

## *Method and Research Design*

The methods included distribution of a web-based questionnaire. The research design is Interpretivism because no validated instrument exists to measure “digital propensity.” Even lead researchers in graphics for learning (Clark & Lyons, 2004) do not make a definitive declaration to support or refute Prensky.

## *Site and Sample*

Participants were subscribers of the UCF Instructional Technology email listserv, which includes students, faculty, and interested third parties of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology student group. Nineteen individuals participated in the qualitative information gathering process.

## *Ethical Considerations*

*(IRB approval #06-3778)*

- Clear intentions of the project through informed consent
- Ensuring anonymity of respondents

## *Data Analysis Procedures*

Data was analyzed using interpretive methods by creating assertions from themes in the respondents replies.

## *Biography of Researcher*

David Norman has been researching the claims of Marc Prensky since August 2005. He has written several related literature reviews related to Prensky’s claim of differences in graphics versus text preferences of Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants.

# *Instructional Technology Students’ Perceptions of How Age Impacts Proficiency with Electronics*

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*A pilot project developed as part of*

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## *Research Question and Purpose*

The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine which skill sets fit each adjective according to journeymen of instructional technology.

## *Conceptual Framework*

This study is background research to discover the reasoning for emphasis graphics versus text in educational materials. The overall conceptual framework guiding the long-term project is quoted from Clark and Lyons (2004). “Graphic effectiveness depends on graphic functionality, guidelines for graphics should be based on research evidence, and context will influence the best use of visuals in any specific training or job support product.”

## *Background and Literature Review*

Marc Prensky (2001a, 2001b) coined the terms "Digital Native" and "Digital Immigrant" to categorize what he thinks are people on two sides of a digital divide with regards to educational experiences. Digital Natives are stereotyped in his article as younger individuals with many thousands of hours interacting with digital toys. Digital Immigrants are stereotyped as older individuals with a background having less electronics expertise.

## *Data Gathering Procedures*

Data was gathered between Oct 12, 2006 and November 12, 2006. The questionnaire was pre-piloted with a third party. Other data consisted of five analytic memos, 10 weeks of field notes, two observations, literature review, and 19 anonymous, online questionnaire replies.

## *Methodological limitations*

- Differential selection and selection maturation interaction: Subscribers to the IT listserv have likely had exposure to the topic from professors and have background that may skew their responses.
- Self reporting error and bias
- Random sampling error: Questionnaire is available to every subscriber. Only particular people may respond.
- Instrumentation: Un-piloted questionnaire may not test what it is meant to test

## *Pilot Study Preliminary Findings*

- Digital Immigrants are perceived to be skilled with telephones, VCRs, simple computer functions, copy machines, library searches
- Digital Natives are perceived to be additionally skilled with blogging, PDAs, mobile phones, computerized games, portable music players
- Digital Immigrants strictly have enough digital background to complete important tasks
- Digital Natives use electronics for entertainment in addition to uses of Digital Immigrants
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office may be a benchmark for digital expertise

## *Next Steps*

- Dissertation topic "An investigation of the relationship between insurance employees’ digital propensity and their reactions to instruction"
- Helps form the basis for a hypothesis of the outcome of the dissertation topic