In my presentation I will argue that web communities, for example fan sites and social media, offer young people a number of contexts based on creativity and therefore can be considered as vital informal learning environments. The media landscape of today is characterized by a convergence culture where narratives cross media borders and fans are active producers of "fan works" (stories, pictures, movies) based on already published material (Olin-Scheller & Wikström 2010). In their spare time young people spend a lot of time reading, writing, and communicating around digital texts. Therefore the development of knowledge on the web is strongly connected with the development of literacies. The fan sites can be described as communities of practice (Wenger 2006) where learning – in opposition to many formal learning environments – is characterized by collective processes (Buckingham 2005 & 2008, Gee 2004). Also, a clear tendency today is that production of culture is a matter of “user generated content” and goes from passive consumption to active production (Tapscott 1996; Jenkins 2006). In the media landscape young people act as prosumers, i.e. both producers and consumers, where collective learning processes and creativity is supported. The so-called "affinity spaces" (Gee 2005) on web sites, offer a strong sense of community as well as vital possibilities for learning. According to Jenkins (2008) such spaces create a sort of collective intelligence that is based on the principle that no one knows everything, but everyone knows something which is important to share with others. At school, though – not least when it comes to assessment – activities such as sharing, copying, and cooperating closely, is often regarded as plagiarism. However, focus on creativity is strong also in formal learning environments like school. At least this goes for the rhetoric of the national curriculum in Sweden. According to this schools should encourage students' creativity, curiosity and self-confidence and willingness to examine their own ideas and solve problems. In Swedish schools however, instead of supporting collective intelligence and networking, individual learning processes are central and the political ambition of individual grading is filtered down through the ages. By using five criteria on how to kill creativity (Amabile 1996) I will in my presentation discuss in what way informal and formal learning settings relate to each other with focus on creativity and literacy. A key issue is how the school relates to various aspects of informal learning and how education prepares students for life in which "digital wisdom" (Prensky 2010) plays an increasingly important role.

(Amabile 1996)


York: Routledge.


