**[Dr Suzy Edwards]:** So we've been doing lots of research in this area and working with children and families to find out what their experiences of digital technologies are, and also working with educators to find out how we can translate some of the children's experiences from the home and into the service. So one of the ideas that we've worked with, if you can see that circle up the top that looks like pieces of pie, this is a notion that's called ‘convergence’, and we talk about ‘converged play’. So convergence is the idea, if you think of a child, you know, born even in the last five years, they don't know a time when there weren't iPads, when there wasn't internet, when there wasn't voice activation, when there wasn't internet of toys. So they don't have in their mind that there's digital play and traditional play. So children born pretty much post-2010, just the advent of the iPad, experience their digital and their traditional play as one thing. So once they were set on separate paths, but over time they've come together, they've converged, right? So we've got this notion of ‘converged play’.

So what this circle does is you'll see it's got as the sort of chunks of the pie pieces, it's got sort of digital activities and then the little rings are the more traditional activities. And so then you get these intersections of where the convergence has happened. So you could have a toy, a Bluey toy, so you really love Bluey, and then you've got sociodramatic play where the child's acting out, the sociodramatic play with their Bluey toy. So wherever those intersections happen is the convergence. So some of the work that we've done is, we've been and we've spoken to children and families to find out what they actually do at home. And what we're able to do is map their converged play at home into these, we call it a web. So it's called a ‘web map’ because it's our spider web.

And there's a chap called Geertz who talks about the fact that in contemporary societies, particularly with media, people weave their own webs of meaning. So I used to be really against popular culture and digital media when I was an educator because I thought it was just mass corporations pushing their plastic fake agendas onto children. But what Geertz says is even though there's those national experiences, what people draw from them as individuals in their local context is that they'll make their own webs of meaning from those national/international sort of conglomerates. They interpret them, for meaning for themselves. So what Bluey might mean to a child where I live here in Berwick compared to a child in Brisbane or Perth or wherever, it can be quite different and that's what we found in our study.

So then by mapping these experiences from the family home, we would work with the educators and say, well, this is what the converged play is at the home, and then the educators would actively work to map the experiences in the service into the gaps. So they might go, “Oh, this child is doing lots of pretend and role play after watching Bluey on the iPhone but I really want to push that into construction activity or some more fine motor experiences,” for example. And so you can see, we've got an example of these blocks. We had a child who's intensely interested in Star Wars and their educator in that situation, would just watch tiny little snippets of Star Wars with him on YouTube and then invite him to draw what he'd just seen, to write the narrative of it and then opportunities for him to then take that and build it. And then this is just a tiny photo, but there was very many of these storm troopers in the kindergarten and they were all on their way and there was a spaceship and it was quite complex work.

There's another little example. I don't know if you can see the little Pokemon characters just on top of the storm troopers. So this work was at the peak, remember the peak of the Pokemon craze when everyone was on their phones trying to catch them? This service had no technologies. This is a really important point. You don't even need to use technologies to give children access to exploring what it means to live in a digital world. So this service, no digital technologies at all. Nothing, not even an iPad. And this teacher's involved in this digital play project. So she knew from the web mapping that there was an intense interest in the community around Pokemon Go, that the families were going after the early session to the local lake to catch the Pokemons.

And so what she did is she printed off the little Pokemon characters, and you can see the little cutout square ones, and she hid them outdoors all outside and then she gave the children corresponding sheets almost like bingo I guess, and they all had a sheet each and they had to try to catch, go around and find the Pokemon Go. And so then you're getting all sorts of things around not only capitalising on that as a digital activity that they're doing outside of the home, but you're getting sort of the pattern matching, number, space, above, below, under, next to, near, plus you're getting the physical activity as they're running around. Lots of social interaction as well. That went on for a term, consistently asked for by the children.

So there's another one here from another project, the one that we're doing at the moment, the Linkage. Can you see the one underneath the web map that's got ‘Who's calling who?’ So this piece of work is deliberately focusing on helping children understand that the internet means my computer is connected, whether it's by a wire or by wireless, but my computer's connected to your computer, Amanda, and my computer's connected to Mary's and Mary's is connected to yours, Amanda, and that's a network, right? And what's happening is people going, “Oh my God, children are online. It's not good. They're going to be approached by inappropriate people and they're seeing inappropriate things and whatever, and we've got to teach kids to be safe online”. So now we're going around telling four-year-olds, don't talk to strangers on the internet, but does a four-year-old know what the internet is?

Because the internet is a network of networks. So these stunningly clever educators have started the idea of the most basic network which is my phone, this phone talks to that phone. And again, this involves no technology. So this is up on a wall. They've got little emoticons on, what's that rippy stuff called, Velcro?

And then down here they've drawn their own faces, you have Velcro and the children play ‘I’m calling you’ so they rip it off, they put their faces on and they're sending emoticons and stuff. Yeah, go on.

**[Amanda Sparks]:** Yeah, no, I was just going to say you're really building that conceptual understanding without having to have the technology actually there.

**[Dr Suzy Edwards]:** No technology there. And then this eventually built to a very sophisticated notion of a connected home corner. So often you've got your home corner, you might have a computer that doesn't work, you might have some phones that don't work. You can make some iPads out of boxes and they connected them with strings. So they made their own little internet with strings in the home corner, little paper clips on the strings and stick-it notes and then the children are sending emails along the strings. And so then when we say don't talk to someone you don't know you can go, well, who's on the end of that string? Should we talk to them? Do we know? And where did that piece of information come from? If someone sent you a picture or some content, do we know who wrote it or who sent it? Should we watch it? Is it appropriate? And that's not involving any technology at all. If we've got time-

**[Amanda Sparks]:** Concrete and hopefully as children develop their evolving skills around digital technology, then it means that abstract, once they get their first piece of technology, they understand what's happening behind the scenes a little bit more.

**[Dr Suzy Edwards]:** And this is what early childhood educators do. We do play based learning so that children can understand the world they live in. They live in a world in which the internet is a thing but you can't see it.

**[Amanda Sparks]:** Yeah.

**[Dr Suzy Edwards]:** Right?

**[Amanda Sparks]:** What does it mean?

**[Dr Suzy Edwards]:** What does it mean, yeah, yep. So all the expertise, there's nothing truly digital about any of these examples, but all the expertise educators have in play based learning and making connections to children's life worlds and building their knowledge so that they can participate well or develop social skills or do all of those things that are still evident. Helping the child make meaning of the worlds. And we've identified that in terms of digitality, meaning-making should be multimodal which means many modalities. So modalities are just things like talking, moving, drawing, writing, video, photos. So you can see in these examples, there's lots of examples of images or whatever.

Global-local is that idea of, don't reject the global staff because we think it's bad for children, for children and adults. I mean, I bet many of our listeners are on Facebook which is a pretty global thing or Instagram or Twitter or might watch CNN or BBC. We live global-local lives too so we shouldn't reject it for children. And understand the flow of how to make meaning of the global in their local situation. And traditional-digital is just that idea that it can segue. Sometimes it's very traditional, sometimes it's digital, sometimes it's that real convergence.

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