## High school students access to digital tools in education. Paper presented at the 9th annual International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies (Edulearn17) in Barcelona, Spain, 3 – 5 July 2017

### Abstract

Swedish high school students have access to at least one computer at home and 9 of 10 use computers in school (OECD, 2015). There is however a big divide between access and use of digital tools. For example, Swedish students lack the skills to find relevant information online. The aim of this study is therefore to explore high school students experiences of using digital tools for an educational purpose. By digital tools we mean computers, tablets and cellular phones. The paper is based on a qualitative interview study. Interviews with 23 students in eighth grade were performed to identify their experiences of using digital tools in education, how they perceive the use of digital tools in education and who decide on the use of digital tools in education.

The analysis is performed within the theoretical framework Actor-Network-theory (ANT). This is a useful frame of reference to perform elaborated analyses of pedagogy and learning and allow for people and material to be understood as connected and interdependent in network structures (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010). The interest is on how networks, as connections of human and non-human actors, are formed (Johannesen, 2013; Latour, 1990). We understand an actors as someone/something that can influence its surrounding (Callon & Latour, 1981; Latour, 2005).

Several actors are identified in the material: students, teachers and administrative personnel as well as digital tools and the computer room. To find many actors within the same network does not mean that they have the same power to influence the network. The students identified the teachers as the obligatory passage point (OOP). The teachers can most of all provide access to digital tools and to the computer room. The computer room is perceived as the arena where students can connect to digital tools and use them in education but this has the effect that digital tools are disconnected from ordinary school work. Instead, digital tools are perceived as something extraordinary outside the daily routine, as a handicraft like woodwork or needlework. This limits the use of digital tools on other areas.