

The New Millennium Learners Project

Francesc Pedró

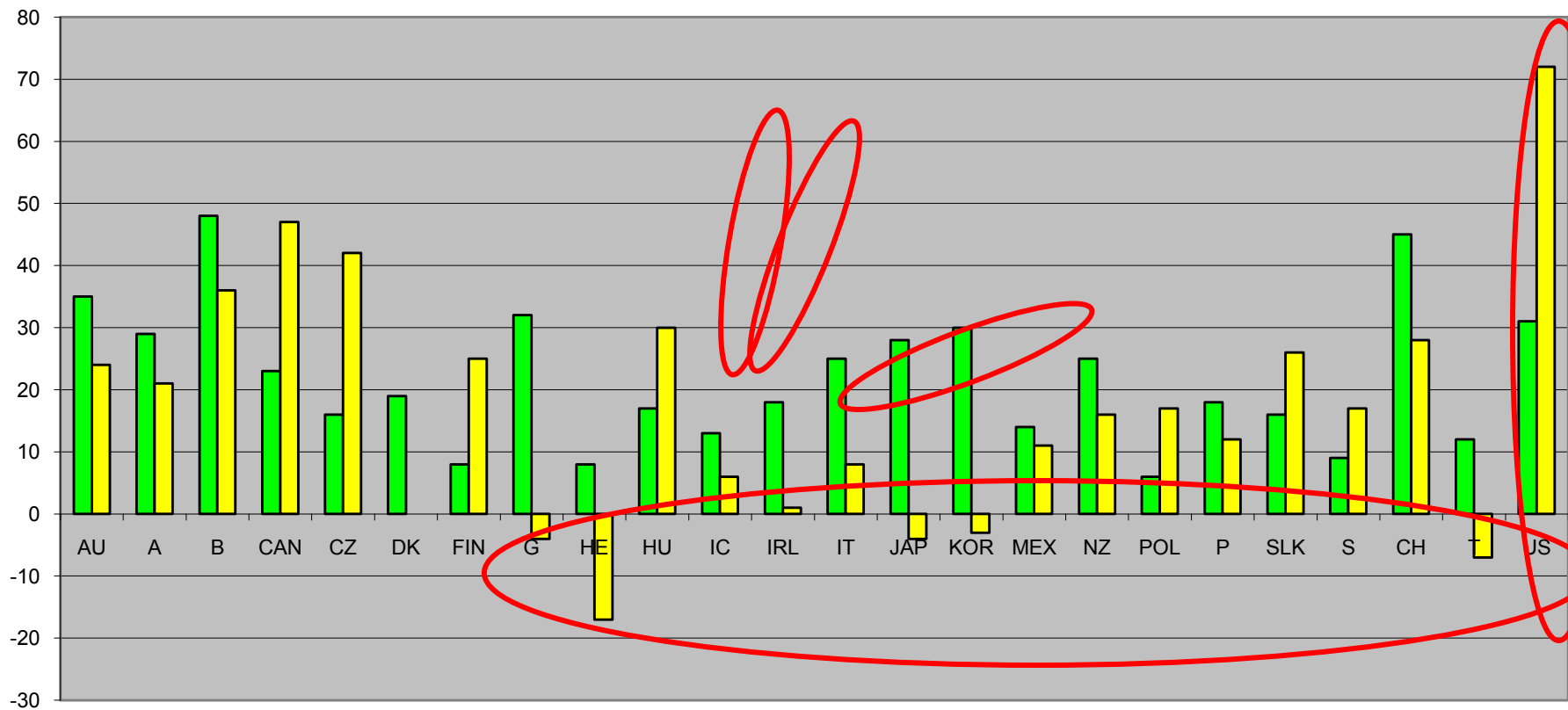
Oslo, October 12, 2007



www.bromasaparte.es

“E-mail is for old people.”

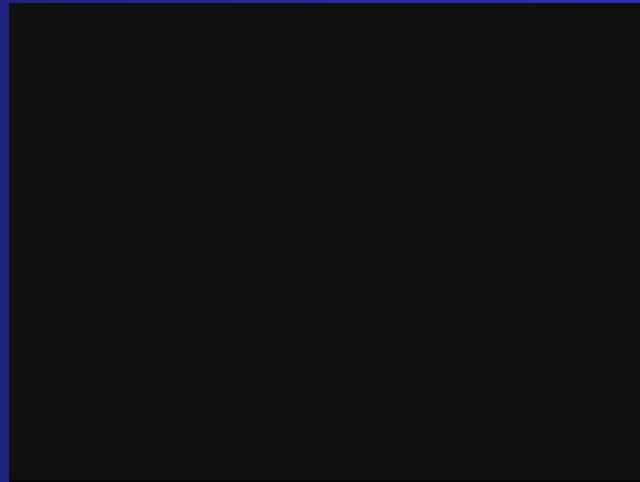
A comment by a student reproduced in
The Chronicle of Higher Education (2006)

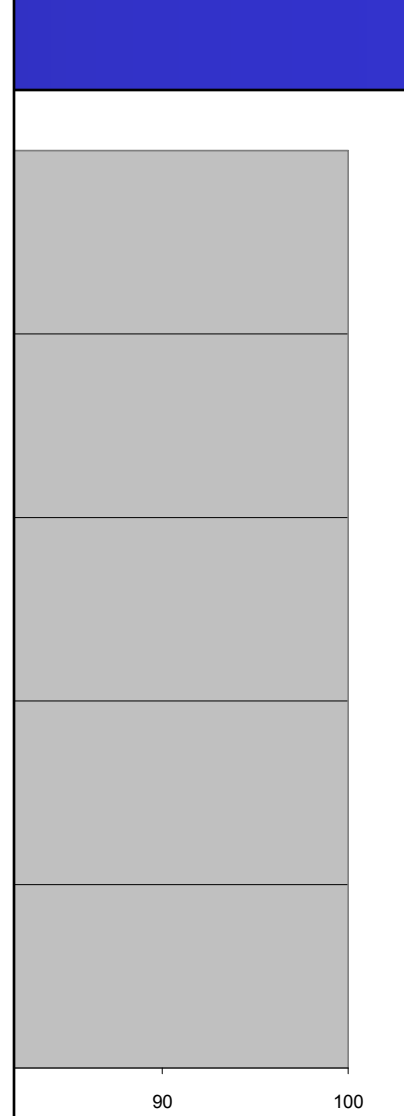
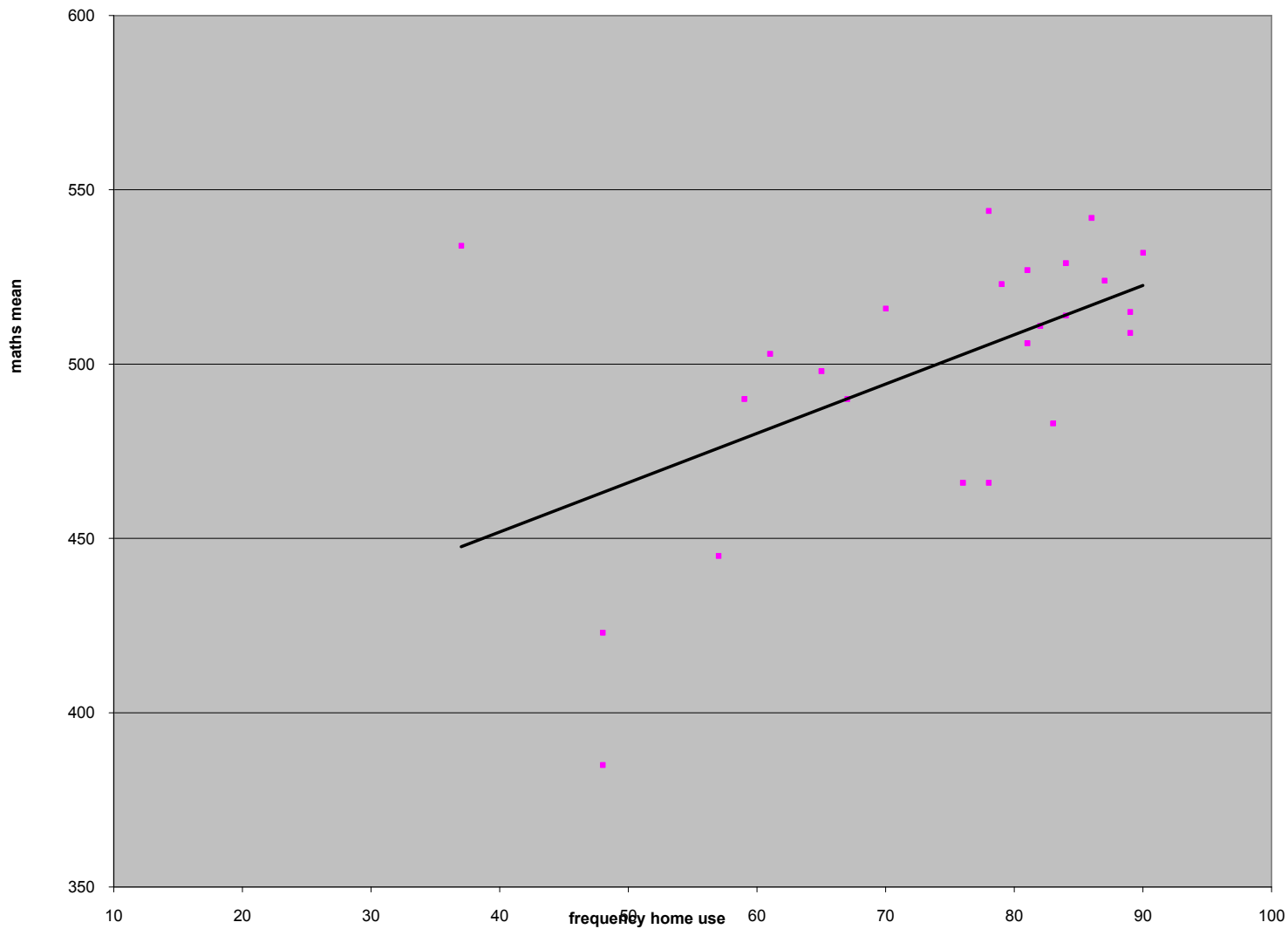


■ having a computer at home
 ■ having a computer at school

Source: OECD PISA 2003 database, Table 3.1.

Our research questions





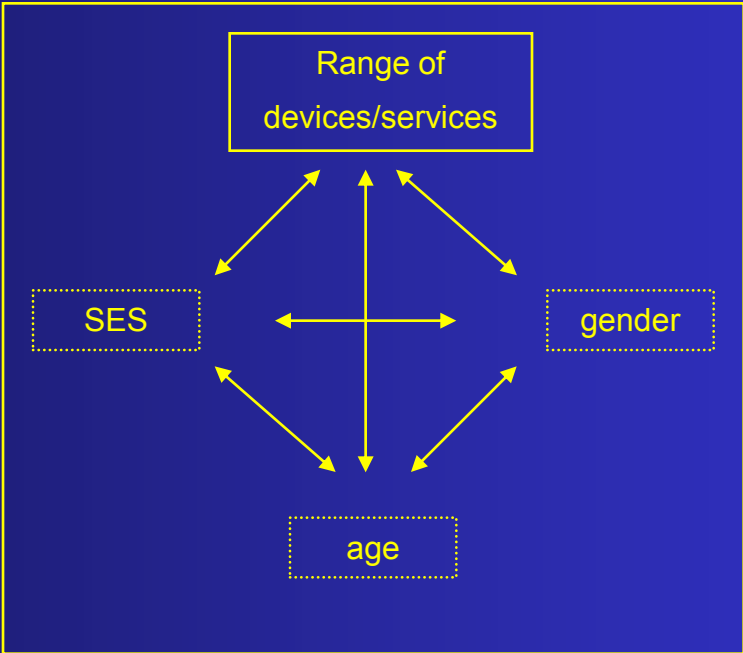
Cognitive skills development

Social values and lifestyles

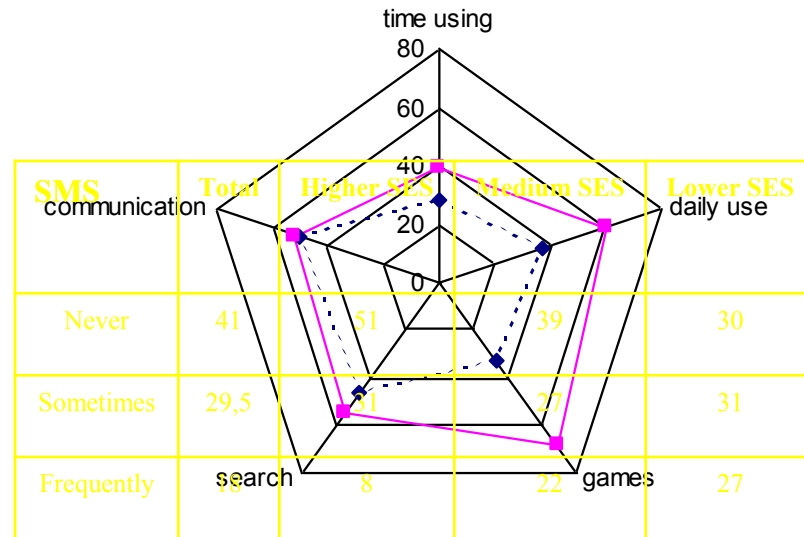


Learning expectations

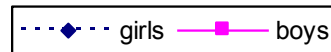
Educational achievement



Time and main uses



Source: Pasquier (2005)



Source: PISA database (2003)

Socio-economic status and internet use

	Internet use: educational purposes*		Internet use: leisure purposes*	
	Exp(B)	% Change	Exp(B)	% Change
Their parents' frequency of use				
Never or hardly ever	-	-	-	-
Monthly	1.093	+9.3%	1.092	+9.2%
Weekly	1.249	+24.9%	1.032	+3.2%
Daily	1.270	+27.0%	1.090	+9.0%

*Significant relationships are marked in bolds.

Academic performance and internet use

	Internet use: educational purposes*		Internet use: leisure purposes*	
	Exp(B)	% Change	Exp(B)	% Change
Academic performance				
High difficulties	-	-	-	-
Some difficulties	1.452	+45.2%	1.022	+22.0%
Adequate progress	2.041	+104.1%	0.787	-21,3%

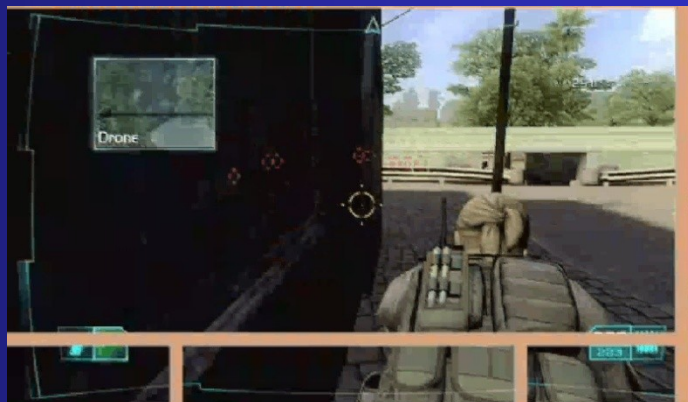
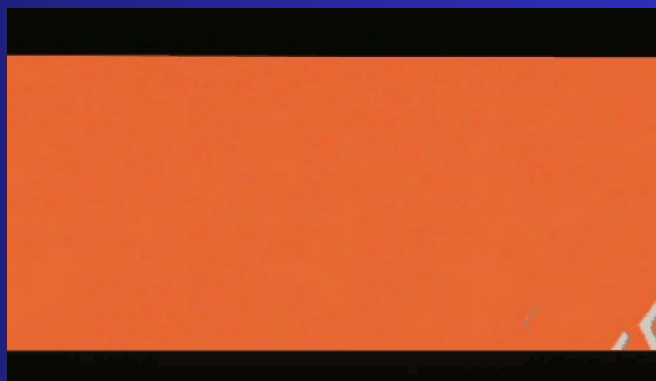
*Significant relationships are marked in bolds.

Four educational challenges



**“Class, I’ve got a lot of material to cover,
so to save time I won’t be using vowels today.
Nw lts bgn, pls trn t pg 122.”**

ICT gourmets



MICHAEL SCHRAGE

The 'edutainers' merit a failing grade

Yes, the internet is wonderful. Yes, children are our future. Yes, state-run school systems require fundamental reform. Nevertheless, the shrewdest policy to improve public education while saving billions in government spending demands abstinence. Keep computers out of the classroom.

The "edutoptan" belief that computers should be essential ingredients of classroom curricula is delusional. A quality education has virtually nothing to do with the technological endowment of the school. To the contrary, history confirms that schools are shockingly poor at successfully assimilating new technologies.

In America, the 1970s proliferation of "language labs" designed to make secondary students multilingual proved expensive exercises in futility. Global diffusion of cheap calculators has improved neither test scores nor understanding of maths concepts. Educational television and then VCRs also promised to transform classroom learning. The results merit a failing grade.

Yet today's champions of digital education swear that this time it will be different. They are right. It will be worse. Why? Unrealistic expectations. This dismissal of failed educational technologies in the past recalls H.L. Mencken's wicked line about second marriages as "the triumph of hope over experience". Good teachers know this. That is why so many are cynical about computerising their classrooms.

To be sure, the UK's Open University

and America's for-profit University of Phoenix offer intriguing models of how educational institutions can successfully integrate innovative technologies into core curricula. However, their students are typically far more mature and self-motivated. More important, these schools made innovative technology adoption inherent to their mission. That commitment remains unshared by any government-funded school system in America, Europe or Asia.

That is not surprising. Imagine the denunciations and the educational evangelists of the day successfully persuaded the schools to acquire the nascent personal computing technologies of the pre-internet 1990s or the pre-WiFi/open source 1990s. Early adoption would have resulted in a costly fiasco of obsolescence. Relentless technological evolution makes it hard for even sophisticated educators to benchmark mediocre classroom technology success, let alone best practice.

But subtler reasons exist for bringing ruthless scepticism to "edutopia". I hear the rhetoric of its champions, educational technology is a glittering silicon seducer that will lure learners to fun, engaging and "edutaining" experiences. "Edutainment" is an ideology. The "edutainers" assert that classroom computing should conform to the cognitive needs and constraints of the child. These technologists offer the false promise that learning should be fun and assert there is something wrong if it is not.

What better way to breed cognitively

spoilt children than sparkly tools that interactively cater to their impatience and short attention spans? Tears of frustration are an essential part of education. The ability to press on even in the absence of simulated cooling and "isn't this fun?" is an essential part of most educational software has nothing to do with cultivating character. Character does not even rise to the level of afterthought. It is all Rousseau and no Epictetus.

What better way to breed cognitively spoilt children than sparkly tools that cater to their impatience and short attention spans?

This absence of character is sadly revealing. Classroom computing offers less of a bold vision than a cowardly cheat by technologists counting on technological innovation to shield them from serious questions about what schools should be. That sensibility is emblematic of a monied elite that would rather buy tools than go through the painful process of determining how best to use them. Serious policymakers and parents who genuinely care about educational reform understand that improved quality does not come from

faster and better gimmickry. Google, iPods and \$100 laptop computers are terrific technologies. So are plasma television sets and 4G mobile phones. Children of all ages should have access to them. But that does not mean they should be used in classrooms as platforms for teachers to entertain students. Schools should be places where newer technologies are not a primary focus of attention, cognition and learning.

Look instead, perhaps, to technology as a medium that creatively redefines relationships between schools and their communities. In South Korea, for example, Seoul educational administrators recently announced that they would expand a mobile phone service that let teachers text parents the grades, schedules and homework assignments for their children. Korean mothers and fathers were apparently very enthusiastic about this innovation.

Is it possible that virtual involvement technologies may have a greater impact on educational quality than the most "edutaining" classroom software? These are the sort of questions that the "edutainers" rarely ask, let alone seriously answer. They are too busy trying to bring The Next Great Technology to your school. Do not let them.

The writer, an innovation researcher at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has participated in computer-based educational initiatives at primary, secondary and university levels for almost 25 years

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Total Residents:	1,305,947
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Online Now:	7,100
US\$ Spent Last 24 Hrs:	543,907

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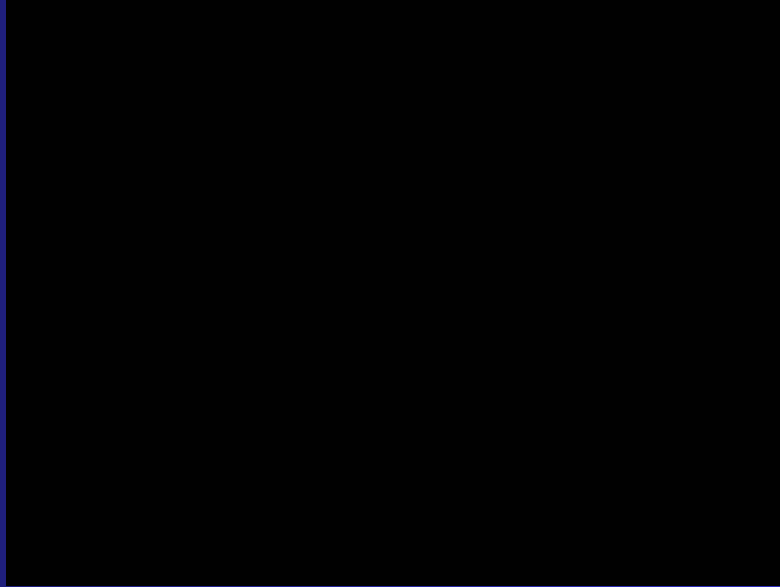
Is the Web 2.0 so different?





**"YOUR MOTHER AND I FOUND OUT YOU'VE BEEN BLOGGING.
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, BUT WE'D LIKE YOU TO STOP."**

Safety



We all have opinions about ICT and education



Gather and compare international evidence

Comments welcome

,,, even by SMS

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