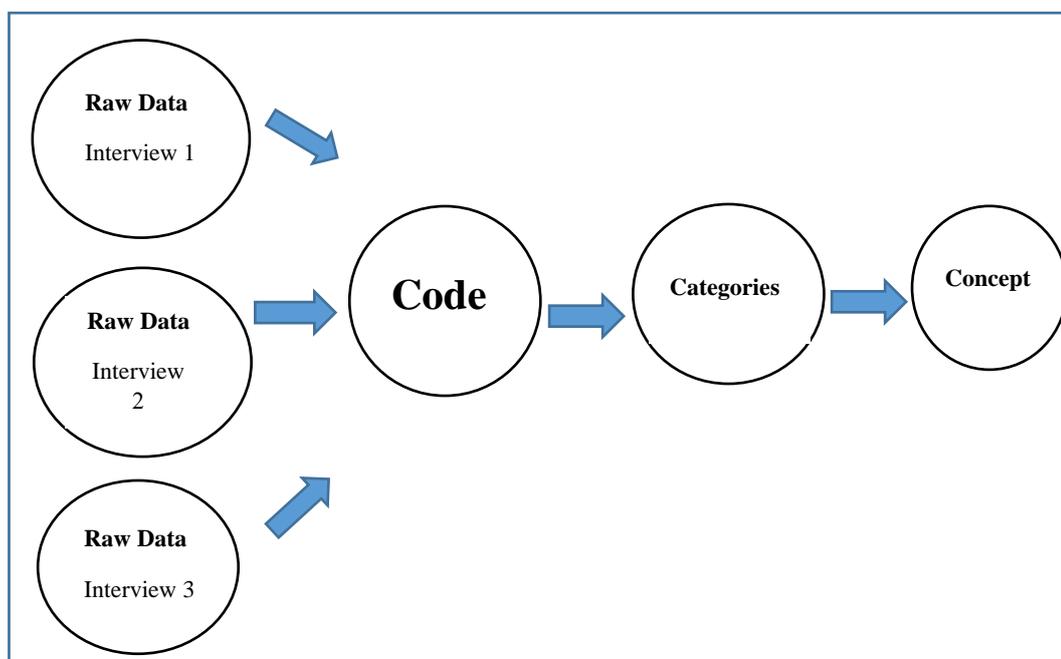


Figure 4.7 Three Cs data analysis: Codes, categories and concepts

Source: Lichtman, M. (2013).

Three Cs Data Analysis (Fig 3.3) that originally had 6 steps (step 1: initial coding, going from responses to summary ideas from the responses; step 2: revising initial coding; step 3: developing an initial list of categories; step 4: modifying initial list based on additional re-reading; step 5: revisiting categories and subcategories; and step 6 coding (Lichtman, 2013, pp. 241-268). The coding process became progressively integrated, with three phases as presented below.

#### **Step 1: Initial and revised coding**

Firstly, I listened to the raw data from the interviews, conversations and dialogues of the classroom teaching in Thailand, then translated the content into English. Close attention was paid to all the details from the data to ensure that the process involved a full and accurate word-for-word coding. A careful consideration of the codes was put in every dataset and codes from each section were labelled manually.

Initial coding was constantly reviewed and revised in order to remove redundancies, with synonyms renamed and terms clarified. The process of forming the codes also came from the literature review, i.e. by using key concepts identified there.

In step 1 and 2, the interviews were transcribed and translated. A table was prepared that could receive the data and organize them. Then, raw data and the table for organizing codes into categories were checked. Colours were used to help easily process these steps.

*Table 4.11 Example of step 1: Initial and revised coding*

<p><b>Girl 1</b></p> <p>It occurred on my Face book friend that someone was added as a friend and that guy tagged the porn images to her wall. Everyone including me can see but my friend can't see it. I let her know and we are so serious and worried about it</p> <p><b>(Cod 11)</b></p>
---

### **Step 2: The initial list and revising of categories**

I modified the codes to organize data into categories. Then certain codes emerged to become the major themes, so a long list of codes was reduced into several lists of sub-categories. Then I combined these subcategories into major categories. I also used colours to help me separate the codes.

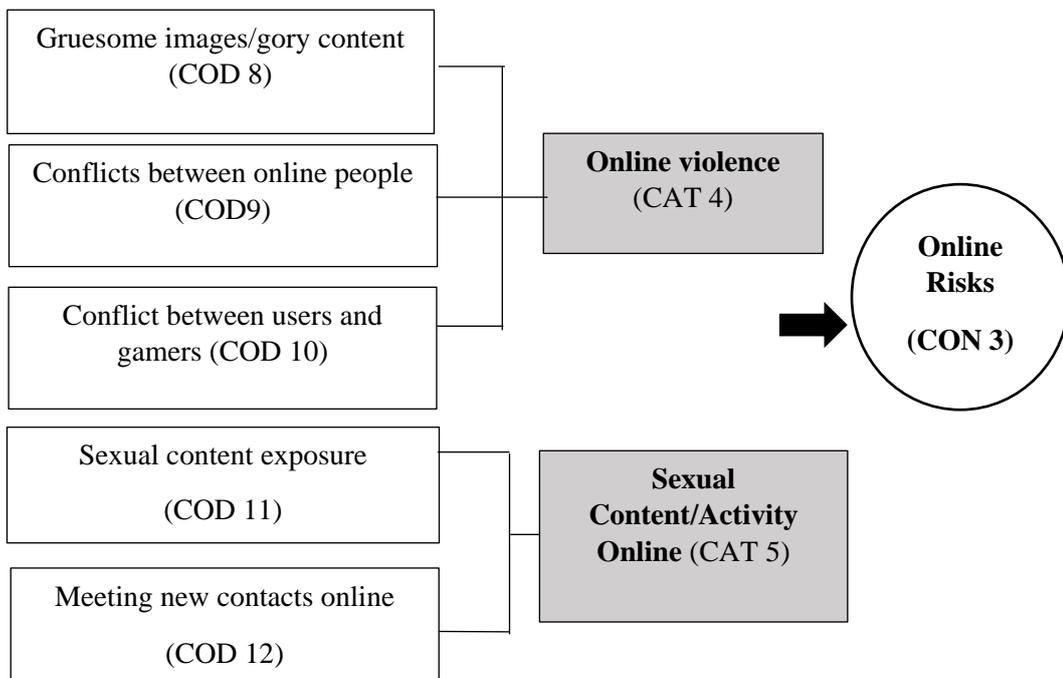
*Table 4.12 Example of step 2: The initial list and revising of categories*

<b>Risks</b>				
<b>Topics/CAT</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Who said</b>	<b>School /when</b>
<b>Sexual Content/Activity Online (CAT5)</b>				
Sexual exposure	11	It occurred on my Facebook that someone was added as a friend and that guy tagged the porn images to her wall (RFP). Everyone including me can see but my friend can't see it. I let her know and we are so serious and worried about it	Girl 1 Private A, 14	Private A 20/1/14

### **Step 3: Developing categories into concepts**

The final process was identifying the key concepts that reflected the meaning of the data. The concept was related to the research problems and the literature review. To develop the concept, 'mind maps' were used to organise and categorise the coded data as shown in the following diagram. The coding of the responses, questions, and findings was presented in the mind map. After that, I described, compared, categorised, conceptualised and developed the findings. Then, summarize, compare, and generate discussion.

The organized data from Fieldwork Number 1 and 2 then described, discussed and conceptualised the findings with key the concept for the research. The following map demonstrates the process of generating and organizing the data into concepts.



*Figure 4.8 Example of developing categories into concepts of my research*

## **4.8 Reliability and credibility**

1) *Member checking*: PAR used feedback sessions and shared data with the participants to check and balance the validity and reliability of the methods. Member checking involved the participation of both the researcher and the participants in order to discuss which aspects of the data analysis best fit with perspectives.

2) *Triangulation*: PAR-based triangulation was used, which was gained through multiple data sources, multiple data collection methods and multiple researcher perspectives. Therefore, the validity and consistency of the result was established.

3) *Prolonged engagement* and persistent observation in the field trip. As a local person, I was familiar with the cultural and social context, spending time observing various aspects of the setting, speaking with a range of people, and developing relationships and a rapport with the participants. This led to the co-construction of meanings between the action research teams, the participants, and myself.

#### **4.9 Limitations in the data collection**

The researcher was one part of the Action Research Team as a facilitator, so this might result in a certain extent of bias when coming to the data analysis. This is because of the long period creating trust and relationships with the respondents and becoming positioned as part of the community of practice rather than as an outsider. However, bias in this research is unavoidable and it could be minimised through multiple data sources including those sources of primary data from the fieldwork and the secondary data from the consulted literature. Particularly, the validity and consistency of the study results can be ensured through the multiple data collection inherent in having *two* fieldwork periods, the time between the two being used, in part, to fine-tune things methodologically.

## CHAPTER 5

### FIELDWORK IN THAILAND (1): LISTENING TO “GIRL 9”

This chapter reports, via the first period of fieldwork, on two important topics in relation to digital media in Thailand, while embedding these topics in data regarding the levels and kinds of internet use among children. The first topic is perceived risks to children and the second is apparent barriers to children fully realizing their opportunities in the digital environment. I explored these issues from the points of view of 13-14-year-old children. I also interviewed adults: teachers, school administrators, experts and policy makers in Thailand during the period from November 2013 to March 2014. The findings of this first period of fieldwork are presented and annotated with comments in this chapter. (Data gathering methods were detailed in the previous chapter.) An important point to be made at the outset is that risk is treated here as largely a matter of perception. Actual risks exist, of course, but from the perspective of the current research, it is how children and adults perceive risk that is especially important and how these perceptions relate to and perhaps inform each other. In fact, this perspective led to an unanticipated discovery that will become clear as the chapter proceeds, and is summarized in the chapter’s concluding section.

#### 5.1 Digital Divide and Online Opportunities

1) From the chart below, it is obvious that Smartphones were the primary device for Internet access among the Thai children. Nevertheless, a higher percentage of the students of the private schools went online via wireless and portable devices than those of the public schools. In contrast, the percentage of the students of public schools who accessed the Internet through traditional devices, such as computers and notebooks, was higher than that in the private schools, with computers and Smartphone usage equal for the public school students.

The current findings showed that children in low income area schools, like public schools in suburban areas, had inadequate access to technology. On the other hand, children from higher income families are more likely to have good access to digital

resources, particularly tablets. However, Smartphones seem to fill the gap in the divide among Thai children, which is an important finding (Fig 5.1).

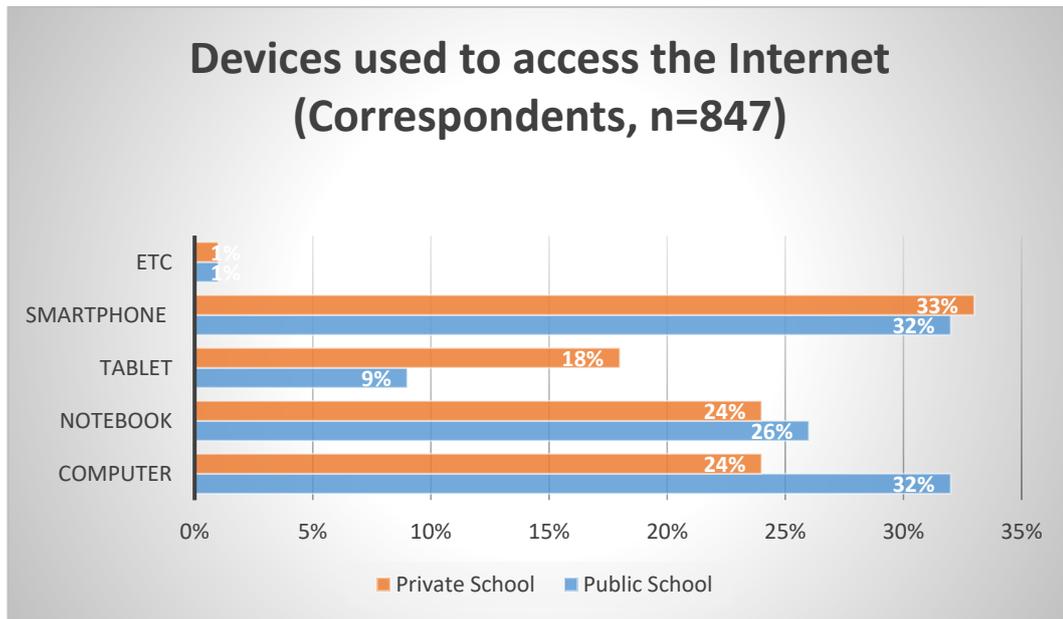


Figure 5.1 Devices used to access the Internet

2) It is not surprising that the students of the private schools spent more time online than those of the public schools, around 30%. Some of them used the Internet for more than 20 hours a week (Fig 5.2). Most of them used the Internet for a mix of enjoyment, education and social networking. Some children could also conveniently connect to the Internet in their own bedrooms.

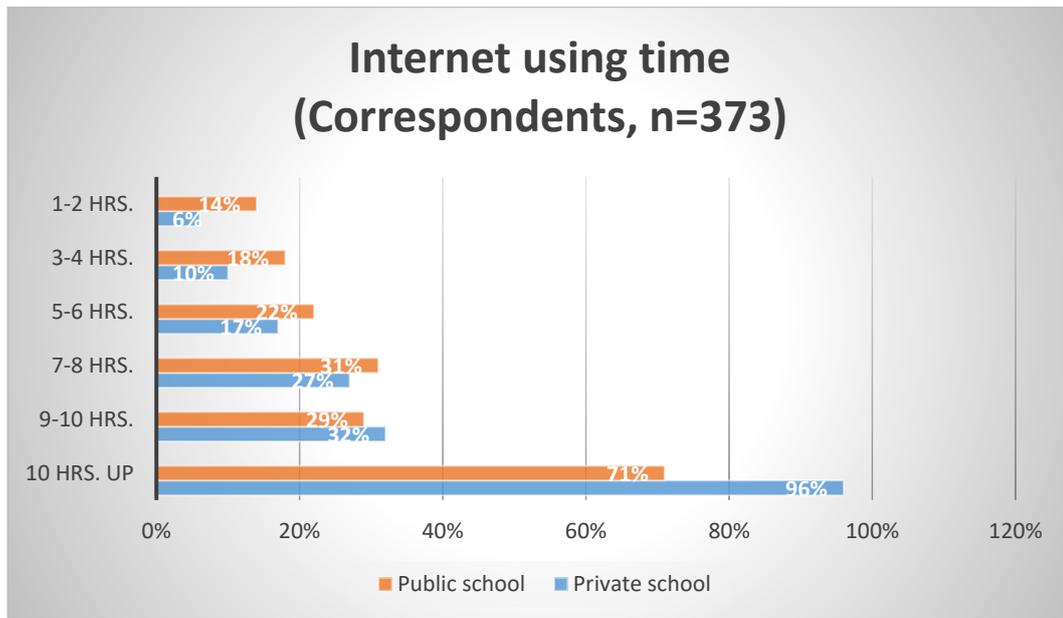


Figure 5.2 Time spent online by children

3) In addition, this data shows that most Thai families support children conveniently accessing the Internet. However, the proportion of students in private schools who went online at home was slightly higher than those of public schools. As the following data shows, most students who used the Internet at Internet cafés were in the low-income group. What is surprising is the low number of students, from both the private and public schools, who said that they accessed the Internet at school, with only 2% and 5% respectively (Fig 5.3). It was found out that Internet accessibility is correlated with the perception of online risks and socio-cultural factors. I will discuss this finding in detail in the section about barriers and online risks.

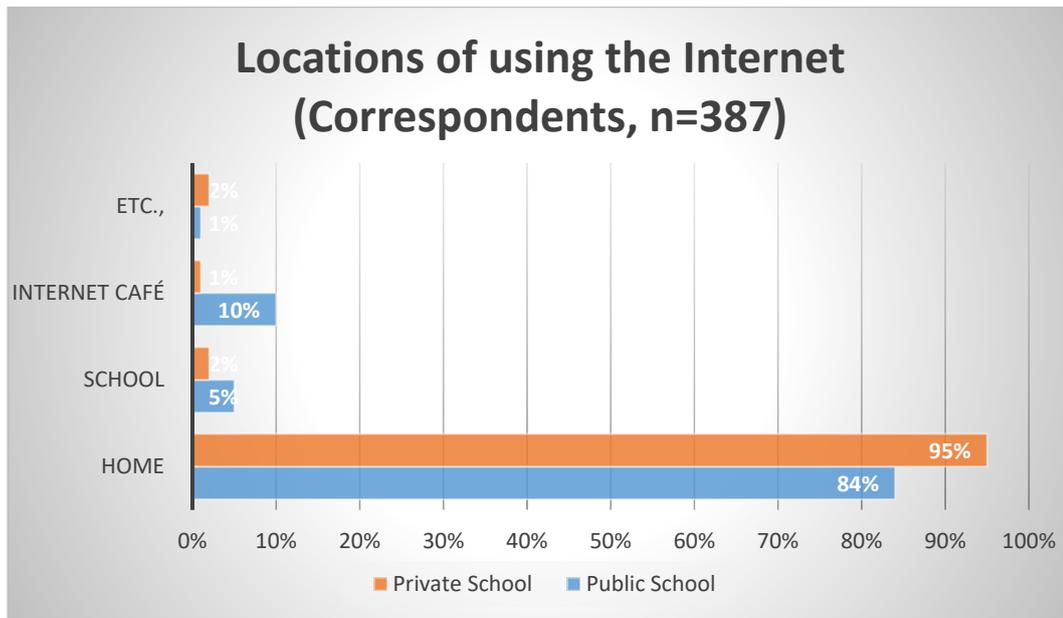


Figure 5.3 The locations of Internet accessibility

### **The private schools (urban area)**

*Girl 1:* I use the Internet 16 hours per week and around 3 hours per day for Facebook and going online. I can use the Internet with my computer and mobile phone in my bedroom. (The private school A: 20/1/14)

*Girl 6:* I use the Internet 9-10 hours per week. I can say that the Internet is very important for my life. I use it to do my school work and prefer using it with my smart phone. It's very convenient because I can use it anytime and anywhere (The private school A: 20/1/14).

*Girl 12:* I use the Internet 23 hours per week for listening to music, watching movies particularly Korean series. I keep watching them all day. On weekends, I use the Internet around 10 hours because I don't have anything to do. I use it with my tablet because it's convenient and portable. (The private school A: 20/1/14)

### **The public school (suburban area)**

*Boy 10:* "I use the Internet at my house 3-4 hours per day. On weekends, I use it at a game café to play online games from 11am to 1pm." (The public school A: 23/1/14).

*Boy 12:* On weekends, I use the Internet around 1-2 hours per week at a game café near my house because my house doesn't have the Internet connection. When I studied in intermediate school year 1 (Mattayom1), I was addicted to online games, I went to the game café near my school every day and played it around 5 hours per week. (The public school A: 23/1/14)

*Girl 27:* I use the Internet at the Internet café around 1-2 hours to search information and login to Facebook to check school assignments. Sometimes, I use it to play games and discuss with my friends about homework. I have to pay money, around 20-30 baht for Internet connection. (The public school A: 23/1/14)

All the information above indicates that going online was an activity embedded in Thai children's lives. One wonders right away where a 12-year-old boy got the word 'addiction' from to describe his own activity. A digital divide clearly exists in Thailand, due to the fact that some public school children did not have access to the Internet at home and had to go to an Internet café to get online. The children from those in high income districts, like private schools, have parents who can afford the higher payment for wireless devices and Internet connection. Consequently, they can use the Internet in a variety of locations such as home, schools and public spaces, while lower income students have limitations of online accessibility and participation in the online world.

In addition, I found that Thai children used the Internet to support their academic achievement, entertainment and social interaction. Most of them used the Internet for enjoyment, that is, playing games, watching video clips and listening to music. They also used the Internet for education, such as accessing global information, user-generated content creation, and sharing their experiences and capabilities with other distant people, as demonstrated in Figure 5.4 below.

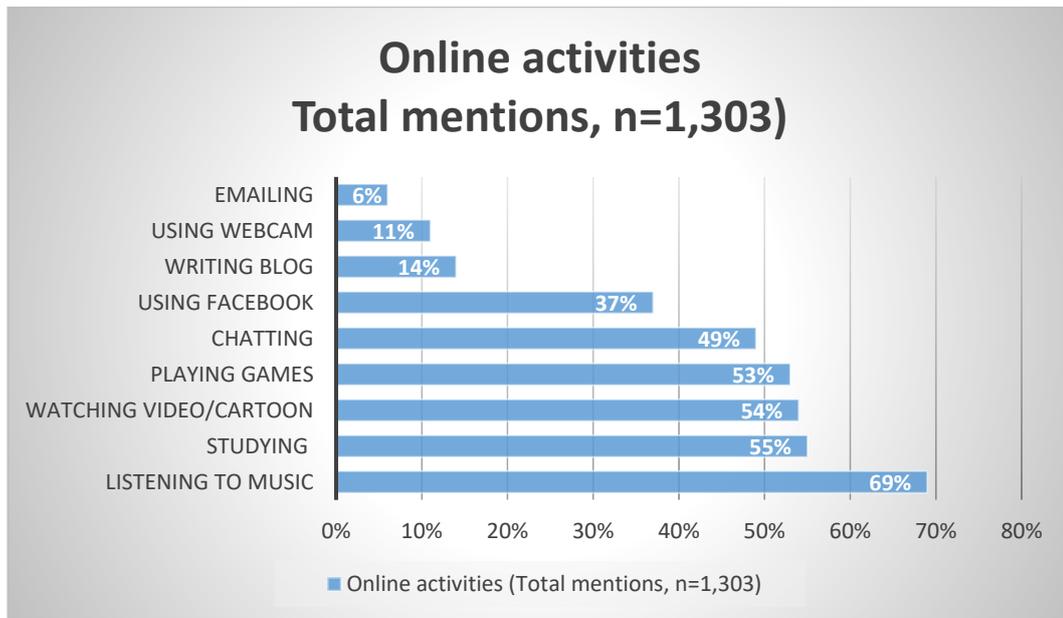


Figure 5.4 Online activities of children

Nevertheless, there were important differences. As we can see from their interviews below, the students of private schools were able to use online media to develop their independent learning in various ways, like searching for useful information, studying through e-tutorials and interactive online learning, whereas public school students placed much more emphasis on merely accessing information uploaded by a teacher.

#### **The private school (urban area)**

*Girl 3:* I use the ‘First Brain’ website to do mathematic assignments. (The private school: 20/1/14)

*Girl 4:* I prefer using the Internet via my Smartphone; it is easier and much more convenient than using a computer. When I **forget to take my assignment to school, I can download it from my smart phone and print it out at school.** (The private school: 20/1/14)

*Girl 7:* If I don’t understand some issues in classroom, I **can access an online class and tutorial.** I can choose the tutor who makes me understand that subject. (The private school: 20/1/14)

*Girl 9:* **Sometimes the teacher lets us use the Internet to search for information about assignments.** I also use the Internet to practise and improve my English. (The private school: 20/1/14)

*Boy 2:* I use the Internet to discuss with my friend when I don't understand the question in an assignment. **She uses Facetime [video call] to teach me how to do the exercise.** (The private school: 20/1/14)

*Girl 19:* **I use Facebook to discuss with my friends about school work.** I think the Internet is very useful for studying" (The private school: 12/12/13)

### **The public school (suburban area)**

*Boy 9:* I use Facebook to check my school work **because the teacher uploads them online.** I use it to discuss with my friends and search for information to do my homework. (The public school A: 23/1/14)

*Girl 23:* We use Facebook to discuss about learning. **My teacher also uses Facebook to communicate with us.** (The public A: 23/1/14)

*Boy 13:* Mostly, I login to Face book for around one hour. **I have to check assignments from my teacher on Facebook.** (The public A: 23/1/14)

*Girl 26:* I use the Internet 3-4 hours per week at the Internet café. Mostly, I use it to search information to do my school work and **check assignments from the teacher.** (The public A: 23/1/14)

*Girl 27:* I use the Internet to search information at a game café for around 1-2 hours from websites and I login to Facebook in order **to check assignments from the teacher.** (The public A: 23/1/14)

From this result, we begin to wonder if access is not the same thing as realising opportunities. For reasons not yet clear from the data at this point, students from private schools, when questioned, immediately jump to emphasising more elaborate forms of online learning than just accessing information uploaded by the school.

We can hypothesise from the interviews that the teachers of the public schools used online media only as a channel to deliver instructions and content to children. By contrast, those in the private schools used the Internet resources as educational tools to encourage children and to create opportunities to develop their self-directed, independent learning. In addition, the most interesting finding was that digital literacy is not merely technological competencies and digital diffusion: it is a matter of skills and strategies in using technology. Furthermore, the finding above demonstrated some differences in digital communication teaching practices between public and private schools. The public school's teachers used online media to exercise their own power through the way in which they taught, which was not unexpected, given the persistence of the seniority culture in state institutions. On the other hand, since the guiding principle at private schools is that children are the centre of knowledge, online media are used to empower children to enhance their critical judgement and autonomy. I will discuss this and similar findings further in chapter 6, Fieldwork in Thailand Number 2.

So, the first finding indicates that a high level of Internet accessibility among Thai children provides opportunities to enhance their digital literacy and resilience. However, the next finding also reveals that it is challenging, in the Thai context, to make the transition to understanding that encountering risks online can facilitate digital resilience for children.

## **5.2 Online Risks**

The fieldwork study found that these Thai children had, in fact, encountered perceived risks when they used various online activities such as logging onto Facebook, playing online games, accessing websites and watching video clips. The percentage of the respondents who encountered online risks was highest for Facebook. However, the results demonstrated that the widespread availability of the Internet and the consequent likelihood of encountering risks seemed not to be associated with perceptions, on the children's part, that the content, while frequently upsetting, would necessarily be harmful.

Most Thai students said that they have had online risk experiences (91%): only 6% of them reported that they had never experienced risks before, with 'risk' being self-

defined here. 3% of children declined to answer (Fig 5.5). (The ethical handling of the data gathering process is detailed in an Appendix to this thesis.) The study also demonstrated that girls (58%) were more likely to be upset on the Internet than boys (42%) (Fig 5.6). As we can see in figure 5.6 the self-reporting of online risk varies by gender. This is in accord with several other studies showing that gender is an important factor that contributes to online risk perception.

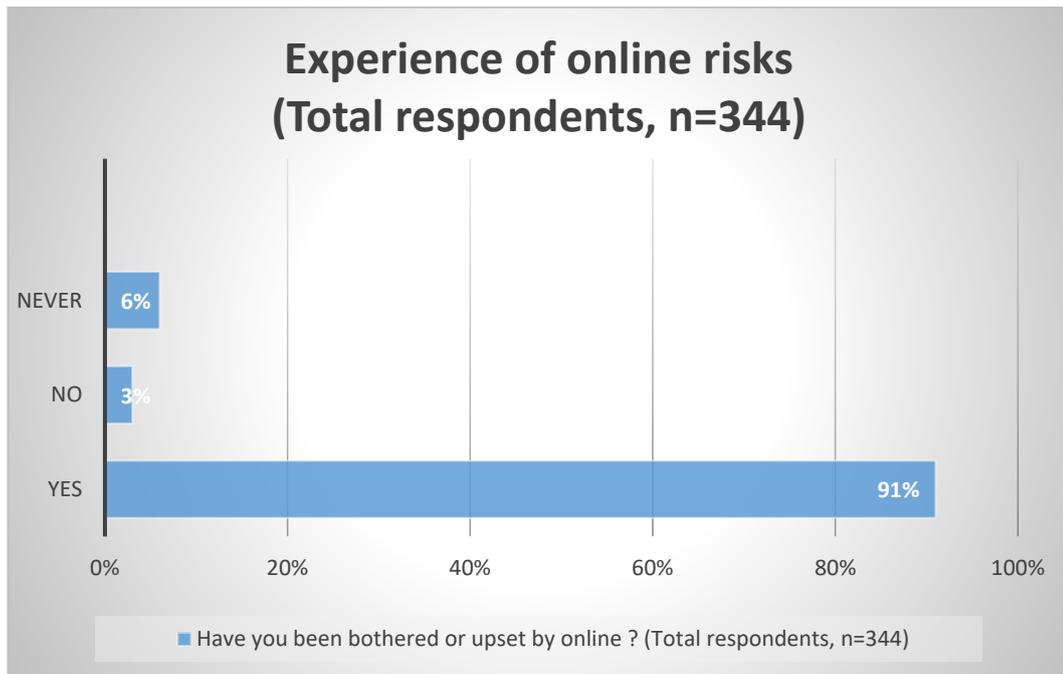
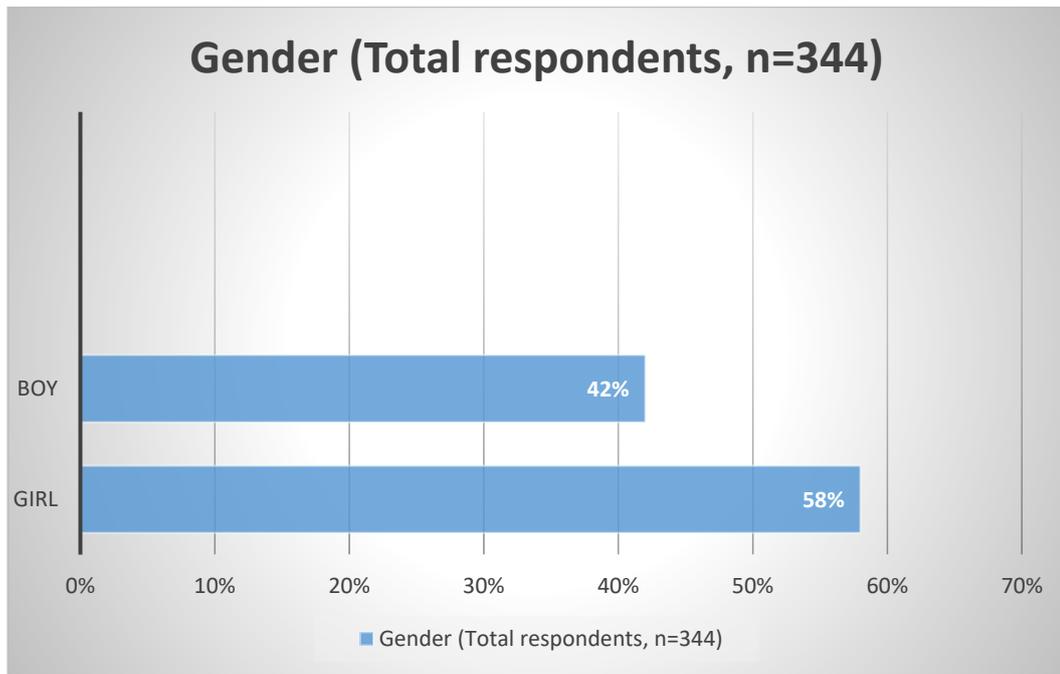


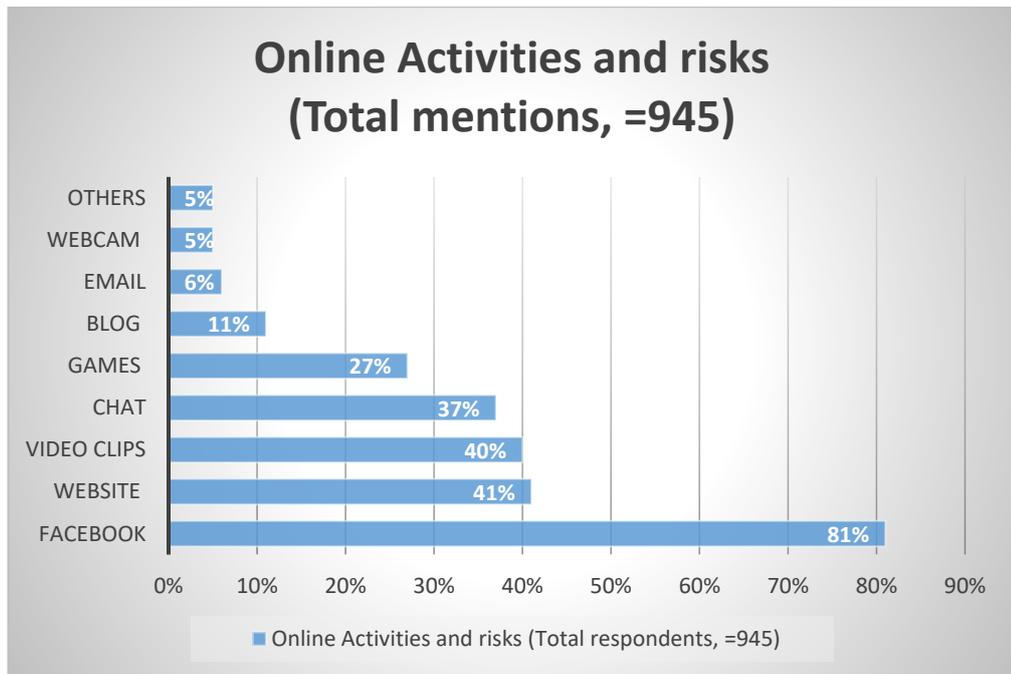
Figure 5.5 Online risks experienced



*Figure 5.6 Online risks experienced by children in relation to gender*

Thus, the experience of online media is not the same for every child, with differences possibly depending on their socio-cultural environment. Further evidence below will demonstrate what constitutes online risks and the cultural framing of those risks.

- 4) In addition, the respondents said that they encountered varying risk experiences when they used various online activities. Most of them had encountered online risks from Facebook, around 80%, followed by websites, video clips, chatrooms (about 40%) and games (27%). Not many children had risk experiences from blogs, emails, webcams and other online activities, such as going on Twitter and Instagram (Fig 5.7).



*Figure 5.7 The activities in which children encountered self-perceived risks*

- 5) Nearly half of the children who used the Internet (47%) said that they had been bothered by seeing and receiving violent content and messages, followed by 30% having encountered sexual content and receiving sexual messages. A low proportion of children (6%) had risk experiences from other sources such as data misuse, identity theft, drug-related messages, fraudulent advertising, and chain letters, as demonstrated in the bar chart (Fig 5.8).

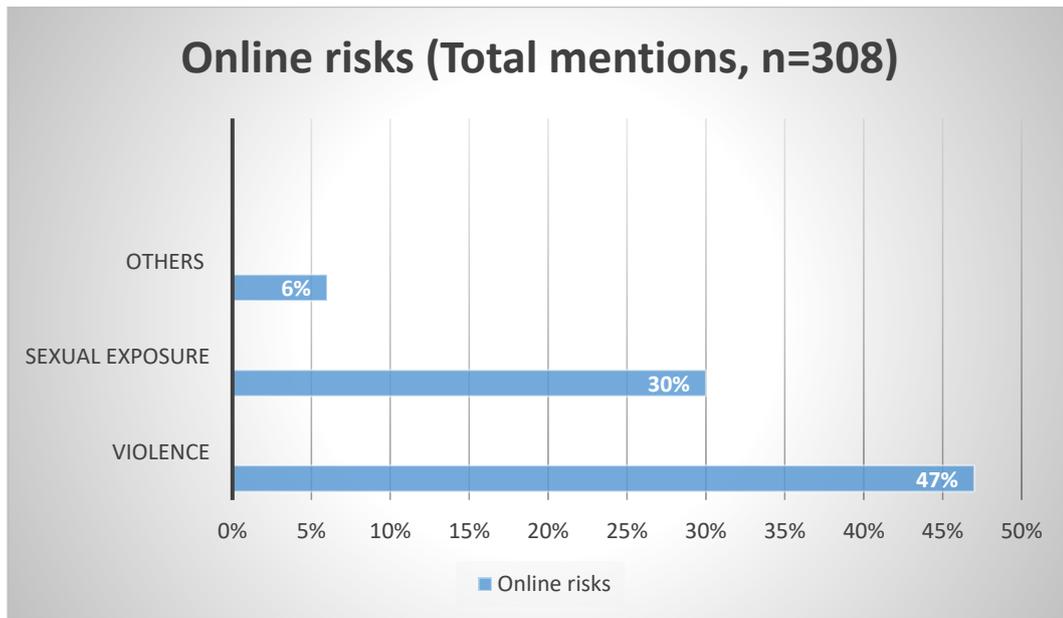


Figure 5.8 Types of online risks experienced by children

Viewing this data, which shows that encountering risky content was common amongst the sample, it could be logical to suggest that the policy maker should impose a protectionist policy to limit children’s use of social media such as Facebook. However, the following interviews demonstrated that there could be no simple translation of online risks into predictable harmful outcomes, but rather that the definition of risks is different between children and adults, and also varies according to contextual differences.

The next finding indicated that the perception about what is appropriate behaviour associated with violent and sexual issues is often narrowly and strictly defined by adults: as a result this may have an effect on children’s perceptions. However, the study reveals that some children are not upset by such exposure. What is shown clearly is that they strongly fear the judgment of others who may think they have sought this material out. Again, such a high number of statements about fear merit more discussion. The findings have shown that defining online risks is not an easy task. Whether risk factors result in actual harm is a question to be explored rather than a conclusion to be assumed (Livingstone et al., 2015; Ólafsson et al., 2014).

## **5.3 Online Risk in Children's Perception vs Adult's Perception**

### **5.3.1 Online violence**

#### **1) Online violence in children's perception**

The current research shows that most of the Thai children in the study felt distressed, frightened or disturbed, at some time, from gruesome images and gory websites such as scary and depressing scenes of death, mutilation and murder.

#### **The public school (suburban area)**

*Girl 26:* I saw online clips about ghosts, accidents and blood in a scene making me so scared. It was horrible and I couldn't sleep all night. (The public school A: 20/1/14)

*Boy 18:* I don't like video clips about children being badly treated, I feel sad. I feel like I have got that experience myself." (The public school B, 23/1/14)

#### **The private schools (urban area)**

*Girl 7:* I saw violence in video clips, like a quarrel between boys and girls, a son was hit by his mother. I felt very sad and I was so sympathetic with the victim. (The private school A: 20/1/14)

Some children told me that they felt unhappy when they saw online video of people quarrelling in public spaces, because of the political conflicts that took place in Thailand during the years 2013 and 2014. These events seem to have 'primed' children's responses to images of protest.

#### **The private schools (urban area)**

*Girl 10:* However, I don't like people posting something to scold each other online particularly, when they don't like someone who has different opinions from them. (The private A: 20/1/14)

*Girl 2:* I saw people have arguments with each other on Facebook I felt really not good. When they expressed their different thoughts, they posted very rude comments and cursed each other. I think everyone could express their own opinions, but they should not post rude language. (The private school A: 20/1/14)

This reaction to ‘trolling’ behaviour and online insults was very marked in the data and suggests that children are judging intent and applying empathetic readings of language, with consequences for whether they feel at risk of distress.

### **The private schools (urban area)**

*Girl 8:* My friends had an argument on Facebook and they needed me to clear up their problem but I think it was not my business. So, it annoyed me and this was the one reason that I stopped using Facebook. So now I use Line to communicate with my friends. (The private school A: 20/1/14) [Line is a messaging app.]

*Boy 8:* When I am playing online games, even if I lose or win, they always scold me but I am not interested in his [another boy’s] comments. However, I got angry sometimes. We played games together and our team lost. He sent a message ‘you are loser’ to my inbox on Facebook. Sometimes we played football at school and had an argument but my friend never stopped, he sent the messages to scold me. I solved this problem by closing the chat room. (The private school B: 12/12/13)

### **The public school (suburban area)**

*Boy 13:* When I played Horn games, some players cursed me but I turned off the microphone and didn’t respond to anything. I think arguments in the games are violent and lead to a big conflict in the team. In my opinion, this game is fun but it has a lot of violence. (The public school A: 23/1/14) [Horn is an action game app developed by Phosphor Games.]

*Boy 14:* We play Hon game; it’s fun because we play with many people. I saw and heard the players complain and scold each other. It was too noisy and they used very impolite words. (The public school A (rural): 23/1/14)

*Boy 15:* My friend scolded me on Facebook because we had an argument at school, after that she posted to scold me on Facebook. I think it would be better if she told

me face to face. I don't like this way because many people can see it. (The public school A: 23/1/14)

*Boy 5:* This situation happened when I studied at primary school grade 1 (Matayom 1). When I slipped over in a playground at my school, many people were laughing at me. Then my friend took a video and posted it on Facebook. I felt very upset. In the first stage, I thought it was just funny, but after seeing all the comments on Facebook I was very ashamed and upset. They posted 'You are fatty and clumsy', 'You are a joke'. It took two or three days to overcome this. I didn't want to go to school because I was so embarrassed and worried that my friends would laugh at me and tease me again. (The private school A: 20/1/14)

## **2) Online violence in policy makers' perceptions**

The current study shows that the media raises the public's perception about online risks through the diffusion of moral panic around violence and sexual content, as an agenda public policy in Thailand. Thailand merely imposes protective measures and policy to limit children from using the Internet, by enacting legislation, because of the adults' anxiety over an alleged social problem.

What is clear from the representative responses collated above, and from the larger pool of fieldwork data they represent, is firstly that children's perception of online risk is closely tied to peer behaviours, and secondly, that mobile use integrates their online experiences tightly into the fabric of their daily lives.

Any response to this way of thinking about risk, whether driven by pedagogical or public policy interests, will need to resist the ring-fencing of digital risk as deriving from a separate activity that can be policed or educationally managed: it is, rather, deeply implicated in social behaviour and in children's own communications with each other.

*PAR expert 4* who has been working to promote media literacy in the Thai educational system, said that moral panic and a perception of children as incompetent are the key barriers to implementing media literacy that goes beyond policing into the realm of personal and social development.

We fear and worry about risks from the Internet so we block and stop children from accessing specific things. As in the past, the media are responsible to the police, under the Minister of Interior, because they fear the harm of online media affecting children. But I, and other committee members promoting media literacy, unfortunately, cannot break through the problem, as they still repeat the same habit that uses only restrictive measures. For example, the Film and Video Act 2008 was enacted so that, for example, youth under 15 could only remain in gaming cafés until 8 p.m. But this focusses only on controlling an isolable behaviour. We have dual committees, one that works in protection and another focusing on education. But media literacy is under the responsibility of the culture ministry that focuses on monitoring children's appropriate behaviour. So, the situation cannot move forward from protection to development, in Thailand.

*PAR expert 6* also emphasised this public policy phenomenon of 'panic' breaking out about a perceived risk, a behaviour being isolated, and a remedial measure being enacted to control it.

There were news reports about children killed by a taxi driver. A reporter claimed that the cause of this murder came from his meeting them online, at night, while playing an online game. After that, the policy makers launched a law to stop children playing that game and limited the opening times of game cafés. This is only one example which demonstrates the anxiety concerning online media in Thai society. I have seen many sectors attempting to input media literacy, as a part of education policy, for more than 10 years but it has never been successful.

What emerged from this initial analysis of fieldwork data was a striking disconnect between children's reality and policy-makers' fantasies. Children's digital lives are a seamless part of their lives overall. Children's perceptions of risk are much more concerned with social relations, with empathetic reactions to hurt, with heartlessness and harm at the level of actual and immediate social relations. Policy-makers' perceptions of risk are more focused on isolating a phenomenon on the

basis of specific acts, in specific venues and policing what has been isolated in this manner, often with an overriding emphasis on content rather than communicative actions by users. This matched with findings in the earlier studies of the EU Kids Online project, as many children said that they were upset by behavior that hurt vulnerable victims. Meanwhile, public policy showed more concern with sexual or violent content per se (Livingstone & Smith, 2014).

The findings in this section of the study show that while policy makers evaluate risks as likely to translate in to harm, they have a tendency to implement policies to protect children from being vulnerable to harm. But risk does not automatically mean harm in a child's perception: some children can exceed their prior emotional and social literacy by encountering risky opportunities online – and as result becoming more resilient.

### **3) Digital resilience: Emotional and social literacy in relation to online aggression**

#### **The Private schools (urban area)**

*Girl 10:* I don't like people who post something just to criticise each other online, particularly **when they don't like some people who have different opinions from them.**" (The private A: 20/1/14)

*Girl 15:* I don't like the posts about political conflicts and insulting comments about each other. **Some argued because of political differences, even though they have been friends** before (The private A: 20/1/14)

#### **The public schools (suburban area)**

*Girl 34:* **I don't like people in two groups having arguments** and posting rude messages on Facebook because they hate each other." (The public school B: 17/1/14)

*Boy 6:* In online games, some persons are hot-tempered; they keep scolding me and other players. **But I am not interested in them. I think online games have advantages because we can use our thinking to plan and how to use limited resources to be the winner.** (The private school A: 20/1/14)

*Boy 8:* **When I am playing online games, even when I lose or win, they always insult me, but I am not interested in bad comments.** Even so, I got angry sometimes. He sent the messages to criticise me. **I solved this problem by closing the chat.**” (The private school B: 12/12/13)

*Boy 4:* **Most adults think online games have only negative sides but in my opinion it has many advantages.** For example, we can learn how to work as a team. **I heard that someone can go on to be world class, if they concentrate on practising. I think playing the HoN<sup>3</sup> game can make me good at planning, and know how to survive in some difficult situations.** However, adults don't draw the lessons and tell children about it, they think online games have only bad sides. (The private school A: 20/1/14)

### **The public schools (suburban area)**

*Boy 13:* When I played Hon games, some players scolded me but **I turned off the microphone and didn't respond to anything.** I think arguments in the games are violent and lead to a big conflict in the team” (The public school A: 23/1/14)

*Boy 8:* **When I play the game, when I lose or win, they always insult me, but I am not interested in him,** I just keep playing. But I have been angry with my friend, we played together and he called me 'loser' when I met him at school” (The public school A: 23/1/14)

Based on the above interviews, children are very able to see their online activity, such as gaming, in terms of personal capabilities. It is almost as if dealing with

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<sup>3</sup> Heroes of Newerth (HoN) is a multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) video game originally developed by S2 Games. Heroes of Newerth pits two teams of players against each other and they can turn on a microphone to communicate with each other while they are battling Wikipedia. (2017, July 19). *Heroes of Newerth*. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heroes\\_of\\_Newerth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heroes_of_Newerth)

insults and bad behaviour becomes part of this: might the level of coping skills and tools children possess constitute substantial safety barriers in themselves? Children seem to learn how to respond appropriately to disturbing experiences and how to use coping capacities when they are encountering aggressive situations. Children who do not feel bothered (or neutral) after risky experiences online can be considered to be more *resilient* (d'Haenens et al., 2013).

Thai children are often positioned as belonging to an incompetent and weak category. However, the evidence above demonstrates that the Internet can provide the chance for children to discover their own competencies. They are able to counter online violence with emotional and social literacy. The protectionist policy can be seen as a way to frame children as incompetent persons who are inferior to authoritative seniors.

### **5.3.2 Sexual 'harm'**

#### **1) Sexuality online in children's perception**

The most interesting finding was why, during the interviews, several children, from both public and private schools, from all areas reported they had been bothered by sexual content, mostly containing images of nudity and sexual activity when they were going online for some other reason. The children, when gently pressed for more information, did not express upset with the content per se. They were upset because such exposure meant inappropriate behaviour of a good child or 'dek dee' according to adult expectations. There are different words for sexual content that children use in Thai language, such as 'Lamok' and 'Po'. These words have slightly different meanings, depending on context.

There was an unexpectedly revealing insight derived from the first fieldwork data analysis: that, from children's perspective, disturbing content could be disturbing, for what they feared having seen *would mean to adults* who found out. This evidence, for early internalization of adult judgement, only reinforces the first finding that children live in a world of relationships, attitudes, expectations, judgments, feelings, etc., rather than a world of direct cause-and-effect links between content and harm.

### **The private schools (urban area)**

*Girl 12:* I also accidentally saw porn sites (Lamok) when I was watching video clips, using Facebook and Instagram. **In my opinion, if someone walks past, they possibly think I am not a good child.** (The private school A: 20/1/14)

*Boy 1:* I accidentally saw porn sites and porn scenes popping up (Lamok) while I was playing a game. **I was frightened and didn't tell anyone because I was so embarrassed.** (The private school A: 20/1/14)

*Girl 3:* I accidentally saw a porn site (Lamok) from Facebook, **I felt very bad because I used the Internet in my living room, so my parents could see everything. I was worried because my parents possibly think I intended to see the porn clips. My mother looked at me and didn't say anything, but in my thoughts she was unhappy and upset with me.** (The private school A: 20/1/14)

*Girl 20:* I really don't like the porn images (Po). **If someone sees I am watching such websites they might think I am a bad child.** (The private school B: 12/12/13)

### **The public school (urban area)**

*Boy 17:* When I searched information to do my school work, I saw many obscene sites (Lamok) that showed sexual intercourse. I tried to cancel it out or ignored it and closed the website. **I felt very bad because we were too young to see pornography.** (The public school B: 17/1/14)

This boy's language seems to be parroting an adult reaction he is aware of, as do the following.

*Girl 18:* My friends saw bad websites (porn sites/Lamok) in classroom, and most of them were boys and I accidentally saw that. I think we should not see these sites, **it's not appropriate for our age.** (The private school B: 12/12/13)

*Boy 10:* I accidentally clicked the button, then a porn video (Po) was played. I didn't have any intention to watch it. **I think this is harmful because that site is not appropriate for our age.** (The public school A: 23/1/14)

Of course, actual risks do exist:

*Boy 17:* **Someone chatted with me and talked about sex but I didn't want to tell anybody.** I think this is because I add people who I don't know to be my friends on Facebook" (The public school B: 17/1/14)

'Good child', or 'dek dee' in Thai language, seems to have become the standard that these Thai children use to translate online risks to harm. They felt upset because such exposure means they may not be good children, or not engaging in 'appropriate' behaviour in the adults' estimation. The appropriate behaviours and correct beliefs are constructed by the adult world (Buckingham, 2000).

As can be seen, online risks are shaped and expressed (or 'framed') in relation to the dominant meaning of 'good child' in Thai culture, and thus depend on the power relationships between children and adults, such as parents and teachers (Zhao & Park, 2014). Defining online risks is not an easy task since it depends not just on the interaction between users and their environment, but also on the ways in which this interaction has been framed.

## **2) Sexuality online in adult's perceptions**

*Computer Teacher, public school, rural area:*

I accidentally found a student accessing sexual websites while I was teaching. I told them to close that program and stopped them from doing it again because **that website was not appropriate at their age.**

*Computer teacher, private school A:*

I accidentally discovered that my students accessed porn sites in classroom while I was teaching. I was very angry and said to all the students that “**this is the school, you cannot show this inappropriate behaviour and don’t do this again**”. **In the school, we can warn and teach children to stop accessing this kind of website.** However, I don’t know when they are at home, if they can access any content and no one tells them.

*Computer teacher, private school B:*

I have seen my students looking at inappropriate websites like porn websites in classrooms. I was worried that if someone walked past and saw their behaviour, it would not be good for them. **He will blame them for this inappropriate behaviour.** I feel anxious with their behaviour because, even in the classroom, they dare to watch the porn sites. So, I cannot imagine what they are seeing at home.

Students are being measured here in terms of inappropriate behaviour for their ages but also according to an implied “what will other people think?” kind of attitude, with even a hint of male authority (‘He will blame them’). The teachers mandated the dominant meaning of ‘appropriate behaviour’ to protect the children from being seen as not ‘good’, as much as from any direct hurt caused to them.

It is obvious that what is meant by ‘harm’, in relation to sexual ‘risks’, is often unclear. The translation to harm is framed by the definition of ‘good child’ or ‘dek dee’ that is expected to behave appropriately, according to Thai custom and values. Schools position themselves as moral agencies that produce the ‘good children’. Many teachers reserve the power for themselves to act as the ‘moral entrepreneur’, labelling behaviours in order to regulate children to be a good child. As Howarth argued, children simply get caught up in these missions to rectify some perceived moral threat to a society (Howarth, 2013). Thus it can be said that the translation of online risks to harm is codified by the notion of the ‘good child’ in Thai culture. But these restrictions and codifications have made children struggle to gain confidence in risk measurement. So, it is important to note that the specifics of traditionally and culturally shaped risk translation need to be taken into account.

For instance, not all children in my sample were upset by sexual risks. They were able to deal with them without feeling bothered or upset and thereby demonstrating a high level of resilience. So what we might begin to think of as emotional and social literacy is starting to emerge here as a contested terrain, where children's and adults' perceptions are in tension with each other.

### **3) Digital resilience in relation to 'sexting'**

It was found that many children had received sexual content from, and been involved in a sexualized conversation with, online contacts whom they had never met face-to-face. The online offenders used social networks, particularly Facebook, to initiate friendships with children then took up sexual conversations by chatting and using web cameras. However, the research suggests that the earlier Facebook users, the privileged group who had started using Facebook at about 8-9 years of age, mostly from private schools, were typically able to recognize signs of risks and develop their risk management skills.

Significantly, there was no case from the current study where contacts online had led to offline contact.

#### **The private schools (urban area)**

*Girl 1:* I had to report this problem three times to Facebook admin. Normally, this problem is from a new friend on Facebook. **At the moment, I choose only the person who studies in the same school, or is the same age as me, to be a new friend. I will check their profile before adding them.** (The private school A: 20/1/14)

*Girl 5:* At that time I didn't know who I should add to be my friend so I added everyone. **He asked my phone number and I didn't tell him and I blocked him.** At present, I add only my friends and some people who I know. **I will check their profile in advance, where they are studying. I accept only people who I have known before, such as friends of my friends.** (The private school A: 20/1/14)

*Girl 7:* **I accept only people who I have met before. If I don't know them I will check their profile first. I know who makes a fake profile.** I still add new friends – I would like to open my opportunities to meet new people so I can exchange my experiences with them. I don't want to limit to only the friends in my school, but I know who I should accept. **I realize that if I don't think twice while making a new friend on Facebook, I will be in trouble with crazy people.**" (The private school A: 20/1/14)

*Girl 14:* One person sent sexual messages (Lamok) to my inbox on Facebook. He asked me 'Are you studying in this school?' Can I go to see you? I know where you live!' So, I blocked him. I added him because I thought he studied in my school. He used the school symbol as his profile. **At the moment, when I would like to add a new friend, I check how many friends he has and they should study in the same school as me.** (The private school A: 20/1/14)

*Girl 19:* **I realize that some people on the Internet are not real; we never meet them in the real world so how can we easily trust them. I can feel that a person is scamming from their pictures, profiles and messages.** For example, all of them claim that they graduated from Oxford, they are rich, take a picture with expensive cars, and they work in petrol or chemical companies. You can see everyone uses similar profiles and doesn't have many friends. **I have got such experiences, so I notice who makes a fake profile.** (The private school B: 12/12/13)

### **The public school (urban area)**

*Girl 32:* A foreigner chatted with me and asked me 'What is your gender?' 'How old are you?' 'Do you have a husband?' So I didn't response. He asked me to open the camera because he would like to show his genitals. I told him 'I don't like poor guys'. He replied 'he is not poor; he is a bank officer in Turaki'. I said 'You are very ugly', but he didn't stop. **I think this is unsafe so I stopped chatting with him. After getting such experiences, if somebody wants to be my friends, they have to send the message to my inbox first. If I have met them before, I will accept them.**" (The public school B: 17/1/14)

*Boy 16:* He greeted me and asked me ‘how old are you?’ ‘What do you look like?’ When I replied to him, he started asking to have sex with me, so I blocked him. **At present, I check the profile before accepting anyone to be my friends.** If they are friends of my friends and I know them, I will accept them.” (The public school B: 17/1/14)

*Girl 14:* A foreigner chatted with me on Facebook. He asked me to be his friend. He asked me about travelling spots in Thailand and then I replied. He said I was such a good friend and he would like to draw my picture, he started asking about my personality. He asked me about my breast size and my skin colour. Then he asked me to open the camera. **My friend told me that if the guy asked me to open the camera he would show his genitals, because she had such an experience before. So, I didn’t open the camera. At present, I set privacy settings so only my friends can send messages to my inbox. I know how to protect myself, to be safe.**” (The public school B: 17/1/14)

The result of this part of the study showed that many children could use their critical abilities to distinguish between meeting online friends and strangers they needed to be cautious about. Additionally, many of them interpreted risk experiences as neutral – showing emotional literacy – they did not especially fear online risks, on this evidence of self-reporting, even though the sexual situations encountered were identified as unwanted and undesirable behaviour.

### **5.3.3 Digital resilience in relation to other risks**

*Boy 2:* Someone created a fake Facebook page to blackmail me. I knew about this situation because my friend asked me why I had two Facebooks. Luckily, it had just happened so I immediately reported it to Facebook admin and I told my mom about this problem. So **we need to learn safety skills** when we use Facebook, for example, how to prevent anyone from copying our pictures, profiles or our names. I am worried about that situation, even though I set the safety settings on my Facebook. (The private school A: 20/1/14)

*Girl 6:* When I got chain letters in my inbox, **I didn't believe them**. They wrote 'if you don't send this letter to 365 persons, your parents will die soon' I think it's impossible because my parents are healthy or, just in the case of an accident, how can I control that situation anyway. **It doesn't make sense** and relates to a chain letter. So, I didn't forward the letter." (The private school A: 20/1/14)

Moreover, I found that in the same age group (13-14 year olds) many students at private schools have changed to other social networks such as Twitter and Line: they said that they can manage their privacy settings better on these platforms.

What can we surmise from these two instances of Thai children responding to having been targeted in undesirable, but not atypical ways? It is possible that children's default position can often be one of coping rather than helplessness. If we assume helpless victimisation as the baseline, then our reaction, as adults, will be seeking to provide as much protection as possible. But if there is any chance that these two examples are not especially unusual – and they resembled many others in the qualitative data – then it becomes necessary to recognise that children may often already be coping adequately. Protection may still be important of course, but so may the enhancement of coping skills.

Once again, this evidence has demonstrated that Thai children are not weak. Many of them already have considerable resilience in relation to 'risky' content encountered on the Internet. However, they would benefit from some freedom from the hegemony of the discourse of the 'good child' in Thai society. They can develop their risk evaluation, and then exceed their coping capacity, when encountering sexual, online incidents. Therefore, Thai children should not be constructed as members of a weak category who are lacking in critical abilities or coping capacity, but they can, with practice, exceed their capacity to cope with risks, affording digital resilience. They are not controllable objects (Fleming, 2008) while discovering various incidents in online worlds: conversely they can enhance their power of definition of risky opportunities to their own identities, from Internet use.

### 5.3.4 School: the (waning) power of the moral entrepreneur

Thus, if children are not restricted in accessing online media, they will probably develop resilience when encountering risk online, while still becoming adults who are ‘grown-up’ in Biesta’s terms and still recognisably ‘good’ in terms of Thai culture. However, the limited set of identity-possibilities currently circulating in Thai society, particularly in educational settings, is the key challenge to enhancing digitally resilience in Thailand.

One surprising finding from my study was that less than one percent of the Thai children studied shared their online risk experiences with teachers. They said that the teachers often become anxious when they heard about risky situations and there is then a tendency to restrict their Internet use in school, which is not what children want. Most children told me that they preferred to ask for guidance about Internet use from their peers (65% on average) rather than their teachers (Fig 5.9).

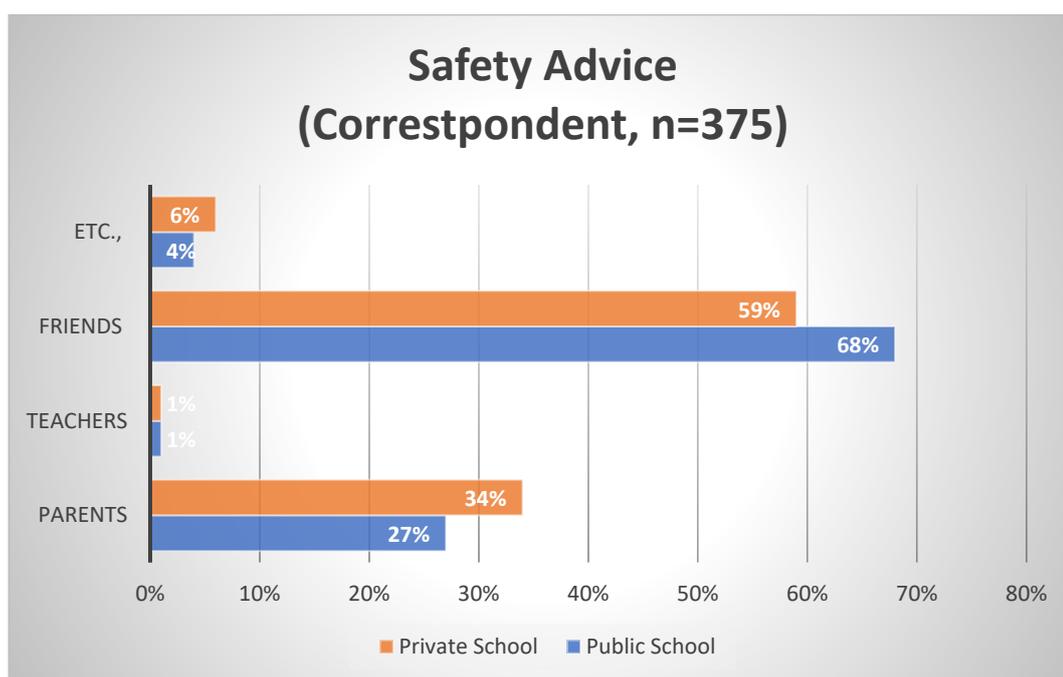


Figure 5.9 Trusted sources for safety advice

**Boy 7: I don't want to tell the teachers because it will be big trouble** (The private school B: 12/12/13).

**Boy 8: I don't want to talk with the teacher because it will be a big problem."** (The private school B: 12/12/13).

*Girl 18:* When I got a problem from the Internet, I didn't want to tell my teacher. I am not close to the teachers and **I am worried that they will blame me for it.**"  
(The private school B: 12/12/13).

Taking these results into account, it is not surprising that less than 5% of children of public and private schools accessed the Internet at their educational locations. Fleming (2008) has pointed out that there is often a 'mismatch' between adult judgements and how children feel themselves to be (pp. 62-63). On the evidence of this study, some children certainly become anxious about this mismatch, worrying in effect that reporting a problem will lead to them being problematized. Interestingly, the data also shows that a quarter of public school students, and one third of private school students, do feel comfortable discussing issues around the Internet with their parents. I did not seek specific information on why they felt comfortable

*CM-member private school A* pointed out that authority (which in Thailand is also thought of as seniority) is a potential barrier:

If adults use only authority... children will grow up with fear, fear their parents, fear their teachers and fear their boss.

He also mentioned that Thailand underwent a major transformation in the school system in 1992 that accepted the child-centred concept by acceding to the UN Convention of Rights. Therefore, the educational system, theoretically, put children at the centre, but Thai culture in practice resists many of the consequent implications:

Many teachers still use the old style; they are the centre of learning, not the students. In addition, we can see that teachers give only content rather than encouraging [children] to think ... they position students as passive learners, as a result, most Thai children cannot develop their critical thinking, even though the Ministry of Education announced the implementation of the Basic Education Curriculum 2001, that implemented thinking development in the core curriculum.

Authority based on seniority has been regarded as one of ‘10 national values of a good citizen’ since 1955. Children who take adults’ opinions as authoritative are seen as good proto-citizens. Nevertheless, Thailand has applied the concept of child’s rights since 1992, when the Covention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by Thailand. However, the findings confirmed that there are tensions about the characteristics of the good child, between local and international agencies, in Thailand. On, the one hand Thai children are constructed to adhere to Thai values and traditions of obedience: on the other hand, the children are expected, particularly by internatonal agencies, to have critical abilities and to realize their own rights as competent citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thai children are governed by both Thai values and global standards in the matter of what it is to be a good child. PAR Expert 4 told me that the seniors in Thai society should move away from imposing restrictions to empowering children’s confidence, that they can manage opportunities and risks on their own:

*PAR Expert 4:* We should realize that children have abilities to construct their own knowledge and learn how to solve problems by themselves. They can discover their capabilities and identity while using online media. Children can go there to talk with any people, anywhere, and discover online resources to satisfy and develop their own interests. So, there is no limitation of time and space in online life for children. Adults need to empower and guide them to find their highest potential when they use these tools. We need to work with parents and teachers, and invest resources to empower children to access digital opportunities and deal with risks based on their own competences.

This interview is in accord with *PAR Expert 6* who identified online risk as itself involving a learning trajectory for children:

*PAR Expert 4:* In my opinion, we should be more open and encourage children to discover online experiences and encounter any information online because this is one of their learning curves.

‘Open’ is the key finding from the expert 4. Thai children might need the ‘open space’ that liberates them from ‘a good child’ in seniority society. As we can see Thai children have high opportunities to discover their competencies, to be resilient from technological opportunities. Some children exposed to online risks without

bother or upset but they employed more proactive coping skills with proactive strategies. In open space as online world, they develop autonomous skills and understanding without fear from adults' expectation. Wyver et al. (2010) suggested that children can learn to enhance their critical abilities to make accurate judgment with online difficulties when they are allowed to explore with risky play.

However, we can see some children cannot handle sexuality online because adults restrict them with the meaning of good child which this is the barrier to build resilience.

So in a seniority society as Thailand, the restrictions put on children, often based on senior's perception, is the challenge to develop education effectively. We might need to think about Peuy's legacy. He does not consider Thai children as obedient and incompetent citizens but he positions the young generation as competent citizens who can move the Thai country on. He opens public spaces. State policy and education, that are always controlled by senior authorities, for the young generation to exercise their own competencies, to contest the governing agencies, and particularly the children learn to realize their own rights, grow up their own abilities and behave responsibly within the society around them.

#### **5.4 Authority, Judgement and Girl 9**

However, I want to end this first fieldwork summary, not with the experts, but with 'Girl 9' (from one of the private schools):

You should make us feel free when using the Internet ... [or] the children will close their real identity because they need to hide some parts that they think adults will not be happy with. But, adults will never discover the real identity of the child'  
(The private A, 20/1/14)

While it is not difficult to find extremely well-intentioned adults advocating a more genuinely child-centred approach to digital life, 'Girl 9' helps us to draw together the strands of this chapter's unexpected discovery. It may be less about the direct risks of online harm that concern children and more about the loop that passes through adult perceptions of the child herself. How the adult sees the risk-encountering child is something that matters greatly to children, who do fear

something (as the quoted expert surmised) – but what they fear is that the adult will see them as “not good” because they have put themselves at risk in their digital lives, that somehow it will be their fault for having explored too far, not played safe, chanced experiencing something “inappropriate”. Until Thai children “feel free” from this potentially pernicious loop of judgement, they may be compelled to hide their digital selves from even well-intentioned adult interest.

Children parrot “ask an adult” as the expected response when questioned about encountering risks, but they show little evidence of actual engagement, especially with teachers. Children’s non-engagement with adults, to whatever degree it is present, clearly presents any educational initiative with particular challenges. Where the reasons are of the type outlined above, these challenges become even more of a barrier to any progressive educational reform. But these fieldwork findings also suggest a way forward.

## CHAPTER 6

### FIELDWORK IN THAILAND (2): THE PROSCRIPTIVE & THE PROACTIVE

This chapter presents and explores the results of the second fieldwork period in Thailand involving a digital literacy module implementation with schools from November 2014 to March 2015. The objective of this phase was to investigate cause-and-effect assumptions, mutually interrelated perceptions, and how these impacted on digital literacy practice, then to recommend an effective approach for digital literacy enhancement for Thai children. The recommendations are contextualised more fully in Chapter 3.

The participants using the digital literacy module that was developed for this research were one public school in a suburban area and one private school in an urban area, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Two schools were considered sufficient for this form of research, as the aim was in-depth exploration of the discourse going on around digital literacy, not a statistically comprehensive survey.

The participatory action team research (PAR) method, as outlined in Chapter 4, was employed to develop the digital literacy modules in the schools. In this phase, I was an active participant in the teacher team to collect observable details, particularly during the action planning and implementation period in digital literacy classes. In addition, I observed the barely perceptible details that impacted on the effectiveness of the implementation plan, between the two schools. Field notes, interviews, video records and pictures of digital literacy classes were used to capture and analyse the findings.

#### **6.1 Initial meetings with the principals**

To begin with, I arranged two initial meetings with the principal of the public school and the vice principal for academic affairs at the private school, at the beginning of October 2014, to ensure that they understood the process and expectation of the digital literacy module that was to be introduced.

The findings that emerged and the emphases that were exposed in the initial conference were as follows.

### **6.1.1 Public school: digital literacy is a defensive mechanism**

#### **1) Online media are a direct cause of harm**

This is the first finding from the initial meeting with the principal of the public school. He believed that digital media cause negative behaviors, particularly around sexuality issues which he called ‘adult issues’. He said that the school had used safety policies by installing filtering software to block inappropriate and harmful content. However, the protection turned out to be an ineffective measure to protect the children from being vulnerable. As a result, he now thought that developing digital literacy through teaching thinking abilities might be an effective way to insulate children from online risks.

*The principal of the public school:*

My school has pushed through a huge budget to install a fibre-optic firewall to block inappropriate websites. However, it’s ineffective as we know students in elementary school use the internet to engage in ‘adult issues’<sup>4</sup> with other people online. (The principal of the public school, 20 October 2014)

#### **2) Students as passive victims**

In addition, the principal believed that the Internet grooms children into sexual activities. So, students would ‘obviously’ be vulnerable to online risks. The children were gauged as, by definition, lacking competence, maturity, self-control and critical abilities. They should be taught to enhance their competencies to be aware of online harm and educated to enhance their thinking abilities to protect themselves from the moral threats encountered online.

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<sup>4</sup> Adult issue means sexual issue

### *The principal of the public school:*

So, how to make children aware of this problem when they use online media and how to educate them to use critical thinking while they are using the Internet is crucial. (The principal of the public school, 20 October 2014.)

This discursive framing in advance of the digital literacy module was very striking because the risk assessment, evaluation and management from digital literacy learning are framed by the ‘good child’ in the principal’s perception. This represents the senior’s power to automatically translate risk to harm, then produce digital literacy education framed by the seniors’ culture. Several scholars argued that students are becoming ‘competent children’ but literacy is defined by the adult’s expectation, rather than in relation to the real learner’s competencies (A. Bjørgen & O. Erstad, 2015; Green, 2014; Livingstone, 2009; Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2014). This is not entirely unexpected in light of issues raised in the first fieldwork, as well as in the literature review chapter.

### **6.1.2 Private school: digital literacy for digital citizens**

#### **1) Online media are a space of potential freedom for developing competencies**

The vice principal of the public school said that digital literacy is an educational concept and practice that prepares children to be critical Internet users. So, the students needed opportunities to explore online experiences that would enhance their thinking abilities. In addition, he believed that children are, by default, competent and active learners, unless classroom evidence reveals some specific problem for individual learners. The school should therefore promote a climate of active engagement, to build self-confidence and self-reliance for children.

*The vice principal of the private school:*

The children of the 21st century have to have highly developed cognitive skills and education should facilitate children to think by themselves. The future learning should come from teaching children to develop their thinking skills. The classroom should be arranged to facilitate and encourage learning development, this includes classroom activities and educational tools. I think if we have good educational tools then children can see, read, explore and try to do something by themselves, and it will lead to learning development of the best kind. (The vice principal of private school, 19 October 2014)

The belief that students are, by default, competent and active learners was the main reason the school agreed to participate in the digital literacy project. This is because the module conformed to the school's BBL project (Brain Based Learning initiative), which aimed to facilitate students to love learning, learn compatibly with the nature of the brain, and develop themselves to achieve individual capabilities, at any level.

*The vice principal of the private school:*

The research project has the concept and practice of thinking development that can be integrated with the BBL. As a result, we can integrate the digital literacy module into our life skills subject. (Head teacher of primary level (Pratom), November 2014)

From these interviews, the students in the private school seem to have more opportunities in digital literacy learning because the learning concept of this school takes a student-centred approach and is concerned with developing children's critical abilities. However, we can see that the binary concept of childhood and adulthood is still active in both schools. The children are positioned as not-yet competent people and the schools feel they have the responsibility to provide effective education to prepare them to be competent citizens with effective education. Biesta (2013) argued that this model of effective learning is a discourse that limits students to developing homogeneous identities within a risk-free space. The child is framed by the process of good citizen production but they cannot discover and realize their own rights and identities in the school context.

### **6.1.3 The discursive framing of the classroom module by senior staff**

The schools operate under the same educational policy, that is to say, they have to include ICT literacy based on the Thai Basic Education Curriculum 2008 that aims to develop citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Soparat et al., 2015). However, I found striking differences between administrators' beliefs and school cultures related to digital literacy. What became starkly apparent from this is that digital literacy activities in the classroom will already have been framed discursively by the school setting and related beliefs, assumptions, values and expectations.

## **6.2 The conference with the teacher team**

After the initial meetings and interviews with the principals, I conducted a conference with teams from the two schools in October 2014. I presented the concept, the draft idea of the actual classroom activities and educational tools.

The meeting provided the chance for the teacher teams to express their own opinions, to improve the digital literacy module, and relate it to their students. Their views were interpreted in relation to: the current ICT and/or life skills program in each school, the curricular positioning of the proposed digital literacy module, the kinds of digital literacy practices already found in the classes, and the teachers' intentions and values. The pictures of the meeting are shown below:

1) **Meeting with the teacher team:** I presented the result of Fieldwork Number 1 and the draft idea of the digital literacy module. I discussed with the teacher team how to design and implement a digital literacy module based on school context.



*Figure 6.1 I presented the findings from Fieldwork Number 1 to the teacher team*  
(Used with permission, photo by a teacher)



*Figure 6.2 I discussed with the team about classroom teaching*  
(Used with permission, photo by a teacher)

In the public school, the teacher teams consisted of eight participants, including a head of academic affairs, a head teacher of the teacher team at elementary level, and a computer teacher.

*In the private school*, there were five participants in the meeting including the vice principal for academic affairs and staff development, a head teacher of the elementary level, three computer teachers and a life skills teacher.

The teachers from the two schools wanted to implement the module in slightly different ways. The public school came up with a plan to incorporate the digital literacy module in the computing subject area. They provided two teachers to be responsible for this class, one computer teacher and one classroom teacher. In contrast, the private school wanted to integrate the digital literacy module in the life skills subject area: one teacher was assigned to manage the class. The differences between these two models can be seen in the following table.

*Table 6.1 The differences in the digital learning plan between the public and private school*

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Public School</b>	<b>Private School</b>
<b>Subject</b>	Computer subject	Life Skills subject
<b>Facilitators</b>	Computer teacher: Key facilitator Classroom teacher: support the key facilitator to manage the class	Life Skills teacher: key facilitator
<b>Length of time</b>	9-11 a.m. (2 hours)	8.40-9.30 a.m. (50 minutes)
<b>Educational Tools</b>	- Video clips about 10 situations on <a href="http://www.samrtkid-d.com">www.samrtkid-d.com</a> - The tools for actual classroom activities	- Video clips about 10 situations on <a href="http://www.smartkid-d.com">www.smartkid-d.com</a> - The tools for actual classroom activities
<b>Actual classroom activities</b>	<u>Lesson one:</u> Game: Behind the online mask <u>Lesson two:</u> Role Play: If I were you, I would <u>Lesson three:</u> Game: Think before click <u>Lesson four:</u> Brainstorming: The circle of opportunities	<u>Lesson one:</u> Game: Behind the online mask <u>Lesson two:</u> Brainstorming: If I were you, I would <u>Lesson three:</u> Game: Think before click <u>Lesson four:</u> Brainstorming: The circle of opportunities
<b>Learning Process</b>	Individual and group process	Individual and group process
<b>Number of students</b>	39 students, 20 girls and 19 boys	45 students, 24 boys and 21 girls

Some of these slight differences were relatively superficial, but some also reflected the different discursive framing already noted. This will become clearer from discussion of the actual classroom findings. But a few factors need to be noted at this stage.

## **6.2.1 The administration's culture shaped module designs**

### **1) Public school:**

#### **1.1) Seniority value in the administrative system**

I found that the seniority value was embedded in the school administration system. Firstly, the reason why the teacher team decided to integrate the digital literacy module in the computing subject area was that they conformed to the principal's decision to do so. Even though he did not attend the conference, he was the person to make the final decision and the team had to accept this without question.

In addition, in the conference with the teacher team, I noticed that the senior teachers definitely had the power to make decisions. The key facilitator and computer teachers accepted everything in relation to the meeting resolutions from the seniors. In the end, they assigned the computer teacher and the classroom teacher to carry out the digital literacy modules. In fact, the computer teacher said that she was not confident and felt uncomfortable teaching the digital literacy module because she had been working as a computer teacher for only 6 months. However, she had to accept the decision.

The administration in public school is a top-down approach, on this evidence.

#### **1.2) Assumption of need to control children's inappropriate behaviours**

The most interesting finding was that the public school assigned two teachers to oversee the digital literacy class. One was the computer teacher, whose role was to teach digital literacy, the other was a classroom teacher who had responsibility to monitor children to ensure 'appropriate behaviour'. The team said that the classroom teacher had key responsibility to maintain discipline and appropriate behaviour of the children in the class. The team believed that the classroom

teacher's authority was necessary to minimize any learning shortfall due to behavioural issues.

## **2) Private school:**

### **2.1) Democratic values in administration system**

Conversely, the attitudes, experience, and practices of student-centred and democratic values are demonstrated in the private school environment. I conducted the same process as at the public school. At the first step, I presented the original plan to the administrator, and then I arranged a meeting with the teacher team. After having a meeting with the vice principal, he invited the teacher team to discuss the learning plan together. I found that the vice principal of the private school was open to everyone when discussing how to achieve learning objectives. I noticed that the private school teachers felt free to express their own opinions and could adjust the original plan to fit with their students and learning style.

The vice principal told me that teachers who are confident to express their own opinions are expected and rewarded in the private school system.

#### *The vice principal of the private school:*

The teacher in this school has the freedom of expression. We have only one condition which is that the teacher should be a good teacher and push forward efforts to impart knowledge and take good care of our students. If the teacher has any new ideas to develop their learning, they can express their own opinions. If the teacher creates new content, new learning techniques, we are willing to support them. We will integrate the digital literacy module in the life skills subject because it has benefits there for our students and teachers. (Online interview. 20 September 2015).

As a result, the teacher team made a free decision without reference to senior authority. They debated about the original plan before implementing it in an actual class.

What has been detected here in these contrasting decision-making processes is an important aspect of what was termed the "hidden curriculum" in section 2.9 of the

literature review chapter. The balance of power between teachers and management in the schools shapes what is possible, and what actually happens in the classroom.

## **2.2) The teacher with the role of a facilitator to empower children**

Apart from the fact that attitudes, experience, and practices of student-centred and democratic values are demonstrated in the private school environment, they are also realized in the overall ethos. The teacher has the role to facilitate children to discover and develop their own competence progressively and this is implicit in the opinion of the vice principal as follows:

*The vice principal of the private school:*

If the teacher asks children something, they are not just testing content mastery; they want them to express their own opinions in the classroom. (Online interview. 20 September 2015.)

The evidence above shows that the private school environment has a student-centred approach while the public school is based more on authority. As we can see, the seniority value was also demonstrated in the school management system and culture which impacted on the digital literacy module's positioning. Therefore, it is very important to look at context-specific factors, including how child development and autonomy are differently conceived in different contexts, when digital literacy is implemented in Thai schools.

## **6.3 Findings emerging from the digital literacy classroom implementation**

After discussing the plan with the teacher teams, I worked with the key facilitators to implement the digital literacy module with students.

### **6.3.1 Digital Literacy Module Implementation**

The schools volunteered to try out the offered digital literacy modules with their students. The classroom environment in public and private schools is demonstrated in the photographs below.

**Lesson 1: Online friends or strangers: meeting new contacts online**  
**Public School: Lesson one**



*Table 6.2 Students watching cartoon animation*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.3 Students playing 'Behind the online mask' game*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.4 This girl was role playing online mask*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.5 Students were raising the traffic light to express their own responses to the masks*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.6 Students presenting their own opinions to the whole class*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)

## Private School



*Figure 6.7 Students playing the website traffic light 2 situations*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.8 This girl was playing online masks*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.9 The teacher was encouraging students to express their own opinions by using traffic lights.*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)

## Lesson 2: Online violence: online conflict and teasing online

### Public School



*Figure 6.10 Students watching a cartoon animation based on the topics 3*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.11 Students raising traffic light*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.12 Students were brainstorming about the situation to create role play*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)

## Private School

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*Figure 6.13 Students were preparing the traffic lights to express their own opinions about the case studies*

(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.14 The teacher was encouraging students to express their own opinions*

(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.15 Students were presenting their own opinions to a whole class*

(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)

### Lesson 3: Think before clicking Public School



*Figure 6.16 The students watching the cartoon case studies in the digital literacy class  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)*



*Figure 6.17 The students were expressing their own opinions by raising the traffic light symbols  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)*



*Figure 6.18 The students were demonstrating a pop-up in a game 'Think Before Clicking'  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)*

## Private School



*Figure 6.19 The students were playing the website traffic light 2 situations*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.20 The boy was presenting a pop-up in a game 'Think Before Clicking'*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.21 The teacher was encouraging students to choose the traffic light for online situations and by sharing their own opinions*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)

## Lesson 4: Online Opportunities Public School



*Figure 6.22 The students were brainstorming with 'The Circle of Opportunities'*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.23 Students were writing the opportunities from online use for themselves, their community and the whole world*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.24 Students were presenting their own ideas to a whole class. I helped the key facilitator to teach this activity*  
(Used with permission, photo by the teacher)

## Private School



*Figure 6.25 The teacher was reviewing lesson 1-3*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.26 Students were brain storming about online opportunities*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)



*Figure 6.27 Students were presenting their group's opinions to the whole class*  
(Used with permission, photo by the researcher)

I found that the beliefs and cultural practices shaped the digital literacy classroom activities in both the private and public school. Consequently, the results of the classroom teaching were different in the two contexts.

I interpreted the results of the digital literacy classes from classroom observation, student responses, interviews with the key facilitators and visual ethnographic methods, and consultation with the PAR team. These are all presented in the following sections.

### **6.3.2 Classroom Observation**

Classroom observations were undertaken for four weeks. The private school arranged the classes from 27 November 2014 to 18 December 2015 and the public school went from 8 January to 29 January 2015. I used field notes, video recording and photograph taking to collect the data during classroom observations.

#### **1) Public school: seniority orientation**

##### **1.1) Teacher's authority provides incentives for appropriate behaviours**

It was interesting to see that the public school provided a classroom teacher to assist the key facilitator to 'control' the class. The students were told to sit properly, listen attentively and respond when the teacher required them to.

As we can see in the dialogues 6.1 below, Teacher 2 used her authority to provide incentives for appropriate behaviours: e.g. discipline, concentration and calmness.

Dialogue 6.1: In digital literacy class in public school lesson 1 and lesson 4

<b>Public School</b>	
<b>Lesson 1, Online friends or stranger</b>	
<b>4 December 2014</b>	
Teacher 1 <sup>5</sup>	Which colour do you choose?
Teacher 2 <sup>6</sup>	<b>Raise only one sign. Only one sign that you choose. You raise one sign only</b>
Student 1	Yellow because it is not safe

---

<sup>5</sup> Teacher 1 is the key facilitator.

<sup>6</sup> Teacher 2 is the classroom teacher who has the role to control the class.

Teacher 1 If you choose yellow it means caution. But if you choose red mean it's not safe

**Student 1** \_\_\_\_\_(quiet)

**Teacher 2** **Answer, Don't be timid!** (the classroom teacher tells Student 1)

**Teacher 1** **I would like to know your own ideas**  
**(The teacher stands beside Student 1)**

**Student 1** \_\_\_\_\_(quiet)

Teacher 1 Who chose yellow?

**Public School**

**Lesson 4, Circle of opportunities**

Teacher 1 Anything else?

Student 2 It will be not good

Teacher 1 Why it is not good?

**Teacher 2** **Speak Louder**

Student 2 It's not good because I worry the cat will bite me

Teacher 1 Anyone else choose red?

**Student 3** **I chose red because we should be careful**

**Teacher 1** **Give the reason. Why, in this situation, should you be careful?**

**Student 3** -----(quiet)-----

**Teacher 2** **Stand up and speak out louder**

Teacher 1 Anyone else choose Yellow?

Student 7 Me

**Teacher 2** **Show the yellow sign when you are answering**

Student 8 Someone will hurt my cat

Teacher 1 Anyone else choose Green?

----- **Students raise the green light**-----

**Teacher 2** **Stand up (the teacher points to one girl and tells her to stand up)**

**Researcher** **Why do you choose green?**

**Teacher 2** **Turn your face to the class when you are answering and speak louder**

**Student 8** I choose green because no one swears at us.

I could see that the authoritative approach from teacher two, who ordered the children to turn their face to the class. I noticed that she exercised her authority to

manage the class and expected the children to pay attention to the class, according to the teacher's order. In the state classroom, this affected the confidence of expression and the enthusiasm for learning among the children. Some children kept quiet and most children were struggling to express their opinions. Some students answered according to their teacher's instructions. The quietness existed in the classroom because of the students' surrendering to the teacher's authority.

### 1.2) The teacher as the centre of knowledge

Another important finding was that the key teacher in the public school setting played a central role in *signposting* the supposedly correct answers to her students. Even though the teacher seems to encourage children to express their views, she strongly steers the responses.

Traditional classroom teaching in the public school is also evidenced in the transcripts (Dialogue 6.2) below.

Dialogue 6.2: In digital literacy class in public school lesson 2, lesson 3 and lesson 4

#### Public School

##### Lesson 2, Online violence: 4 December 2014

Teacher	If your friend slips over, should you take a picture?
Students	No
Teacher	If your friend slips over. What do you do?
Students	Help my friend
Teacher	<b><u>You should help your friend and don't shoot a video and share on Facebook.</u></b> Everyone in the world can see it and that can make your friend upset. With the test today. <b><u>What is the colour that you should choose?</u></b>
Students	<b>Red</b>
Teacher	<b><u>Yes, you should choose all red and don't do like that. So you have to choose only the red colour because it's not appropriate behaviour.</u></b>

### Lesson 3, Pop Ups: 11 December 2015

- Teacher**      **What is the colour that you should give to this Pop Up?**
- Student 2**      **Yellow because they will be tricking us and we shouldn't do things like that.**
- Teacher**      **Your answer is correct.**
- Student 3**      Pop Up: Free download cheat apps to win HoN games.
- Teacher**      **What is your answer?**
- Student 4**      Red if we download, they will charge the money from our credit card and my parents will lose the money.

### Public School

#### Lesson 4: Circle of opportunities

- Teacher 1**      **Who chose yellow?**
- Student 4**      If someone sees my cat on Facebook and thinks my cat is not lovely and they post something bad about my cat. I will not be happy and possibly have an argument with them.
- Student 5**      If they like our cat, they may want to buy our cat.
- Teacher 1**      **Anyone else choose Green?**
- Student 8**      **I chose green because no one swears at us.**
- Teacher 1**      **So with the situation that you write the blog about your beloved cat. What is the colour that you should choose? The answer should be green but don't give your address and your contact number to them. Your answer is similar to that of [student 6]. Again tell your friend what your idea is about this?**
- Student 6**      **If we tell them where my house is, they will come to my house and take my cat away with them**
- Teacher 1**      **This is a good story. However, the colour that you should choose is green but don't give your address to them.**

As we can see, the teacher directed children towards what she saw as the right answer, a decision she had already made for them. Conformity in relation to authority is being taught here, just as much as any digital literacy objective, which is precisely how a hidden curriculum can underpin an explicit curriculum and reshape the intentions of the latter.

Theoretically, Thailand has applied the student-centred approach, aimed to enhance critical abilities for children, since 1999. In addition, the present National Curriculum focuses on educating children to be a competent citizen for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, in practice, the teacher and educational system still reproduce a ‘good child’ or ‘dek dee’ who exhibits filial piety and obedience in a seniority system.

## **2) The private school: a learner-centred approach**

### **2.1) The teacher positions students as autonomous**

In the private school, on the other hand, the facilitator encouraged the students to think about the questions and come up with their own solutions. She also updated the online situations herself; to push her students to further enrich their thinking skills. She challenged children to explore how to solve the problems on their own.

I noticed that she did not signpost the right answers, but children could express their own, sometimes unexpected, angles on the situations. She challenged children to explore how they were thinking and to help each other with their solutions.

### **2.2) The definition of “appropriate” behaviours is determined by children themselves**

In addition, students of the private school were positioned as autonomous and independent learners. As we can clearly see below (Dialogue 6.3 and 6.4), children were encouraged to define online risks and opportunities based on their experience. Some children translated online opportunities into online risks. Some children thought the online risks do not mean harm. The facilitator did not define right answers from an adult perspective. Instead of only hypothetical situations, the children were encouraged to draw on their real, online experiences. The facilitator’s role in the private school is demonstrated in the dialogue below.

**Private School**

**Lesson 3, Pop Up : 22 January 2015**

- Teacher      What is the colour for this Pop Up?
- Student 2     Green because that guy in the Pop Up seems to be okay.
- Student 3     Green because I want to get the phone.
- Teacher      You want to get it. Are you sure it's free?**  
**So we'll listen to the students who chose yellow? Anyone in the class choose yellow?**
- Student 4     I choose yellow. I think they will use our picture to do something in inappropriate ways so we should be cautious.
- Student 5     I have heard the news that one lady is tricked because of a pop up like this. She gave her information but she didn't get the free iPhone.**
- Teacher      This is a good example.**  
**Do you believe them? Who has any other ideas?**

**Private School**

**Lesson 4, Circle of opportunities**

- Teacher      In this situation what colour do you think you should choose?**
- I will start with yellow first.**
- Student 1     If we post about my cat, I am worried the criminal will know my information.
- Teacher      You choose yellow because you are worried someone online will know about your personal information.**
- Student 2     Someone will use my cat story to do something in a bad way.
- Student 3     When we post and we publicize our address, if the criminal sees it, they can come to my house and kill my cat.
- Teacher      He said that if we write the blog and show the address, the criminal will know where you live. They may come to kidnap their cat or kill it.**
- Student 3     And they will kidnap me too.
- Student 4     There are good and bad sides in this situation I think. If someone sees the cat, particularly the criminal, they may steal our cat.**

- Teacher**            **It means there are good and bad sides in this situation. The risk is someone will steal your cat if they know where you live, because your cat is so lovely.**
- Student 5            I am worried that they will steal my cat. I had a bad experience because bad people stole my dog.
- Teacher**            **He told us his real experience -- he said that his dog was stolen. So if he writes a blog about his cat, he is worried that the situation will happen again. Good example. And now we will be going to green. Anyone in this class choose green?**
- Student 6            Me. I think it just shows that the cat doesn't need too much worry
- Student 4            Other people will know about the cat and when people read our blog they will know how lovely my cat is.
- Teacher**            **Good! You can share your good story with other people.**
- Student 5            It will make me popular.
- Teacher**            **Yes, this can make you famous!**

Dialogue 6.4: In digital literacy class in private school lesson 2

### Private School

#### Lesson 2, Online violence : 15 January 2015

- Teacher**            **If your friend slips over. What is the colour that you choose?**
- Student 1            Red. I don't want to upset my friend.
- Student 2            If we do that, this will make my friend upset. We shouldn't do it.
- Teacher**            **How do you solve the problem?**
- Student 3            Delete it and post another good picture
- Teacher**            **Anything else that you would like to do to deal with this situation?**
- Student 3            Apologize to my friend. I will tell her I won't do it again and I have already deleted it.
- Student 4            We should say sorry to our friend and delete the clip.
- Teacher**            **If your friend slipped over in front of you. What is the proper behaviour that you should do?**
- Student 5            Help them.
- Teacher**            **How can you help them?**
- Student 5            I will help her to stand up and take her to the hospital

Teacher     **Anyone have any other ideas?**  
Student 6    Help and support my friend.  
Teacher     **Well done**

The private school teacher did not pre-define the definition of online risks or opportunities for the children. In effect, she asked them to employ their own definitions of risks and opportunities, to fit with their own circumstances and experiences, while still encouraging a sense that some responses are to be more highly valued than others. The progressive teaching ethos in the private school came through very clearly, even in these simple interactions.

So what these first samples show is how assumptions about learning signpost solutions in different ways and shape how autonomously a child responds in relation to those solutions, often by colouring the classroom language interactions in subtle, but powerful, ways.

### **6.3.3 Students' responses**

Looking at students' responses will help us to identify the development of children's attitudes, knowledge and abilities in the situations that I observed.

#### **1) Public school: the 'good child' in seniority-based society**

##### **1.1) Obedient students in the digital literacy class**

The digital 'literacy' in public school focuses on teaching children to avoid online risks according to adult instructions. Most students of the public school explained their own opinions according to the teacher's instructions. I found that the students' answers typically came from the memorization of the teacher's instructions, rather than from their own understanding and solutions. In the interactions below, for example, they used the phrases 'stop, don't do, 'reject' and 'refuse' to explain how to safeguard themselves from undesirable online content and this comes from the teacher's signposting of expected responses.

*Girl 1:* 'We **shouldn't** release our stress, or be moody on Facebook. **We shouldn't take the pictures** when our friend makes some mistakes and post them on Facebook' (The public school)

*Girl 5:* ‘If someone asks for our personal information, such as our address and contact number, we **shouldn’t** fill in the form’ (The public school)

*Girl 7:* I learn how to use online media and the Internet. When the person who I have never met before asks me to be his or her friend, we **should refuse** him or her (The public school)

*Girl 10:* If we meet an online stranger, we **should refuse them.** (The public school)

*Girl 11:* We **shouldn’t use** the Internet to swear at our friends and tease a friend, such as posting inappropriate pictures on the Internet. **Don’t give our personal information** because it will not be safe. (The public school)

This is the language of proscription, of should, don’t, should not, and refusals. On the surface it seems benign enough, but it reflects, none the less, the communication to children of a proscriptive discursive framework that shapes the language they use and thus how they understand what their own most appropriate responses will be.

### **1.2) The taught response may not adapt to real online cases.**

The students of the public school chose the solutions that they remembered from what teachers said to them. In the interviews, it became evident that most students remembered the same solutions under various online circumstances. But the solutions from a teacher may not always be applicable within wider or differing online circumstances. Children evidently encountered this issue and their response to new circumstances tended to be the same – ask an adult.

*Student 1:* If we are not sure what should we do, **we should tell our parents and teachers or trusted adults** (The public school)

*Student 2:* If someone uses Facebook to swear at us, **we should tell trusted adults and ask them** how to solve the problem. (The public school)

*Student 3:* **We should tell our parents** if we see pop ups online. (The public school)

*Student 4:* We should delete it and **ask our parents** what we should do. (The public school)

*Student 5:* We shouldn't immediately click pop ups and **we can talk with our parents.** (The public school)

*Student 6:* If they ask for our personal information and credit card number, **we should tell parents, teachers and trusted adults.** (The public school)

Again, these are not inappropriate responses per se, and asking an adult will often be a good idea. But the repetition of this response often felt like parroting and, more seriously, exposes another aspect of the hidden curriculum – the teaching of a dependency on adult authority figures as the default position. This will become clearer in comparison with responses from the private school classroom.

As Buckingham argued, media education, of which digital literacy development is a variant, should start with the actual competencies of children (Buckingham, 2000), rather than the authority of adults. This is not in any sense to dismiss the latter, which would be simplistic, but rather to argue that literacy is built upon default foundations that determine how *independently* competent a child will ultimately become.

## **2) Private school: 'good child' revisited as the potentially independent child**

### **2.1) Children are developed with thinking abilities**

As we can see from the dialogue, the teacher played the role as a facilitator to encourage students to cope with challenging situations with their unique solutions. Thus, the children could summarize their own conceptual knowledge according to classroom teaching. As a result, I found that the student answers showed conceptual understanding because the teacher didn't define and design the meaning of risks and risks encountered, for them.

They used their own words such as 'don't believe', 'not be beguiled', 'be cautious', 'be careful' and 'prevent' to clarify the concept of preventative methods from online risks.

This came from the teacher who did not define what is good or, appropriate and inappropriate behaviour but she provided the freedom for children to discover their own answers. The teacher played the role to empower children to realize their own

power. The question from the teacher was not for judging but encouraging children to think about all possibilities.

The answers from children, after classroom teaching, are demonstrated below,

*Boy 2:* I learn how to **be careful** when I am using the Internet. (The private school)

*Boy 3:* I think about how to **prevent** the online risks. (The private school)

*Boy 12:* I have to know how to **prevent** myself falling for trickery online. (The private school)

*Boy 13:* How **to be safe** from online risks is important. (The private school)

*Boy 14:* **I want to be careful** when I am using online media. (The private school)

*Boy 9:* **Not be deceived** from stuff online. (The private school)

*Girl 4:* I want to know **how to be safe** from online risks. (The private school)

*Girl 8* **Be careful** with the bad persons online. (The private school)

*Boy 21:* **Don't be deceived** when I am using digital media. (The private school)

*Girl 21:* Digital literacy means **don't be gullible** about digital media. (The private school)

*Girl 16:* I learn not to too **easily believe** people on the Internet. (The private school)

When I compiled these lists of typical comments (of which there are many more in the same style), the contrast became clear between the two schools, and quite remarkably so. It became overwhelmingly evident that the children in the private school used language in a different way from those in the public school, when talking about their online lives. These children are using proactive rather than proscriptive language: they are talking about the care they should take, being aware of their own potential gullibility or susceptibility, what they can do to prevent harm befalling them. They are talking about exactly the same situations as the public

school children, but they are doing so using a different vocabulary. This vocabulary is clear evidence of an alternative hidden curriculum, manifesting itself in language: a curriculum of enablement rather than obedience to a ‘protective’ authority.

This may at first seem like quite a small difference. But when we combine it with “Girl 9” (from Chapter 4) and her concern about what part of her digital “self” she makes visible to adult scrutiny, an important picture is starting to emerge, one that we will explore more thoroughly in the next chapter but which can have one more dimension added to it at this point, thanks to the data gathered during the second fieldwork.

## **2.2) Children can extend their coping capacity to build digital resilience**

Another important finding was that the children of the private school demonstrated *confidence in their own ability* to cope with the various challenges of online life.

*Student 7:* If we don’t know if they are a good or bad person, we **should ask for information until we are sure if they are a bad person**’ (The private school)

*Student 8:* We **should ask for information. If there are some signs to show they are a bad person, I will stop chatting with them**’ (The private school)

*Student 9:* I am worried that a guy will ask for my personal information. I think if this guy is a good person, he can help me to study. **However, if I feel uncomfortable and there are some signs that I will take a risk, for example his starting to ask about my personal information, seeing my face, I will stop talking with him** and delete him from my friends’ (The private school)

*Student 10:* I haven’t known him much but I would like to talk with him. If **he is distrustful, I will stop talking with him**’ (The private school)

*Student 18:* **I don’t give out my personal information because somebody can stalk me to home or school**’ (The private school)

*Student 11:* **I will deal with my emotions first because I don’t want to respond always with the same behaviours.**’ (The private school)

These are the voices of confident children, who trust their own capability to respond to different situations. So the digital literacy module introduced into their classroom was an effective stimulus to think about a range of online situations, but the kind of learning that occurred was determined (far more than I anticipated) by the school and classroom culture, which is to say, by both how the classroom activity was framed, and how language reflected that framing.

#### **6.3.4 Key facilitators' perceptions**

##### **1) Public school: 'obedient' child is a pedagogic achievement**

The public school told me that the effectiveness of the digital literacy teaching resided in the fact that the students typically stopped using Facebook in order to protect themselves from meeting online strangers, according to her instruction. (Although one speculates that "Girl 9" would say she merely told the teacher this because it was what the latter wanted to hear.)

*Private school teacher:*

Now the students who pass the program are in Pratom 5 (elementary year 5) I notice that they change their behaviour when they are using the internet. This is because most students are my Facebook friends, so I can notice their changing behaviour. I notice that they don't curse their friend, argue or use impolite language with their friend on Facebook. Some children stop posting anything and someone stop using Facebook.' (30 June 2015.)

##### **2) Private school: 'independent' learner is a pedagogic achievement**

Conversely, the private school teacher played a constructive role that would encourage children to practise their thinking and reasoning processes and build their confidence.

*Private school teacher:*

If students think by themselves, the answers will be different and various because the answer can be red, yellow or green. For example, in the answer for online strangers who are foreigners, some children choose red because they think it will be risky and they don't want to talk with that person. But some students think they

can learn English from the westerner, and then when they start asking their personal information, they will give red. I think expecting only one answer is a limitation of their thinking development” (30 June 2015.)

This statement speaks for itself as a non-proscriptive adoption of the digital literacy module. In the hands of this kind of teacher it becomes a tool for thinking with. In a more proscriptive setting, the same classroom activities become contexts for instructing children in what is expected of them, especially in the “should not”.

## **6.4 Findings from visual ethnographic method**

I used the Visual Ethnographic method (Pink, 2012) by showing the video footage of the classroom teaching of the public and private schools to the informants, that is, two key facilitators and one educator. The facilitators watched the video footage of each classroom and gave their own opinions. I also showed the footage to the school administrator who is in the PAR team. The child and family development experts were also informants in this method.

### **6.4.1 Authority in classroom as a barrier to thinking development**

It was obvious that the teacher in the public school used her authority to instruct the class. The key informants noted that the public school teacher manipulated the classroom in order to position the children as passive and needing direction. The children in the public school attempted to present their own ways of coping with online problems by choosing more than one solution. However, the teacher interrupted their thinking process by ordering children to choose only one answer. It is not hard to conclude that, in all likelihood, cognitive development is impoverished as a consequence.

*The private school teacher A:*

I notice that in the public school, there are two teachers and I think one teacher has the role to help the key teacher to control students. However, in my opinion the important point is that we can't see the nature of the children. **Some children want to express their own different ideas but they are worried that it will be incorrect. As a consequence, they are not confident to express their own opinions.** (30 June 2015).

*CM-member Private School B:*

**There are two teachers in public school and I wonder how this will impact on children's self-expression. I notice that children in the public school do not feel absolutely free to answer.** When they raise the traffic light, they seem to be reluctant to raise it. I notice that there is one teacher who has the role to control the class. **I notice that the students of the public school choose to tell the answer that they think the teacher will be happy with, rather than from their real thinking. So we can't see the different ideas in public school** because they possibly are worried that their answers and reasons will be wrong and different from the teachers' expectations. (1 July 2015)

*PAR Expert 5:*

**The answers from students of the public school are not diversified but the students of the private school have a variety of answers.** Some of them choose different colours. Noticeably, there are some students in public school who choose two colours, **I think their ideas are very interesting, but the public school teacher told them 'You have to choose only one colour.'** So we can't see their different ideas because they are not confident to express their different opinions anymore. (3 July 2015)

What this fieldwork material has strongly reinforced is the idea that digital literacy pedagogy is not 'objective' or 'neutral' but is framed by cultural and social practices (A. Bjørgen & O. Erstad, 2015; Green, 2014; Livingstone & Haddon, 2009; Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2014).

Buckingham has stated that:

Schooling is a social institution that effectively constructs and defines what it means to be a child – all in various ways serving to reinforce and to naturalize particular assumptions about what children are and should be. As a result, children may be unable to act in any other way simply because they have not had the opportunity to do so. It is in this sense that discourse in general can be said to produce behaviour rather than simply reflecting it. (Buckingham, 2000, p. 197)

The transmission of a hidden curriculum behind any overt curriculum initiative introduces a fundamentally complicating factor into any attempt at educational

enhancement. Where the choice is between, broadly speaking, a hidden curriculum of proscription and a hidden curriculum of encouraging proactive learners, the same learning tools will have very different results. Where the hidden curriculum is discursively expressed, as so evidently here, the behaviours produced may be very different.

## **6.5 Fieldwork conclusion**

Digital literacy is not a personal capability but is a level of achievement. So, children who have literacy in this sense should have the competence to access, analyse, evaluate, create and participate in online media (Aufderheide, 1993 as cited in Hobbs, 1998, p. 16).

However, the two periods of fieldwork show that the educational culture tends to provide a setting in which students experience and practise the literacy that a society expects. Therefore, the achievement of literacy comprises a set of culturally regulated competencies that specify not only what is known, but also what is normatively valued as disapproved or approved of. In the state or public school. I researched in this stage of the fieldwork the literacy schooling is framed by the seniority value embedded in Thai culture.

Buckingham emphasises that:

Literacy is a phenomenon that is only realized in and through social practices of various kinds, and it therefore takes different forms in different social and cultural contexts. (Buckingham see in Livingstone, 2009, p. 191)

Thus it can be said that digital literacy is not simply about what is taught in a classroom, but it is determined by classroom culture and context, where the latter becomes ultimately a question of societal context. On the evidence presented here, that broader context reveals a fundamental tension. The recommendation must be that this tension itself will have to be addressed if meaningful digital literacy enhancements are to occur across the Thai educational system.

A cautionary note is necessary, however, about this chapter's findings around the proactive child. In the classroom transcript extracts above, this assumed

proactiveness was demonstrated almost entirely by what we might think of as a flexible language performance: the private school teacher typically praised a particular use of language in which situations were being described as multifaceted and generated more than one response or idea. She had an “ideal” in mind, on this evidence, of flexible language performances as indicators of underpinning capability.

To return to the issues raised at the end of the first fieldwork, it is important to relate those to these findings about the two hidden curricula: the proscriptive orientation and the proactive orientation, which we have found in the different school cultures. At first sight, this seems to be saying that the public and private schools are unreceptive and receptive environments respectively, for this kind of educational development. So, any recommendations arising from this research would seem predetermined to work in one setting and not in the other. But deeper reflection on the two sets of fieldwork data suggests a slightly different reading of them.

Both schools idealize the child in the same way. The proscriptive orientation seeks to protect this idealized child. The proactive orientation seeks to encourage this idealized child. The children in the public school are constructed to be ‘dek dee’ for seniority culture, while the students of the private school are produced to be the good citizen for international policy.

This is not, then, a simple matter of the public versus the private culture. Thus we can notice that in the private school, the achievement of digital literacy is framed by the hegemonic discourse of effective education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Biesta (2013) argued that this is the misunderstanding of education because “education isn’t a mechanism and shouldn’t be turned into one” (p.4). So, in both cases the education, child-centred or not, is predominantly playing the role of restricting children to homogeneous identities as ‘good’ or ‘competent’ children.

So, it becomes a matter of seeing that these different cultures share the same problem, the idealization of the Thai child. This is a problem because both hidden curricula then tend to underestimate the value of letting the child be a child in an un-idealized sense (Girl 9 from the previous chapter), in order to develop an authentic form of resiliency, rather than either the over-protected child (with

“parroted” or inflexible language performances) or the proactive child held to a standard of flexible language performance that may or may not signal underlying capabilities. The potentially resilient children in the two school cultures may still be potentially independent and resilient in much the same ways. It is this potential that any educational initiative has to tap into, and this would seem to entail adopting a non-idealized conception of the Thai child, as well as finding out whether language performances are indicators of the kinds of resilience, or lack of resilience, that this research has begun to prioritize. Although the latter may be beyond the scope of the present research, this issue will be revisited in the next chapter in terms of differing “codes” of literacy.

## CHAPTER 7

### “MANY MEN, RESPECT MANY MINDS”

#### (NA-NA-JIT-TANG)

### 7.1 Introduction

In undertaking this project on the teaching of digital literacy in Thailand, I have found that my attention has gradually become focused on the model of desirable interactions between children and adults, especially the relationship between children and teachers, which currently guide Thai education. This is most evident, in my sample, in the public schools although it also has influence in the more internationally-oriented private schools. Most of the existing work on media literacy in Thailand has claimed that Thai children lack the necessary critical abilities and self-reliant competencies to cope with online risks without ‘paternalistic’ interventions. For example the report from the Media & Information Literacy (MIL) curriculum project, supported by UNESCO, claimed that Thai children do not display, in class, the kind of good judgement needed to use media effectively and responsibly (Nupairoj, 2013; Siricharoen & Siricharoen, 2012). The recent report, *Reviews of National Policies for Education in Thailand, an OECD UNESCO Perspective, 2016* informed that Thai students have not yet fully attained the levels of computer, information processing, and related communication skills required for the 21st century. Thai students have reportedly less confidence and fewer abilities in the use of ICT than those in most other countries<sup>7</sup>. So, the report recommended adoption of the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for digital literacy enhancement.

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<sup>7</sup>In 2013, Thailand participated in the International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS), which tested the digital skills of 14-year-old students in 23 countries (Box 6.1; Fraillon et al., 2014). Thai students finished second from the bottom on the study, above only Turkey. Among Thai students, 64% scored below the lowest level of ICT proficiency, 23% scored at the lowest level (Level 1), 11% scored at Level 2 (the proficiency level of most students in other participating countries), 2% scored at Level 3 and none reached Level 4, the highest level (OECD/UNESCO, 2016 p.252).

However, this present research has begun to ask whether previous observations of this kind, in effect, see only what the classroom culture permits, and not what the children are capable of. Being a culturally conservative society, for the most part, the example of Thailand brings into sharp focus the question of adult perceptions of the child and how these affect educational attitudes and practices, especially around the extension of literacy education into the digital media domain. Furthermore, the fact that a massive growth in connectivity in Thailand is counterbalanced by underdevelopment in competency has to be judged against the background of post-development studies' critique of the 'international expert' paradigm, as discussed in Chapter 2 and hence the degree of underdevelopment may be overstated if only judged according to that paradigm. More training, on the international model, will not necessarily allow more or different competencies to show themselves at classroom level. In order to understand what we might now think of as the cultural constraints on competency, it may be useful to consider an example of a specific convergence of digital practices and technology, to see what it tells us.

My fieldwork produced the necessary evidence to explore this more fully.

## **7.2 Digital resilience is not technological determinism but social determinism**

The growth of online usage seems to provide opportunities for Thai children to develop their knowledge and skills in digital literacy and resilience. It can be seen that the Thai State has been promoting Internet infrastructure that aims to provide digital opportunities in education. Moreover, my finding shows that Smartphones have helped to bridge divides in technological accessibility among the young generation. Thus, it could be simply concluded that Thai children are being fostered to engage in risky opportunities that will enhance their digital literacy and digital resilience. However, my study has pointed out that encountering online risks is a contextualized and complex process, and there is variance between children and adults in how they conceptualize the risk definition (Staksrud, 2013). So, cultural context and practices need to be taken into account (Hasebrink, 2014; Livingstone et al., 2015; Smahel & Wright, 2014). A good example of this can be seen in how there are different perceptions of sexuality, from the child's perspective

and from an adult's perspective, and therefore the evaluation of online risks is framed by the notion of the 'good child' in Thai society. In my sample, the children were upset by accidentally encountering sexual materials because such exposure is understood by adults to be inappropriate behaviour for 'a good child' or 'dek dee'. Consequently, there are frequent diffusions of moral panic around violence and sexual content in public policy in Thai society. The risk experiences are avoided in order to protect the children from being perceived as not being 'good' as much as from any imagined direct harm that might be caused by them.

So we have to ask, are the concepts of 'dek dee' and 'competent child', as characterized in schooling, contested or resisted by the children themselves? This might be the reason why less than one percent of children in my study chose to talk with the teacher when they encountered online risks. In addition, only a small proportion of Thai children said that they accessed the Internet in school (despite ease of access there) – perhaps they are conscious of the *surveillance* inherent in the prevailing ideology? Most of my respondents mentioned that if they talk about risky circumstances with the teachers, they will not be seen as 'dek dee'. That is, they fear being judged as not meeting the character standards of the school and society; they fear that adults will think they deliberately seek out online experiences that they do not have the resources to handle.

This finding perhaps represents one manifestation of the "mismatch: (Fleming, 2008, p. 62) between the childhood ideologies in seniors' perceptions and children's feelings about themselves, between the offline world, school and social setting, and the online world

### **7.3 Different teaching/school paradigm styles in Thailand**

#### **7.3.1 Good child ('dek dee') naturalized through the traditional classroom teaching**

The finding from my Fieldwork Number 2 reflects the fact that Thai students in public school are positioned as subordinated subjects in a proscriptive orientation. The children are typically labelled as immature, naughty, disobedient and disorderly: they are seen as needing adults to train and control them to become more

mature, orderly and polite. The learner is expected to strive to be ‘dek dee’, demonstrating discipline and obedience under the regulation of seniors in the classroom and society.

So, students perceive the teacher as an authority figure who has the right to frame them to be ‘dek dee’ (a good child). The teacher has the authority to control them, to discipline them, and to urge them to perform properly, in response to social expectations, as an obedient citizen. The good children or ‘dek dee’ have to sit properly, listen attentively, participate during the class, raise their hands and generally do things the teacher has told them to do. As Fleming (2008) argued that “the good child is a particular cultural invention” (p. 62), so, the school is a social institution to reinforce and to naturalize assumptions about children, about what children are, and should be, rather than simply reflecting it (Buckingham, 2000). So it can be said that compliant students are the cultural product of such Thai educational practices and institutions.

In addition, it is often obvious in the data that a good child in public school is expected to believe in the seniors’ words, without questioning. The successful learner is a student who answers the questions in a way that conforms to the teacher’s solutions. The power of authoritative knowledge, to attribute right and wrong, and to provide appropriate and inappropriate solutions for children, can block a child’s learning behaviour as demonstrated by the evidence in Chapter 6 *Fieldwork in Thailand Number 2*. In the digital area of their lives and study, a number of students used some methods to protect themselves from online risks - for instance, by stopping using the Internet and thereby refusing the potential for harm, in a manner similar to the teacher’s instructions. The evidence showed that the students’ opinions, in these cases, came from the beliefs of teachers rather than from identifying and reflecting on their own individual solutions.

During the fieldwork, the PAR team often reiterated that ‘dek dee’ has been regarded as one of the ‘10 national values of a good citizen’, since 1955 and had been reinforced again, in 2014, as a National Value. In addition, the Basic Education Core Curriculums 2008 prescribed the desirable characteristics of a learner: for example, showing respect and gratitude to seniors as well as loyalty to the nation, religion, and cherishing Thai-ness in basic education (The Ministry of

Education, 2008, p. 11). There was a high level of awareness of these facts amongst the adults in my research. Even though Thailand, over this period, had supposedly transformed the educational system from teacher-centred to child-centred, evidently the ‘dek dee’ ideology still reflects the power relationships between seniors and juniors, in a whole system of Thai pedagogy, within the public school system. It is a national value, an educational policy, an administrative system, and a determinant of classroom teaching. The ‘dek dee’ discourse mandates the hierarchical power relationship in schooling to construct and reproduce the ‘dek dee’ ideology in order to valorize a seniority-based society. However, the concept of ‘dek dee’ has been uncontested or reinterpreted and then aligned with the concept of the ‘competent’ child, taken from International educational frameworks.

### **7.3.2 The ‘competent’ child is shaped by international standardization**

My findings in relation to digital literacy, in a proactive orientation, demonstrated that the private school tends to provide a setting in which students experience and practise critical abilities to cope with challenging situations themselves, thus building digital resilience. The key factor is that children are positioned as competent people who can make their own judgements when encountering and solving the problems under their own circumstances, autonomously. So, the students can exercise their own thinking and have responsibility for their own decisions, while also developing courage and confidence to venture into challenging experiences.

In classroom teaching, the teacher ideally plays the role as a facilitator to empower children to discover their own coping capacity to deal with risky situations by using their critical abilities. Facilitators empower children to reflect and discover their individual answers and coping strategies. So, the ‘good child’ samples from a private school reveal a *potentially competent* learner who can exercise his or her own thinking capacity, and have responsibility for their own decisions, in order to develop confidence to venture into challenging experiences

The relationship between teacher and students is based on children’s ability and experiences, rather than the authority of seniority. The good child, here, engaged in discussing and even disagreeing with adults’ opinions. So, the reconceived ‘good

child' personality is valued here for the autonomy, independence and creativity shown, without worrying about making mistakes that will be corrected. My study has shown that these kinds of children are able to enhance their own practical applications of literacy and to cope themselves with their own individual circumstances of online use, rather than drawing only on the teacher's expectations.

The study concludes that the different character of the good child, in different school contexts, reinforces the different assumptions about what the good child definition is in classroom teaching. The good child in a private school context may not always, or consistently, be the person who is expected to be obedient and conform to authority. Conversely, they may be expected to have a capacity for critical reflection, decision-making and independent action. So we see in the National Curriculum, that schools are required to develop the learner's competencies in communication, thinking, problem-solving, life skills and technological competencies for the world community (The Ministry of Education, 2008). So, the learning practices of the public schools, however, obviously reproduced the hierarchical relation between students and teachers. This form of schooling may develop baseline digital literacy (e.g. technical skills) but is limited in its capacity to develop the cognitive proficiency, coping skills, self-reliance, and self-governance required in children, in order for them to be digitally resilient. On the evidence presented here, the private schools in Thailand seem likely to foster resilience defined in this way.

Boontinand and Petcharamesree (2017) argued that:

“There are tensions in the education system for preparing youngsters to become patriotic, obedient, and conforming citizens, on the one hand, and non-dogmatic, critical, and valuing diversity, on the other” (p. 2)

Therefore, the findings from Fieldwork Number 1 and 2 shows that Thai children, in both public and private schools, are idealized into homogeneous categories derived from each educational setting. The children of the public school are constructed as the 'dek dee' to support seniority values, while the children of the private school are produced as 'the competent child', a model which represents a successful outcome for international universal indicators, by possessing the

desirable qualities of a citizen for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, digital literacy enhancement is expressed in relation to the dominant meanings of childhood ideologies in Thai society.

#### **7.4 The transformation of schooling to enhance digital resilience**

So, I am coming to the conclusion that Thai children should be liberated to construct their own cultures (Buckingham, 2000; Fleming, 1996). In relation to this issue, Bernstein (1974) suggested that elaborated codes facilitate an elaboration of the individual's experience. The facilitators liberate children to express their individual unique experiences and alternative solutions.

This study emphasizes the need to consider the sociocultural context of educating children to be digitally resilient. But more precisely, it has suggested that there are two codes - the restricted code and the elaborated code (Bernstein, 1974), as it were, for a good child for seniority culture and a 'competent child' for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (as a discursive and practical construction of the child as a cultural concept) and these map onto classroom codes or 'languages' of interaction between adult and child. Where children are liberated to take responsibility, to cope themselves, in their own way (d'Haenens et al., 2013; Przybylski, Mishkin, Shotbolt, & Linington, 2014; Third et al., 2014), the 'language' of literacy may be what can be termed, an 'elaborated' one. On the other hand, some children may be confined to largely passive roles and instrumental skills (Wyver et al., 2010) and this may occur where the language of 'literacy' is a 'restricted' one.

It is obvious that the children in the two public schools in my sample are reinforced and naturalized as innocent and incompetent persons who cannot cope, by themselves, with challenging online experiences. The teacher holds the central power of regulation and knowledge and the children are submissive to their authority. They are reinforced and measured as passive recipients, who are not able to think independently as autonomous persons. The children are constructed as obedient citizens, through traditional classroom teaching. Particularly in public schooling, the number of alternatives for identity-construction are often severely limited and strong controls are put on digital behaviour (in official contexts like

school, at least) because of the fear that it will impact negatively on the construction of acceptable identities.

However, in the private school in my sample, there seemed to have been success in enhancing digital literacy and resilience, because the children demonstrated their critical abilities and coping skills with online risk experiences. However, my study shows that the children are restricted to a singular identity, which is ‘the competent child’, framed by the effective schooling from education production. Children who are confined by restricted codes of digital literacy are trained in ICT skills but are inhibited in making their own judgments because their critical abilities are codified by their schooling and their culture. Bernstein (1974) demonstrated that the restricted code offers little variety or exercise in decision-making. The socialising agencies are well defined and structured so, in practice, you find a restricted code in both private and public schools.

The pedagogic achievement of public school is the obedient citizen, or ‘dek dee’, in the seniority culture. In private school, the good child and the production of competent children for the 21st century are similar concepts. Neither of them allow the growth of ‘real’ (as in freely chosen) identities for Thai citizens. Therefore, although the information, provided by my child informants, showed that they often had rich and thoughtful ‘lives’ online, the existence of the resilience and adaptability, many of them already possessed, was typically not recognized by adults.

This conclusion is supported by previous studies showing that digital literacy competences are not only what is known, but also what is normatively valued as disapproved of and inappropriate by adults (Snyder, 2007 as cited in Livingstone, Wijnen, Papaioannou, Costa, & del Mar Grandío, 2013, p. 348). So, the literacy, in both classrooms, is the ‘good manners’ as defined by adults and practiced by children (Buckingham, 2000; Drotner & Livingstone, 2008; Fleming, 2008). The ability to deal with online risks is not due to their real competence but is shaped by, what I have called ‘the childhood ideology’, embedded throughout schooling (Buckingham, 2000; Hasebrink, 2014; Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2016; Tsaliki et al., 2014). This study has concluded, however, that literacy is not an individual

achievement, but is dependent on the pedagogic and social contexts in which ‘technologies’ of literacy are used in specific ways.

Consequently, schooling, in offline practice, has been dominated by childhood ideologies framed by both seniority value and international conceptualization, with this narrow focus limiting Thai children to a set of identities around digital literacy learning, based on the good citizen model.

These findings significantly challenge the generalized assertions about Thai children’s lack of competence, critical ability and immaturity, as asserted by the MIL project and UNESCO reports. If digital literacy is discursively framed as being ICT skills, risk-avoidance, and compliance with social norms (the restricted code), then these reports may be identifying a social failing, not a children failing. The digital literacy prescriptions from outsiders, identified as the correct answer for everyone, just reflect the dominant power to provide ‘appropriate’ tools according to Universalist standardization. As a result, Thai society has never had real opportunities to discover and construct its own genuinely appropriate concepts and techniques of digital literacy, to fit within the Thai context. So, it is up to the ability of individuals, groups, institutions, organizations and societies to define and design their own concepts and strategies, to fit within their specific, particular, circumstances.

### **7.5 The potential for renegotiating the concept of the ‘good child’**

If digital literacy is discursively framed as resilience in ICT-mediated situations, acceptance of risky opportunities and coping rather than compliance, with potential for questioning norms and standardization (the elaborated code), then children in Thailand may be discovered to have untapped potential. Thai children can enhance their strong sense of autonomy, as competent learners, because they are free from restrictive codification in terms of knowledge and cultural values. Thus, digital media education should release children to discover their real competencies and identities in the schooling, public space. So, children should be given opportunities, via an elaborated code of digital literacy, which can expand their coping capacity to be truly resilient.

To finish my research by considering these challenges further, I interviewed three experts: (1) Dr. Vachararutai Boontinand, Lecturer, Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University; (2) Mr Sanphasit Koompraphan, former member, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child; and (3) Mr.Kriang Titijumroenpon, Vice Principal, The Prince Royal's College.

In the first interview, Dr Boontinand offered a complex argument for what she termed ‘cognitive responsibilities’. By this she meant that the responsibilities of being a citizen should go beyond what she referred to as the ‘patchwork’ of occasional contributions:

Education has to produce a new consciousness of civic processes and the potential for critical engagement with structural relationships in society. Responsible citizenship is not only ‘patchwork’, such as volunteering. But schooling should create the citizen who thinks critically and is able to analyze the cause of problems – this represents their “cognitive responsibilities” as citizens. (Boontinand, 11 May 2017).

The kind of digital resilience that has ultimately been argued for in this project, dependent as it is on an elaborated code of literacy, is clearly a component of the “cognitive responsibility” that will have to be developed in learners if we are to effect this long-term change in educational values.

Biesta (2013) suggested education should contribute to the ways in which children and young people can become the subjects of action and responsibility, but yet do not become selfish and self-centred, or ‘Subjectified’. So, under such a perspective, Thai young people could become independent and autonomous, as well as having responsibility for other human beings and the natural world.

This argument is in line with the second of my final group of interviewees, Koompraphan, who pointed out that civic participation is fundamentally reliant on cognitive development. It is thinking skills that are needed, not disciplined attitudes per se: ‘If we only use authority in teaching, we can’t call that “education’ (Koompraphan, 11 May 2017). Similarly, Tidijumreonporn asserted that if adults only use power to control children’s attitudes, it will be difficult to enhance critical

thinking (Tidijumreoporn, 2014). Nevertheless, Boontinand argued that it is not easy to move away from structurally unequal power relationships, between children and adults, in order to renegotiate the ‘good child’ concept:

I have been hit back by some people who ask simplistically, why is respect for seniors not good? I said respect for seniors is not the problem, but I explain that believing “authority”, without question, is the problem. Sometimes we disagree with what we are told, but we *cannot argue* and as a result a constructive solution will never happen. So we need children to show appropriate humility, but also listen to, and think about people’s opinions, rather than just “hear” their age or status. Adults also have to reciprocate, by listening to children and taking them seriously. (Boontinand, 11 May 2017).

This is also in keeping with Tidijumreoporn’s view: “We would like to teach children respect, but they should also be courageous when they express their own views” (Tidijumreoporn, 2014). Koompraphan also said that “humility in the Thai context should not mean being under control, but rather that children should express their strong arguments with respect for seniors’ knowledge, not just age or status”. (Koompraphan, 2017)

These interviews, with significant opinion influencers, suggest that scope does exist for renegotiating the concept of the ‘good child’ in keeping with the central argument of this thesis. But it will be the proposed link between cognitive processes and social responsibility that makes all the difference: enhanced thinking skills are needed to underpin forms of critical consciousness that can be both appropriately humble and independent-minded, at the same time.

## **7.6 Many Men Many Minds in the Zone of Negotiation**

My study has found that in the *online world*, the children can exceed their emotional and social literacy from risky opportunities. Some of them develop positive coping strategies from, for example, encountering sexual online experiences and online aggression; coping with them affords them digital resilience. Thus, several studies suggest that children should encounter some degree of risks, in order to experience the positive side of risk-taking, which is to expand their coping capacity and

develop their self-knowledge as healthy risk takers (d'Haenens et al., 2013; Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; Renn, 2004; Third et al., 2014).

Further, according to my findings, such a wise provision of freedom will result in children developing resilience, that in turn, contributes to grown-up-ness,' which then contributes to the 'formation' of the person.

*In the offline world*, Biesta (2013a) suggested that education should provide a way in which children can have freedom from a limited set of identities, such as that of the good citizen or the effective life-long learner (Biesta, 2013a, p. 2).

Similarly, Peuy argued against the use of a singular ideology, in education or in any environment, as this is the way that authoritarians can use to force people to think and act in the same way, which is called 'unanimity'. The concept of the 'good child', for a seniority culture, and the 'competent child', for global society, have to be considered as based on this assumption of unanimity. However, in the digital age, children are developing their own sense of identity when they encounter risks and opportunities in online media, and consequently there are challenges to reform the public space of education, State, and family to let children engage in risky behaviour in order to achieve resilience and then discover their own identities.

This is the reason why we have to listen to Girl 9 again,

You should make us feel free when using the Internet ... [or] the children will close their real identity because they need to hide some parts that they think adults will not be happy with. But, adults will never discover the real identity of the child'  
(The private A, 20/1/14)

Consequently, my study suggested that Thailand should have a 'Zone of Negotiation', a zone that develops mutual respect and a sharing of power between seniors and juniors. This would be a zone where two or more groups listen to and respect each other, because we have different minds (mental competencies) or, in terms of a well-known Thai saying: "many men, so many minds" (Na-na-jit-tang) .

Because each person has his or her own mind and experience, which is unique, so the aims of education should not be restricted to the production of identities for children made from strict cultural values and universalist standardization. Thai children have the right to think independently, to express their own voices without the restriction of age, status or gender, etc. Thai seniors would benefit from listening to their voices and provide a liberal space for children to take risks (with the support both of their peers and adults, to construct their own identity).

My study demonstrates some light from the teachers in private school, who liberate the children from the meaning of ‘good child’, that can be subjected to a process of negotiation as follows,

*Private school teacher:*

**If students think by themselves, the answer will be different and varied because the answer can be red, yellow or green.** For example the answer for an online stranger who is a foreigner, some children choose red because they think it will be risky and they don’t want to talk with that person. But some students think they can learn English from the westerner, and then when they start asking for their personal information, they will give red. I think having only one answer is a limitation on their thinking development. **So the teacher should listen to what is the reason that they use to support their thought.** (Private school teacher, 30 June 2015.)

The school can thus play the role of waking up the ‘monster’, a role (not a dangerous one) which involves respecting the many minds of people around them. As Biesta (2013a) suggested, education should not be the perfect match of input and output resulting in effective production (p. 2). Education should always involve risks because students are not to be positioned as objects to be moulded and disciplined, but as subjects of action and responsibility (p. 1). This is a new understanding of the child, but one which already has connections with Thai culture through the life and thoughts of Peuy Ungaphorn, as well as being backed by the findings from my fieldwork.

## 7.7 Conclusion

This research project has discovered that what happens with the potentially contested cluster of values called ‘dek dee’ and ‘competent child’ in Thai society. It is likely to determine whether digital literacy initiatives will do more than (a) train in ICT skills and (b) try to operationalize the universalist ‘standards’ promoted by development agencies with an interest in Thailand’s shortfall in this regard. Rather than accepting that there is only one, universal definition of literacy, the research has reached the conclusion that digital literacy is coded in two ways – one restricted, the other elaborated – and that this coding tends to map strongly onto the differing value systems, and pedagogical orientations, of the public and private school sectors in Thailand. The elaborated code of digital literacy ultimately replaces the term literacy itself, in favour of the notion of digital resilience.

The classroom module developed for the project’s fieldwork clearly exposed this restricted code in action, when the module was adopted, but framed by both local cultural values and international standardization. If the latter is a clear instance of the adult world’s discursive construction of the child, it will only be from such renegotiations that the truly resilient, Thai digital citizen of the future will emerge.

In conclusion, we can say that the concept of resiliency absorbs and supersedes the other ways of thinking about digital literacy, as summarized at the beginning of Chapter 1. Resiliency is a way of children responding to challenges within a protective system of the right kind: one that is non-judgemental of the child, open to risk, but responsive when risk becomes detrimental. Digital resiliency is not about risks versus opportunities, but about encountering risky opportunities where education affords spaces, to do so safely and productively.

The piloted digital literacy module can be judged in this light. It was neither successful nor unsuccessful in itself in “promoting” an enhancement of digital literacy because, in the end, it exposed a flaw in that way of thinking about education. Instead, digital resiliency has emerged from this project as a better way of thinking, where the resiliency is a complex capacity to respond openly within situations, where risks and opportunities may be interwoven, and these situations may include the classroom itself, as well as personal, familial, and other social

spaces and situations. In such complex situations, no set of teaching and learning tools can be separated from the codes, cultures and hidden curricula that determine their effectiveness.

Thus, the public spaces, such as State, school, family and international agencies, would do well to provide the space for children to discover their own identities. So, the spaces of Thai education could be opened, allowing children, many of whom already have skill and experience in the digital world, to enter the seniors' world. The seniors should allow children to encounter online risks in education and in online work: as a result they will develop their real rationality, consciousness and capability to carry out their cognitive responsibilities, to both Thai society, and the world around them.

I would like to finish this chapter with the speech by The Late King Rama IX that he gave to Thai people on 31 December in 1976 after the 1973 Thai Popular Uprising.

‘The Thai People have clearly expressed their wishes. With this, there is a common understanding and there is an opportunity to work together in order to fulfil our aspiration. Although there may be obstacle along the way. We can overcome them as long as we sincerely cooperate with one another... Those who have duties and responsibilities must tend to them and successfully fulfil them to the best of their potential with honesty, with compassion, compromise and goodwill. Our collective work will soon lead to success and a lasting development for our nation.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### **Case studies: 2D cartoon animation**

2.1 The media and classroom activities consisted of four sessions with 10 case studies. The case study was based on true stories recounted by children from Fieldwork Number 1 consisting of:

Lesson 1: Online friends or strangers: meeting new contacts online

Lesson 2: Online violence: online conflict and teasing online

Lesson 3: Think before clicking: Pop-ups online and data misuse

Lesson 4: Online opportunities: The benefits of online media

The case studies were designed as 2D cartoon animation by Mr. Panitan Chartamphai, animator, research assistant, and uploaded to a website [www.smartkid-d.com](http://www.smartkid-d.com) by Mr. Peerawich Phaknonkul, web programmer and designer. The teacher used these in actual classroom activities. The 10 case studies are demonstrated below.

## Lesson 1: Online friends or strangers: meeting new contacts online

Video clip 1 lesson 1: Online friends or strangers: Meeting new contacts online

Topics	Process
<p><b>Video clip 1</b> <b>Case study 1</b></p>	<div> </div> <p>Situation 1: While you are using Face book, someone sent a request to you to add him/her as his friend.</p> <div> </div>
	<div> </div> <p>Hello (Sawaddee)</p>



Please add me to be your friend (send friend request)



Mr. Smile sent a request to you

Confirm      Not now



Have I known him before?



Why does he want to be my friend?

นักเรียนคิดว่าสถานการณ์นี้เป็นอย่างไร?

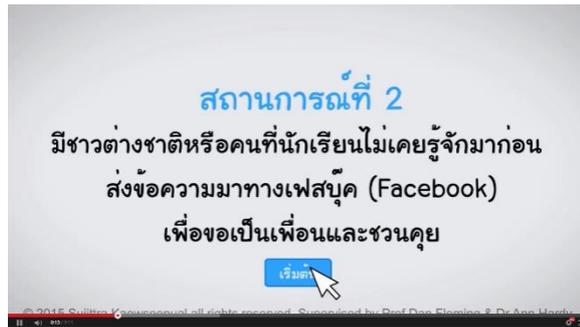


What do you think about this situation?

Red : risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green: Safety/ appropriate

**Video clip 2**

**Case study 2**



Situation 2: A foreigner or someone who you have never met face to face before sent a friend's request to your inbox (on Facebook Chatroom) and she/he wants to chat with you



Hello (Sawaddee)



I want to be your friend



Sure



I want to be your friend too



Great! I think you are so lovely.



What is your name? Where do you live? Start the camera, I would like to see your lovely face.



Have I known him before?



If I start the camera and chat with him, what will be happening?



What do you think of this situation?

Red : risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green: Safety/ appropriate

## Lesson 2: Online violence: online conflict and teasing online

Video clip 3 lesson 2: Online violence: Online conflict and teasing online

Topics	Process
<p><b><u>Video clip 3</u></b> <b>Case study 3</b></p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Situation 3: You take a video of your friend who slips over, and share it on Facebook</p>
	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Shame !!! Clumsy !! (posted by other people on Facebook)</p>



Are you ok?



Why did you 'like' this about me?

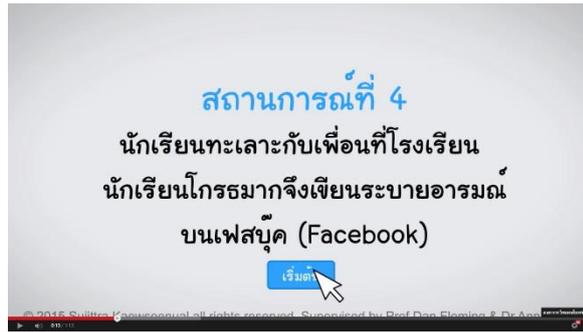


What do you think about this situation?

Red : risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green: Safety/ appropriate

**Video clip 4**

**Case study 4**



Situation 4: You argue with your friend at school, then you get angry, you post your feelings on Face book



It's not my fault ! It's your fault ! (in classroom)



No! It's not my fault ! It's your fault ! (In classroom)



I hate you ! (At home)



Idiot! Have to post it now !!!! (At home)



I hate you! Idiot !! (post it on Face book)



Dump him (posted by other people on Face book).



Why do you do this ?!

นักเรียนคิดว่าสถานการณ์นี้เป็นอย่างไร?

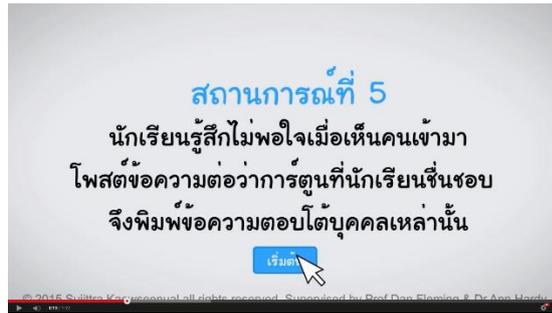


What do you think about this situation?

Red : risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green: Safety/ appropriate

**Video clip 5**

**Case study 5**



Situation 5: You are not happy when you see someone comment on your favorite cartoon character. So you comment back to those people.



What are they doing ???



I have to fight back now !!



Idiot !!!! (post it on Face book)



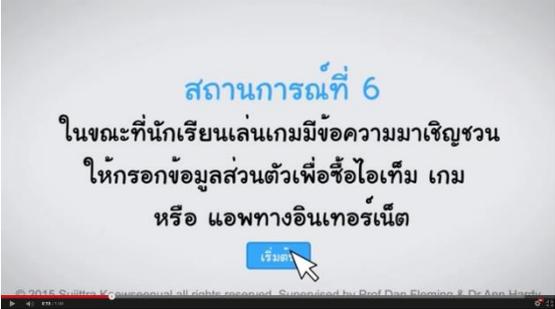
Why did you say that about my cartoon !!!! (post it on Face book)  
 Suck cartoon !!!!! (post it on Face book)



What do you think about this situation?  
 Red : risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green: Safety/ appropriate

### Lesson 3: Think before clicking: Pop ups online and data misuse

Video clip 6 lesson 3: Think before clicking: Pop ups online and data misuses

Topics	Process
<p><b>Video clip 6</b></p> <p><b>Case study 6</b></p>	 <p>Situation 6: While you are playing games, there are pop-ups inviting you to fill in your personal information to buy games, items, and apps.</p>
	
	 <p>Awesome !</p>



If you want to win the game. Buy it Now !!!



Should I give my personal information to them?



What will happen if I give them my personal information?



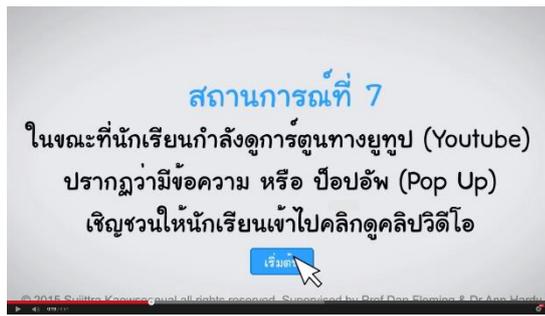
What do you think about this situation?

Red : risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green: Safety/ appropriate

**Video clip 7**

**Case study**

7



Situation 7: While you are watching cartoons on YouTube. A pop-up inviting you to click video link is popping up on your smart phone



Click now ! It's much more fun !!!!



Should I click ?



What's going to happen if I click to go to it?



What do you think about this situation ?

Red : risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green: Safety/ appropriate

## Lesson 4: Online opportunities: The benefits of online media

Video clip 8 lesson 3: Online opportunities: The benefits of online media

Topics	Process
<p><b>Video clip 8</b></p> <p><b>Case study 8</b></p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>สถานการณ์ที่ 8 นักเรียนเขียนเล่าเรื่องราว "เจ้าเหมียว" แมวที่รักทางเว็บไซต์</p> <p>เริ่มดู</p> </div> <p>Situation 8: You write a story about your beloved cat on your personal blog</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>เขียนบล็อกเรื่อง เจ้าเหมียวที่น่ารักดีกว่า</p> </div> <p>My cat is so lovely. I want to show him to other people</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>น่ารักจังเลย</p> <p>log ๒.เหมียวๆ 3 Followers</p> </div> <p>So cute</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>เจ้าแมว น้อย เหมียว ง่ายๆ</p> <p>ดูเจี๊องจังเลย</p> </div> <p>Pussy, Pussy. It's nice.</p>

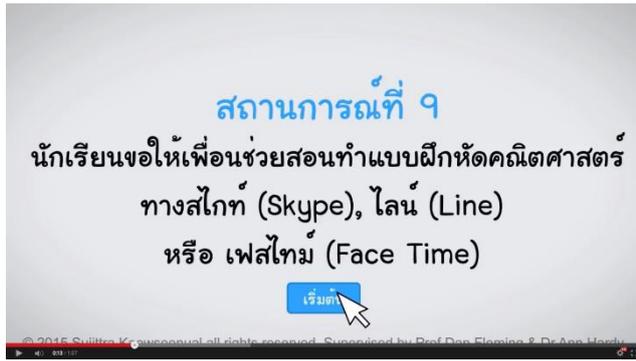


What do you think about this situation?

Red : risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green: Safety/ appropriate

**Video clip 9**

**Case study 9**



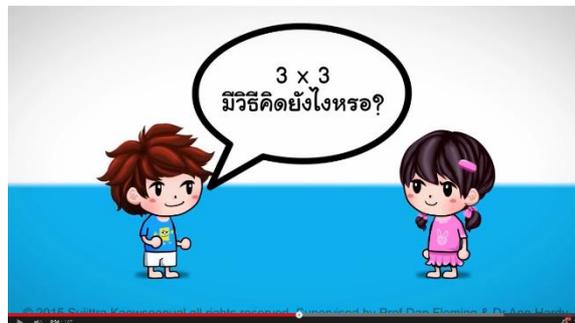
Situation 9: You use Skype, Line and Face time (social media) to do a math exercise with your friend



Can you help me to do my math please?



Sure



How to calculate 3X3 ?



3X3 is 3+3+3



Um, I've got it. Thanks !



What do you think about this situation ?

Red : risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green: Safety/ appropriate

**Video clip 10**

**Case study 10**



Situation 10: Mom suggests you see the ‘Insect World’ website



Mom ! What’s that ? (in the garden)



Let me show you something



Have a look at this website.



This is the 'Insect World' website (on the Internet)



Wow !!! Awesome !!!



What do you think about this situation ?

Red : risks/inappropriate Yellow : Be cautious Green: Safety/ appropriate

## **Appendix B**

### **Information sheets and consent form**

#### **C1 Information sheets and consent form, English version**

Specific contact details in Thailand will be added to the sheets during the fieldwork there.

#### **NOTE ABOUT PARENTS WITH IMPAIRED LITERACY**

In the event of any parents being unable to read this material, the principal researcher will meet with them to read/explain the information

## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET/CONSENT FORM**

### **ADULT: ACTION RESEARCH MEETING**

[English-language version of Thai original]

#### **Dear Participants**

You have been invited to participate in a research project conducted by a researcher from The Centre of the Protection of Children and Women's Rights Foundation in association with the University of Waikato (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) in New Zealand. The project is entitled *Digital Literacy Enhancement: Thai Children's Use, Safety from Risk and Opportunities in Online & Digital Media*. We write to seek your approval and assistance to conduct this research and to involve your child as a participant.

#### **Purpose of the research**

The purpose of the research is to investigate appropriate definitions of digital literacy for Thailand and practical means for achieving it with children. Results of the study will lead to the creation of a concrete body of knowledge and examples of good practice for the development of children in the use of digital media. This will create empowerment in young people's digital media use as well as contributing to Thai social development more generally.

#### **Methods and demands on participants**

If you agree, I will invite you to take part in the action research team consisting of a mixed panel: 2 student representatives, 2 parents, 2 teachers, 2 administrators and 5 consultants (names and role descriptions available on request). This project has four phases. Phase one is refinement of the research topic and questions, which is the first major step in the process. Second is identifying possible causal assumptions around 'risks and opportunities' that the research will test. This is followed by the implementation, which is developing and implementing an action plan. The last phase is following up and assessing the results of action in order to improve the procedures of digital literacy. You will be invited to express your own opinions and share your experiences in order to enhance digital literacy for Thai children aged 12-14 years.

In addition, you will help the team to mitigate any risk of emotional harm and in dealing with any critical incidents for children that might occur during the research. Each meeting will take around two hours in Chiang Mai 50290.

**Social Worker Contact Detail**

[to be added at the time]

**What are your rights as a participant?**

If you choose to participate in the research you have the right to:

- Withdraw your contributed material from the research up to two weeks after the meeting
- Decline to be audio/video recorded and request that the recorder be turned off at any time
- Request that any material be erased
- Ask any question about the research at any time during your participation
- Request a copy of any notes taken about the meeting

**Confidentiality**

I will ensure that all written notes and transcripts will be kept in a locked cupboard at my residential address. Any information stored upon the computer will only be accessible through a regularly changed password. Only I have access to the transcript and electronic information and all data will be destroyed after a five-year period unless otherwise specified by yourself.

The resulting material will be included as part of my Doctoral thesis for a New Zealand university.

This information sheet is for you to keep for your own reference.

**Protection**

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Waikato in New Zealand. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email [fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz), postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand.

In Thailand, this project has been approved by the Committee of the Centre for the Protection of Children and Women's Rights Foundation. Any questions about the ethical

conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee of the Centre for the Protection of Children and Women's Rights Foundation in Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai Province Official 5th floor, Chotana Road, T.Changpeuk, A. Maung , Chiang Mai, Thailand Tel. +66 5311 2642-4

### **The Results**

The results of my research will be used as part of my Doctoral thesis. As such, four copies of my thesis will be produced, three hard copies and one accessible online. Images from the recordings may be included but names will not appear. The findings may also be used in presentations and journal publications. You can be provided with a copy of the thesis, if you wish.

### **What Next ?**

If you would still like to take part in the research, I will contact you in the next week so we can organise an appropriate time to meet. If you have any questions or queries about the research, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor.

**Please keep the prior portion of this consent form for your records.**

**If you consent to participate in this project, please sign the following signature portion of this**

**consent form and return it to \*\*\***

-----  
**Tear or cut here or separate the pages**  
-----

**\*\*\* the researcher's name and contact details in Thailand will be inserted**

### **Signature(s) for Consent:**

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study **up to two weeks after the relevant meetings** or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out by the **Participant Information Sheet**.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out above and in the **Participant Information Sheet**.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest in this study.

*[CONTACT INFORMATION WILL BE ATTACHED WITH LOCAL AND NZ DETAILS]*

## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

### **CONSENT FORM ADULTS –**

### **ALL RESEARCH METHODS**

[English-language version of Thai original]

#### **Dear Participant**

You have been invited to participate in a research project conducted by a researcher from The Centre for the Protection of Children Rights and Women’s Rights Foundation in association with the University of Waikato (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) in New Zealand. The project is entitled *Digital Literacy Enhancement: Thai Children’s Use, Safety from Risk and Opportunities in Online & Digital Media*. We write to seek your approval and assistance to conduct this research and to involve your child as a participant.

#### **Purpose of the research**

The purpose of the research is to investigate appropriate definitions of digital literacy for Thailand and practical means for achieving it with children. Results of the study will lead to the creation of a concrete body of knowledge and examples of good practice for the development of children in the use of digital media. This will create empowerment in young people’s digital media use as well as contributing to Thai social development more generally.

#### **Methods and demands on participants**

**The activities you are being invited to participate in will have their boxes ticked below.**

**Information about all research activities is included here for your interest.**

#### **INTERVIEW**

The interview will be approximately an hour to an hour and a half in length (and will be audiotaped). Typical top-level questions are: what do you think about the risks to children in digital media?, what do you think the barriers are to children realizing their opportunities to the full in the digital environment; why and in what ways should we implement digital literacy as national policy in Thailand? Your thoughts and opinions are important so you are welcome to bring up any matters which you view as important to my research. I would like to audio record the interviews so that I have an accurate account of your views and opinions.

**CONFERENCE**

I hope you will take part in a conference which will take approximately 2 hours (and will be audiotaped). I will invite 9 parents and 9 teachers, whom you might know already, to the group to discuss their views on behalf of parents and teachers about a) The effectiveness of digital literacy procedures in the classroom, b) The development of children's attitudes, knowledge and practice/abilities through digital literacy activities, and c) How and in what ways we might enhance digital literacy for Thai children in the long run.

*[SJ: I will add more details here after phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3]*

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW (WITH TEACHERS)**

The interview will be approximately an hour to an hour and a half in length (and will be audiotaped).

Typical top-level questions are: your feelings, attitudes and views as a facilitator of a digital literacy module, what the factors are that will make the module a success or failure, in your own opinion, how and in what ways to make the digital literacy module successful in school (wider uptake etc.)

*[SJ: I will add more details here after phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3]*

**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (EXPERTS & POLICY MAKERS)**

The interview will be approximately an hour to an hour and a half in length (and will be audiotaped). Typical top-level questions are: how, and in what ways to improve digital literacy initiatives to be successful in the long term in Thailand; what are the main obstacles that will be barriers to implementing digital literacy for improving the well-being of Thai children; how and in what way to effectively provide the best digital opportunities for Thai children

*[SJ: I will add more details here after phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3]*

**Social Worker Contact Detail**

[to be added at the time]

Any transcripts of recordings will only be read and used by me and will not be used for any other purpose. The information from these discussions etc. will be the basis of my

PhD thesis. The transcripts might also be used to write articles for publication in academic journals. You are welcome to see the final thesis and/ or a copy of any articles before they are published.

### **What are your rights as a participant?**

If you choose to participate in the research you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question(s)
- Withdraw the material from the research up to two weeks after the interview or conference
- Decline to be audio recorded and request that the recorder be turned off at any time
- Request that any material be erased
- Ask any question about the research at any time during your participation
- Request a copy of any notes taken about the conference or interviews

### **Confidentiality**

I will ensure that all written notes and transcripts will be kept in a locked cupboard at my residential address. Any information stored upon the computer will only be accessible through a regularly changed password. Only I have access to the transcript and electronic information and all data will be destroyed after a five year period unless otherwise specified by yourself.

The resulting material will be included as part of my Doctoral thesis for a New Zealand university. Images from the recordings may be included but names will not appear.

This information sheet is for you to keep for your own reference.

### **Protection**

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Waikato in New Zealand. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email [fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz), postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand

In Thailand, this project has been approved by the Committee of the Centre for the Protection of Children and Women's Rights Foundation. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee of the Centre for the Protection of Children and Women's Rights Foundation in Chiang Mai. Chiang Mai

Province Official 5th floor, Chotana Road, T.Changpeuk, A. Maung, Chiang Mai, Thailand  
Tel. +66 5311 2642-4

### **The Results**

The results of my research will be used as part of my Doctoral thesis. As such, four copies of my thesis will be produced, three hard copies and one accessible online. Images from the recordings may be included but names will not appear. The findings may also be used in presentations and journal publications. You will be provided with a copy of the thesis, if you wish.

### **What Next ?**

If you would still like to take part in the research, I will contact you in the next week so we can organise an appropriate time to meet. If you have any questions or queries about the research, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor.

**Please keep the prior portion of this consent form for your records.**

**If you consent for your child to participate in this project, please sign the following signature**

**portion of this consent form and return it to \*\*\***

-----  
**Tear or cut here or separate the pages**

**\*\*\* the researcher's name and contact details in Thailand will be**

**inserted Signature(s) for Consent:**

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study **up to two weeks after interviewing or taking part in a conference** or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out by the **Participant Information Sheet**.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out above and in the **Participant Information Sheet**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest in this study.

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET/CONSENT FORM  
ADULTS – PARENTS/CAREGIVERS – ALL RESEARCH METHODS**

[English-language version of Thai original]

**Dear Parent/caregiver**

Your child has been invited to participate in a research project conducted by a researcher from The Centre of the Protection of Children Rights and Women’s Rights Foundation in association with the University of Waikato (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) in New Zealand. The project is entitled *Digital Literacy Enhancement: Thai Children’s Use, Safety from Risk and Opportunities in Online & Digital Media*. We write to seek your approval and assistance to conduct this research **and to involve your child as a participant**.

**Purpose of the research**

The purpose of the research is to investigate appropriate definitions of digital literacy for Thailand and practical means for achieving it with children. Results of the study will lead to the creation of a concrete body of knowledge and examples of good practice for the development of children in the use of digital media. This will create empowerment in young people’s digital media use as well as contributing to Thai social development more generally.

**Methods and demands on participants**

**If you agree, your child will be involved the activity or activities with the ticked boxes below.**

**We are providing information here about all the activities in the project so that you can see the big picture of what’s going on overall.**

**SURVEY RESEARCH**

I will ask your child to complete a questionnaire at his/her house. I will also give the questionnaire to you in advance at the parents meeting day at your child’s school. If you are not available on that day, I will send the questionnaires by post to your house. Your child will be asked to answer the questionnaire for approximately 20 minutes with questions about

1. Age, gender
2. What kind of technology he/she use to access online content

3. Where does your child access online content? (media and location)
4. The activities that your child typically takes part in via online media
5. What kinds of bad situation your child might ever have encountered on the internet ('bad' as defined by them)
6. What are your child's feelings about seeing things on the internet that upset him/her?
7. Who would your child like to tell when they encounter upsetting things in online media?
8. Who can help them when they are faced with that kind of situation?
9. What online activities does your child enjoy most?
10. Does your child do creative things online? ('creative' will be explained in simple language)

Please return the questionnaire and the tear-off section of this consent form, up until two weeks after receiving and completing them, (in a sealed envelope) to the teacher.

#### **INTERVIEWS**

I will interview him/her at your house. **While I conduct the interview you or a chosen adult family member will be asked to stay in the room.** Your child will be interviewed for approximately 30 minutes (and will be audiotaped) with questions about:

1. Age, gender
2. What kind of technology he/she use to access online content
3. Where does your child access online content? (media and location)
4. The activities that your child typically takes part in via online media
5. What kinds of bad situation your child might ever have encountered on the internet ('bad' as defined by them)
6. What are your child's feelings about seeing things on the internet that upset him/her?
7. Who would your child like to tell when they encounter upsetting things in online media?
8. Who can help them when they are faced with that kind of situation?
9. What online activities does your child enjoy most?
10. Does your child do creative things online? ('creative' will be explained in simple language)

**GROUP DISCUSSION(S)**

If you agree, I will invite your child and 19 other students, whom your child might know already, to express their own opinions for around 2 hours (which will be audiotaped) in group discussion. The objective of the discussion is developing digital initiatives for improving well-being for children aged 12-14 years old in their online activities. *[SJ: I will give more details of activities after knowing the results from phase 1.]* **You can attend the meeting yourself if you wish.** The meeting will be conducted at the Centre for the Protection of Children and Women's Rights Foundation, Chiang Mai Province Official 5th floor, Chotana Road, T.Changpeuk, A. Maung, Chiang Mai.

**TRIAL/PILOT GROUP(S)**

If you agree, your child will be taking part in a trial group of 4 other children who are piloting the research design, to check thoroughly children's understanding of what the project entails and the appropriateness of the intended digital literacy procedures which we will bring into use with children aged 12-14 years old in the classroom. Your child will be free to discuss and express their opinions for around 20 minutes (and will be audiotaped). *[SJ: I will give more details of activities after knowing the results from phase 1.]* The pilot testing will be conducted at the school Chiang Mai Thailand.

**CLASSROOM GROUP COMPARISON (CLASSROOM ACTIVITY PLUS 'BEFORE' AND 'AFTER' INTERVIEWS)**

If you agree, I will invite your child and 29 other students, some of whom your child might know already, to participate in the digital literacy module in a classroom.

Before attending the class I will talk to your child about his/her attitudes, knowledge and practice/abilities in using digital media for improving their well-being and opportunities. After finishing the class, I will talk to him or her again with questions about a) The effectiveness of the digital literacy module that they attended in the classroom b) The development of his/her attitudes, knowledge and practice/abilities through the digital literacy module and c) The effectiveness of facilitators (teachers) who delivered the module.

The digital literacy module will be conducted in one day (around 8 hours). The 'before' and 'after' interviews for evaluation take around 2 hours (and will be audiotaped) at the school.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR CHILD BECOMES UPSET FOR ANY REASON?

*If your child discloses information about experiences that have been upsetting and/or becomes emotionally upset while answering any question, we will refer to this as a 'critical incident' and we have a procedure in place (see below) for dealing with this effectively.*

### **Other possible inconveniences or disadvantages**

Apart from the time it will take for the child to participate in this project, no other inconveniences are anticipated. Their involvement in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw your permission as indicated and withdraw any data that has been provided up to that point. Refusal to participate in the study or withdrawal will not affect any relationship you may have now or in the future with your child's school and the University of Waikato in New Zealand.

Provision will be made for **referral of critical incidents** to you as parent at the point of disclosure by the child, so that you may act to support and protect the child if deemed appropriate. However, referrals to parents will not be made during subsequent interpretations of data by the principal researcher. Parental referrals will only occur where critical incidents occur that disclose emotional distress on the part of the child. **'Referral' will include information about expert professionals that you can consult for assistance or advice if required.**

**It is important that you understand what the research is about and what your child will be asked to contribute. Therefore please take time to read this information and feel free to discuss it with others if you wish. This information sheet is for you to keep for your own reference.**

### **Confidentiality**

I will transcribe key material from the various audio recordings as indicated above, under the research activity headings. The resulting material will be included as part of my Doctoral thesis. Images from the group/public sessions may be included but names will not appear. The transcripts and resulting analyses might also be used to write published articles in academic journals. You are welcome to see the final thesis and/ or a copy of the articles before they are published.

All your child's answers will only be seen by the researcher. The responses your children provide may be used in the researcher's PhD thesis, direct quotes may be taken from the material but will remain completely anonymous.

Any information stored on computer will only be accessible through a regularly changed password. Only I have access to any audio files, transcripts and electronic information and all data will be destroyed after a five year period unless otherwise specified by yourself.

### **Protection**

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Waikato. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, email [fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:fass-ethics@waikato.ac.nz), postal address, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand.

In Thailand, this project has been approved by the Committee of the Centre for the Protection of Children and Women's Rights Foundation. Any questions about the ethical conduct of this research may be sent to the Secretary of the Committee, the Committee of the Centre for the Protection of Children and Women's Rights Foundation in Chiang Mai, Chiang Mai Province Official 5th floor, Chotana Road, T.Changpeuk, A. Maung , Chiang Mai, Thailand Tel. +66 5311 2642-4 26

### **The Results**

The results of my research will be used as part of my Doctoral thesis. As such, four copies of my thesis will be produced, three hard copies and one accessible online. Images from the recordings may be included but names will not appear. The findings may also be used in presentations and journal publications. You will be provided with a copy of the thesis, if you wish.

If you have any questions or queries about the research, please feel free to contact me, or your child's teacher, and/or my chief supervisor (see below for contact details).

Please keep the prior portion of this consent form for your records.

If you consent for your child to participate in this project, please sign the following signature portion of this consent form and return it to \*\*\*.

-----  
Tear or cut here or separate the pages  
-----

\*\*\* the researcher's name and contact details in Thailand will be inserted

**Signature(s) for Consent:**

I give permission for my child to participate in the research project entitled *Digital Literacy Enhancement: Thai Children's Use, Safety from Risk and Opportunities in Online & Digital Media*. I understand that, in order to participate in this project, my child must also agree. I understand that my child and/or I can change our minds about participation, at any time, by notifying the researcher of our decision to end participation in this project.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw us from the study up until 2 weeks after completion of the applicable research activities and that my child may decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I understand I can withdraw any information provided up until the researcher has commenced analysis on the data. I agree to provide information to the researcher under the conditions of confidentiality set out above and in the

**Participant Information Sheet.**

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out above and in the **Participant Information Sheet.**

**Name of Child (Print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parent/Guardian (Print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest in this study.

**[CONTACT INFORMATION WILL BE ATTACHED WITH LOCAL AND NZ DETAILS]**

# "SMART ONLINE"

## Information sheet for you!

Hello, my name is KAEW and I am looking at how children can be smart online. I'd like you to join my team.

Please have a look at this leaflet and call me or email me if you have any questions. Thank you for reading this

What is the study about?

This study is to try and understand your experience of using the internet in smart ways, what you like doing on the internet, how you felt if you ever found anything you didn't like online, and how you may have been helped

Why have I been chosen?

You are very important and with your help we can learn more about how to make young people really smart and safe online!

What will happen next?

I will invite you to a team meeting where you will be one of two young people's representatives. There will be some adults on the team who are looking forward to meeting you.

**It will take you about 2 hours to take part.**

**We will be interested in your ideas about what you and your friends do online.**

Do I have to have ideas about everything that comes up at the meeting?

You do not need to contribute ideas on every topic if you don't want to.

And you can pull out of the study up until [day will be inserted] without saying why.

Will the things I tell the team be kept secret?

Only the team members will know who you are by name. Anything you say will be noted down and may be referred to again without naming you as the source.

If you would like to take part, then we will also need your parents' consent. Please tell your parents you have read all the information on this leaflet. I will contact them too

Please feel free to contact me with any questions:

Telephone Number:

Email address:

If you feel this study has harmed or upset you in any way you can contact us using the details below:

Team Social Workers' name

Telephone Number:

Email address

Joining my team tells us that you agree to being part of my study. **THANK YOU!**

# "SMART ONLINE"

## Information sheet for you

Hello, my name is KAEW and I am looking at how children can be smart online. I'd like you to fill in a survey for me. Please have a look at this leaflet and call me or email me if you have any questions.

Thank you for reading this

What is the study about?

This study is to try and understand your experience of using the internet in smart ways, what you like doing on the internet, how you felt if you ever found anything you didn't like online, and how you may have been helped when you did.

What is the study about?

You are very important and with your help we can learn more about how to make young people really smart and safe online!

What will happen in the survey?

I will send you some printed questions about how you use the internet, what you enjoy doing online, how you felt if you ever found anything you didn't like online, and if you felt you needed to tell somebody about that.

**It will take you about 15-20 minutes to fill in the survey at home.**

**I will use your answers but not your name – No one will know who you are!**

Can I skip questions?

You do not need to answer any question you don't want to

And you can pull out of the study up until (day will be inserted) without saying why.

Will the things I tell you be kept secret?

No one will know who you are unless you tell me something that suggests you, or another child, are at risk of quite serious harm -- then I may need to tell one or two helpful adults so that we can keep you safe.

If you would like to take part, then we will also need your parents' consent. Please tell your parents you have read all the information on this leaflet. I will contact them too

Please feel free to contact me with any questions:

Telephone Number:

Email address:

If you feel this study has harmed or upset you in any way you can contact us using the details below:

Team Social Workers' name

Telephone Number:

Email address

Doing my survey tells us that you agree to being part of my study. **THANK YOU!**

# "SMART ONLINE"

## Information sheet for you!

Hello, my name is KAEW and I am looking at how children can be smart online. I'd like you to fill in a survey for me. Please have a look at this leaflet and call me or email me if you have any questions.

Thank you for reading this

What is the study about?

This study is to try and understand your experience of using the internet in smart ways, what you like doing on the internet, how you felt if you ever found anything you didn't like online, and how you may have been helped when you did.

Why have I been chosen?

You are very important and with your help we can learn more about how to make young people really smart and safe online!

What will happen in the interview?

I will be asking you some questions about how you use the internet, what you enjoy doing online, how you felt if you ever found anything you didn't like online, and if you felt you needed to tell somebody about that.

It will take place in your home.

**It will take 30 minutes**

If you agree, it will be recorded on to a sound recorder.

**I will use your words but not your name – No one will know who you are!**

Can I stop the interview?

You can stop the interview any time.

You do not need to answer any questions you don't want to.

And you can pull out of the study up until [day will be inserted] without saying why.

Will the things I tell you be kept secret?

No one will know who you are unless you tell me something that suggests you, or another child, are at risk of quite serious harm -- then I may need to tell one or two helpful adults so that we can keep you safe.

If you would like to take part, then we will also need your parents' consent. Please tell your parents you have read all the information on this leaflet. I will contact them too

Please feel free to contact me with any questions:

Telephone Number:

Email address:

If you feel this study has harmed or upset you in any way you can contact us using the details below:

Team Social Workers' name

Telephone Number:

Email address

Talking to me tells us that you agree to being part of my study.  
**THANK YOU!**