

Settlement in the digital age

DIGITAL INCLUSION AND NEWLY ARRIVED
YOUNG PEOPLE FROM REFUGEE AND
MIGRANT BACKGROUNDS



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About CMY

CMY is a Victorian not for profit organisation supporting young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to build better lives in Australia. CMY believes diversity is a cornerstone of Australia's success; respect for everyone's human rights is essential for a fair and equal society; and everyone should be able to feel like they belong and can participate fully. This is reflected in CMY's 25 years of working with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to become connected, empowered and influential Australians.

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1. Introduction

The digital revolution has seen technology gradually embedded more and more within our everyday lives. Increased use of digital technologies has also been linked to changes in human activity and social interaction, reorganising not only how we work and study, but also how we meet our daily needs, fulfil our desires and engage with the social world (see Castells, 2005). Undoubtedly, one of the most significant benefits is the unparalleled access to connect with others and to information, resources and opportunities. This digital connectedness facilitates participation in many areas of our lives, with the result being that access to and engagement with digital technology is increasingly essential to inclusion in society today (Australian Digital Inclusion Index, 2016).

Though we have become more reliant on digital technologies and the internet, evidence has emerged to show that the benefits of this new digital age are not spreading equally to everyone. Gaps in access to and use of digital technology and the internet, both among and within countries, have been described as a digital divide. Linked to economic and social inequalities and strongly correlated with other forms of exclusion, research has shown that this divide – that is, whether someone is digitally included or excluded – has the potential to not only leave some people behind, but to further entrench their disadvantage (Helsper, 2011; ACOSS, 2016).

Young people are some of the most prolific users of technology and the internet today. Often described as having ‘grown up digital’, many young people’s high-volume use is also commonly correlated with high-level digital skill or expertise. This has led to broad use of the term ‘digital native’ to describe all young people. However, the homogenising of young people’s experience and the use of such labels leads to assumptions about what young people can and can’t do. This impacts on policy and, according to Banaji (2011, p. 60), in the digital age makes it increasingly likely that “we lose sight of the groups of young people who have never had access to the skills, hardware, and cultural environments that make people into digital natives.” This is of particular concern as we move further towards a future where economic and social inclusion are increasingly dependent on a young person’s technical skills and digital literacy (VicHealth and CSIRO, 2015; FYA, 2016a).

This is especially relevant for newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Upon arrival to Australia, young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are thrust in to an intensely digital environment where their digital inclusion is a potentially powerful tool for achieving settlement outcomes. Digital inclusion may enhance young people’s ability to make full use of digital technology to access opportunities, navigate services and participate in economic, social and civic life. However, as a result of pre- and post-migration factors, newly arrived young people may face a range of complex barriers to digital inclusion in addition to those experienced by their non-culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Australian born peers.

To date, there is limited research exploring newly arrived young people’s engagement with digital technology and the internet or how digital participation facilitates their settlement in Australia. This paper builds on existing work to further explore these questions. First, we review what is known about how offline participation, resources and opportunities influence access to and engagement with digital technology and the internet among newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. In turn, we look at what is known about how digital inclusion impacts participation and settlement outcomes.

2. Glossary

ICT: Information and communication technology

SNS: Social networking services are online platforms that allow individuals to create a public profile to build social networks or social relations among people who share similar interests, activities or backgrounds and can mirror real-life connections.

Digital inclusion: The extent to which individuals are able to fully participate in digital life and control resulting social and economic benefits. Takes into account how access, skills and attitudes support engagement in activities online or via digital technologies.

Digital literacy: Set of multidimensional skills and competencies required for digital participation.

Digital participation (also, digital engagement): Process or act of taking part in something online or via digital technology, as distinct from digital inclusion (see above).

Newly arrived young person: A newly arrived young person is someone who was born overseas and has lived in Australia a relatively short amount of time, includes young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. According to the Federal Government, someone who is newly arrived has lived in Australia for five years or less. Other definitions vary according to the length of time it is considered to take to settle in Australia. This paper refers to newly arrived young people using the Federal Government's definition.

Offline: Activity or interaction that does not take place via use of digital technology (e.g. computer, smartphone, tablet or other digital device).

Online: Activity or interaction that takes place via use of digital technology (e.g. computer, smartphone, tablet or other digital device). The term 'online' is often used in place of 'digital' to enable clarity of expression when contrasting digital and non-digital, i.e. online and offline.*

* Author's note: It is recognised that one can be using a computer or other technology 'offline'. The use of the term offline in this way refers explicitly to using technology while not being connected to a network – either a system of computers or the internet. For example, while all digital participation occurs via technologies, not all digital participation takes place via the internet or within a networked or connected system of technologies. However, use of the terms online and offline are employed more commonly today to describe broadly where activities and interactions are taking place – that is, whether they are online, occurring with use of technology or, offline, not with use of technology – and do not encompass the more nuanced understanding about whether the activity or interaction is explicitly occurring in a networked environment (usually via the internet) or not. Within the growing literature on this topic, use of the terms online and offline in this way are increasingly common place. Throughout this paper we adopt the more familiar understanding of these terms to make the writing more accessible and digestible, albeit perhaps not technically accurate. However, wherever there is potential for meaning to be unclear, the distinction between online and offline is clarified. For more on this see www.infoexchange.org.au or www.ict4it.org.

3. Key Findings

Digital inclusion refers to the capacity to participate fully and equally in the digital world and is increasingly recognised as a critical factor in social and economic inclusion. Despite this, the pivotal role of digital inclusion in successful settlement for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds remains underexplored.

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds arrive in Australia with an incredibly diverse range of skills and experiences that determine how well prepared they are to navigate settlement in an intensely digital environment. However, during their first five years of settlement, the refugee and migration experience appears to present additional challenges to their digital inclusion.

Factors known to impact upon digital inclusion include: ACCESS to digital technology and the internet; level of SKILLS and digital literacy; ATTITUDES towards digital technology; activities and USE of digital technology and the internet; and SUPPORT networks.

ACCESS to technology and the internet

- Internet access in the home among newly arrived young people in their first five years in Victoria mirrors rates for Australia's poorer households.
- One in three newly arrived young people do not have broadband access in the home in their first year in Victoria. This is compared to less than one in five among young people in Australia.
- Less than 20 per cent of newly arrived young people go online regularly at school. This is compared to 96 per cent of young people in Australia.
- 28 per cent of newly arrived young people never use a laptop or desktop computer to access the internet. This is in contrast to 47 per cent of Australian teenagers who go online three or more times a day using a laptop or desktop computer.
- The quality of internet and digital technology access for many newly arrived young people is below average levels for young people in Australia. This is especially the case for newly arrived young women, who are more likely to have no internet access in the home and less likely to use public access points such as libraries. When young women do have internet access in the home this is more likely to be mobile data not broadband.
- Reported poor quality and limited public access to digital technology and the internet among newly arrived young people suggests current efforts to bridge gaps in digital access for this group may not be sufficient to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

SKILLS and digital literacy

- Newly arrived young people's digital skills and competencies (digital literacy) are incredibly varied on arrival, although self-reported confidence in skills is generally high and most newly arrived young people are regular users of digital technology and the internet.
- Many newly arrived young people have had limited formal and informal digital learning experiences, with some demonstrating poor knowledge and familiarity in basic digital skills and online safety.
- Newly arrived young people are receiving limited targeted supports to assess and

build their digital literacy in the early years of their settlement to prepare them to enter Australia's intensely digital education system and workforce.

ATTITUDES towards digital technology and the internet

- Attitudes and motivations towards technology are influenced by family, peers and culture, and impact on newly arrived young people's digital participation. Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds who are newer to Australia, are female, and have limited previous experience of digital participation are more likely to have lower confidence, engage in fewer activities online, and place less value in the benefits of technology on their lives.

Activities and USE of digital technology and the internet

Young people's online activities provide insight into how they may be using digital technology to support achievement of offline outcomes in the settlement context. Understanding how newly arrived young people are using digital technology and the internet can help us develop targeted programs and interventions to better support their settlement journey.

- 77 per cent of newly arrived young people report having been online in the previous four weeks. This compares to 82 per cent of young people in Australia.
- 68 per cent of newly arrived young people go online three or more times per day. This is compared to 87 per cent of young people in Australia.
- Three quarters (76 per cent) of newly arrived young people had participated in online entertainment-related activities, such as downloading music or video clips, during the last three months. Sixty one per cent had engaged in communication-related activities, such as email or social media, while only half (52 per cent) had engaged in commerce online, including online banking and shopping.
- Most newly arrived young people are regularly looking for information about recreation (81 per cent) activities when they are online, closely followed by information about education or study (70 per cent) and general interest, such as news or current affairs (70 per cent).
- While almost 70 per cent of newly arrived young people use email and social networking services (SNS) like Facebook regularly, almost one in five 'never' use these key communication technologies.
- Young men are more likely to be using SNS than young women and use increases with length of time in Australia.
- Generally, newly arrived young people report using digital technology and the internet to access information and services online. However, the types of information and services vary, with newly arrived young people more likely to use digital technology and the internet when looking for information or services related to recreation activities and less likely for core services such as Centrelink or Medicare.

SUPPORT networks

Key digital support networks for young people include parents, teachers and peers. Research shows that these supports provide young people with technical advice and guidance, influence their attitudes and behaviour towards digital technology, and impact upon their capacity to derive benefits from their digital participation and manage risks online.

- Many newly arrived young people are predominantly reliant on peers in the first few years of settlement for help and support using digital technology and the internet.
- Newly arrived young people believe they have superior digital literacy, awareness and competency to their parents and older family members, limiting the value of these key supports for facilitating digital participation.
- Newly arrived young people in English Language Schools (ELS) are considerably less likely than young people in mainstream school or education to be accessing digital support from teachers or other formal guides.

What does this tell us?

When they are digitally engaged, newly arrived young people appear to be using digital technology and the internet to support various aspects of their settlement. This includes, maintaining important connections to family and friends overseas, connecting in to local opportunities and resources, developing broader social networks and skills, and accessing information and tools to support their language acquisition and general knowledge about Australian culture and society. However, broad assumptions made about young people's general digital access, skills and expertise, as well as gaps in their digital support networks, may be resulting in newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds not receiving the assistance they need upon arrival to facilitate their digital inclusion. This has the potential to not only leave young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds behind, but to further entrench their disadvantage.

4. Background

4.1 Digital participation and young people

"We are in the network society, although not everything or everybody is included in its networks" (Castells, 2005, p. 16).

"Inside the networks, new possibilities are relentlessly created – outside the networks, survival is increasingly difficult" (Castells, 2000 quoted in Notley and Foth, 2008, p. 17).

The majority of young people in advanced economies have embraced the digital revolution (Poushter, 2016). Evidence from Australia shows that young people today are more connected and engaged with digital technology than any other generation, with digital participation facilitating engagement with everything from communication, education and employment to consumption (Valkenburg and Peter, 2009). Online communication has been positively related to social connectedness and wellbeing among adolescents. Digital technology and the internet can break down barriers to participation and are used to build and maintain social networks locally and globally, from close friends and family to acquaintances and even businesses and brands.

For many young people, digital participation is not seen as an add-on to their everyday life, but has become part of their lived experience. Digital spaces are increasingly enmeshed with, and for most regular users, blend almost seamlessly into their day to day existence, supplementing their regular interactions and supporting access to resources and opportunities for participation in daily life (Livingstone, 2016).

However, as the relationship between digital participation and the achievement of offline outcomes deepens, creating evermore efficiencies and improvements, evidence has also

emerged to show that not all young people are able to access and use digital technology equally (Helsper, 2011). Digital participation rates are lower in poorer countries, while in more advanced economies rates are lower among those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and those who experience other forms of marginalisation (Poushter, 2016). Even among those with access, continual development of digital literacy and access to hardware is required to keep up with advancing technology and applications. Alongside the growing benefits of the digital age, the increasing interdependence of our offline and online lives means that unequal access to digital technology and the skills to use it has the potential to result in unequal life chances and vice-versa.

While material access to digital technology is a key factor, a number of other things are influential upon young people's digital participation. Psychological resources, including attitudes towards technology and belief about ability, are known to impact digital participation, including young people's capacity to manage risks online. Parents and family are also influential, serving as gatekeepers, role models, supports and teachers, while schools and education institutions are important points of access as well as learning. Friends and peers play a critical support role and influence use patterns and uptake (Tsatsout, 2011 in Eynon and Geniets, 2012; Livingstone et al., 2015).

In addition to these, there are also broader societal and cultural factors influencing young people's digital participation. For example, research suggests that an uncritical acceptance of the idea in advanced economies that young people's "intrinsically digital lifestyle" alone makes them competent and effective digital participants, has led to gaps in their access to quality digital education and support (Desjardins, 2015, p. 28). As a result, many young people today, even those who have experienced almost constant exposure to digital technology, "do not have the skills to navigate a rapidly evolving information landscape" (Combes, 2009, p. 8). This is supported by research that shows that while many young people may be confident with technology, and disposed to use it, there is significant diversity in what they are doing online and the positive influence it has on their lives (Eynon and Geniets, 2012; Combes, 2009).

4.2 Digital and social inclusion

"...one could argue that the concept of social inclusion reflects particularly well the imperatives of the current information era, in which issues of identity, language, social participation, community, and civil society have come to the fore" (Castells, 1997 cited in Warschauer, 2004, p. 9).

As the digital revolution has advanced, links between our online and offline lives have deepened and have revealed evidence of a 'digital divide'. This separates those with the resources to access and engage with technology, and derive tangible offline benefits from their digital participation, from those without similar resources who appear to be increasingly missing out.

Over time, exploration of the digital divide has led to the development of a more nuanced and multidimensional concept that further explains the complex and interrelated factors influencing our access to and engagement with digital technology and the capacity to derive benefit from this digital participation – digital inclusion.

"Digital inclusion is not just about computers, the internet or even technology. It is about using online and mobile technologies as channels to improve skills, to enhance quality of life, to drive education and to promote economic wellbeing across all elements of society... (it is) fundamentally about economic and social participation" (Australian Digital Inclusion Index, 2015, p. 3).

Digital inclusion refers to the extent to which individuals are able to fully participate in digital life and control resulting social and economic benefits. This concept takes into account how three key factors - access (to digital technology), skills (to use digital technology) and attitudes (towards digital technology) – facilitate or hinder digital participation. While offline resources and opportunities can impact directly on digital inclusion (Australian Digital Inclusion Index, 2015, pp. 12-13; Thomas et al., 2016, p. 31) Zappalà (2003, p. 13) has also highlighted that the inverse is increasingly true, noting “having access to ICT (information and communications technology) is becoming so central to being able to fully participate in the economic, social, political and cultural spheres of society.” Despite growing recognition of this, “there is almost no theoretical work regarding the factors that make digital engagement successful in improving people’s everyday lives” (Helsper, 2012, p. 415). What is known is that types of digital participation that are more likely to be beneficial to outcomes in our offline lives are those that take place in domains where an individual has offline needs (Helsper et al., 2015).

The increasing interconnectedness of our online and offline lives means that into the future it will not always be possible to separate the two spheres. As a result, efforts to address challenges of social and economic inclusion need to take account of an individuals’ digital inclusion – not only their access to digital technology, but their skills and attitudes towards technology and capacity to derive tangible offline benefits from their digital participation. This includes newly arrived young people settling in to life in Australia.

4.3 What is successful settlement?

The process of settlement involves a complicated series of negotiations and adjustments, as refugees and migrants seek to establish themselves in their new country and become “part of the social, institutional and cultural fabric of a society” (Valtonen, 2004 in MYAN, 2016, p. 12). In Australia, this process is considered to be successful when it occurs without a person having to relinquish their own distinct identity and culture.

The Australian National Youth Settlement Framework describes active citizenship as the “optimal settlement outcome for young people” in Australia (MYAN 2016, p. 14). Similar to the concept of social inclusion, which refers to a system of resources and participation that can be mutually reinforcing, active citizenship is about participation and belonging.

Social inclusion - A system of resources and participation that can be mutually reinforcing. Resources, such as income or education, are used to support participation in a range of activities from economic (e.g. employment) to social (e.g. connecting with networks), while participation in activities is recognised as supporting attainment or reinforcement of resources (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2012, p. 12).

Active citizenship - Participation and belonging. The concept of citizenship itself has long been related to ideas of inclusion and exclusion; it includes the experiential and subjective dimensions that enable a person to feel like they belong and have a stake in society. Participation has similarly been described as the opposite process of social exclusion, highlighting how notions of citizenship, participation, inclusion and belonging are inextricably linked (CMY, 2014, p. 10).

For newly arrived young people settling in Australia active citizenship involves the acquisition of social capital and agency, attained through resources and participation in the civic, social and economic life of the nation. Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds who are engaged as active citizens enjoy positive and free cultural and religious expression, a sense of belonging in Australian society, can navigate multi-cultural identity, understanding of Australian culture and society, and access to and navigation of a range of services (CMY, 2014).

Young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds demonstrate significant resilience and possess a range of strengths and resources that can support their settlement. However, settlement challenges can be multiple and complex and, as a result of the refugee and migration journey, newly arrived young people often experience a range of unique and additional challenges compared to those faced by their Australian born and non-culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) peers. These can include, financial strain, limited social networks, lack of cultural capital, intergenerational conflict, disrupted education, low or limited English language proficiency, and racism and discrimination (MYAN 2016, p. 13). Apart from these challenges, young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds often face a range of additional barriers to accessing the supports and services they need to settle well due to their age, developmental stage and position within the family (CMY, 2006).

Research shows that these challenges stem from the social, cultural and political contexts that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds lives are embedded in, and impact upon each young person in unique ways. In a highly digitised society such as Australia, an emerging factor potentially influenced by these challenges is digital inclusion – or the degree to which a newly arrived young person from a refugee or migrant background is able to make full use of digital technologies to access resources and opportunities that support their sense of belonging and full participation in Australian society (Thomas, et al., 2016, p. 6).

4.3.1 Digital inclusion and the settlement journey

“Settlement in a networked world is fundamentally tied to the resources and opportunities afforded to youth in making a life in their new country both online and offline” (Gifford and Wilding, 2013, p. 558).

There is a growing body of research demonstrating that in the Australian context “digital inclusion follows some clear economic and social contours”, with factors such as low levels of income, education and employment identified as barriers to digital participation (Thomas et al., 2016, p. 5). However, there is currently limited research exploring specific barriers or facilitators to the digital inclusion of refugee and migrant communities settling in Australia and how digital inclusion impacts upon their achievement of settlement outcomes.

One research study from Australia that does address this topic suggests that among refugee and migrant groups, a gap in use of digital technology and the internet continues even after providing equal access to the internet and the technologies to get online (Alam and Imran, 2015, p. 351). This study looks at refugee migrant’s digital technology use in the Australian context. It suggests that in addition to access to digital technology and the internet, digital inclusion among those from refugee backgrounds is impacted by the following factors: age (younger participants more likely to derive benefits, with more time and motivation to engage), income (cost impacts upon quality and amount of access to the internet and on transport to access

public sites), digital literacy, and English language proficiency. Length of time in Australia was also identified as a significant mediating factor in this study, with newly arrived young people identified as more disadvantaged across most indicators. This study concluded that:

“There is a digital divide among refugee migrant groups and it is based on inequalities in physical access to and use of digital technology, the skills necessary to use the different technologies effectively and the ability to pay for the services. The opportunities to use digital technology could support the social inclusion of refugee migrant groups in the broader Australian community” (Alam and Imran, 2015, p. 344).

International research has also found that certain life transitions appear to impact young people’s digital participation negatively, these include housing instability and homelessness, parenthood (new parents), unemployment and insecure or casual employment, and being a migrant or refugee in the early settlement period (Eynon and Geniets, 2012, pp. 4-5). Further research, undertaken in a number of settlement countries, suggests that in addition to demographic characteristics found in the population as a whole, refugee and migrant communities face a range of unique and additional barriers to digital participation. These include English language proficiency, prior formal digital skills learning (digital literacy), or whether refugees and migrants have arrived from an advanced economy that is highly digitised (Caidi and Dillard, 2005; Bowles, 2013; Llyod, 2010 in Eynon and Geniets, 2012).

Additionally, international research has revealed that while young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds may experience barriers to digital participation, over time they are appropriating forms of digital technology, such as social media, according to different needs they may have. This digital participation is believed to be supporting their exploration of identity and belonging, and opening them up to a range of information and knowledge about diverse opportunities for participation and engagement (Dekker et al., 2015; Wilding, 2012).

5. Methodology

The purpose of this paper was to learn more about the digital inclusion of newly arrived young people and to investigate how their digital participation facilitates achievement of outcomes in the settlement context, from learning English and building social capital, through to accessing services and transitioning to mainstream education and work. In order to explore these questions a mixed methodology was used. Consultations with young people provided context and narrative to key concepts and areas emerging from a literature review, survey with young people, and interviews with services.

Where the term ‘young people’ is used in relation to findings, this should be understood as young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. A number of young people who have lived in Australia for more than five years participated in the survey and consultations, whenever the views and contributions of these young people (who do not fall under the definition of ‘newly arrived’) are included in the following discussion of findings this is clearly stated.

5.1 Literature Review

The literature review included Australian and international material, which was used to build an understanding of issues relating to young people and digital inclusion broadly, including how

digital participation impacts upon other forms of participation. The review of literature also explored whether newly arrived young people and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds experience particular or unique barriers or facilitators to digital participation. Findings were used, in the first instance, to support survey development and in drafting consultation questions. Later, the literature was consulted for the purpose of contextualising survey results and understanding key issues and experiences revealed in consultations with young people. A detailed reference list can be found at the conclusion of this paper.

5.2 Survey

A survey was designed for newly arrived young people to assess key factors identified in the literature as impacting upon digital inclusion. Fields for inclusion were selected based on findings from the literature review and those found in other surveys of youth digital participation and access to digital technology in Australia to allow for some comparison with the broader Australian youth population.

The survey measured respondents' digital technology and internet access and activities in set fields or domains. Young people surveyed also responded to a consistent set of questions that sought to establish potential trends in digital engagement among this cohort and areas to focus on further in consultations.

Survey respondents were identified through CMY's networks and completed the survey either online, using CMY's website, or in paper version. All respondents were able to complete the survey anonymously and respondents were offered an incentive for their participation.

Several respondents chose to skip a number of questions. This may have been due to limited comprehension of the question, as the survey was delivered in English. Efforts were made to mitigate this, including delivery of the survey in person with support for respondents to ask questions and seek clarification. The survey was delivered concurrent to the focus group and general sessions.

5.3 Consultations

In all, eight consultations were held in seven geographic locations across metropolitan Melbourne, including Dandenong, Noble Park, St Albans, Footscray, Braybrook, Kensington and North Melbourne.

Over 50 young people participated in two general consultation sessions as part of their homework club or English Language School (Certificate II or III in English as an Additional Language). These sessions allowed scoping of questions and exploration of core issues. These general sessions were structured around an introductory online safety information session to facilitate capture of general levels of digital literacy and participation.

Six focus group discussions with approximately 50 young people were subsequently held. Four focus groups were held with young people currently attending English language school and two were held at homework clubs with students currently enrolled in years nine to 11 at various mainstream high schools (Note: all focus group participants currently attending high school had been living in Australia for five years or longer).

Focus group discussions were guided by a set of semi-structured questions informed by the literature review and two broader consultation sessions. Recordings or detailed transcripts were

not taken. Facilitator notes were written up later and analysed for themes, as well as, unique observations/comments. Informal interviews also took place with services and volunteers working with newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Reflecting on the findings it is important to note that the participants represent a small sample which is not representative of all newly arrived young people. As such these findings can be indicative only.

6. Findings

6.1 Demographics

Survey respondents were aged between 14 and 25, with the majority falling between the ages of 18 and 23 years. Of respondents, 48 per cent were male and 52 per cent were female (percentages have been rounded). The majority of respondents were very newly arrived, with 43 per cent having arrived in Australia less than one year ago. This compared to 36 per cent of respondents who had arrived between one and five years ago, and 20 per cent who had been in Australia for five years or longer. Ninety-five per cent of respondents were currently studying, including in English language classes. Almost one in five respondents reported that they were currently working in some capacity. Of those who were not working, almost two thirds were looking for work.

| Key activity | Description |
|---|---|
| Quantitative | |
| Survey of newly arrived young people (n=94) | <p>A total of 94 young people completed the survey online (34 per cent) and via hardcopy (66 per cent). Not all questions were answered by all respondents.</p> <p>Age (n=94) Respondents' ages ranged from 14 to 25 years: 65 per cent in the 18 to 23 years age range, 15 per cent aged 17 years and under, and 19 per cent aged 24 years or older.</p> <p>Gender (n=94) Just under half of all respondents were male (48 per cent) and just over half were female (52 per cent). All respondents provided an answer to this question with no respondents identifying their gender as other.</p> <p>Length of time in Australia (n=92) Almost half of all respondents (43 per cent) had lived in Australia for less than a year, 20 per cent for between one and two years, and 20 per cent for more than five years. Less than five per cent had been in Australia for between two and three years, eight per cent for three to four years and four per cent for four to five years.</p> <p>Country of birth (n=93) Respondents were born in 25 different countries. Larger numbers of respondents reported their country of birth as Afghanistan, Burma and Thailand.</p> <p>Cultural background (n=91) and language/s spoken at home (n=94) Young people reported 35 different self-identified cultural backgrounds and 30 language groups, with 16 per cent of respondents speaking more than one language at home.</p> <p>Education (n=94) and employment (n=93) Eighty-eight per cent of respondents were studying full time and six per cent part time. Five per cent of respondents were working full time, ten per cent part time and three per cent casually (18 per cent working in total). Fifty-one per cent were not working and reported they were looking for work.</p> |

| Qualitative | |
|---|---|
| Focus groups and interviews with newly arrived young people (n=50+) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants were aged between 14 and 25 Twelve participants had lived in Australia for more than five years. Length of time in Australia for those who were 'newly arrived' (less than five years) varied from three months to between four and five years Twenty nine participants are female and 18 are male Participants were from over 25 different self-identified cultural backgrounds and spoke over 20 languages at home More than three quarters of the participants were studying English as a second or additional language at the Certificate II or III level. Almost a quarter were in high school. |
| Discussions with services (n=7) | Several services and volunteers working with newly arrived young people in various education settings were consulted, including Jesuit Social Services, AMES Australia, The Huddle, Project ROCKIT, and staff working in CMY's Ucan2 program. |

6.2 Summary of survey findings

TABLE 1: Digital participation comparison: All Australian young people compared to newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds (by length of time in Australia)

| | ACMA survey of Australian young people (14-17yrs) (*14-24 yrs) | CMY survey of newly arrived young people (15-25 yrs) | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| | | All | less than 1 year (43%) | 1-5 years (37%) | 5 or more years (20%) |
| Access technology | | % (percentage) | | | |
| Have home broadband access | 86 | 74 | 65 | 76 | 83 |
| Own a mobile phone | 80 | 96 | 100 | 97 | 83 |
| Used a smartphone | 80 | 96 | 100 | 97 | 83 |
| <i>Access internet (last 3mths)</i> | | | | | |
| Mobile phone | 65 | 96 | 100 | 97 | 83 |
| Computer | 74 | 63 | 65 | 62 | 72 |
| Educational institution | 64 | 20 | 18 | 18 | 31 |
| From a friend's place | 57 | 18 | 13 | 38 | 22 |
| Library | 26 | 15 | 25 | 9 | 1 |
| <i>USE (ACMA - capability)</i> | | | | | |
| Gone online in the previous four weeks | 82 | 77 | 68 | 66 | 94 |
| Online three or more times daily (14-24 y.o.) | 86.5* | 68 | 53 | 66 | 83 |
| <i>Frequency by device (14-24yr)</i> | | | | | |
| Laptop or computer | 53.5* | 7 | 1 | 11 | 8 |
| Mobile phone | 71.5* | 74 | 75 | 76 | 61 |
| Tablet | 19.5* | 10 | 6 | 10 | 11 |
| Other (games console, TV, etc.) | 7.5* | 8 | 31 | 34 | 17 |
| <i>Online activities</i> | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Streaming video | 64 | 73 | 72 | 70 | 78 |
| Downloading music/video | 40 | 70 | 68 | 82 | 50 |
| Playing games online | 47 | 27 | 28 | 24 | 28 |
| Streaming music or radio | 40 | 67 | 71 | 72 | 50 |
| Email | 78 | 68 | 64 | 68 | 72 |
| Social networking | 54 | 68 | 56 | 71 | 83 |
| Uploading content (video) | 44 | 57 | 51 | 64 | 56 |
| Research / browsing | 78 | 70 | 46 | 65 | 83 |
| Buying, selling or shopping | 20 | 34 | 21 | 42 | 44 |
| Banking (transactional) | 12 | 38 | 33 | 44 | 33 |
| Online information | | | | | |
| Health | | | 36 | 64 | 87 |
| Education | | | 66 | 76 | 61 |
| Employment | | | 42 | 33 | 56 |
| Housing | | | 28 | 31 | 28 |
| Recreation | | | 77 | 85 | 78 |

NOTES: Data on all Australian young people comes from the ACMA (2016) Aussie Teens and Kids Online, Research Snapshot. ACMA stats measure 'frequent' as using the device three or more times in a day to go online. CMY's survey measured 'frequent' as accessing the internet or using this device 'all the time'.

7. Discussion

The following discussion is presented in two parts: the first, 'Digital inclusion of newly arrived young people', looks at the findings regarding overall levels of digital inclusion among young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in their first five years in Australia. This includes the use of literature to interpret the findings and draw comparisons with the general Australian youth population. The second part, 'Digital participation and settlement of newly arrived young people', looks at how newly arrived young people are using digital technology to facilitate aspects of their settlement. This section draws on the survey findings related to 'use', the focus group discussions, and the literature, to unpack if and how digital participation is being translated into tangible offline outcomes by young people as they settle.

7.1 Digital inclusion of newly arrived young people

The following discussion looks at the findings from the survey and consultations with newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in the context of the findings from the literature review. It explores newly arrived young people's digital inclusion in terms of their access to technology and the internet, digital skills and attitudes towards technology.

7.1.1 Access to digital technology and the internet

Access refers to the availability and affordability of digital technology and the internet (Agnosti and Willington, 2012 in Correa, 2015). In Australia, there is mounting evidence that a lack of access is resulting in a deepening of disadvantage for some. Differences have been found to be influenced by a range of factors, including income, age, level of education attained,

employment status, and location (Australian Digital Inclusion Index, 2015; Ewing, 2016; Swist, Collin, McCormack and Third, 2015).

Newly arrived young people who participated in the survey are mostly regular internet users and their interaction with the internet and digital technology appears to increase with time in Australia. Sixty-seven per cent of participants who have been in Australia less than five years have been online in the previous four weeks, in contrast to 95 per cent of participants who have been in Australia for five years or longer. Eighty-three per cent of participants in Australia for five years or longer also report going online three or more times per day in contrast to 53 per cent of those in Australia for less than one year. These contrasting results suggest length of time in Australia impacts digital participation.

One factor likely influencing the increase in digital participation over time is increased access to technology and the internet. This shift may be caused by a range of factors. For example, length of time in Australia could impact on attitudes towards digital technology and the internet, or young people may be influenced by friends or social networks when moving to mainstream schools where digital engagement is greater among Australian born peers. Additionally, changes in use at school or work could be triggering an increase in access at home. Also, affordability could be driving uptake over time, as families become more settled and have less pressing priorities, freeing up finances for digital technology and the internet in the home.

While only 65 per cent of participants who have lived in Australia for less than one year report having access to broadband internet in the home, this figure climbs to 83 per cent for participants who have lived in Australia for five years or more. This compares to 86 per cent of Australian young people with access to broadband internet in their home (ACMA, 2016). Despite the survey findings showing an increase in access overtime, the percentage of all survey participants in their first five years who report having access to broadband internet in the home mirrors rates for some of Australia's poorest households (ABS, 2016a).

One way participants appear to be bridging this gap in access to broadband internet in the home with the use of mobile data. Of the one in four survey participants who do not have broadband internet access in their home, 28 per cent have no internet access in their home at all while 72 per cent have access at home via mobile phone data. Reliance on mobile data raises concerns related to the quality and affordability of this type of access, as mobile data is often more expensive and access can be undermined by poor coverage or speed, as well as the potential for young people to go for periods without any access.

Survey findings also reveal that in addition to gaps in access to the internet, during the first five years most newly arrived young people's level of access to digital technology and the devices needed to get online falls behind that of young people in the broader Australian community. A majority of survey participants access the internet 'all the time' using their Smartphones (73 per cent). However, use of other devices falls well below the Australian youth average, with over one quarter of participants reporting that they never use a laptop or desktop computer to access the internet and close to half never use a tablet (ACMA, 2016). One participant highlighted that while they had a laptop at home their siblings often used the family computer, requiring them to use their smartphone most of the time.

When asked about limitations to their access to digital technology, some focus group participants reported that they would like larger screens and keyboards. This reflects the considerably high rates of digital engagement taking place for many newly arrived young people via mobile phones. Mobile phone, or smartphone, only access can restrict the depth

and type of digital participation young people engage in and may limit young people's development of familiarity and fluency with programs and technologies they will need to participate fully in life in Australia.

A recognised means for people with limited resources or other barriers to digital participation to bridge gaps in access to the internet and digital technology in the home is via access at public sites, such as libraries and schools (Kliene, 2013). However, while 96 per cent of Australian children go online at school (Green et al., 2011, p. 7) this figure is just one in five among the newly arrived young people surveyed for this paper.

Availability of digital technology and the internet in sites outside the home is recognised as an important bridge to addressing access gaps, however research also suggests that the quality of this access matters (Kliene, 2013). This is because users who feel they have control and choice over content and technology are more likely to find their experience useful, fruitful, significant and relevant (Selwyn, 2004 in Eynon and Geniets, 2012, p. 32). Focus group participants accessing the internet outside of the home report that variation in quality and levels of access to digital technology and the internet at these sites is an issue. Quality of infrastructure and ease of access for participants varies from location to location, and even from school to school and library to library.

Participants also state that access in some public sites is highly regulated, determining not only when and how often they can go online, but also what activities and communities they can participate in online. This is frustrating for those participants who rely on these sites as their primary access points and suggests that existing sites may not be sufficient in overcoming gaps in access for newly arrived young people.

Further to the need to physically access digital technology and the internet, the ability to access content that is accessible and meaningful is also known to impact on levels of digital participation. Almost one quarter of Australia's youth population were born overseas and one in five Australians speak a language other than English in the home, yet the majority of resources and information available online are accessible only in English (ABS, 2016b). As a result, young Australians "do not enjoy equivalent opportunities to access 'good' material produced by their own cultural or language group, or reflecting their social and community values" (Green et al., 2011, p. 20; see also, Blanchard, Metcalf and Burns, 2007). Focus group participants supported this, with many stating that they continue to access information, such as news and current affairs, both about local and global events, in their first language. This is often accessed via social media and other peer-to-peer information sharing digital platforms via contacts overseas and is seen as an important mechanism for many participants to keep up-to-date with what is going on 'back home'. This means many young people are not engaging with locally produced content and perspectives.

Differences in access between newly arrived young men and women were also revealed in the survey. The survey findings show that female participants are less likely to have access to the internet at home and, when they do have access, this is of a poorer quality (i.e. mobile data only). Female participants are also much less likely to access the internet in a public space, such as a library or community centre. While gendered social or cultural norms may be influencing access in the home, from the available data it is not possible to determine the direct cause of this variance. Differences in male and female participants' online activities explored below may, however, be resulting from this access gap.

7.1.2 Skills and digital literacy

Digital literacy refers to a set of multidimensional skills and competencies “to use ICT appropriately to access, manage, integrate and evaluate information, develop new understandings, and communicate with others in order to participate effectively in society” (Ainley, Frailion, Gebhardt and Schulz, 2012, p. 8; see also Third, et al. 2013). Digital literacy incorporates capacity in basic technical and operational skills with knowledge of information systems, communicative skills for working with communication technologies, and digital competencies such as searching, navigating, critically analysing, and creative skills (Bawden, 2008). Importantly, the set of skills and competencies required to participate online can also change from place to place. This is because digital literacy is also “a set of cultural practices at the core of the informational and communicational processes of a specific society that is founded on the intensive use of ICT” (Mominó and Meneses, nd, p. 3).

Measuring digital literacy is a highly involved and complicated task that, while carried out in Australia by others, was beyond the scope of this investigation. Instead, this paper sought to garner an idea of general levels of digital literacy in consultation sessions and focus groups. This was done through self-reporting on confidence to use technology and factors (related to skills and competencies) enabling or constraining broader digital participation.

Generally, participants self-reported high levels of confidence in navigating and engaging with digital technology and the internet to meet their needs. However, in a simple test conducted with groups that aimed to get an indication of general familiarity and knowledge with digital technology and the internet, it became evident that self-assessment of skill levels may not reflect reality. In this test, many young people were not aware of key privacy functions and were unable to set basic privacy settings on popular social media platforms, platforms many of them were already using. Importantly, knowledge of and familiarity with technology, online platforms and digital safety awareness among participants demonstrated during this activity varied wildly. This has also been seen in other studies with young people (Blanchard, et al., 2007; Third et al., 2013).

Digital skills and literacy are learned both in formal and informal spaces. Formal learning typically takes place in schools and educational settings, where technical skills and competencies are taught in a structured learning environment. Informal learning is mostly experiential, and includes the gathering of experience and confidence. Peers and parents are key influencers on informal learning, with research showing parents and peers with greater digital skills, experience, and confidence have more positive effects on young people’s digital literacy (Green et al., 2011, p. 39; Third et al., 2013), p. v). Informal learning takes place mostly in the home, but with the increasing mobility of devices, can occur anywhere that young people are engaging with digital technology.

The survey and focus groups reveal newly arrived young peoples’ digital skills and literacy to be highly varied on arrival. Participants’ prior access to formal training and/or experience with digital technology and the internet in formal educational settings before arriving in Australia were quite diverse. Key variances in access to formal training and supports were also identified post-arrival in Australia, notably between participants attending high school in Australia and those attending English Language School (ELS). Many participants attending ELS are not receiving formal training in how to use digital technology and the internet in this education setting – although a small number noted that optional computer courses were offered outside

of their classes. Of the participants attending high school many are also not receiving formal training in digital technology at school, even though technology is used frequently in their classes.

The lack of formal learning opportunities and access to digital technology and the internet in the first five years deserves further attention. In addition to being an indicator of digital inclusion, digital literacy (along with confidence and experience or ease of use) are key factors influencing young peoples' capacity to translate digital participation into tangible offline outcomes in the long term (Helsper et al., 2015). Furthermore, participants who need the most support with digital engagement are likely to also be those with less support for informal learning in the home. This highlights the important role education providers and other on-arrival supports play in identify and bridge the gap for newly arrived young people.

The exception to a lack of formal training for almost all participants was online safety and bullying advice. An overwhelming majority of young people had received advice and information in a formal education setting on this topic. However, a number of young people report that often those delivering these sessions 'just don't get it'. Participants report that the information or advice they have received has been pitched both too high and too low for their level; that it is often not relevant (often because they don't use the platforms or technologies being used as examples); and, that suggestions for mitigating risk or dealing with issues are often unrealistic. Speaking to this, one young woman highlighted how in a session she had attended at her school the focus was all on Twitter even though the primary SNS used among her and her peers was Snapchat.

Informal or experiential learning has been shown to be highly important to supporting digital skills development and promoting digital participation. Young people often informally learn digital literacy skills and competencies through self-mediated experiential online learning that takes place through and amongst peers and in the home, with the support of parents or other family members.

In addition to being an important source of digital knowledge and skills, research shows that peers also impact upon young people's attitudes and motivation to engage with digital technology and the internet and are critical supports and mediators for young people to manage and respond to risk online (Green et al., 2011; Third et al., 2013). Participants report receiving the most help and advice regarding digital technology and the internet from their friends and peers. This ranges from assistance with technical problems to support managing online safety and interactions. In particular, focus group participants attending high school in Victoria report that peers and teachers are helpful supports when they experience technical issues and challenges online. In contrast, while young people in English language school rely on peers they are much less likely to have teachers or educators who they speak to about developing their online skills or dealing with technical or online issues.

Many group participants report that they would request support and guidance from peers over parents. Participants perceive that their parents don't understand how to use technology or the activities they are engaging in online and are therefore, unable to help with issues or challenges that may arise.

Among a very small number of young people whose parents are online, parental support and guidance is often restricted to technical issues or supports. Parents who were perceived by participants as more competent users of technology were also more likely to attempt to actively mediate young people's online engagement. Most participants who had been in Australia

over five years were more likely to see parental mediation as something to actively circumvent – this was especially true of parental attempts to ‘follow’ or ‘friend’ them on SNS. However, participants report that parents’ attempts to mediate lessen over time - “as we got older it was more relaxed.”

While some participants do seek help and advice from siblings and partners, overwhelmingly family and in particular parents, are not key sources of guidance, help or advice when it comes to digital technology and the internet. In fact, a number of participants report that they are a main source of information and advice for their parents when it comes to digital technology and online participation.

7.1.3 Attitudes to digital technology

“Rather than sliding into a moral vacuum when they go online, young people draw upon the same moral framework that shapes their offline engagements” (Third et al., 2013, p. 5).

Digital participation is only partly explained by access and skills. Research has also found attitudes towards digital technology and the internet also impact on digital participation. Attitudes towards technology can influence an individual’s motivation, interest, notions of control, belief in ability and confidence levels. It can also influence ideas about the benefits of digital participation, as well as development of strategies to manage and respond to risk and take advantage of benefits online (Green et al., 2011; d’Haenens, Vandoninck and Donoso, 2013). Key social mediators, such as family, school, peers and media, can all influence attitudes towards technology. Additional factors influencing attitudes towards technology include individual personality and psychological resources and previous experiences, particularly negative experiences, which can impact upon motivation and confidence (Eynon and Geniets, 2012; Correa, 2015; Erstad, 2011). Membership of social or cultural groups also matters, because shared attitudes influence behaviour, including use of digital technology. There are also significant differences, within and between cultures and countries, in terms of how sociocultural factors impact upon how young people view, relate to and use digital technology (Lee, 2008 in Banaji, 2011; Erstad, 2011).

Some of the variance in attitudes towards the perceived benefits and usefulness of digital participation among participants appear to be related to factors including age, peers’ and parents’ attitudes to technology, level of familiarity, and gender. However, the influence of these factors on attitudes towards digital technology, and how these attitudes then impacted on digital participation, among newly arrived young people was difficult to discern.

Broadly, young people with greater familiarity, and those who used technology more frequently, reported greater levels of confidence and satisfaction when looking for information or accessing services online. Participants reported their peers as key influencers on what technologies they adopted and the level of their technical skills. Parents’ attitudes towards technology were also reportedly quite influential upon young people’s digital participation. Although there was some evidence to suggest that participants believe their parents need to adapt their approaches and responses to digital participation in the new cultural context.

Access also appeared to impact on attitudes. For example, one young male participant described how “going on the computer is a waste of time. You have to open the laptop, turn it on, log in, open the program... You know? All just to respond to an email or whatever! Using the phone is so much easier.” While this response may indicate that some young people find personal devices more convenient for meeting their current digital needs it may also reflect lack

of depth of experience and exposure to a range of devices and their uses. This highlights a need for further exploration of the factors impacting upon attitudes towards technology and how these are influencing online behaviour and digital participation among newly arrived young people.

A relationship between attitudes and gender was more evident during focus group discussions. An example of gendered norms influencing digital participation came from a small number of young female focus group participants who reported that they do not engage in any use of public communication or social networking. Two of the young women had previously used public social networking services, but their parents had made them deactivate these accounts. Others said that they were exercising full agency over their decision not to engage in online public forums or with public social media platforms and profiles, reporting that this decision was based on their belief that social networking was a “waste of time” or “a distraction”. A lack of similar findings among male participants, coupled with evidence from the survey to show clear gender differences in use, suggests that at least some young women’s digital participation is being mediated by their own or others’ attitudes towards digital technology.

7.2 Digital participation and settlement of newly arrived young people

The following discussion explores what the survey and consultation findings say about what newly arrived young people are doing online and how this digital participation may be impacting their settlement journey. To contextualise the findings we draw on the literature, highlighting what is already known about digital inclusion and broader youth participation.

7.2.1 Personal wellbeing

“Belonging to a community is one of the most important social determinants of wellbeing among young people” (Gifford et al., 2009, p. 88).

Wellbeing and other psychological resources, such as self-esteem and sense of identity, are fundamental to all other resources for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds during settlement. In particular, strong connections with social bonds (social relationships among people from similar backgrounds) foster psychological wellbeing, influencing quality of life among newly arrived settler communities (Hunter, Amato and Kellock, 2015). Today, social connection is increasingly facilitated by young people through internet and digital technologies (McGrath, 2009; Valkenberg and Peter, 2009). One of the greatest offerings of the internet and digital technology for newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds settling in a new context are the exceptional opportunities to remain connected to social bonds, such as family and friends, around the world (Gifford and Wilding, 2013).

Participants report using a range of digital tools and online mechanisms for connecting with others. Survey results reveal similar rates of internet based text or chat service use to mobile phone and SMS use among those participants using digital technology and the internet to communicate with friends and family overseas. Internet-based video services, social media and email are also important tools used by participants to keep in touch with family and friends outside of Australia. Focus group participants who report connecting with their ethnic identity online also say they often supplement their contact with family and friends overseas with information, particularly news and current affairs from ‘back home’, that they access online.

“ICTs can open up new possibilities for becoming at home in a new country and as a citizen of a more global, deterritorialised world” (Gifford and Wilding, 2013, p. 558).

Digital participation may also support refugee and migrant young people’s navigation of identity and belonging by providing a space where young people can connect with diverse supports and networks, including other migrant and refugee youth, locally and globally, with whom they can explore notions of identity, ethnicity and belonging in the settlement context (Wilkinson and Mulligan, 1995 in Blanchard et al., 2007; Gifford and Wilding, 2013; Wyn et al., 2005; Vandonick, et al., 2012). Survey findings reveal that over time frequency of digital contact with family and friends overseas decreases. Given rates of digital communication increase over time, this is likely related to an increase in young people’s social networks in Australia. The similar or higher use of internet-based technologies such as social media and internet-based text and chat, to communicate with those in Australia suggests the development of bonding networks locally are being facilitated via digital participation.

Positive bonding networks are also shown to support wellbeing by reinforcing identity and belonging and promoting solidarity (Ager and Strang, 2008). When asked to think about their online experiences, survey participants reported that these are spaces where they:

- ‘can help others’ (40 per cent)
- ‘feel accepted’ (39 per cent)
- ‘feel safe’ and ‘can get help from others’ (36 per cent)
- ‘can find others like me’ (20 per cent)

Survey participants living in Australia for five years or longer were more likely to ‘feel accepted’ than those who had been in Australia for less than one year, while female participants (65 per cent) were twice as likely as young men (35 per cent) to report that they ‘feel accepted’ online. The differences in reported feelings of acceptance between male and female participants may be influenced by young men being more likely to go online in public forums and to use public social media profiles and platforms than young women, hence being more likely to be exposed to views and opinions that differ from their own. Others have also found gender differences in use of public digital access sites internationally (Dixon et al., 2014).

These findings may also indicate how online engagement may be influenced by offline experiences. This would reflect previous research with newly arrived young people in Australia that found newly arrived young women report feelings of belonging to friends at rates significantly higher than young men, and that young men are more likely to report experiences of discrimination (Gifford et al., 2009). Participants’ increased feelings of acceptance online over time appear to contradict research of offline experiences. For example, in a longitudinal study of newly arrived young people settling in Victoria, Gifford, Correa-Velez and Sampson (2009) found that newly arrived young peoples’ feelings of belonging peak in the first years of settlement and then remain steady, and for some young people decline, over time.

Participants living in Australia less than a year are twice as likely to report ‘feeling safe’ online (44 per cent) and are over three times as likely to believe they ‘can find friends I trust’ (45 per cent), than those who have lived in Australia for over five years (22 per cent ‘feeling safe’, 14 per cent ‘can find friends I trust’). This reported decrease in feelings of safety online in Australia over time may reflect similar decreases in feelings of safety offline among newly arrived young people in Australia that have been found to occur when young people transition from ELS to mainstream school. These changes in feelings of safety were also linked to increased experiences of discrimination, as well as to decreases in young people’s sense of engagement with and achievement in education in this new setting (Gifford et al., 2009). This finding deserves further

attention, particularly for understanding if and how offline and online sense of safety and belonging among newly arrived young people are related.

Australian research also shows that when it comes to wellbeing, after family and friends, the internet is the preferred medium of support for young people (Antezana et al., 2015; KidsHelpline, 2015). This suggests that digital participation may also be a potential means for newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to access online-based social and emotional wellbeing programs to support their mental health and wellbeing during settlement. Almost two-thirds (66 per cent) of survey participants regularly search for health information online, with length of time in Australia appearing to have a positive influence on use of the internet for this purpose. Female survey participants (69 per cent) are also slightly more likely than male survey participants (61 per cent) to regularly access information about health online. A small number of focus group participants have used formal online resources or tools to access advice or support since arriving in Australia. However, it is more common for participants to use digital technology and the internet to contact existing networks or contacts for support and advice. For example, asking for practical advice from friends and acquaintances on Facebook or group texts, rather than from services available online.

An additional finding from the focus groups related to how participants navigate risk in the online world. Online and offline risks, and vulnerability, are interrelated and research shows that the way young people are experiencing risk has changed in the digital age and not all young people are equally placed to successfully manage risk when they encounter it online. International research into factors influencing children's digital participation show that online factors, such as technical skills and competencies, higher levels of digital participation, and prior exposure to online risk can support successful navigation of risk online. The research suggests:

“the more children use the internet, the more online activities they undertake, the more digital skills they gain... the higher it is likely that they climb the ‘ladder of online opportunities’ to gain the benefits... (Correspondingly) the less engaged, skilled or supported children gain fewer opportunities or risks, thereby perpetuating the digital divide” (Livingstone et al., 2015, p. 6).

This research also shows that offline factors are equally influential on capacity to manage online risk. These include: social supports, particularly mediation and guidance from teachers and parents, as well as support and advice from peers; psychological resources, including self-efficacy and resilience; belonging and connectedness; and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and socio-economic status (d’Haenens et al., 2013, pp. 2-5).

Generally, participants who have lived in Australia longer report experiencing more risks related to exposure to potentially harmful content and negative interactions online. While participants who are more newly arrived also report issues or risks, these appear more likely related to misuse of personal information, such as people pretending to be them online and people ‘hacking’ or ‘spamming’ their email. Digital skills and competencies, as well as experience online, are likely factors mediating this difference in experience, suggesting that time in Australia may support graduation of digital skills and competencies required to manage issues of a more technical nature. In contrast, increased exposure to potentially harmful content and interactions over time may be linked to increased digital engagement over time and to the depth and breadth (diversity) of newly arrived young people's social networks the longer they live in Australia. This highlights the importance of building digital skills early and of providing spaces for informal learning to take place.

7.2.2 Civic participation

Participation in the civic sphere is an indicator of successful settlement for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. This encompasses the formal and informal ways that young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds engage with and participate in their community, learn and enjoy rights and responsibilities, and access and navigate services and supports (CMY, 2014; MYAN, 2016). However, newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds settling in Australia have been found to face significant barriers to achieving core outcomes in the civic sphere. Identified barriers include a lack of access to information about opportunities to get involved in the community and unfamiliarity (or poor access to) Australian service systems and supports (CMY, 2014).

Digital participation can support expansion of newly arrived young people's range of connections, enhancing development of relationships with the wider community allowing them to supplement online engagement with offline social interaction. This could support the building of social and cultural capital, leading to greater links to networks in the broader community and the opening up of offline opportunities (Dandy and Pe-Pua, 2013).

More than 80 per cent of survey participants are using the internet to find out information about recreation activities, including searching for information on sports, music and cultural events, accessing timetables, maps and e-ticketing services and joining groups (mostly via social media) to learn about upcoming opportunities to participate. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of these participants are using the internet as a resource to access this type of information 'all the time'. There is little difference in use of the internet and digital technologies to find out information about recreation activities, such as sports, music and cultural events based on participants' length of time in Australia.

Male focus group participants, who had lived in Australia for longer, demonstrated greater English language proficiency and self-reported being competent and confident digital participants. They were also more likely to be engaging in public, interactive groups online, including groups that linked them to offline opportunities. Those not using public platforms or profiles were more likely to rely on friends and networks to share information with them about resources and opportunities. Survey findings supported these findings, revealing that female survey participants are slightly more likely than male participants to have 'never' accessed this type of information online before.

Focus group participants suggest that public social media platforms are often a faster and more accessible way to access information about opportunities than other online media platforms and private messaging. The potential concentration of information about recreation activities in public social media platforms may be influencing how newly arrived young women are accessing and engaging with this type of information online and using it to support their offline engagement in social and recreational activities.

"Making use of online opportunities connected to participation and civic engagement relies on communicative competencies in general and digital skills in particular" (Livingstone and Haddon, 2009, p. 71).

"Simple, clearer, faster" is the tagline of the Australian Government's Digital Transformation Office. While a number of services are already fully or partially online in Australia, the Federal Government is currently investing in the Digital Transformation Agenda. Among other things, this agenda heralds a transition to a greater number of public services being delivered primarily

via online and digital technologies. This includes information critical to engaging civic rights, such as health services, and civic responsibilities, such as core processes of democracy like the census and even voting. Therefore, digital participation is not only desirable but becoming increasingly necessary for equal and full access to resources and opportunities for civic participation in Australia.

A high number of participants report using digital technology and the internet to access information and engage with services online, although there is significant variance in the type of activities. The most common online activities among newly arrived young people are related to entertainment, with 76 per cent of participants engaging in some form of entertainment-related activity in the last three months. One in three participants report downloading or streaming music, video or radio, and 60 per cent of participants report that they engaged in entertainment-related activities regularly during this period. During the last three months, 61 per cent of participants also engaged in communication-related activities, such as email, social networking, chatrooms, blogs or uploading, while only half (52 per cent) had engaged in commerce online, including online banking and shopping.

Exploring this topic further in focus groups revealed that participants' use of technology for these purposes appears to decrease as the complexity of the activity increases, suggesting digital skills and/or English language proficiency may be mediating online information and service utilisation. For example, many participants report using the internet to find out about movie and transport timetables, but very few report going online to find information or access core services related to Medicare or Centrelink, stating that they would prefer to do this in person.

Some focus group participants describe how this can impact upon confidence and agency because it requires reliance on others to meet basic needs. (This was equally challenging in formal scenarios, such as reliance on a case worker to provide information about eligibility for supports, and informal ones, such as reliance on classmates to share information via text about changes to a class excursion because a young person is not on Facebook). Others highlighted how an inability to access necessary information about services, either because of language barriers or digital literacy, can be disruptive and take time away from other important activities, such as school or work if they need to attend face-to-face appointments to fill this gap.

Equally important to improving the digital participation of newly arrived young people then is the need to ensure online services and information are accessible to all members of the Australian community. A recent investigation of online information and service utilisation among CALD communities in Australia revealed numerous barriers limiting CALD users' access to and utilisation of digital services and to information about services online. Identified barriers include, English as a second language, limited or no literacy in a first language, lack of online competencies and skills impacting ease of access, perceived usefulness, and concern about the security of personal information online (FECCA, 2016). Such findings highlight the multiple and interdependent nature of challenges facing young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds' access to and utilisation of information and services online. It also shows the need for digital solutions to be targeted and comprehensive to ensure that they adequately support meaningful access and participation for this group.

7.2.3 Social Participation

“Core to settlement is coming to belong in a new host community while at the same time, maintaining and creating new forms of belonging in a globalised world” (Gifford and Wilding, 2013, p. 572).

Connections with people of dissimilar backgrounds, or bridging networks, facilitate social participation by connecting us with external information and resources, creating broader social identities, and generating reciprocity as we get to know those different to us (Putnam, 2000 in Kellock, 2016). For newly arrived communities bridging networks support settlement by facilitating access to social resources and opportunities, building social and cultural capital (Gifford et al., 2009).

Research shows that the internet is an important resource for young people in building and maintaining social capital, where they are “cultivating social networks and strengthening social ties” (Wellman, 2001 in Blanchard et al., 2007, p. 14). The use of technologies, such as social networking services, contribute to young people’s personal network diversity, laying down a foundation of latent ties that allow for connection through acquaintances online and making social bridges more approachable. This process creates a continuous co-presence of others and their social capital that is accessible through one’s own online presence (Dekker et al., 2015).

While almost one in five survey participants report that they ‘never’ use social media or email, almost a third are using them ‘all the time’. Young men are more likely to be using social media than young women (82 per cent and 73 per cent respectively), while length of time in Australia also influences use of social networking services (SNS). Focus group participants that are frequently online report that they spend a vast majority of this time communicating with others. For many participants digital technology and the internet are viewed as critical tools that enable them to stay in touch with others at a time when they have few close supports or networks offline. Overwhelmingly, participants’ communication with people overseas takes place with existing social contacts via private messaging and video/photo share applications.

Most participants report using digital technology and the internet to reinforce connections to broader networks of acquaintances and others with very few using digital technology and the internet to form connections to new social bridges. Where these online networks and relationships are with peers in Australia, technology appears to mostly enable participants to reinforce relationships established offline (e.g. with ELS classmates). With few exceptions, participants’ online social network expansion and diversification seems to follow similar patterns to offline development of bridging networks (e.g. when young people move to mainstream school their offline network expands and they connect with these new social contacts online as well). Public profiles and public platforms are commonly used by participants to expand into these networks. Very few participants reported engaging with strangers online.

Interestingly, participants described a complex and nuanced system for managing online risk related to SNS use. In particular, participants were aware of the need to be mindful of the many and varied ways that their information and content may be misused – not only by strangers, but by friends and networks. Some participants who have been in Australia for five years or more report feeling peer pressure to engage through SNS in Australia in order to build and maintain social connections, especially via public profiles, as non-participation could lead to some level of social exclusion.

Those participants who are engaging in more public forms of online interaction with broader

networks also describe how they carefully manage the online image of themselves in order to balance the desire not to be socially excluded from friendship networks with respect for familial or cultural expectations. Others, mostly those engaging with SNS platforms privately only or not at all, suggested that while peer pressure may be a motivator for some young people, you did not have to have a public profile on SNS to build broader networks.

One young female focus group participant, who has been in Australia for longer than five years, described how joining Facebook (with a public profile) in the first few years of arriving in Australia had been helpful for her. She believed this engagement enabled her to build her English language skills and also provided a place where she felt safe to watch and learn gradually, not only about risks, but also about how young people in Australia engage and behave. She felt this was beneficial for her offline interactions.

Social networking services and other online spaces for young people to meet others and build social networks and connections, both in Australia and overseas, are valuable to the development of social and cultural capital. However, not all young people have the same levels of confidence and familiarity with technology to negotiate these spaces without support. Barriers, such as the blocking of popular SNS in sites frequently accessed by newly arrived young people, poor parental digital literacy and awareness, lack of offline supports and familiarity, and inaccessible information and advice for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds about SNS and online safety, must be addressed in order to improve young people's capacity to utilise digital participation to achieve settlement outcomes in the social sphere.

7.2.4 Economic participation

Economic participation, including engagement in education or training pathways towards employment, has an overwhelmingly positive impact upon settlement outcomes in all other domains for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Economic participation can increase confidence, strengthen social networks and support development of new skills, as well as support sense of belonging (CMY, 2014). However, access to education and employment for newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds can be significantly affected by their own and their families resources and opportunities – or lack of – including language barriers, lack of familiarity with the service system, lack of financial resources, lack of information on educational 'pathways' or options, and difficulty gaining recognition for prior qualifications (Beadle, 2014; CMY, 2006).

The economic participation of Australians is increasingly facilitated by digital technology and the internet. Not only are digital skills and literacy increasingly necessary in order to participate in study and work, but information, resources and opportunities related to work and study are steadily becoming only available online (FYA, 2016a). Digital platforms can provide cheaper and more accessible modes of study and work, for both the provider and the consumer, removing traditional barriers to education and employment (VicHealth and CSIRO, 2015). Additional potential benefits for newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds settling in Australia include: greater access to information, breaking down of language barriers, greater flexibility in study options and improvements to service system accessibility. With limited and unequal access to the social and cultural capital necessary to engage in education and employment (Kellock, 2016), digital technology and the networking potential offered by the internet present the potential means for many newly arrived young people to bridge gaps in economic participation.

Despite the prevalence of digital commerce in Australia only half of all survey participants had engaged in commerce related activities online in the last three months. Furthermore, while almost half of the survey participants are currently looking for work, one in five has 'never' used the internet to look for information about work. However, regular use of the internet to look for information about employment increases with participant's length of time in Australia, although this increase is small compared to changes over time in other domains.

Almost all survey participants are currently engaged in formal education, however only two thirds are accessing information related to education online. Participants who have been in Australia for less than a year are twice as likely as those who have lived in Australia for five years or longer (11 per cent) to have 'never' accessed information about education online, and female participants are slightly more likely than male participants to have 'never' accessed information about education online.

Educational setting and English language proficiency appear to be factors influencing whether or not newly arrived young people are accessing technology to support their learning. Consultations with service providers working with newly arrived young people reveal that young people attending ELS are more likely to be using mobile devices and engaging in informal (self-directed) digital learning (e.g. engaging with online dictionaries and translation technologies to support their formal education). This is in contrast to the experience of participants attending mainstream schools, who are mostly regularly engaging with technology in formal education settings and who mostly have access to laptops and computers for both formal and informal learning.

Some form of digital technology is used by most participants to support their learning in the early years of settlement, however this is most often self-directed and informal. Online video content (OVC) is increasingly popular among younger generations as a means for engaging with information and informal learning, and this trend has not passed by newly arrived young people in Australia. YouTube, along with music videos and movies, are perhaps the most referenced sources of entertainment among participants. However, newly arrived young people report engaging with these materials for diverse purposes. OVC and a range of other interactive online content is being accessed by newly arrived young people to build language skills, increase knowledge (including understanding of Australian culture and society) and to develop skills (YouTube, and other OVC platforms such as 'CrashCourse', are cited by participants as an important place where they learn new, mostly practical, things at their own pace).

A lack of awareness of and access to education and employment related resources and opportunities online are the most commonly cited factors impacting upon young people's use of the internet to look for information about employment. However, this isn't the case for all young people. A small number of participants report that they have used SNS platforms to connect to broader networks and garner information about employment and/or online search engines to find information about employment opportunities. This again highlights the dramatic differences not only in levels of digital participation among newly arrived young people, but also in their ability to utilise technology to support their settlement goals.

8. Conclusion

As a result of the increasing interconnectedness of our offline and online lives, digital inclusion has become a potential key to full and meaningful participation in Australian economic and

social life. This key can serve to unlock a range of resources and opportunities, online and offline, for newly arrived young people that are essential for achieving settlement outcomes.

The findings from this paper suggest that newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds possess a diverse range of resources and experiences that support their navigation of settlement in an intensely digital environment. However, many also face a range of pre- and post-migration challenges in addition to those experienced by their non-culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Australian born peers. These must be overcome in order to make full use of digital technology to advance the settlement journey.

To support newly arrived young people to settle well in the digital age it is essential that interventions are focused on addressing barriers to their digital inclusion. This means understanding and investing in: quality of and access to digital technology and the internet; digital literacy and skills; and, attitudes towards digital technology, such as levels of confidence or belief in benefits. Attention should also be given to the levels of knowledge and expertise among newly arrived young people's offline support networks.

Addressing barriers to access in the early stages of settlement requires a review not only of barriers in the home, such as affordability, but also of barriers in sites where young people use digital technology and the internet outside of the home, such as schools and libraries. In order for these sites to truly meet the needs of young people investment should be made to understand how young people are engaging online and the tools and access they require to derive the most benefit from this participation.

Newly arrived young people arrive in Australia with a highly diverse range of digital skills, experiences and technical knowledge. Existing digital skills training for new arrivals needs to move beyond online safety. This requires identification of young people's digital literacy and competencies early, before they transition to mainstream education, and the delivery of targeted and flexible training options. Support for parents and family of newly arrived young people to engage in informal digital learning and development would also fill an existing gap in many newly arrived young people's digital support network.

There is also a need for further investigation of attitudes towards technology and the quality of young people's offline support networks to promote and support their digital participation. Findings show that over time young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds settling in Australia become more confident and frequent users of the internet and digital technologies. Given the importance of digital literacy and technical skills in Australian work and study contexts, we need to learn more about the factors influencing digital engagement among newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in order to help young people, families and communities address concerns and build their capacity to exploit the potential benefits of digital participation in highly digitised communities like Australia.

Finally, this paper establishes a foundation for further exploring how newly arrived young people's digital participation influences their successful settlement in Australia. Further research is required to provide greater depth to these findings and to explore how young people are translating digital participation into tangible outcomes that support their settlement. Supporting young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, their families and communities to build their capacity to take advantage of the opportunities and resources increasingly made available online is an important means for facilitating successful settlement in the digital age.

9. Recommendations

1. Address barriers to digital inclusion by improving access to digital technology and the internet for newly arrived young people.

- a) Federal Government to support English language providers and other on-arrival service providers to assess the needs of newly arrived young people in order to inform the provision of consistent and high quality access to technology that bridges gaps to digital access, especially for those in the first few years of settlement.
- b) All levels of government and community services currently providing digital access points to newly arrived young people to review the benefits and risks to young people of placing restrictions on online access. (This requires giving special consideration to the potential for these to be the only sites for online access and digital learning for some young people. Risks should be balanced with the need for newly arrived young people to have access in order to be able to participate.)

2. Recognise digital literacy is a key to unlocking opportunities and promoting participation.

Improving digital inclusion requires addressing prevailing assumptions about the digital literacy of young people to be addressed. Just because young people are online doesn't mean they automatically have all the skills they need to successfully engage and derive benefits from their digital participation.

- a) Generalist and settlement-specific services and organisations review how digital skills assessment and training in formal digital skills and competencies (beyond online safety) can be integrated into current settlement or other on-arrival programs and supports to facilitate the successful transition of newly arrived young people into the highly digitised worlds of education and work in Australia.
- b) State and Federal Government invest in supporting ongoing development of the digital literacy of the workforce engaged to support newly arrived young people settle well. This would recognise that the digital space is ever-changing, and that the skills required to keep pace demand continuous learning and development.

3. Strengthen offline supports for newly arrived young people to successfully navigate and draw benefit from digital participation.

- a) Enhance young people's informal learning and digital support networks through Federal, State and local government investment in youth-led, peer-to-peer digital literacy and online safety programs, including the tailoring of existing modules, for newly arrived young people.
- b) All levels of government and community services (particularly youth and family services) resource intergenerational programs for newly arrived community members that promote online engagement and build familiarity with technology. Such programs would aim to bring parents and children together to develop technical skills and online safety awareness.

4. Support technological innovation in the settlement sector.

- a) Government, as well as generalist and settlement-specific services and organisations working with newly arrived young people to review online information and service accessibility, ensuring that the needs of young people who are newly arrived are being met by this shift in the delivery of information and services. Innovative examples of tailoring digital information and services to this particular cohort include the recent podcast series 'Life in Australia' by Australian Red Cross.
- b) Federal Government resource English language providers to investigate and employ digital technologies in the classroom to complement English language acquisition and build digital literacy in the early stages of settlement. Approaches could build on the existing digital tools and resources young people are already using to supplement their formal learning.

5. Universities, government and services to conduct further research.

- a) Include indicators that measure factors unique to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds (such as migration status, parental migration status, length of time in Australia) to ensure newly arrived young people's level of digital inclusion is captured and change is measured over time.
- b) Increase understanding of the influence of the unique challenges of migration and settlement upon young peoples' digital inclusion in Australia, specifically the role access, skills and attitudes play in early digital engagement.
- c) Research factors that support newly arrived young people's translation of digital engagement into tangible offline outcomes in the settlement context.
- d) Research the role of digital participation in mediating (or intensifying) particular experiences of exclusion, such as discrimination and racism, among newly arrived young people.

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