

DIGITAL NATIVES CHANGING THE WORLD

Young people today are virtually always online, creating a generation where the physical and digital merge seamlessly. New generations of digital natives have known nothing else, and are set to embrace new technologies in ways that will change the world faster and more profoundly than ever before.

A key trait of digital natives is that they tend to live much of their lives online, often without distinguishing between the online and the offline sides of their lives. Instead of thinking of themselves as having separate identities for their lives in the digital and physical worlds, they often have a single identity (in two or more different spaces.) They are characterised by a set of common traits, including the amount of time they spend using digital technologies, their tendency to multi-task, their tendency to express themselves and relate to one another in ways mediated by digital technologies, and their pattern of using these technologies to consume information and create new knowledge and art forms.

For these young people, new digital technologies are the primary mediators of human-to-human interaction. They have created a 24/7 network that blends human identity with technology to a degree that we have never experienced before. This is transforming human relationships in fundamental ways. Digital natives feel as comfortable in online spaces as they do in offline ones. They do not think of their hybrid lives as anything remarkable because they have not known anything but a life connected to one another.

digital native [dij-i-tl ney-tiv]

A digital native is someone who has a greater understanding of digital concepts through frequent interaction with them from an early age. Conversely, a person who is less familiar with this digital environment, who only learned how to email and use social networks later in their life, is referred to as a **digital immigrant**.