

Is 'sharenting' on social media the new normal?

September 13 2017, by Luke Mcmanus

Parents are posting photos of their children on social media to build their personal brand and boost their role as influencers, Murdoch University researcher Dr Catherine Archer has warned.

New research has examined why an increased number of mum bloggers are using social media channels to share content based on their [children](#), also known as "sharenting."

Across the globe, more and more mum bloggers are earning money from their personal 'brand' and role as online influencers, with some now courted by many international brands and organisations.

Dr Catherine Archer, from the School of Arts, investigated what motivates mum bloggers and ordinary [mothers](#) to share their children's stories and [images](#), and if there are ethical concerns related to this.

"The rise of mum bloggers has been a worldwide trend that has influenced 'ordinary' non-blogging mums to embrace technology and become avid users of social [media](#), 'sharenting' images and information related to their offspring," Dr Archer said.

"Many mum bloggers use their families – in particular their young children – as characters in their [story](#) posts and also co-opt them in sponsorship and other money-making opportunities.

"These posts help the bloggers increase their social capital and influence.

Ordinary mothers are also now using images and stories related to their offspring, often from the first ultrasound scan."

By comparing the motivations, hesitations and justifications of both mum bloggers and ordinary mothers related to sharing their children's images and stories, Dr Archer looked to understand if there are differences between mum bloggers and ordinary mothers.

"It was found that for mum bloggers, while there were some hesitations related to privacy of their children, some seemed less concerned with the rights of their children when the children were younger and unable to speak for themselves," she added.

"As the children grew, and were able to voice their opinion, the bloggers often shared their images and stories less.

"It is also argued that mum bloggers may view their children as 'brand extensions' of their own blog or personal brand.

"For ordinary mothers, a range of views showed that while there were some concerns with privacy, many were sharing their children's photos but were struggling to understand the complexities of laws, issues and technology related to [social media](#).

"As mum bloggers are considered influencers of ordinary mothers, their online behaviours – and those of other internet celebrities – may well be affecting the choices made by ordinary mothers related to digital parenting."

Provided by Murdoch University

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