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YOU'RE ALWAYS ONLINE: NEGOTIATING INTERNET TEMPORALITIES IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

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The structures and constructs of time, that is, the *rules of time*, have always governed how schools operate. Timetables, bells, calendars, vacations, schedules, and diaries are examples of how schools have been structured and schooling has been performed. Schools have been predicated by these particular rhythms of time, i.e. being 'present'. Long-held assumptions persist that internet technology provides a ready infrastructure for transforming the experience of teaching and learning within the organizational setting of the school. The effect of internet technology as a presence in schools is real enough (i.e. investment has been substantial) but the extent of its effect on change and innovation in terms of what gets done (and what gets learned) is less certain. As internet technologies and media are an integral element of contemporary education, and increasingly shape the ways in which time is experienced in schools, internet technology use is often shaped and bounded by dominant structures and 'grammars' of schooling – not least formal assessment and curriculum requirements, tacit expectations of time, space and place, and management regimes of accountability and performativity. The fundamental nature of time means that we are constantly negotiating it, are 'in' it, are using it, are spending it, and are wasting it, which can be considered theorisations of temporality. When discussing concepts such as the acceleration of society (Wajcman, 2015, 2008), the age of distraction (Hassan, 2012), the attention economy (Goldhaber, 1997) and iTime (Agger, 2011), theorisations surrounding temporality are occurring. For instance, Judy Wajcman claimed, "technologies change the nature and meaning of tasks and work activities, as well as creating new material and cultural practices" (Wajcman, 2008, p. 66). Increasingly, the way time is passed is closely aligned with neo-liberal presuppositions. Capitalist constructs of productivity are linked to how effectively people are using their time to achieve.

Digital devices and ubiquitous online access have enabled and produced temporalities and rhythms – part of the assemblage of practices that construct a school. This paper examines the multiple ways that time is negotiated in contemporary technology-infused schools. Given the dramatic changes in temporality produced by new media, it is evident there are (mis)assumptions about the 'correct' use of time which are embedded and reproduced via binary distinctions such as work and play, productivity and waste.

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Teachers regularly state there is not enough 'time' to get through curriculum or to teach children or to attend to the multiple demands expected of the profession. This paper outlines and then contrasts how different groups of teachers and principals view internet technologies alongside their understandings of time. This is particularly important given that everyday actions generate temporal qualities and these rhythms, practices and rituals construct our sense of time.

The research questions that are of particular interest are:

- How is the understanding of school teachers and leaders' sense of time shaped by their use of internet technologies?
- Where are internet technologies implicated in instances of *temporal control* within the school context?

The paper draws upon in-depth ethnographic studies of three Australian secondary schools across a period of twelve months. This extended period of immersive fieldwork utilized the main forms of data generation associated with classroom research and school ethnography – including over 100 site visits, 300 hours of *in situ* observations, field notes, documentary analysis, photographing and videoing, corridor conversations, and numerous interviews with staff, students and other members of the school communities. Within the paper, experiences from both 'high-using' and 'low-using' students, teachers, and leaders are provided.

The paper draws upon thematic analysis of this large corpus of ethnographic data and applies particular concepts surrounding the acceleration of life within digital society (developed by Judy Wajcman, Ben Agger, Robert Hassan, and others) to the secondary school context. Particular focuses include: the temporal contexts of 'doing school' via internet technology, how internet technology fits/shapes the rhythms of the school, and how internet technologies are implicated in instances of *temporal control* within the school context.

On one hand, the paper charts how internet technologies are implicated in the persistence (and entrenchment) of traditional modes of 'school time' - in particular the forms of analogue time associated with the 'factory' model of school arrangements and organization. These include the persistence of the familiar linear rhythms and temporalities of the school lesson, day, week, term and year – all of which are reinforced through many of the dominant (internet) systems and structures used in schools – particularly notable given that everyday actions generate temporal qualities and these rhythms, practices and rituals construct subjectivities of time. The paper explores how analogue practices surrounding the structured notions of time and conceptions surrounding the use and understanding of time are being newly mediated by internet technology and internet practices within schools. As teachers and students have the ability to be 'always online', the article discusses how this impacts on students' learning, and teachers' health, sociability, practice and productivity.

In contrast, the paper also highlights practices that are negotiated through the use of personalised digital devices and online modes of interaction and communication, in

particular, the fluid intensifications, accelerations and compressions of time. The research points to how for a group of educators in one school, their sense of autonomy and control was heightened when using internet technology as it increased their capacity of *when* they could communicate and *how much* could be communicated, facilitating greater temporal communication. For some teachers, their practices meant they did not have time to effectively learn how to use digital devices. For some principals, the use of email and other web-based software for broadcast communication meant that their subjective sense of time was saved. While some participants were able to make the most of technology to transverse constructions and subjectivities surrounding temporal control, in contrast, others appeared burdened by technology which led to a reduced sense of autonomy and control over their time. The paper therefore concludes by exploring how (what seems to be) the same technologies mediate very different internet temporalities in secondary schools.

References

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