Pass the iPad: Collaborative Creating and

Sharing in Family Groups

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The increasingly cross-generational use of personal technology portrays families each absorbed in individual devices. Tablets potentially support multi-user working but are currently used as personal devices primarily for consumption, or individual or web-based games. Could tablets support creative co-located groupwork in families and how does such creative work differ from the same task on paper? We designed and evaluated an app requiring individual and group co-creation in families. 262 family groups visiting a science fair played the collaborative drawing game on paper and iPads. Group creations were rated significantly more original and cohesive on iPads than paper. Detailed video analysis of seven family groups showed how tablets support embodiment and use of digital traces, and how the different media sustain individual and shared actions at different stages in the creative process. We sketch out implications for ownership and ‘scrap computers’: going beyond personally-owned devices and developing collaborative apps to support groupwork with tablets.