Constructing the Self in a Digital World

It has become popular in recent years to talk about “identity” as an aspect of engagement with technology – in virtual environments, in games, in social media, and in our increasingly digital world. But what do we mean by identity, and how do our theories and assumptions about identity affect the kinds of questions we ask about its relationship to technology and learning? *Constructing the Self in a Digital World* takes up this question explicitly, bringing together authors working from different models of identity but all examining the role of technology in the learning and lives of children and youth.

Cynthia Carter Ching is Associate Professor of Learning and Mind Sciences at the University of California, Davis. Her research focuses on how people across the lifespan and within particular sociohistorical contexts make meaning with and about the technologies in their lives. In 2007 she won the American Educational Research Association's Division C Jan Hawkins Early Career Award for Humanistic Research and Scholarship in Learning Technologies for her study of digital photo journals in early childhood education. She has also served as an Associate Editor at *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*. Her work has appeared in *Teachers College Record*, *Urban Education*, *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, *Computers & Education*, *Early Education and Development*, and *E-learning & Digital Media*. She has previously worked at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and received her PhD from UCLA.

Brian J. Foley is Associate Professor of Secondary Education at California State University, Northridge. His research focuses on the use of the Internet to support learning communities for students and teachers and the use of visualization in science education. This work includes studying communities of teachers as well as students. He explores how students in informal online environments such as Whyville.net create and define their community. Working with science teachers, Foley helped develop the Computer Supported Collaborative Science program, a model of teaching that takes advantage of cloud computing to enable a more collaborative science classroom. Foley completed his PhD at University of California, Berkeley, and has worked at the Caltech Precollege Science Initiative and University of California, Irvine.
LEARNING IN DOING: SOCIAL, COGNITIVE,
AND COMPUTATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

SERIES EDITOR EMERITUS
John Seely Brown, Xerox Palo Alto Research Center

GENERAL EDITORS
Roy Pea, Professor of Education and the Learning Sciences and Director,
Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning, Stanford University
Christian Heath, The Management Centre, King’s College, London
Lucy A. Suchman, Centre for Science Studies and Department of Sociology,
Lancaster University, United Kingdom

The Construction Zone: Working for Cognitive Change in School
Denis Newman, Peg Griffin, and Michael Cole

Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation
Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger

Street Mathematics and School Mathematics
Terezinha Nunes, David William Carraher, and Analucia Dias

Understanding Practice: Perspectives on Activity and Context
Seth Chaiklin and Jean Lave, Editors

Distributed Cognitions: Psychological and Educational Considerations
Gavriel Salomon, Editor

The Computer as Medium
Peter Bøgh Anderson, Berit Holmqvist, and Jens F. Jensen, Editors

Sociocultural Studies of Mind
James V. Wertsch, Pablo del Rio, and Amelia Alvarez, Editors

Sociocultural Psychology: Theory and Practice of Doing and Knowing
Laura Martin, Katherine Nelson, and Ethel Tobach, Editors

Mind and Social Practice: Selected Writings of Sylvia Scribner
Ethel Tobach et al., Editors

The list of books in the series continues after the index
Constructing the Self in a Digital World

Edited by

CYNTHIA CARTER CHING
University of California, Davis

BRIAN J. FOLEY
California State University, Northridge
## Contents

*List of Contributors*  
*Series Foreword*  

Introduction: Connecting Conversations about Technology, Learning, and Identity  
*Cynthia Carter Ching and Brian J. Foley*  

**Part I. Authoring and Exploring Identity**  

Introduction Part I: Developmental Perspectives  
*Cynthia Carter Ching*  

1 “This Is Me”: Digital Photo Journals and Young Children’s Technologies of the Self  
*Cynthia Carter Ching and X. Christine Wang*  

2 Digital Storytelling and Authoring Identity  
*Alan Davis and Daniel Weinshenker*  

3 Building Identities as Experts: Youth Learning in an Urban After-School Space  
*Carol Cuthbertson Thompson and Lisa Bouillion Diaz*  

4 Positive Technological Development: The Multifaceted Nature of Youth Technology Use toward Improving Self and Society  
*Marina Bers, Alicia Doyle-Lynch, and Clement Chau*  

**Part II. Identities in Flux and in Play**  

Introduction Part II: Identities Unleashed  
*Brian J. Foley*
Contents

5 “You Can Make Friends Easier on a Boy Face”: Identity Play and Learning in a Multiuser Virtual Environment 148
   Brian J. Foley, Melanie S. Jones, Pamela Aschbacher, and Cameron McPhee

6 Deleting the Male Gaze? Tech-Savvy Girls and New Femininities in Secondary School Classrooms 177
   Claire Charles

7 Affiliation in the Enactment of Fan Identity: A Comparison of Virtual and Face-to-Face Settings 195
   Caroline Pelletier and Natasha Whiteman

8 Navigating Life as an Avatar: The Shifting Identities-in-Practice of a Girl Player in a Tween Virtual World 222
   Deborah A. Fields and Yasmin B. Kafai

Index 251
Pamela Aschbacher is Director of Research at the California Pre-College Science Initiative at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California.

Marina Bers is Associate Professor, Eliot Pearson Department of Child Development, and Adjunct Professor of Computer Science at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts.

Claire Charles is Lecturer in Education Studies at Deakin University in Geelong, Victoria, Australia.

Clement Chau is a doctoral candidate in the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts.

Cynthia Carter Ching is Associate Professor of Learning and Mind Sciences in the School of Education at the University of California, Davis.

Alan Davis is Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Colorado, Denver.

Lisa Bouillion Diaz is Extension Specialist in Technology and Youth Development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Alicia Doyle-Lynch is Lecturer in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts.

Deborah A. Fields is Post-Doctoral Researcher at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Brian J. Foley is Associate Professor of Secondary Education in the Michael D. Eisner College of Education at California State University, Northridge.

Melanie S. Jones is Associate Faculty Associate in the Psychology Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
List of Contributors

Yasmin B. Kafai is Professor of Learning Sciences in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Cameron McPhee is a psychometrician, statistician, and research analyst at the American Institutes for Research.

Caroline Pelletier is Lecturer in the Department of Children, Families, and Health in the Institute of Education at the University of London.

Carol Cuthbertson Thompson is Interim Coordinator Bantivoglio Honors Concentration, Associate Professor in Education at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey.

X. Christine Wang is Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at State University of New York at Buffalo.

Daniel Weinshenker is Rocky Mountain/Midwest Regional Director of the Center for Digital Storytelling in Denver, Colorado.

Natasha Whiteman is Lecturer in the Department of Media and Communications at the University of Leicester.
Series Foreword

This series for Cambridge University Press is widely known as an international forum for studies of situated learning and cognition. Innovative contributions are being made by anthropology; by cognitive, developmental, and cultural psychology; by computer science; by education; and by social theory. These contributions are providing the basis for new ways of understanding the social, historical, and contextual nature of learning, thinking, and practice that emerges from human activity. The empirical settings of these research inquiries range from the classroom to the workplace, to the high-technology office, and to learning in the streets and in other communities of practice. The situated nature of learning and remembering through activity is a central fact. It may appear obvious that human minds develop in social situations and extend their sphere of activity and communicative competencies. But cognitive theories of knowledge representation and learning alone have not provided sufficient insight into these relationships. This series was born of the conviction that new, exciting interdisciplinary syntheses are underway as scholars and practitioners from diverse fields seek to develop theory and empirical investigations adequate for characterizing the complex relations of social and mental life and for understanding successful learning wherever it occurs. The series invites contributions that advance our understanding of these seminal issues.

Roy Pea
Christian Heath
Lucy Suchman