

CONTACT:

Sabrina Smith

sabrina.smith@edutopia.org

(415) 662-1673

Edutopia Announces the Digital Generation Project

An Insightful Look into the Lives of Ten Extraordinary Digital Youth

San Rafael, California (May 27, 2009) -- "Nobody calls anybody anymore. If you want to get hold of someone, you text them," says thirteen-year-old Sam, checking one of 114 messages in her cell phone in-box. Sam is one of ten young people profiled in Edutopia's Digital Generation Project, the culmination of a yearlong investigation into the media-rich, networked lives of today's digital generation. The video portraits aim to help educators and parents understand how digital media are changing how this generation of young people create, collaborate, and teach.

In addition to the biographical video portraits, visitors to the project's Web site can explore links to each student's games, projects, Web sites, and video creations.

The excitement of the youth, and their ease in navigating their digital worlds, not to mention what and how they are learning is truly impressive -- and inspiring. They include

- eleven-year-old Cameron, who produces and edits music videos, short documentaries, and school announcements at home, at school, and on the road with his hockey team -- and films his own hockey swing, slows it down, and analyzes it.
- thirteen-year-old Dylan, who collaborates with students from all over the world to make award-winning Web sites.
- eighteen-year-old Luis, who teaches Lego Robotics to kids and maps the trees in his community with global-positioning-system devices.
- eighteen-year-old Nafiza, a graduate of Global Kids's Online Leadership Program, who works with other students to make animated films on pressing social issues using Teen Second Life.
- twelve-year-old Jalen, who participates in the Digital Youth Network after-school program; Jalen and his friends use the social-networking site Remix World to critique their work before publishing it on YouTube.
- nine-year-old Dana, a member of Kidsteam, at the University of Maryland's Human-Computer Interaction Lab, which helps design better technology for kids.

"With so much commentary about the technological culture today's young people inhabit, we felt it was important to show the diversity of their digital lives, up close and personal, from a variety of backgrounds and locales," explains Milton Chen, executive

director of The George Lucas Educational Foundation. "We want to help educators and parents understand these new tools and behaviors and consider how they can be applied in new ways of teaching and learning."

The Digital Generation Project also includes interviews with teachers, administrators, and parents who address the challenges and rewards they face while striving to keep pace and support these digital learners. Interviews with big thinkers like Howard Gardner, James Paul Gee, Mimi Ito, Henry Jenkins, and Katie Salen help frame the discussion.

The Digital Generation Project was produced with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as part of a \$50 million digital-media and learning initiative that explores how digital media are changing how young people learn, play, socialize, and participate in civic life.

About Edutopia:

Edutopia is published by The George Lucas Educational Foundation, founded in 1991 by filmmaker George Lucas as a nonprofit operating foundation that documents, disseminates and advocates for innovation and the redesign of K-12 learning environments, including how technology can transform teaching and learning. Through Edutopia.org, Edutopia magazine, Edutopia video, the Edutopia News e-newsletter, and a growing online community, the Foundation is building a movement to stimulate education reform with a special focus on core concepts of comprehensive assessment, integrated studies, project learning, social and emotional learning, teacher development, and technology integration. More information about Edutopia is available at Edutopia.org, one of the leading education sites on the Internet.