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CHAPTER 2.II

DISCOURSES, DISPOSITIFS, AND DISPOSITIONS IN YOUNG CHILDREN'S MOBILE MEDIA USE

BJORN NANSEN
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION,
FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Abstract

The use of mobile media devices, interaction with touchscreen interfaces, and engagement with digital content and communication by children aged below five is attracting increased research attention. As these technologies populate domestic spaces, lowering thresholds of usability, studies are beginning to quantify young children's digital activities and routines, including parental attitudes towards and mediation of children's digital media use (e.g. Marsh et al. 2015; Rideout et al. 2013).

This research reveals a critical tension between policy and practice. Health guidelines continue to emphasise a restrictive approach to young children's "screen exposure" (AAP 2016), whilst the use of touchscreens in early childhood is increasingly common and unremarkable. In these contexts, parents are often left "rudderless" (Green and Holloway 2014), inhabiting media environments containing multiple and mobile devices yet having to navigate competing and contradictory messages from commercial, health, and educational discourses.

This chapter analyses how these discursive tensions and material negotiations around young children's mobile media use are understood and enacted within domestic space and family life. It draws on qualitative research that explores young children's use of mobile media in domestic contexts in Melbourne, Australia, using techniques including guided tours of household media and screens, family interviews, and demonstrations of digital play, alongside social media data collection to investigate content shared about young children's mobile media practices.

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The research findings align to the concept of *dispositif* (Foucault 1980), which articulates the ways both physical spaces and expert discourses coalesce to shape and govern a particular situation. The dispositif in the contexts of children's mobile media includes domestic materialities such as media infrastructures, device domestication and distribution, along with discursive operations such as policy guidelines, news media reports, and commercial marketing. This chapter analyses how this dispositif both configures and complicates parental mediations of young children's mobile media use, noting that the tension between policy and practice unfolds through often uncertain and inconsistent *dispositions* embedded in the messy materialities, relations, and routines of family life.

Keywords: *young children; mobile media; touchscreen interface; discourse; dispositif; disposition; domestic/family space*

Introduction

Digital media use by infants and toddlers is a relatively new area of media and internet research, given their historically limited engagement with or capacity to use new media technologies and their associated interfaces. Yet, transformations in mobile devices and touchscreen interfaces on smartphones and tablets, accompanied by an ever-expanding range of entertainment and educational content directed at children—including broadcast programs, streaming services, digital games, and mobile applications—are enabling new modes of both media consumption and digital participation by young children.

As these technologies have penetrated domestic spaces and lowered thresholds of usability, a number of studies have quantified young children's digital activities and routines, and investigated parental attitudes towards and mediation of children's digital media practices. Survey-based research is quantifying the media activities and time spent by young children with mobile devices (e.g. Marsh et al. 2015; Ofcom 2013; Rideout et al. 2013), highlighting how "the use of touch screens is widespread in early childhood" (Cristia and Seidl 2015). This research reveals a critical tension between policy and practice, in which it is unsurprising that parents are often left feeling "rudderless" (Green and Holloway 2014). On the one hand, it is increasingly observed that living within media environments containing multiple and mobile devices, the use of mobile media in early childhood is increasingly inevitable, common, and unremarkable. On the other hand, the dominant discourse received by parents on their children's media use emphasises a restrictive approach to the risks associated with "screen

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exposure", whilst messages from commercial advertising or educational literature encourages consumption and use for learning.

Such contradictions suggest a need for more contextual research methods to investigate how both discursive tensions and the materialities of household media environments are navigated and enacted. This paper seeks to contribute to this agenda by exploring how the competing discourses that surround, and the material conditions that configure, young children's mobile media use become sedimented within household environments, relations, and routines.

There is some emerging research exploring how parents mediate young children's touchscreen device use (e.g. Nansen and Jayemanne 2016; Nevski and Siibak 2016a). These studies extend a long tradition of parental mediation literature, which began with the medium of television and developed through studies of computers, the internet and videogames (e.g. Livingstone and Helsper 2008; Nikken and Jansz 2006; Wartella et al. 2013), to analyse how parents perceive, place, and manage media in the home. Historically, this literature highlights how mediation is determined by factors such as media type, parents' views, child age and so on. Yet, in the contexts of young children's contemporary mobile media use, a straightforward disciplinary model of parental control is complicated by research highlighting a wider set of arrangements and influences, including household media ecologies, touchscreen affordances, and sibling relationships (e.g. Aarsand and Aronsson 2009; Nansen 2015; Nevski and Siibak 2016b).

This paper builds on these insights to consider how young children's mobile media use is configured in the home by drawing on the concept of *dispositif* (Foucault 1980). This concept is useful in trying to tie together both the discursive and non-discursive elements that operate in any given context. For Foucault, a dispositif or apparatus articulates the entanglements of "discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements…" (194); these coalesce to collectively shape and govern a particular situation. The dispositif in the contexts of young children's mobile media includes the materialities of household media, such as internet infrastructures, device domestication, distribution, and mobility, along with discursive operations such as policy guidelines, news media stories, and commercial marketing. This paper analyses how this dispositif both configures and complicates parental mediations of young children's touchscreen use, noting that tensions between policy and practice unfold through uncertain and inconsistent dispositions embedded in the messy relations and routines of family life.

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Methods

This paper contextualises the entanglements of discursive tensions and material negotiations by analysing how young children's mobile media use is enacted and understood within domestic space and family life. It draws on qualitative research with families and children aged from birth to five (25 families; 41 children) in domestic contexts in Melbourne, Australia, during 2015-2016. The research builds on established traditions of media ethnography (e.g. Lally 2002; Morley 1986; Silverstone and Hirsch 1992), using techniques including guided tours of household media and screens, family interviews, and demonstrations of children's digital play. This household research was complemented by social media data collection exploring wider cultural contexts and content shared about young children's mobile media use on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram (see Nansen 2015; Nansen and Jayemanne 2016). This methodology was motivated by exploratory and ethnographic traditions, which seek to understand social meanings and practices in greater depth, and the application of these methods was varied and guided by the households' preferences and capacities.

The household research is limited by the participating families coming from a largely homogeneous and privileged group, one that is well educated, live in inner urban neighborhoods, and predominantly contained nuclear families. Yet, comprising a sample of relatively early and heavy adopters, these families offer insights into young children's changing media environments and emerging practices, based on households with ubiquitous wireless internet connectivity, and multiple mobile devices (smartphones, tablets, laptops). Similarly, the online data collection was selective and purposive, rather than representative, seeking to explore specific sites of cultural production and content sharing around particular hashtags or keywords (e.g. #babyselfie; "iPad baby"). Using this data for research purposes raises ethical issues about privacy and consent given the posts are being used in an unintended context from which they were originally shared; this is further complicated by the research focus on young children. These issues have been identified and minimised through efforts to de-identify data gathered from publicly available social media posts.

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Analysis and discussion

Media discourses and negotiated dispositions

In Australia, as elsewhere, government guidance for parents on their young children's use of mobile media is directly informed by health research, which largely positions mobile media within the rubric of "screen time" inherited from older broadcast models, cautioning parents about the dangers of "exposure" to electronic screens (AAP 2016). A recent update to the policy statement on children's digital media use from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which directly informs Australian Department of Health (ADH) guidelines, has for the first time differentiated between interactive media such as tablets, smartphones and mobile applications, from broadcast media such as television that have dominated their historical treatment of "screen time". Acknowledging that interactive media are creative and engaging in ways that differ from simply consuming media content, and that their proliferation is reshaping children's media environments, practices and relationships, the AAP recognise they require a different approach to recommendations. The updated guidelines now recognise content and context more explicitly, addressing issues such as quality, shared media use, and role-modelling. Yet, especially for younger children, such amendments are still underwritten by a restrictive approach, with recommendations of zero screen time for children under the age of two persisting, apart from engaging in video calls.

As expected, then, mainstream news media is dominated by stories that draw on medical literature as a source of authority, reinforcing a discourse that reflects culturally-specific attitudes to parenting, family life and wellbeing, in which parents are repeatedly warned of the dangers of young children's "exposure" to touchscreens for their physical, cognitive, and social development, whilst also offered strategies for managing the increasingly media saturated lives of young children (e.g. Bilton 2013; Rosin 2013; Rowan 2014).

Yet, parents also receive competing and contradictory messages from other discursive domains, especially commercial and educational discourses surrounding the benefits of mobile media content in the lives of young children. Education literature often provides touchscreens and mobile media with a legitimating role centred on the digital literacy requirements for future learners, labourers and citizens (see Plowman et al. 2010). Educational discourses are, in turn, often leveraged within the mobile app economy, with apps designed for children overwhelmingly sold as educational (Shuler 2009), whilst a range of digital media channels seek to propel or profit from this media culture, with a number of reviews sites (e.g.

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children's technology review), YouTube channels (e.g. FunToyzCollector) and mummy-tech blogs (e.g. coolmomtech) surveying the latest gadgets and apps, ostensibly to inform or entertain parents around their purchasing decisions.

Despite the dominance of a pathological discourse around young children's "exposure" to "screen time", in this study parental awareness about recommended guidelines for their young children's use of mobile media was unclear, unknown, or even confused:

> I think it's like half an hour to an hour, max.
>
> I have no idea, but I know it's like really small, and I know that my kids probably watch a little bit more than the recommended viewing time.
>
> I have heard statistics about what the optimal, or the maximum viewing time is in a day. Um, and it was something quite high, from memory. Um, and my kids are never allowed to watch that amount of T.V.

Despite the uncertainty about specific recommendations regarding screen time limits for children, there was clearly a more explicit engagement by parents with the logic and framing of such time based and restrictive approaches. Parental dispositions towards health discourses surrounding young children's use of mobile media were characterised by a sense that they were too narrowly defined, that they were disconnected from the media environments we now inhabit, and they were impractical given the lived realities and routines of daily life, in which parents' juggle parenting with numerous other pressures and demands from paid work to housework, to the demands of consumer culture and technological innovation:

> They're just problematic because it's almost like there's no such thing as being away from a screen anymore.
>
> Well, well, they're, they're levels of being in front of the screen. It's like you know this is working and I'm sitting here, in front of a screen. But maybe if I was sitting over there and talking to me while I was in front of the screen I wouldn't be in front of the screen but there's still a screen in front of me.
>
> I don't think restricted is the right kind of word. Because obviously, like, in some, it's just a multi-use device right.
>
> I think that the guidelines are probably not that realistic. I think that's very very hard to have a five-year-old and watch one hour of TV a day. I mean I probably could do that, if say I didn't work. Or, I didn't run a household, we didn't have another sibling, like it's just ... I don't know how people do it.

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More critically, parental dispositions rejected the overwhelmingly pathological or instrumental discourses surrounding children's use of digital media, seeing the framing of health discourses in terms of effects or time, and educational discourses in terms of functional outcomes as overly narrow. Instead, they affirmed the personal and cultural values associated with children and media, seeing benefits of mobile media and digital content through a lens of narrative and play, and critiquing the screen equivalence of this discourse for lacking nuance around the context and content of children's mobile media use:

> There so many kinds of screens in kid's eyes these days, but do you see any problems around the, the idea that all screens are the same? And all the screen activities are the same? I mean that's what screen time basically means right? So, it's like they don't differentiate between an app, family photographs, television, anything.

> Anyone who's properly read a book or played a video game like kind of knows that like they can be one of the most memorable or special moments of your life. Like, you know, as a kid.

> Ultimately, you're still sitting on your arse, kind of, not doing anything, and it's funny how everything gets, everything other than books get such a bad rap. So, you have to really think about it, which I probably haven't quite had time to do. You generally think of television as probably the worst, given that it's just not really engaging your brain. But then, there are some really good programs like Mr. Maker, and Play School and things like that, where actually, they are quite educational and they, you know, are crafty and stuff like that. And then, the iPad, I would kind of categorise into, it depends on whether you're just watching TV on the iPad or whether you're actually doing an app.

Finally, parents described the importance of balance in their young children's use of mobile media. This was a disposition that was equivocal about screen and authority discourses imposing a rigid model from above. Instead, parents privileged their intimate experience, common sense, and embedded knowledge in understanding and shaping their children's use of mobile media:

> I don't think it's necessary to say no screen time, device time, whatever, but I certainly think you know, if he was not reading, if he was not running around or reading books I'd see it as a problem.

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> I think there was a recent news report saying that as long as kids got a minimum of three hours of outdoor play, screen time wasn't the worst thing in the world.
>
> So, the only way you can really get them to just sit and slowdown is that (iPad)…you know that they're these active kids, they're not just sitting there the whole day in front of it. Um, but we're not really strict on its time.
>
> I just think everything in moderation.
>
> Something like iView [video streaming platform] which is just um, basically, they're quite spoon fed the content. I'm like, I'm not wrapped with those, the things that are more interactive like the coloring in stuff that H was doing. He was never really interested in drawing and that sort of sparked a bit of an interest.

Balancing young children's mobile media use, then, was both a disposition toward, and application of this perspective in configuring and mediating their children's media spaces and practices. Balance was perceived in terms of organising their children's mobile media use in relation to other digital media content, legacy media forms, and non-mediated activities.

Domesticating mobile media dispositifs

Studies of household media have sought to understand how new technologies are domesticated within physical spaces, family relations, and social practices; how they become physically, socially, and symbolically located within the home (Silverstone and Hirsch 1992). This tradition of research began with broadcast media such as television and its reception in the home (e.g. Morley 1986), and later evolved to consider a range of digital technologies, including the home computer (e.g. Lally 2002), the internet (e.g. Ward 2005), and the mobile phone (e.g. Haddon 2003). This research reveals that as successive waves of media technologies are domesticated, spreading spatially throughout the house and temporally around the clock, habits and patterns of family life undergo changes. A key example is the shift from collective family television viewing, organised around a single and immobile broadcast box (Morley 1986), to the emergence of more distributed and individualised media practices (Turkle 2011), based on the affordances of multiple and portable devices connected to the internet via household Wi-Fi.

This contemporary dispositif, comprising connected media infrastructures, the domestication of multiple devices, and the ambient presence and

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circulation of mobile media was discussed by parents in the study in terms of the rationale for and patterns of household mobile media adoption. The reasons given for purchasing new devices, whilst often bound up with the logics and imperatives of technology to upgrade and accumulate, were also articulated in terms of their suitability for use by young children. Tablet devices, in particular, were perceived to offer affordances for young children associated with usability, mobility and multi-functionality; whilst key events, such as a planned family vacation, were often the catalyst for purchase:

> Really, we bought it for M, when we were travelling, so she had games when we went overseas and on the long flight to entertain her.
>
> We got it specifically because we were about to go on this massive journey, and D had just turned 2, and I was worried about the journey, so I think we got it then, and I wasn't sure how much we'd use it or not.
>
> I think, I suppose it's, it's a flexible, it's a very portable unit, so for us, travelling a lot, it's brilliant to be able to take it with you, and you know, the battery lasts quite a long time, and so, you can either take it on a long car journey, or you can take it on a long plane journey, you know, you can easily get it in and out of rucksacks and stuff at the airport.

Once purchased, however, family discussions highlighted how domesticating and dwelling with mobile devices prompted more frequent, distributed, and varied use by young children. The materialities of mobile media, in which they are connected to the internet, not often located in a fixed place but circulate around the home, and have screen interfaces that are responsive to and light up through touch, meant devices were often lying about, available, and enticing for young children to use:

> Yup, and we've got an iPad, which just floats around anywhere.
>
> Yeah, so they kind of just sort of inherited stuff that was around, so rather than going and buying them a device, they just kind of picked up the things that were laying around.
>
> And he notices when the lights, the bright light. A little bit, little bit moth to a flame, you know.
>
> Um, that's again if [Dad] leaves it [phone] laying around his…L now knows the codes on his phone.

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Clearly the material properties and affordances of mobile media created environments that facilitated and promoted young children's ease of access and use, yet parents were not simply passive recipients of such technology determination. Instead, they discussed how they actively made decisions around when and where and why young children used mobile media. Whilst these varied, we saw a number of common parental mediation threads emerge, including the reasons for making mobile devices and content readily available for young children. Parents spoke about using mobile media to entertain their young children in situations where they were otherwise occupied, such as driving, working or cooking—the so-called "pass-back" effect (Chiong and Shuler, 2010):

> Sometimes you use devices to pacify them, so you're busy, you know doing ... work or something.
>
> I use it like a tool to entertain her … in our routine.
>
> Kind of handy but you know, on the same token um, it's, it's a way to shut the kids up, you know. If you got a DVD player at the back of mum and dad's headrest in the car and the kids are silent, or they take the, the iPad into the restaurant.
>
> Um, I can't say I would never use technology to pacify my child, because some nights there have been ... Uh, maybe where there's just one of us at home and I'm just unable to settle her.

Parents also described their motivations for making mobile devices readily available for children in terms of perceived benefits of learning to use devices and engaging with educational content as part of the perceived necessity for development of digital literacies, or in terms of social benefits associated with viewing digital content, especially family photographs, or in mediating social interaction, especially communication with distant relatives:

> Well it's a reality of their world.
>
> I think cutting them off from it is actually doing them a huge disservice, to be honest … Because they're going to go out into the big wide world and they're just going to be so far behind everyone else.
>
> The little one just wants to watch it over and over again. She thinks it's fantastic watching herself.

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> She's got international grandparents. Got international cousins … she's going to be on the screen a lot!

Alternatively, parents spoke about a desire to place limits on their young children's use of mobile devices in order to encourage other activities. Parents described a range of mediation strategies to limit use, ranging from traditional restrictive mediation processes involving the imposition of rules around media free spaces or times, through to the use of reward-based limits for good behavior, as well as more technology-focused ways of restricting access such as hiding devices, changing passwords, or turning the Wi-Fi off:

> I suppose a bit of a rule is that they wouldn't just go and help themselves to it.

> The front lounge is the kids' play room. Which is ... they have a couch there, and occasionally they're allowed to take the iPad into that room. So that would, that would be sort of what you would call "unsupervised access" potentially. But, um, but for the most part, I encourage them, if they're using the iPad to um, be in the family living room, so I can see and hear what's going on.

> [We] promised that after good behaviour ... I think it was after a meal, and a bath, and book, if he was still keen, then he could have a go.

> And so, we'll change that [log-in] code so then they really both need to ask for it.

> I'll often put it up in his wardrobe… So, it's out of sight.

Overwhelmingly, such forms of mobile media provision or partition were not settled or stable. Instead, they varied across the course of the week, often in the contexts of family schedules and weekly routines, or due to special social occasions, or often because of the differences in social rhythms between weekdays and weekends, with rules on mobile media use often becoming more relaxed on weekends, due to a sense of it as a slower leisure time:

> And then at the weekend, we often say to the kids, if you can just give us, like, half an hour or something in the morning. We'll put the iPad in their room, on a Saturday morning, or a Sunday morning. And then ... Do that the night before, and we'll sort of tell them to, it will be there.

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> … there's been times like we had people around for drinks last Sunday, the Sunday before, and they were coming in at, I think, four o'clock or something. Well, see, she's bored. She's an only child …
>
> Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday go to daycare, and so even though it's not a crazy structure, it's, it's a big day. So, on Thursday, I allow them to do just whatever they want. So, if that could be, you know, I just want to, I'm tired, I want to watch a bit of TV, or they will come out and draw.
>
> Sometimes on a Sunday when I've got the children and they're watching one of their movies, you know one or two of the movies that they're watching, sorry. They watch probably you know one or two movies every weekend.

Such arrangements and practices of young children's mobile media use did not only vary within the routines and rhythms of households, but also in the contexts of family relationships. We saw varied patterns of use emerging through situated negotiations, involving parental differences in approach or sibling relationships and device sharing. Parents also described changing patterns of media content and app use as children aged, and how this was negotiated through practices of reviewing or co-viewing, or how their mediation practices changed in relation to subsequent children:

> I think the family realises it is a shared device, because if someone wants it, there's often a lot of kinda like bargaining between siblings, like you know, you can have the iPhone, I'll have the iPad.
>
> It's got a four-digit code that they know. G [older brother] knows the code, um, but he is less inclined to use it. And, so, F [younger sister] has to ask him or us.
>
> I've stumbled across some, watching stuff I wasn't aware they were watching, like Ninjago … So I sat down with them and watched an episode … and kind of talked to them about who the characters were, and what their impression of what the characters were doing.
>
> Yeah so it's, it's negotiation rather than two 2 hours or, you know, like some kind of quantifiable limits on how much you would want her to.
>
> And some things were different because her older brother was at school, and, um, so she had unrestricted, um, access I guess. No one was telling her what to watch and things … Yeah, I think, just the dynamic of having a second child ...

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Shared family media practices often coalesced around cherished family moments or rituals, exemplified by the practice of ambient family video calls:

> We quite often just have them [on Skype] ... have the computers in there while we're having dinner … the laptop will be there, opened up at one end of the table with the family here and there will be my sister having breakfast with her family in Ireland ... the kids are running around and playing with each other, they'll pop in and say, "Hi."

The routines, rhythms, and relationships of household mobile media use, then, involved varied and sometimes inconsistent or even contradictory patterns. These emerged through media affordances and logics, and via parental mediation strategies to both enable and restrict their availability and operation. In turn, such media technologies and their mediation were embedded within the materialities of household environments and entangled with the messy realities of social rhythms and family relationships to configure a dispositif of young children's mobile use that was not settled or stable, but dynamic and evolving.

Distributed dispositions

These tensions between mobile media operating either as a resource for young children's learning, leisure, and social development, or as a site of concern associated with exposure to inappropriate content, risks of overuse, or subject of family conflict, did not only emerge within household spaces or family relationships. They also played out through wider social networks and online communication due to the mobile media dispositif of young children spreading beyond located physical spaces such as the home through networks of internet connectivity. With mobile media connected to digital spaces and networks, and sharing functions both enabling and encouraging content sharing, the particularities of different familial practices intersected with wider cultural norms and debates about the digitisation of childhood.

The locus of much of these tensions was the degree to which parents participated in sharing content about their young children within their social networks, or in enabling young children's social media presence and interaction. Parents described how social networks were a valuable resource for information sharing about appropriate or quality content, especially mobile apps. On the other hand, parents also expressed an awareness of, responsibility towards, and reluctance to, create a digital presence and footprint for their children by sharing images on social media, noting the

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potential personal, emotional, or professional implications for their children when they grew up:

> Generally, when I choose apps, I often write a message on Facebook ... it's usually just before a long journey, going back to the UK, and I'll say does anyone know of any good apps … So then I'll, I usually go and like, Google it and review, you know, have a look at the reviews, and then choose a couple of those new ones to put on.
>
> But all my Facebook stuff is quite locked down to people I know. But even then no, no naked photos or anything like that … because I don't think that's fair. He should be able to choose how he exposes himself through social media.
>
> I think about the way that my friends, for instance, and no disrespect to them, have posted photos of their kids ... All the way through their lives on a very regular basis, with their real names on social media, it means that as an adult, those children are going to have their whole lives open to the world or at least partially open.
>
> And I'm very open to K deciding that he wants his own social media presence, if and when it happens.
>
> … my partner and I have a blanket ban on mentioning the child, or posting photos with the child on social media.

In contrast to the clearly reflective and restricted practices of sharing content of their young children online by parents in this research, searching with keywords and hashtags related to young children and mobile media (e.g. #babyselfie on *Instagram; "*iPad baby" on YouTube), quickly revealed that many parents are comfortable and keen to publicly share images, videos and information about their young children using mobile media. In turn, such sharing is facilitated by the functionality and affordances of mobile media, for easily capturing and posting content, even infrastucturing young children to be able to take and share images, if sometimes accidentally (Nansen 2015):

> Isabella's first #babyselfie!She actually pushed the button herself! #sixmonths #almostsevenmonths #cutebaby #babylove #niece #baby #myfavoritelittleperson #cleverbaby
>
> Just found this in my phone, my three years old taking selfies when I'm not looking #baby #jad #selfie #babyselfie #cute #happy #babyboy #theappleofmyeye

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> My baby and her selfies lmao. She really took this by herself too. Babies nowadays are something else. #selfie #babyselfie #babiesofinstagram #photogenic
>
> I leave my iPad for a few minutes and she's playing around taking selfies #baby #selfie #babyselfie #cuteness
>
> #Selfie obsessed baby. Seriously though. He won't stop. Insists on pressing the button and everything. He sees my phone and points and says "Pic? Pic?" I've created a monster lol.

The #babyselfie data has the feel of parents recording and sharing important milestones in their baby's development like their first steps, though here the images document and communicate infants' initial encounters with, capacities for, and interactions with mobile technology.

In sharing this digital content on social networks, parents operate as intermediaries in the communication of their children's digital images. Unsurprisingly, many of the associated hashtags, captions, and comments accompanying these posts pointed out the cuteness of the images, conforming to well-established regimes of affective reception (Lobato and Meese 2014), and the dominant types of images of young children research has shown mothers typically share online (Kumar and Schoenebeck 2015):

> OMG that's a cute video.
>
> Cute overload... ;)

In keeping with the agonistic dynamic of comment culture, but also the wider discourses circulating about the developmental, social, and even ecological risks associated with young children using mobile media, negative comments on posted images or videos were also common. The disposition of commenters drew on narratives such as the impact of mobile media in colonising time that should be reserved for "unmediated experience", for example, arguing that the iPad was detracting from "natural" play with traditional media or engagement in physical activities outdoors:

> More sensuality! Less electronics I say!
>
> He's entering the age of the digital cage early… Give that kid a book!
>
> This kid is going to have a lot of trouble adjusting to fossil fuel depletion.

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Such dispositions extended to addressing the parents who posted content, often expressing unease or misgivings about their role in facilitating their children's use of mobile media, extending to outright aggressive accusations of poor parenting, if not neglect:

> I think this shows that the parents haven't exposed their child to a book/magazine before they introduced her to a iPad. THAT is the shame part.

> This is excellent parental planning. Show that child early that she will spend life enslaved to a screen in order to afford whatever magazines and the fashion industry command her to consume. Welcome to reality, kid.

> Why not give your child paper and pens? Parents who use iPads as replacements for physical things like toys, the outside world disgust me.

Conclusion

This research and analysis provides insights into the evolving complexities around young children's mobile media practices, adding to the literature on parental mediation by highlighting how diverse and often contradictory forms of child mobile media use emerge in response to different discourses and their filtering within the everyday routines of home life.

The discussion aligns to the concept of *dispositif*, which articulates the ways domestic media materialities and wider discursive formations coalesce to shape and govern a particular situation, such as young children's mobile media use. This paper analysed how this dispositif both configures and complicates parental mediations of young children's mobile media use. It highlighted the tension between policy and practice, revealing that the standardised or uniform approach implied by policy guidelines is unworkable within the messy materialities, relations, and routines of family life. Instead, we see more circumspect and equivocal parental *dispositions*, which unfold through sometimes uncertain and inconsistent practices, but also through dynamic and evolving relations that nevertheless remain sensitive to the value and context of mobile media in young children's lives.

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