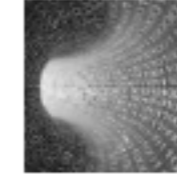




Article



My whole world's in my palm! The second-level divide of teenagers' mobile use and skill

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Abstract

Mobile communication emerged as a dominant channel for networked teenagers. While some theorists celebrate possibilities for autonomy, others are concerned that the increased reliance on mobile-based communication leads to disparities in digital skill and status replication. We examined how mobile-mediated behavior among teens interacted with the characteristics of socio-demographics and mobile access to predict (1) levels of diverse use and skill and (2) consequences of skill/use differences ($n = 552$). Findings revealed that skill/use disparities were manifested based on race, and such variations were associated with status of parents in interaction with mobile phone ownership. Instrumental use and content/creation-based skill had significant impacts on public involvement among teens. Our data have implications for understanding how social backgrounds incubate mobile based disparities in light of enabling teens' life chances.

