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How real is the Google Generation?

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Google generation

● those born in, or after, 1993

● who have not known a world before the web

● Last in line of ‘generations’: baby boomers, Gen X, Gen Y, etc.
Assumptions

- the Google generation are different
- they love computers
- they hate books (and libraries)
- and many more
Evidence

- Rather lacking
- Few empirical studies
- Lots of anecdote and opinion
- Hardly any evaluation and ‘meta study’
  (University College London - Ian Rowlands)
10 assumptions

- About the Google generation and information
- How justified are they?
- Summarise evidence (with some personal observation)
Google generation are different and homogenous

- perceived as different
- but still large differences
  - between individuals
  - between socio-economic groups
  - between countries

- and many similarity with older groups
Google generation are obsessed by technology

- Not all of them
- Not all the time
Google generation prefer multimedia to text

- not all of them
- none of them all the time
- reading more than previous generations
- novelty fades
Google generation demand
edutainment and infotainment

- not all of them
- none of them all the time
- novelty fades
- easiest and quickest is best
Google generation demands instant information

- yes
- so do most other people
- GG cannot remember a time when this was not the norm

- Maybe ‘slow information’ is the next trend
  (City University PhD project)
Google generation are skilled with technology

- not really
- some are, most aren’t
- confidence is mistaken for skill
Google generation are good at finding information

- not so

- they can often find something quickly
- but it may not be what they want
- lack understanding of ‘information world’
- limited judgement and evaluation
- stop at ‘good enough’ without appreciation what ‘better’ might be
  (like the rest of us ?)
Google generation wants only digital communication

- true, to a large extent

- but this may reflect cost (free texts) and convenience
Google generation multitasks effectively

- Need to stay connected
- Attempt to do several things ‘at once’
- Distraction problem
  - Getting worse ?
Google generation rely on peers rather than ‘authority’

- ‘wisdom of crowds’ view
- social networking effect

- no evidence for this
- peers are quick and convenient sources
Concluding thoughts

- Google generation
  - Not so similar to each other
  - Not so different from everyone else
  - Not so good with technology and information as they, and others, think
  - Show same trends are previous (but more so?)
  - Difficult to provide for
  - Need to be understood better