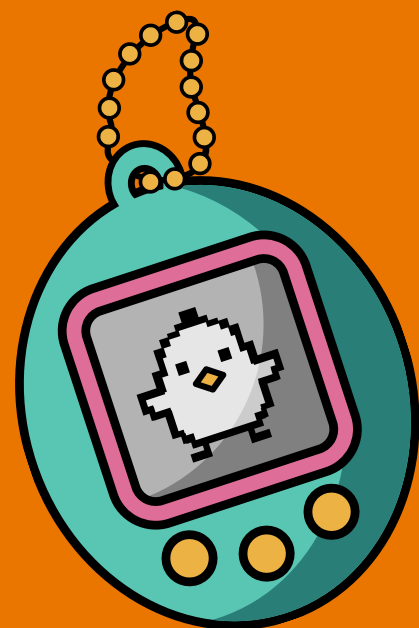


Youth Work

Comparing the 1990s and Today



Introduction to Youth Work Evolution

UNDERSTANDING CHANGES FROM THE 1990S

Youth work in the UK has **transformed remarkably** since the 1990s, influenced by shifting social, political, and cultural landscapes, emphasizing policy reform, equality, and youth wellbeing.



Society and Policy Context

POST-THATCHER ERA

The post-Thatcher era emphasized individual responsibility, focusing on developing personal talent. This shift aimed to empower young people while fostering a sense of independence in youth work.

a" child possesses innate abilities and that both government and parents must work together to nurture these "(Thatcher, 1987)

JOHN MAJOR'S POLICIES

John Major's government (1990–1997) promoted vocational training and practical learning. These initiatives aimed to provide young people with skills and opportunities for better employment prospects.

" too many young people reached school-leaving age without clear direction or purpose in their education "(Major, 1991)

NEW LABOUR INITIATIVES

The New Deal for Young People, introduced by New Labour, prioritized target-driven approaches. This policy shift aimed to enhance outcomes and provide structured support for disadvantaged youth. The New Deal for Young People aimed to reduce youth unemployment by directing young people into structured routes of training or employment, with increased accountability placed on services to achieve measurable outcomes (Warwick Institute for Employment Research, 1999).

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). This focus on behavior management sought to address youth crime while sometimes leading to increased bureaucratization in youth work.

Devolution in Wales

Exploring the impact of the Welsh Devolution on youth work

The 1997 Welsh Devolution Referendum led to the formation of the **National Assembly for Wales** in 1999, supporting child-centred education models and professional standards for youth workers.



Youth Culture

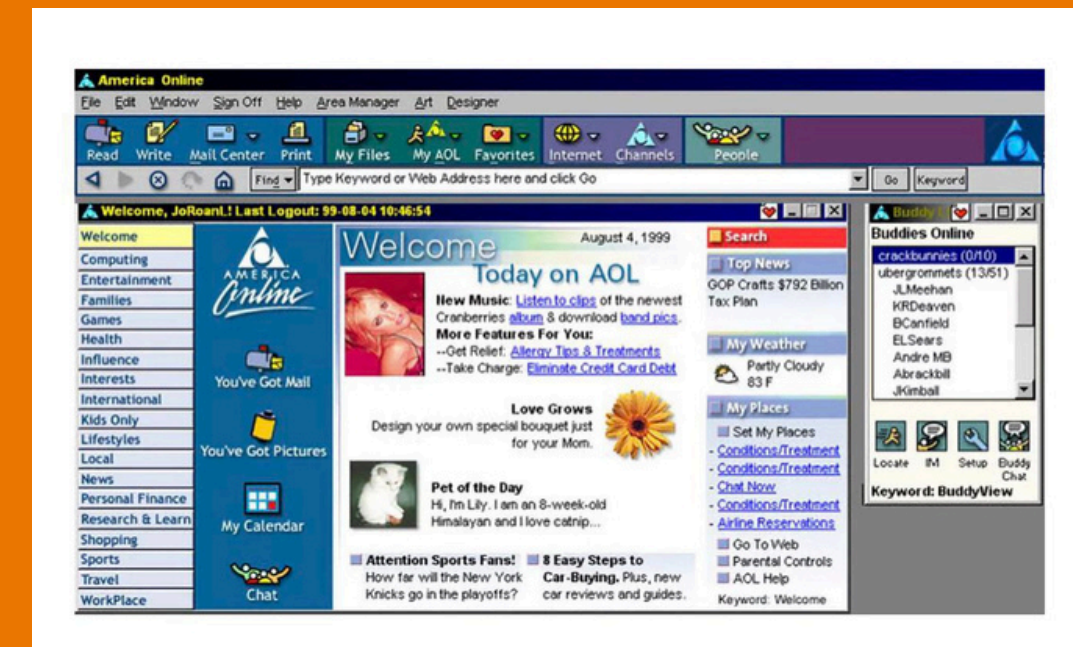
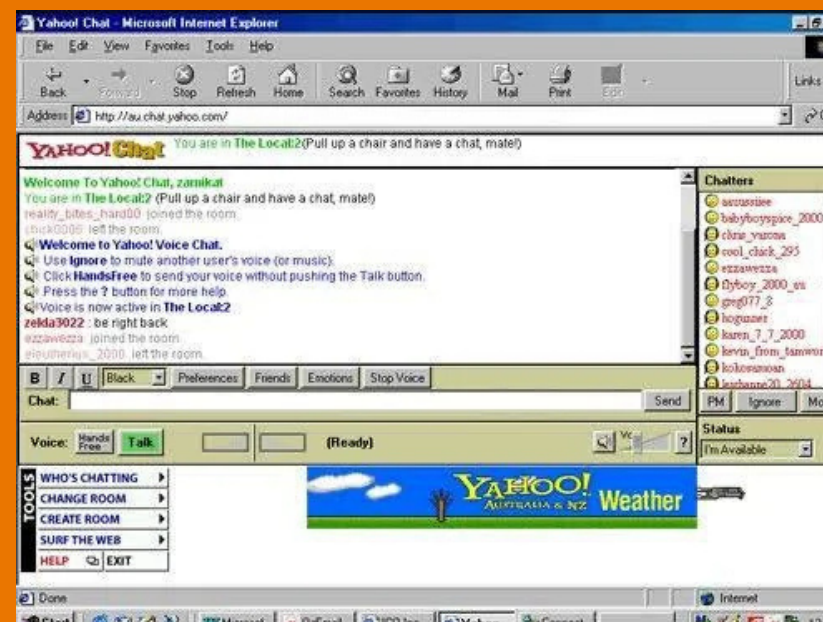
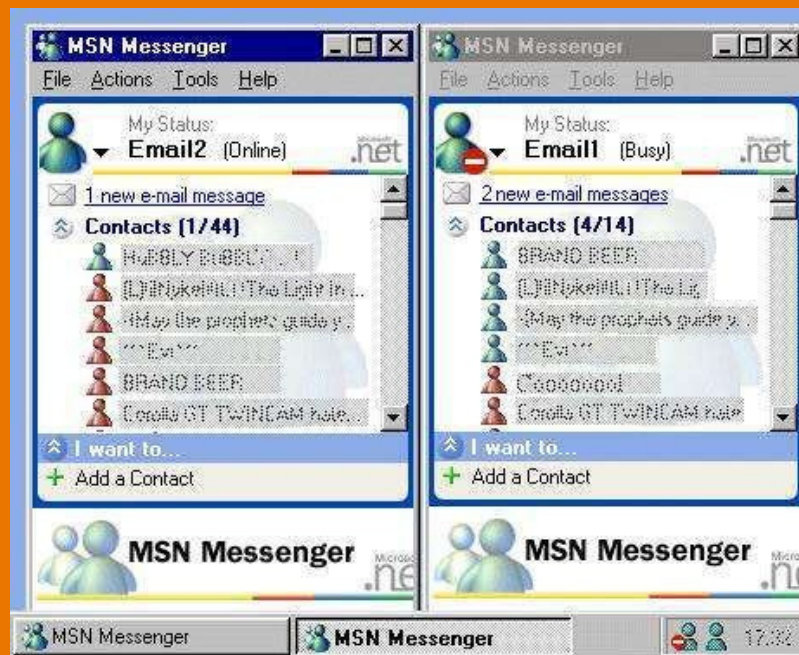


- *“Rave culture, for example, offered a sense of belonging and escapism, creating temporary spaces where social class, gender and background appeared less significant”
:Subcultural theory,Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1970)*
- *Targeted provision entails provision for vulnerable young people, including neighbourhood and street work outreach teams, youth advice and guidance services, youth justice teams, drug and alcohol misuse services, sexual health services and homelessness support :Youth Work Strategy for Wales (2024)*



Digital

“the need for practitioners to promote critical thinking, online safety and healthy digital habits as part of their everyday practice” (Welsh Government, 2020)



Equalities and Justice

The Macpherson Report (1999) highlighted systemic racism in UK services, prompting significant reform within youth work, prioritizing equality and inclusivity to serve diverse communities effectively.

OUR STORY – SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD

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RED
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Our Story

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CARD**

Sexual Health Education: Historical Perspectives

THE EVOLUTION OF YOUTH SEXUAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Post-HIV/AIDS campaigns in the 1990s emphasized comprehensive sexual health education, while the 1993 Education Act highlighted moral values, shaping the youth work approach towards inclusive relationships and sex education.



Mental Health Challenges

1990S OUTCOMES

Youth born in the 1990s face significantly **worse mental health outcomes** today compared to previous generations, largely influenced by rapid societal changes and increasing pressures.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE

The rise of social media has led to heightened **self-comparison** and unrealistic beauty standards, contributing to anxiety and depression among young people, making mental health support more essential than ever.

Key Transformations in Youth Work

STRUCTURED PRACTICE

The shift from **informal education** to structured, outcome-based practice has allowed youth work to be more focused, measurable, and aligned with broader social objectives.

PROFESSIONALISATION

There has been a significant increase in the **professionalisation** of youth work, particularly in Wales, where new standards and training opportunities have enhanced the quality of services.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Youth work has expanded to include **digital literacy** and mental health support, addressing the unique challenges faced by young people in today's technology-driven society.

Conclusion: Adapting Youth Work for Change

EVOLVING PRACTICES IN A DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE

Youth work must **adapt and respond** to evolving social and political changes, ensuring practitioners are equipped to empower young people in today's digital and culturally diverse landscape.



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