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**“Boys Like Action Games, Girls Like Animal Games”:
Sexuality of Self / Selves in the Development and Use of Digital Games by
Children in Middle Childhood**

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Caoimhe: “Some man who was actually quite silly invented that girls have to play with this and boys have to play with that. [aged 8 yrs]

Play is one of the defining activities of childhood (Crawford2009), and toys are the artifacts that encapsulate the difference between ‘childhood’ and ‘adulthood’ (Baxter 2005). Moreover, toys, including digital media games are playing an increasingly prominent role in the construct of childhood (s) and the development of the concept of sexuality and self that is significantly separated from an adult experience (Baxter 2005, Schwartzman 2001, Schwartzman 1978). This presentation focuses on the use (s) and its implications of two digital technologies; Play station and Nintendo by sixty boys and girls in middle childhood. Much of the previous research conducted *on* or *about* children’s toy’s focused on gender development and sex stereotyping of toys for children in their early years. These findings consistently argue that boys and girls prefer to play with different toys (Campbell, et al. 2000, Serbin, et al. 2001, Servin, Bohlin and Berlin 1999, Martin, Eisenbud and Rose 1995). However this view totally disregards children in middle childhood for whom digital games are increasingly important in their play worlds and the construction of the self and sexuality. Also the view of boys and girls as separate, both in their toy preferences and their play worlds ignores the large volume of children who cross the “same sex” divide. Indeed, children themselves clearly articulate acknowledge and appreciate similarities and differences within, and between, both sexes.