Chapter 5
The Children's Digital Media Center @ Los Angeles

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ABSTRACT

The Children's Digital Media Center @ Los Angeles studies young people's interactions with digital media – with a focus on the implications of these interactions for their offline lives and long-term development. Founded by Professor Patricia Greenfield, Distinguished Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), USA, the Center is a collaborative effort of researchers at the UCLA and the California State University, Los Angeles, USA. CDMC@LA researchers have been at the forefront of research on children's and adolescents' use of media ranging from early media forms such as television and video games to more recent ones including various applications on the Internet such as chat rooms, social networking sites, and YouTube. This entry presents an overview of the Center – its history, researchers and collaborators, research focus, and major contributions.

INTRODUCTION

The Children's Digital Media Center @ LA (CDMC@LA) (www.cdmc.ucla.edu) is a collaborative effort between faculty, students, and visiting researchers in the Departments of Psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA). The mission of the Center is to study young people's interactions with digital media – with a focus on the implications of these interactions for their offline lives and long-term development. Researchers at the CDMC@LA have been at the forefront of research on young children's use of media ranging from early media forms such as television and video games to more

recent ones including various applications on the Internet such as chat rooms, social networking sites, and YouTube. In this entry, we first present an overview of the Center – its history, researchers and collaborators, research focus, and major contributions. Next we describe some of the seminal work done by the Center's founder, Professor Patricia Greenfield, which started the field of interactive media and development and served as a foundation for the Center. Then, we describe early work done at the Center, followed by current work and conclude with future research directions.

OVERVIEW

The CDMC@LA was founded and directed by Dr. Patricia Greenfield, Distinguished Professor of Psychology at UCLA; the Associate Director of the Center is Dr. Kaveri Subrahmanyam, Professor of Psychology at California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA). It began in 2001 as part of the Children's Digital Media Center (CDMC), a consortium funded for five years by the National Science Foundation. The CDMC is perhaps the most lasting legacy of Dr. Rodney R. Cocking, a cognitive developmental psychologist who was "early to understand the value of studying the computer genre that children spent most of their time with - electronic entertainment games, rather than what most researchers were focusing on—the use of computers in formal education" (Greenfield & Calvert, 2004, p. 627). Dr. Cocking established and was the Program Officer for the Developmental and Learning Sciences Program within the National Science Foundation; he launched the Children's Research Initiative (CRI), "an initiative designed to move the field of Developmental Science forward" (Greenfield & Calvert, 2004, p. 629). The CDMC was one of the first centers to be established as part of the CRI and was a collaborative effort involving researchers at several U.S. Universities – Dr. San-

dra Calvert, the Project Director at Georgetown University, Dr. Patricia Greenfield at UCLA, Dr. Barbara O'Keefe at Northwestern University, Dr. Ellen Wartella and Dr. Elizabeth Vandewater at the University of Texas at Austin.

Starting in 2006, the CDMC site at UCLA forged a new identity as the Children's Digital Media Center@ LA or the CDMC@LA with sites at UCLA and CSULA. Since the core mission of the Center and the researchers associated with it have remained unchanged throughout, this entry will simply refer to both as the CDMC@LA. In 2011, CDMC@LA researchers at UCLA included Dr. Adriana Manago, as well as doctoral students, Guadalupe Espinoza, Kristen Gillespie-Lynch, Shu-Sha Angie Guan, Yalda T. Uhls, and Lauren Sherman; graduate alumni include Professor Brendesha Tynes, Dr. Lalita Suzuki, and Dr. Elisheva Gross. Undergraduate alumni include Jerel Calzo, a recent Ph.D. from University of Michigan and now a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard, and Goldie Salimkhan, currently CDMC webmaster and collaborator, as well as graduate student in graphic design at Pratt Institute. Researchers at CSULA include graduate students Phuoc Jimmy Tran, Rogelio Carillo, Thomas Staunton, and Minas Mike Michikyan; alumni include Deborah Laurin now a doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champagne, Kevin Linares, and Roy Cheng a graduate student in a joint program at the London School of Economics/University of Southern California, USA. U.S. Collaborators of the CDMC@LA include the following researchers and scholars: Dr. Jaana Juvonen, Professor of Psychology at UCLA, and Dr. Stephanie Reich, Assistant Professor of Education at the University of California, Irvine. Reflecting its international scope, the CDMC@LA also collaborates with researchers in Europe including Dr. David Smahel, Associate Professor at the Institute for Research of Children, Youth and Family, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University (the Czech Republic) and Dr. Natalia Waechter, senior researcher at the Austrian Institute for Youth Research, Vienna.

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