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DEFINITION AND THEORY OF WEB-BASED YOUTH WORK



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Online Youth Work Methods

Youth workers began to use the Internet as a tool already in the late 1980s (Vesikansa 1991).¹ In the first decade of the 21st century, the diversity of online youth work manifested as various types of services and applications.² The activities and working methods have developed hand in hand with technology. Internet is a natural environment for youth work, because the target group, young people, are there.

The concepts related to online youth work have not been defined yet in the field of youth work. They have evolved through technological and other development. Online youth work can be described as dialogical (Joensuu 2005). **On the other hand**, Cavén-Pöysä, Sihvonen & Söderholm (2007) and Merikivi (2007) have described online youth work with the terms *virtual youth work* and *virtual interaction services*. In addition, online youth work has been referred to as, for example, *Web-based youth work*, *Online youth work*, *online dialogue*, *virtual youth work* and *computer-mediated youth work* (Pasanen 2008; Sevilä 2009; Viilomaa 2010; Kaivosoja 2010; Huttunen & Merikivi 2011).

Concepts related to the Internet are in a continuous state of flux. The term used in this book, *Web-based youth work*, refers to all delayed and real-time youth work and activities targeted at young people carried out on the Internet. Social media communities and services are used in youth

work as, for example, spaces, tools and platforms.³ The terms and methods related to online youth work are described in Table 1. (Timonen 2010.)⁴

Table 1. Online youth work methods (Timonen 2010).

Web-based youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth centre websites for external communication Online youth information and counselling services Open youth activities/centres on the Internet Young people's participation, empowerment and consultation on the Internet Use of online games as tools in youth work Delayed or real-time online dialogue Online youth work
Online youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online dialogue Real-time online youth work Youth centres online, virtual youth centres Multi-professional Online work
Online youth activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people developing their own online youth activities
External communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and implementing communications in social media
Promoting learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory and peer activities online
Media education in Web-based youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet safety and privacy Netiquette Participatory activities online

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Web-based Youth Work and the Theory of Youth Work

Youth work and the theory of youth work have in practice been strangers to one another in Finland. The broad spectrum of youth work does not fit under any one field of science. The multidisciplinary nature of youth work hinders the development of its status in the academic field – it also means that no particular field of science will defend the role and importance of youth work. As a comparison, day care fits firmly in the framework of educational science despite its functions related to social work. The lack of theory in the field of youth work has impeded its establishment, for example, in the field of education. Furthermore, it has unnecessarily obscured the significance of youth work. When reviewing the theory of youth work, one must accept that *theory* can in one context refer to a scientifically argued definition of the concept, and in another, guidelines based on best practices developed through experience (Nieminen 2007, 51–54).

In fact the theory of youth work can be approached by using different types of theory. This allows one to analyze youth work at an abstract level without any connection to practical applications. Youth work can also be guided through a theoretical model. This type of normative theory generates clear objectives and methodology for youth work. Its goal is to influence young people's behaviour and views about different issues and phenomena. Alternatively, the theory of youth work can be approached from a practical perspective. This kind of theory-in-use combines knowledge, personal know-how and skills, as well as tacit knowledge. It also brings together professional youth work and the civic activities and voluntary work related to youth activities. (Nieminen 2007, 52–54.)

Theoretical Dimensions of Youth Work

The theory of youth work can also be viewed by analyzing its different dimensions. These analytical dimensions can consist of conceptual pairs that include a theoretical view of an issue, and its ideal state. However, not all theories of youth work contain these dimensions. Together, the different

theoretical dimensions form the umbrella theory of youth work. (Nieminen 2007, 54.)

Table 2. Six dimensions of youth work.

Society	Humanity
Sustainability	Tasks
Methods	Values

The theory of youth work can contain an idea of the society we are living in, as well as an idea of an ideal society. In this case, the goal of youth work is to pursue this (1) *ideal society*. Especially the normative theory of youth work contains guidelines and methods aimed at developing society through youth work. (Nieminen 2007, 54–55.) In the field of youth work, an ideal society could be described as a community of active citizens. In Web-based youth work, it is necessary to define the meaning of active online citizenship (e.g. Facebook likes, activity on the Initiative Channel online service⁵, or work against racism⁶).

Normative and practical theories of youth work often include an in-built (2) conception of human essence. This idea can be explicit and recognized, or an intuition guiding actions. For example, by playing a strategy game, is a young person a passive viewer of a computer screen or an active contributor to an activity? In a similar fashion, an ideal young man can be, for example, a conformer, a person involved in civic activities, or a self-reflective thinker. From a constructivist perspective, the starting point for a theory of youth work is an active young person, who is able, through youth work intervention, to develop self-reflection and self-direction skills in order to grow into a personal individual. (Nieminen 2007, 55.) In youth work is the conception of human essence not affected by the operating environment in which young people are encountered, whether it is Web-based youth work or an event at an open youth centre. What matters is the youth worker's input and the interaction it generates.

The theory of youth work can also include an (3) *idea of sustainability*. This idea addresses the relationship between man and nature. It plays a

key role in, for example, the theories applied in adventure and experiential pedagogy. On the other hand, also the theory of youth work applied by the Guides and Scouts of Finland or animal rights organizations contains an ideal relationship between man and nature. The idea can be presented at philosophical or practical level. (Nieminen 2007, 54–55.) The idea of sustainability can be made concrete with services such as Google Earth⁷ or Google Street View⁸, which allow users to minimize their own carbon footprint by travelling virtually in authentic locations. In the same way, the activities of the Fallkulla animal farm⁹ of the Youth Department of the City of Helsinki can be accessed via social media such as IRC-Galleria¹⁰.

The (4) *idea of purpose* in the theory of youth work is seen most clearly in the ideas of society and man. The idea of purpose can include a value-based objective of an ideal man or society. The purpose of youth work is found, for example, in the Youth Act (72/2006). The purpose can also be included, for example, in the objectives of an individual club of a non-profit organization, or in the perception of the purpose of youth work of an adult volunteering to patrol the streets on a Saturday night. (Nieminen 2007, 56.) In Web-based youth work, the purpose is visible, for example, in the working methods of non-profit organizations. Youths are provided guidance and company, as well as information and collaborative games. Alternatively, an ideal society can also be one in which several services (youth work, social work, health care) are provided at one location, such as in the real-time, multi-professional Online youth work provided by the National Development Centre for Online Youth Work VERKE¹¹, or the delayed question-answer services provided by Pulmakulma¹¹ (“Problem corner”) on different subjects (e.g. housing, education, studies, work, free time, sustainability, going or moving abroad).

In normative and practical theories of youth work, an (5) *idea of methods* is based on the purpose of youth work, as well as on the idea of how the intended purpose could be achieved. The idea of methods includes the operating environment and the assumption of sufficient resources. It can be a detailed operational flow chart, or an operational framework based on the professional expertise of youth workers. An idea of methods always involves an educational relationship. (Nieminen 2007, 56–57.) The relation-

ship is particularly visible in Web-based youth work, where, for example, online discussions are seen as a method of encountering young people, and the games arranged by NGO EHYT¹³ are seen as preventive youth work. At the regional services department of the Youth Department of the City of Helsinki, Web-based youth work is one of the five core processes of youth work. This reflects a methodological idea in which Web-based youth work is seen as a method worth investing in. Indeed, resources and evaluation criteria have been defined for online youth work. For example, at the regional services department, online and media instructors support youth workers in their online activities at regional youth work units. The (6) *values* of the theory of youth work are diverse. They consist of the ideological backgrounds of different actors and can appear very different depending on one's viewpoint. In other words, the values can be considered relative. In normative and practical theories of youth work, values are stated explicitly, while cognitive theories tend to pursue a value-free approach. (Nieminen 2007, 57.) The values of Web-based youth work are based on the values of the organization producing the activities. The values can be based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the values defined by the city for youth work, a religious background or, for example, a political ideology. The Forum for Online Youth Work¹⁴ has published ethical guidelines for online youth work, which describe the rights and responsibilities of both young people and youth workers. The concept of youth work is understood through the six dimensions described above. The key issue is that youth workers should stop to reflect on their own motives behind their work. Similarly, the inbuilt ideas guiding youth work should be stated explicitly when planning the activities of different organizations. The objective is not to define what is right or wrong, but to understand the motives and driving force behind one's decisions. This process would make it easier to achieve the desired goals. In online interaction, one cannot analyze the body language or facial expressions of participants. Therefore, it is particularly important to pay attention to what is being communicated and how. At the same time, it is important to think about the purpose and the target group

of the service being provided, and whether or not the defined goals can be achieved through online activities.

Web-based Youth Work in the Field of Education

In his article on the theory of youth work, Nieminen (2007, 48–49) also discusses the position of youth education and youth work in the field of education. Formal education refers to the education system involving the school system. In formal education, students progress systematically and eventually receive a certificate or a diploma defining their level of knowledge. Like formal education, also non-formal education is goal-oriented, but it takes place outside of the school environment. For example, the training of online peer support students called Verkk@ri¹⁵ is a goal-oriented education, even though it is not one of the formal educational duties of the school system. In a similar fashion, the training of assistant instructors in Netari represents goal-oriented training aimed at providing a qualification for non-formal education.

Informal learning takes place at work, at home or during free time – for example, via the Internet. In other words, it is not restricted to any location. For example, language learning takes place naturally in the English-language virtual world of Second Life¹⁶ because of the motivation to survive. Informal learning can take place in activities arranged for educational purposes, but in most cases it is random and unplanned. In addition, the learning goals or schedules are not organised hierarchically, and the learning does not involve a certificate or a diploma. Informal learning is also unstructured by nature, and it does not involve a student-teacher relationship. Informal learning is sometimes also referred to as everyday learning. (Nyyssölä 2002, 18; Statistics Finland 2010.) One characteristic of informal learning is interactive and parallel learning by the instructor and the student. It is the spontaneous learning by an individual or a group, and not learning organised by an educational institution.

According to Smith (2006, 15–17), informal learning most often takes place through discussion or conversation, which makes it independent of time and location. He also describes informal education as unplanned.

One cannot know beforehand where it will lead. The focus is on situations and experiences to which learners cannot be forced. For example, in the activities and online outreach youth work of the National Development Centre for Online Youth Work VERKE and church online youth workers, one-on-one discussions are held with young people only at their request.

Smith also describes the operating environment of informal education as more relaxed than the school environment. It is important, for example, that a group can take responsibility for its learning. This means that the educator has to be able to guarantee the safety and equal treatment of all members of the group. Therefore, the key role of an informal educator is to develop and provide environments that facilitate learning. The tool to this end is the ability to generate discussion even about very sensitive topics such as sexuality. (Smith 2006, 24–25.) In online youth work, this is a key working method, which also poses challenges for the professional quality of Web-based youth work.

In the support chat rooms called Manteli (“Almond”) organized by Save the Children, children and young people can talk to safe and trained adults as well as their peers (Härmä & Korhonen 2010). Working in the Manteli (“Almond”) crisis chat room¹⁸ requires solid expertise, sensitivity and conversation skills. The National Development Centre for Online Youth Work VERKE, on the other hand, is a good example of how youth workers have to know how to act professionally while working close to young people

The fourth field of learning is random learning, which can perhaps best be described as learning through experience or trial and error (Nieminen 2007, 49–50). One example of this is learning how to use a Web browser or online games. It should be pointed out, however, that in real life, the aforementioned fields of education and learning are overlapping and closely related. In other words, their categorization is useful mainly as a tool for theoretical analysis.

Under the Youth Act (72/2006), youth work is defined as promoting young people’s active citizenship and empowerment, supporting their growth and independence, as well as interaction between generations. The duties proscribed under the act are carried out through both non-formal

and informal education. Nevertheless, there is something problematic about the general framework at a practical level. Most people would agree that youth work is not part of formal education. However, many would question whether to position youth work (including Web-based youth work) in the field of non-formal or informal education. In this debate, it is difficult to determine whether the disagreement stems from categorical ambiguity or actually differing views. In the end, restricting youth work in one area or another would not be wise. For example, in Web-based youth work, there is a demand for both non-formal and informal education.

Youth Worker as an Educator

Foreman (1990, 19–25) discusses the self-image of a youth worker specifically as an educator. Although youth work takes place outside of formal education, it is still evaluated using pedagogical criteria. According to Foreman, youth work is, above all, work that supports the development of a young person's personality. This work requires educational acts that enable learning. In fact, Foreman would prefer to talk about a youth work curriculum than a strict educational programme. Youth work can include both planned and unplanned learning situations. In both, learning takes place in accordance to the curriculum, with the methods and content guiding activities in dialogue. In youth work, learning is based on the development of young people's capabilities through situations planned to enable learning. However, unlike in school education, youth work learning situations cannot be planned completely in advance – the key point is to reflect on the learning situations and thereby turn them into capabilities. At the same time, the youth worker needs to understand the context in which a young person is living. This connects the youth worker to the reality of the young person and also strengthens the young person's understanding of his or her capabilities and possibilities.

Foreman (1990, 19–25) also discusses the special role that a youth worker has in the eyes of a young person. Many youth workers have special skills that they integrate into their work. In this context, it is important for the youth worker to have pedagogical skills that allow the young

person to become a participant and a learner, instead of ending up merely as the youth worker's audience. Another special characteristic of youth work is learning in and through groups. Therefore, an informal educator has to be able to manage the learning processes of young people, and be available for the debriefing of situations in order to enable self-reflection. This poses a challenge for Web-based youth work. It requires careful planning to attach young people to activities and to build activities that involve an attractive self-reflection phase.

Batsleer (2008, 5–13) describes the youth worker as an informal educator whose duty it is to go wherever young people are. The method is conversation, which in this context should be understood as dialogue rather than chatting. The focus is on helping young people develop in their everyday environment. Batsleer discusses the informal curriculum of youth work mainly as a register of methods, which describes, for example, different conversation types for addressing different types of themes. The themes are related to power, conflict, inequality and diversity. In other words, young people are empowered through conversation. In this context, empowerment refers to freeing young people of false and restrictive conceptions. Young people are supported in becoming active citizens instead of mere consumers. Informal educators need to have the ability to encounter young people as they are, and not as small adults. Many Web-based youth work services use chat rooms. While this working method may appear easy to use, it can be demanding, especially when addressing a difficult topic with young people. In such situations, peer support can be highly valuable for the youth worker. For example, in the National Development Centre for Online Youth Work VERKE -chat, a youth worker can, during a shift, make an Internet phone call to a colleague for professional consultation.

Thus, real-time and delayed online dialogue represents key methods of Web-based youth work. In these services, young people are encountered in social media or youth work services through conversation, by chatting. Online conversations are often held in groups or small groups. The services also offer opportunities for one-on-one discussions (Kaivosoja 2010). At the moment, online dialogue is used as a working method in the activ-

ities of several Finnish non governmental organisations and the National Development Centre for Online Youth Work VERKE.

In practice, online dialogue is used as an educational working method, for example, as follows:

The objective of *Etsivä nettityö* (online outreach youth work) of Nuorten Palvelu ry (NGO: Youth Service Association) is to find solutions for each young person's particular situation together with the young person. Through listening and dialogue, young people are encouraged and supported, and perhaps provided with different perspectives on the addressed issues. (Nuorten Palvelu ry. 2010.)

The youth workers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland discuss issues related to faith and life with young people in the online services of the church and other service providers. Church online youth workers move in social media communities and participate in discussions in accordance with the principles they have established. They follow the media and Internet forums, and develop practices for the church's online dialogue. (EVL 2010a.) The objectives of the church include training workers for online dialogue (EVL 2010b).

In the Manteli ("Almond") chat rooms, young people talk to adult volunteers, who offer information, guidance and support in questions and everyday situations. If necessary, a young person is instructed and referred to the appropriate services. (Härmä & Korhonen 2010.)

Batsleer (2008, 5–13) highlights the motivation of the informal educator in youth work. It would be beneficial for educators to analyze and recognize their motives, as well as the fact that educators tend to focus on different groups by gender or the "difficulty level" of the group. Nevertheless, it is important to understand why the educator finds any particular group appealing. When the representatives of a target group are only forming their identity, they are also more susceptible to the educator's influence. The basis of informal education is dialogue, and therefore the educator gets to work very close to young people. Acknowledging, for example, one's own prejudices and attitudes allows one to work with different groups. Furthermore, informal educators can be provided professional support through supervision and guidance.

The work environment is particularly challenging, because the target group of an informal educator is young people. In traditional human relations professions, work takes place in purpose-made facilities, such as a classroom, a therapist's office or a doctor's practice. However, youth workers have to be able to carry out their work, for example, at a computer, and to create a peaceful and safe meeting environment in the middle of a broad range of competing activities. Youth workers have to be able to evaluate a young person's personal space in order to be close enough – but not too close. In addition, young people typically want to move within and between spaces. This poses another challenge for educators that must be acknowledged when encountering young people. (Batsleer 2008, 60–63.) In online encounters, it is particularly easy for young people to move around. They can follow several websites simultaneously and tend to make their choices spontaneously. In online encounters, the space and activities must be carefully planned, if the objective is to establish a connection with a young person.

According to Müller (2006, 22) one principle of youth work is the voluntary participation of young people. Also the encounters in youth work are based more on interpersonal relationships than structures. Youth work focuses on group learning and at the same time gives young people a sense of belonging and participation. Indeed, informal education can be considered a form of enabling participation in democratic civil society. Also this goal of youth work can be achieved in the online environment. However, we need to consider the different aspects of online participation, such as the meaning of Facebook likes. Do young people see them as participation?

Batsleer (2008, 71–77) also discusses the problem that youth workers face in the apathy of young people. She sees apathy as a defensive guard against change and uncertainty. Confused about all the changes they are going through, young people need to find a shelter from all the surrounding stimuli. By hiding behind apathy, young people can deal with their uncertainty without reacting to stimuli from the outside. It can be difficult for youth workers to tolerate apathy – they might try to solve the problem by organizing programme aimed at activating young people.

From the perspective of informal education, this is not a productive approach. By tolerating the apparent apathy, the educator will also tolerate the young person's uncertainty. This enables the young person to encounter an adult that they can trust for support. In Web-based youth work, discussions are followed by passive and active (trolling) young people. Youth workers need to be able to communicate that they have recognized the young person and are willing to meet the young person on his or her terms. On the Internet, young people test youth workers just as they do at youth centres. However, the medium poses its own challenges. For example, the young person is able to switch to another website, which ends the situation. Youth workers need sufficient professional skills to connect quickly to the young person in order to enable interaction. The reaching of adulthood is defined by various age thresholds. These thresholds involve rights or responsibilities, such as the right to obtain a moped licence, vote in elections, and criminal responsibility. On the Internet, this is reflected in the age limits of social media communities. Also online games have recommended age limits. On the Internet, age limits mirror the real world, and the two are moving closer to one another. In discussing the growth of a young person into an adult, Batsleer (2008, 92–97) states that the specific strength of youth work is the educational relationship based on voluntariness. On the one hand, adulthood means reaching a specific age, and on the other, the ability to live an independent, responsible life. The latter does not develop automatically, but requires the opportunity to practise decision making in such a way that also the consequences of the decisions are understood.

As an educator and a voluntarily chosen partner, youth work plays a key role here. At the same time, youth work appears to the young person as a partner that wants what is best for the young person. This partnership is not equal, but it is based on reciprocity and respect. Confidentiality is also important in the relationship between a young person and an informal educator. However, the confidential relationship cannot prevent the youth worker from passing on any information provided by the young person that causes concern from the perspective of child welfare. For this reason, in 2010 the Forum for Online Youth Work, whose members in-

clude NGOs involved in real-time youth work on the Internet, prepared common guidelines for filing a report with the child welfare authorities.²²

Youth work should now claim its position as an informal, professional educator, just like early childhood education has done. Also youth work has to demonstrate that what may appear like idleness is in fact strong professional expertise in youth work. In this case, the working method is active presence and observation. An informal educator has to be able to differentiate between a young person's acts provocation and real needs. Also the educator's reactions and their management demonstrate the person's professional competence. Managing one's reactions is a demanding requirement for Online youth workers. It would be more natural to respond quickly with an action plan instead of being present in a calm manner. (Müller 2006, 25–27.)

One of the special characteristics of an informal educational relationship is the relationship between a young person and a youth worker. Youth workers might end up following their calling more than their profession. The typically casual approach towards young people in youth work may result in confusion and misunderstandings. For example, a young person can interpret such an approach as friendship. The youth worker must know how to keep the relationship with the young person as a customer relationship. (Batsleer 2008, 100–101.) The youth worker must also be able to identify bullying among young people, even though it can be very subtle and well-hidden. Here, observation is a key method, as is the basic working method of informal education, presence. Youth work should offer a safe and confidential atmosphere, which is easy to approach when other environments prove unsafe or the risk of bullying increases. From the perspective of informal education, bullying is resolved through methods of peer mediation. (Batsleer 2008, 122–127.)

Also Web-based youth work has developed in an increasingly professional direction. Online youth work organizations introduce their employees to the ethical guidelines for online youth work. In the Verke - National Development Centre for Online Youth Work activities, municipal youth workers are trained to become online youth workers. Save the Children trains volunteer adults to take part in youth support chat rooms,

and the volunteers undertake to comply with the ethical guidelines for on-line youth work after their training. Online youth information and counselling services comply with the ethical guidelines for online youth work drafted and approved together by the members of the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA).²³

The informal approach is probably most easily understood in Web-based youth work. There, young people voluntarily join the activities, and also the interventions related to the work are based on the needs of the young person. In the actual work, the “hanging out” is arranged in such a manner that when the need for one-on-one discussion arises, the young person can move into a quiet space with the youth worker for discussion.

Key Functions of Web-based Youth Work

Nieminen (2007a) has studied the functions of youth work, and has defined four key functions: socialization, individualization, compensation, as well as resourcing and allocation. In addition, Nieminen defines one so-called hidden function: control. It is useful to examine Web-based youth work also from the perspective of these key functions.

The socialization function of youth work refers to attaching a young person into the culture, society and surrounding communities. From the youth worker, this process demands knowledge and skills, as well as the communication of values and practices. According to Merikivi (2007, 6), the socialization function of youth work is realized in the Netari on-line service, which includes youth workers from across Finland. The results of the Virtahepo (“Hippo”) study conducted by Cavén-Pöysä, Sihvonen & Kangas (2007) support this claim. According to the Virtahepo study, young people find it significant that the youth workers encountered on the Internet are professional adults. Similarly, they feel that it would be important to have online youth workers from the same area they are from.

The individualization function refers to supporting the growth of a young person into a self, an independent individual aware of one’s needs and goals. Here, the starting point is listening to, recognizing and respecting the young person’s needs. Young people should be provided a space

where they can develop their personal characteristics. In Web-based youth work, online youth information and counselling services offer information pages as well as delayed question-answer services such as the Pulmakulma (“Problem corner”). In these services, youth work professionals respond to young people’s various questions within five business days.

The starting point of the compensation function is fixing any deficiencies or difficulties in the socialization and individualization functions. The objective is to address factors threatening equality and non-discrimination, and to support those young people who are in the weakest position in society. In Web-based youth work, a good example of this is NoRa – No Racism, a joint project of Save the Children and the Youth Department of the City of Helsinki, which develops Online youth work against racism. Also the multi-professional approach of the Verke - National Development Centre for Online Youth Work focuses on young people in need of special support, as does online outreach youth work. Web-based youth work reduces the differences in the living conditions of young people. It allows young people to gain access to at least some of the same services regardless of their place of residence.

One function of youth work is to influence the resources allocated by society to young people, as well as the allocation itself. Another goal is to train young people to influence the decisions concerning themselves. This is also called education for democratic citizenship, which includes teaching media literacy to young people. For young people, social media is an easy channel for influencing. It should be noted, however, that influencing carried out using social media will never have any effect, if the channel is inappropriate for the cause. A good example is the Finnish General Strike community founded on Facebook²⁴ in the autumn of 2010. Even though the community secured 10,000 likes the actual protest was attended by a few dozen people. One could argue that the Facebook campaign might have attracted people to the protest held in front of the Parliament House if the fan page had been called a “protest” instead of a “general strike”. Other online tools for education for democratic citizenship include “Valtikka” website by the Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi and the Initiative Channel. The Initiative Channel allows young people to make pro-

posals and witness and participate in the initiative process, with municipal youth workers handling the communication between the young person and municipal decision-makers.

The control function is granted to youth work from outside. It is not actual youth work, but expectations concerning youth work. In Web-based youth work, this might include, for example, the expectation that the primary duty of a youth worker is to observe the online behaviour of young people and to report any suspicious activity. Such a view puts the youth worker's educational role in the background.

It is possible to define Web-based youth work and the related concepts. However, since the technologies, tools and methods involved are rapidly developing, changing and transforming, the concepts need to be flexible as well. At the same time, youth work is always youth work, regardless of the environment, medium or methods used. In Web-based youth work, it is important to hold on to the basic principles of youth work. Youth work has plenty of work to do on the Internet, and it is needed there.

Notes

- 1 Youth database 1989, Citizenship Education Centre
- 2 <http://www.alli.fi/nuorisoalan+kehittaminen/nuorille+suunnatun+verkkotyön+foorumi/>, <http://www.koordinaatti.fi>
- 3 The Finnish Terminology Centre TSK has published a social media glossary. http://www.tsk.fi/tiedostot/pdf/Sosiaalisen_median_sanasto An IT glossary is available in the database of the voluntary team work on IT terminology coordinated by the Finnish Terminology Centre TSK. <http://www.tsk.fi/tsk/termitalkoot/>
- 4 Timonen's categorization is based on empirical observations on online youth work in 2009–2010.
- 5 <http://www.aloitekanava.fi>
- 6 <http://www.pelastakalapset.fi/toiminta/nuorisotoiminta/nora-no-racism/>
- 7 <http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>
- 8 <http://maps.google.com/intl/fi/help/maps/streetview/>
- 9 <http://irc-galleria.net/user/Fallkulla>
- 10 <http://irc-galleria.net>
- 11 <http://www.verke.org/in-english>
- 12 Greater Helsinki Pulmakulma. <http://www.nuoret.info>
- 13 <http://www.ehyt.fi>
- 14 <http://www.alli.fi/nuorisoalan+kehittaminen/nuorille+suunnatun+verkkotyön+foorumi/>
- 15 <http://www.mll.fi/nuortennetti/>
- 16 <http://secondlife.com/>

- 17 <http://sakasti.evl.fi> > Uudistuva kirkko > Hengellinen elämä verkossa > Hengellinen työ verkkoyhteisöissä > Verkkokeskustelu
- 18 <http://www.pelastakaaalapset.fi/toiminta/nuorisotoiminta/manteli-tukichat/>
- 19 <http://www.mll.fi>
- 20 <http://sakasti.evl.fi> > Uudistuva kirkko > Hengellinen elämä verkossa > Hengellinen työ verkkoyhteisöissä > Verkkokeskustelu
- 21 <http://nuortenpalvelu.fi> > Hankkeet > Etsivä nettityö
- 22 <http://www.alli.fi/nuorisosaalan+kehittaminen/nuorille+suunnatun+verkkotyon+foorumi/> > Lastensuojeluilmoituksen ohjeistus
- 23 <http://www.eryica.org>
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Charged up and Online: Advances in Youth Work

Abstract

Finnish youth work online has recently been attracting wide-spread interest. Youth work can be done using the tools of information technology, and it has been shown possible to successfully reach, meet and support youths through the internet. In recent years, developments in youth work methods have been made on both theoretical and practical levels. **Charged up and Online: Advances in Youth Work**, written as a joint project by the Finnish Youth Research Society, the University of Applied Sciences (HUMAK) and City of Helsinki Youth Department, is the first survey of youth work on the Internet that knits practical cases and theoretical articles closely together into a rich dialogue that paints a comprehensive picture of the existing operating models. The book describes the ever-changing job of the youth worker and encourages readers to discuss strategic guidelines and directions of youth work online. **Charged up and Online: Advances in Youth Work** is well-suited as a youth and social studies textbook for methodology courses as well as supplementary reading for all youth workers who want to extend their professional know-how.

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