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Internet Use of Youth from a Gender Perspective

The presentation introduces and discusses the main results of our research project "Internet experiences and forms of habitus of young people with different educational backgrounds[1]". This reconstructive youth study, based on the "documentary method" ("dokumentarische Methode" vgl. Bohnsack u.a. 2001), aims at generating the medial orientations which guide the practice of 14-16 years old adolescents in terms of their Habitus. Our analysis of media cultures of youth, based on the interviews and group discussions has demonstrated that the structural categories of "educational milieu" and "gender" are highly relevant. There were empirical significant differences with respect to the preferences of content and use: Compared to rather highly educated pupils the rather low educated young people use digital media mostly for entertainment and less for information (for issues of school). With their specific symbolic orders and habitualisations rather low educated young persons act in digital communities in ways that are significantly different from the media use of high educated pupils. Following central results will be discussed from gender perspective:

1. The contradiction between an "adult's habitus" based on reasoning and girl's computer gaming: Using the example of a girls group from a catholic girl's school (eg. Buchen 2004) it will be explicated why girls draw sharp distinctions from boy's computer gaming culture, although they participate to this type of use. Our evaluations have shown that this fields of the internet are preferably used by low educated male **and** female adolescents in to construct and to perform gender differences ('doind gender') which imply gender-specific connotations (shooting games; chats).

2. The contradiction between the "digital habitus of experts" and the virtual knowledge of low educated pupils: Using the example of a group of low educated pupils (eg. Buchen / Straub 2005 i.E.) it will be explicated that boys' technically induced "digital habitus of experts" becomes perished in the face of an increased normalisation of digital media in everyday life because it i s challenged by girls. This happens this habitus is not based on computer knowledge but on habitual imprinting which refers to traditional gender norms. Within the milieu of high educated pupils there was usually a coherence between "special habit" and boy's competence.

3. The fascination of the 'hacker' for male adolescents: Using the example of a group of low educated pupils (eg. Buchen / Straub 2006 i.E.) the meaning of the fascination of social phenomenon of the 'hacker' for computer enthused low educated boys will be discussed. The youth study has shown that the 'hacker' issue has different meaning and relevance for youth from different types of school.