Chapter 6
Digital Housekeeping

Abstract At this point of the book, the concept of 'digital housekeeping' is introduced and applied in the context of the overall investigation. Based on existing research, digital housekeeping tasks and responsibilities are broken into three subcategories to facilitate analysis: hardware installation and configuration, digital content and software management, and transfer of knowledge within the family. In the Finnish, Italian and Slovenian families in this study, digital housekeeping tasks, especially those related to software, were typically assigned to the young warm expert(s) in the family. In hardware-related matters, the family's digital housekeeper could also be someone else, such as the father of the family. The chapter concludes with the suggestion that a family's digital housekeeping tasks and responsibilities are likely to become reorganized and redistributed as its members grow older, it changes shape or its older family members develop more digital skills.

The previous chapter discussed how one becomes, and what it means to be, a warm expert in digital families in which family members make extensive and varied use of digital technology even if their individual skills levels as well as their modes and styles of using that technology may be very non-uniform. In this chapter, the attention is turned to the tasks and responsibilities involved in the maintaining of the digital home. How big a role do warm experts play in ensuring that digital devices and applications work properly in the digital home? While the issue was already touched upon in the previous chapter, a more detailed analysis is presented here, focusing on the digital housekeeping activities to have emerged as a consequence of the digitalization of the domestic sphere of life.

The concept of *digital housekeeping* refers to all the tasks, chores and responsibilities involved in the maintenance of the networked home's functioning. In previous research, digital housekeeping tasks have been broken down into three main subcategories: hardware purchases and configurations, software and application management, and transfer of knowledge (Kennedy, Nansen, Arnold, Wilken,

& Gibbs, 2015; Tolmie, Crabtree, Rodden, Greenhalgh, & Benford, 2007). The discussion in this chapter is organized so as to reflect this categorization, in order to better be able to document the various aspects of digital housekeeping observed in the three countries in this study.

Housework Meets Digital Technology

The concept of digital housekeeping opens a fresh and modern vantage point for the study of the division of housework within the family. For it, besides a rich body of qualitative and historical research on the division of housework, much of which specifically focuses on sex segregation (e.g. Jackson, 1992; Oakley, 1974), also the established field of time-use research looking into the division of housework at the household level can be drawn upon (e.g. Gersbuny & Sullivan, 1998; Hook, 2010; Oinas, 2010). Time-use diary data sets, coded in uniform time-use categories (e.g. Harmonised European Time Use Survey [HETUS]), have enabled international comparisons and time trend analyses regarding the proportion of household chores performed by men and women, respectively.

In the established time-use categories and classifications, digital media and communication technologies fall under free-time activities and are considered as belonging to the domain of mass media consumption. However, even casual observation suggests that digital technologies also have brought with them new kinds of maintenance and meta-work not limited to entertainment and pastime functions only. Sustaining the functionality of the home and the daily life more and more entails spending time on tasks such as installing, configuring, pairing and updating various devices, programmes and applications. What all that could mean for one's daily life is in the following quote given an example of by the Italian key informant Enrico (aged 24):

> My grandfather instead turns to me for the deletion of the call log, the checking of the messages to be read, and some of the routine maintenance work on the PC. I'm also the one telling him when there are emails that are important to him. I do the same with my parents as well. My dad sometimes tells me to go check his messages in case there's anything he should read, while my mom sometimes asks me to change some setting on her business smartphone or to help her do some online banking thing or the like…. As regards our home computer, it's my job to keep the antivirus programme up to date and ensure that all the different programmes work properly. Also my aunt turned to me for advice when she was buying a new smartphone, and also afterwards, to get detailed instructions from me on its use, especially how to configure Internet access and transfer photos from it to her notebook.

Just as with any other housework, also digital housekeeping appeared to evoke ambivalent feelings about the distribution of responsibilities among family members. Some key informants claimed the responsibilities to be fully and evenly shared in their families, arguing, like the Slovenian key informant Tina (aged 25), that 'the responsibility for the proper functioning of our devices and programmes is evenly distributed amongst us all in the family; no one is particularly in charge'. Claudia

(aged 21) from Italy explained, along somewhat lines, that the way digital house-keeping tasks were divided in her family had come about 'totally spontaneously and in a most natural way' and that '[t]here have never been any arguments or friction between us about the way these roles are distributed'. Other key informants like the Slovenian Angela (aged 27), however, went on to complain that, in comparable situations in their families, there were times when it felt like no one had or was prepared to assume the responsibility for making sure that the digital devices functioned, fixing them when there was a malfunction.

Indeed, it was quite often the case in the families that when problems or unexpected situations arose, responsible persons on hand were few and far between. As also this research indicates, not much progress had been made in ensuring a fair division of technology-related housekeeping tasks over the years. Quite the contrary, compared to how things had been before, the situation had even become less clear and less established. As the grandmother (aged 79) of the Slovenian Boris (aged 26), for instance, bemoaned, in the past 'everyone knew who was in charge, but today it's no longer so'. Media and communication devices had become highly personal, leaving the household equipment that everyone used in no-man's land, as it were. In the next sections, the current state of digital housekeeping practices in the three countries is taken up in more detail, looking at how the tasks in question were divided in the extended digital families in them.

Hardware Purchases and Maintenance

It should come as no surprise at this point that the main responsibility for digital housekeeping in the digital families also in this study fell into the hands of the warm experts in their midst. Typically, these were part of the younger stratum of the family and were considered as having strongly influenced the purchase of the digital hardware (as in the families of, e.g. the Slovenian Angela, aged 27, and Klara, aged 28; the Italian Mario, aged 24, and Enrico, aged 20) and being thus also responsible for their maintenance (as, e.g. in the families of the Slovenian Anita, aged 28, and Tina, aged 25; the Italian Marco, aged 24).

The young warm experts' digital housekeeping role was highlighted in the key informant reports particularly well when the question was about family practices aimed to secure the proper functioning of technological devices in the family. The Slovenian Petra (aged 25), for example, told as follows: 'When there is a problem, people in our household turn to the person in the family they know can fix it: they turn to either my brother or me and want us to make their gear work the way it should'. Also, in the Italian key informant Emilio's (aged 30) own family and parental family, it was clear who had the responsibility for digital housekeeping, even if the situation differed between the two contexts in this regard:

> In my own house [where I live with my girlfriend] I am the one handling all the technical aspects and making sure the information technology works, although my girlfriend and I, we are both very knowledgeable about how to use ICTs…. However, where my parents and my siblings live it's my father whom the rest of us turn to when it comes to technical stuff: he is seen as a kind of consultant whenever there's a malfunctioning machine to be fixed or a new purchase to be made.

The idea, expressed also by Emilio in the context of his parental family, that parents are the family's decision-makers was deeply rooted in the minds of the key informants and their siblings. When it came to major decisions such as those concerning the purchase of shared household technologies (a new digital television set, broadband Internet, etc.), it was frequently underlined that even if children were almost as a rule always consulted and listened to, the final decision was not theirs but their parents', and even then more typically the father's rather than the mother's. The Finnish key informant Sara (aged 25) supplied an example of this in her interview report. Her brother very firmly took their parents' opinion to be decisive when buying appliances for the home. As Sara clarified, this brother did, though, always extensively discuss any technology purchases with his father first before the transaction was made, while the mother of the family was also heard, to obtain her opinion on whether the new equipment was in the end really needed in the family or not. Sara's own interpretation of all this was that 'my parents' opinion is not necessary final and absolutely decisive for my brother, but it affects him, even if that might be mostly subconsciously. By saying so, she suggests that deferring to one's parents, as in her brother's case, was more of a cultural norm than any actual determining factor. A somewhat related view was put forth by another Finnish key informant, Laura (aged 29), who stated that 'the parents talk with their youngsters before any equipment purchases are made because the young people know more, but when the parents pay for the purchase, they are also the ones to make the final decision'.

Along these lines, many informants made a clear distinction between formal purchase decision and provision of information influencing or leading to that decision. It was argued, for instance, that while it was the parents who stood for the former, the latter role was young warm experts' purview. In the following quote, the Finnish key informant Carla (aged 23) provides a case in point:

> My father thinks that it's he who makes the decision to buy something, but then it's my brother who decides what kind of device we are actually going to buy. So the decision whether, for instance, we should or shouldn't get a computer is made by my father, but what kind of computer it's going to be, in terms of its technical properties, is then decided by my elder brother, who's in our family the one who knows most about ICTs.

Thus, even when the older family members indeed paid for the purchase, the young warm experts had considerable influence in practice on what kind or type of hardware would end up being acquired. As the Slovenian key informant Alexander (aged 24), for instance, explained, '[w]hen it comes to technology purchases, my father [aged 58] and my mother [aged 44] always ask me or my brother [aged 18] for advice first, since it's the two of us who are the most knowledgeable about these things in our family'. Slovenia, however, was not unique in this respect, as, for example, Alessandro (aged 20) and Claudia (aged 21) in Italy could testify:

> When there is new ICT equipment that we need to buy in my family, it's definitely my sister and I who are our experts for it. That means that our roles drastically change, if not get totally reversed, compared to the usual situation. The decisions are, in other words, de facto taken by the children who describe and explain to their parents the differences between the various products. (Alessandro)

> The purchases of new devices that we do are most often influenced by the younger ones amongst us, as they are far more advanced and experienced in information technology than their parents. But it's always possible to find a compromise between the two parties. (Claudia)

Even though parents' de facto decision-making power in this study, due to their limited knowledge of new technology, was at least in part apparent only, both parents and their children were nevertheless aware of the former's ability to actually control family spending. As the father of the Finnish key informant Carla (aged 23) put it, 'also the wallet decides'. The Slovenian key informant Franc (aged 25), too, paid attention to the cost factor in his family's purchases in this regard, explaining that, in their case, the more expensive purchases were decided upon jointly by the children and the parents. As he noted, '[s]ince the purchases of new ICTs typically cost a bit more and are therefore most often paid for by the older members of the family, we nevertheless make the decisions about them jointly, based on past experience and needs'. Similar observations were put forth in Finland and Italy, too. The Finnish key informant Marika (aged 20) summed up the situation in her family by stating that, in hardware acquisitions, also the household's current financial situation mattered. In Italy, the uncle of the key informant Emma (aged 22) stressed how 'the economic dimensions of those [purchase] decisions are actually controlled by the adults, since they decide how much will be spent'.

All in all, the act of purchasing new technological devices in the digital families studied emerged as a deliberative and intergenerational. For the decisions to go smoothly and be made un-conflictually, confidential relationships within the family appeared to be necessary. The Slovenian key informant Boris (aged 26) was one to highlight the importance of trust in his family's decision-making in this regard. As he explained it, this trust became especially significant when 'the person getting to make the purchase decision in the family is the one who is most skilled at using the technology, while the others must simply believe that it's a good decision'. In fact, according to Boris, this was so, in particular, when 'the purchase concerns technology that affects all members of the family, like the Internet, television, or telephone service provider, for instance'. Also, the Italian Melissa (aged 25) underlined how in her family technology purchases resulted from joint decisions. As she explained, when her grandparents, for instance, grew interested in some particular device, they first solicited advice concerning it from others, after which it was then decided 'together which option is the best for the family to choose'.

What is important to note here, however, is that not all hardware appeared to be similar in this respect. There was, for example, a clear difference between purchasing low-priced, personal communication technologies and more expensive household technologies. While the importance of intergenerational dialogue was in both cases emphasized, particularly when the question was of a purchase involving more expensive technology for the family's use, several of the informants also stressed

that everyone should at the same time be responsible for their own personal technology purchases and maintenance. This idea of personal responsibility and the need for self-sufficiency was particularly notable in families whose members were financially independent of one another. The Slovenian key informant Jakob (aged 26) provided one example, describing as follows what he had found among the adults with a steady job or another source of regular income that he had interviewed for this study:

> Everyone of them decides for themselves about their purchase of their personal ICTs. If it's a bigger purchase, then they consult with their partner and also their children and other family members whom they perceive as the most knowledgeable about that stuff, being thus able to offer the best advice, and after that they all arrive at a joint decision.

Having personal technologies thus also meant accepting personal responsibility for the devices' functioning. Among those underlining this fact was the Slovenian key informant Petra (aged 25), who stated that '[w]hen it comes to mobile phones, each one of us is responsible for her or his own gear'. Similarly, the Finnish Carla (aged 23) pointed out that 'I feel like if people have their gadget in a personal, and not common, use, then they, at least to some extent, are the ones with the responsibility for it, on their own. So that if the thing stops functioning, you usually try to solve the issue by yourself, before asking others for help'.

Indeed, in this study, this idea of personal responsibility associated with independent purchases was most often put forward by the Finnish respondents. In Finland, we may recall, financial independence is typically achieved at a relatively young age. As the 21-year-old Julia, for example, noted, '[i]In this golden era of hire purchase, even students like us can easily afford laptops and smartphones'. Yet, as another Finnish respondent, Laura (aged 29), reminded, the level of independence in such decisions varied based on the person's disposable income from one life stage to the next: 'Everybody takes their own hardware purchase decisions based on their current personal needs and their current financial situation; everybody these days has personal devices, no longer just, let's say, a shared family computer'. Also, Mary (aged 26) in Finland spoke of how one's current life stage and living arrangements influenced the degree to which one's hardware purchases could be decided upon independently:

> When planning to buy equipment, grown-up children make their own decisions, while a family living together in the same home—father, mother, two youngish children—makes hardware and software purchases together, with older children making interventions.

Interestingly, some key respondents nevertheless stressed their parents' relative independence as decision-makers, contrasting them to their grandparents. For example, the Finnish Simon (aged 24) summarized the findings from the interviews he had conducted as follows:

> When it came to hardware purchases, the independent role of the parental generation was emphasized more, whereas for grandparents, younger family members were more often enlisted as advisors and participants for the decision making when acquiring, for example, a computer.

Grandparents' lower degree of independence in their technology purchases was also described by the Italian Sabrina (aged 23), who reported that her 'grandmother leaves the choice about the ICTs to be purchased to my parents or, alternatively, my brother'. Here, however, one should note that technological independence does not, in general, and also in this study did not, decrease in a linear fashion with age. Some of the key informants for this study had relatively young parents (in their mid-50s and early 60s) who had outsourced all the decision-making in technological matters to their descendants. One such person was the Slovenian Angela (aged 27):

> [M]y mother [aged 53] and my mother-in-law [aged 62] do not participate in the decision making about the new technological equipment to be acquired. They do not even have a say in the purchase of their own mobile phones, which are not smartphones…. And if my father [aged 63] needs a new one, he lets my brother know what it is that he needs and how much money he is willing to part with for it, after which it's then my brother who goes out and finds something fitting the need.

All in all, the division of digital housekeeping tasks in new hardware purchases and maintenance thus varied across families and countries, while one thing remained constant: the possible purchases were typically highly dependent on older family members' level of digital engagement. The more 'digital-ready' the key informants' parents were, the more independently they made their technology purchase decisions (and the actual purchases). Major (read: expensive) household technology purchases, such as of TV sets and laptop computers, were more often than smaller ones, such as a smartphone, discussed and completed together with other family members. However, the one common feature in all of these situations—and this was so in all the three countries studied—was that young warm experts were in every case given the main responsibility for the proper functioning of the hardware ultimately brought home.

Software and Application Installations

A task that even more often and more conspicuously than purchasing and maintaining hardware was left for the young warm experts in this study to fulfil was that of managing software and applications. According to key informants, all that which was 'hiding inside' their devices or could be installed on them represented a terra incognito for many of their late-middle-aged parents. As the reports they submitted revealed, especially key informants' parents frequently sought advice from their young warm experts when encountering a problem using their smartphone. This was the case, for instance, with the parents of the Italian key informant Alice (aged 23):

> My parents only use these apps because I and my sister help them do that. At the beginning, they were only able to use their phones in the offline mode. When my parents discovered new technologies and began to understand the benefits of using them, they did for some time explore them on their own, but right now they're constantly coming to me and my sister again for help, as sometimes they just keep forgetting even the basics of how their apps work.

Also, the Slovenian key informant Anton (aged 29) reported himself to be the person whom his 'parents turn to when they need help using their mobile phones

or PCs'. Both of his parents had bought their mobile phones without any help from their children, but afterwards they needed advice in the use of applications and with certain smartphone functions. Anton explained that he had 'set up email accounts for them [parents'] along with some functions like speed dialling and some other mobile phone settings'. In other words, Anton's parents were confident enough to make their own technology purchase, yet felt unsure when it came to what was hidden from sight inside the sleek exteriors of their phones. Somewhat similarly, also the Slovenian key informant Katja (aged 25) described that, because her brother, who was the other warm expert in the family, was often away from home, she had ended up being the sole person at home to help her mother to, for example, instal new applications like Viber and keep instructing her grandmother about how to send text messages.

Quite often, the key informants' parents also required help in installing computer programmes. Because of their lower engagement with smartphones, many of them had kept using stationary communication devices, such as desktop computers. According to the Slovenian Franc (aged 25), in his family 'parents are for the most part only taught how use computers—how use of the different applications, programmes, etc., in them'. He then specified having 'mostly taught them how to use Facebook, and some slightly more advanced Microsoft Word functions, and how to instal new software if needed'. In the family of the Slovenian key informant Veronika (aged 27), it was her younger brother 'who solves the issues with software, like anti-virus programmes' for their parents and the rest of the family.

The fact that the parents needed and received help with software installation and updates did not, however, mean that they would not have liked to learn new things and new skills. Quite the contrary, many of them were eager to learn new programmes and applications. According to the interviewees, this, to be sure, then also added to the young warm experts' already fairly long to-do lists. The Finnish key informant Rita (aged 34) wrote about her father who had grown interested in a new operating system, the Linux-based Ubuntu, after having seen her Rita and her partner happily use it. At the time of the interviews, Rita's father was contemplating on becoming a Ubuntu user himself, with Rita anticipating him to certainly need help in using it, and that 'if that happens, he will be needing a lot more help from my husband with all the software upgrades, as with Ubuntu at least some coding skills are needed for that'.

Older people's dedication to desktop computers often complicated the work of the young warm experts, who found mobile devices much easier to use as well as more reliable. In Italy, Elisa (aged 26), for instance, described her brother (aged 30) and her uncle (age N/A), who were the warm experts in the family, as 'the reluctant maintainers of our smartphones, PCs, and other communication devices' who often expressed 'frustration about how desktop applications are more prone to fail in less expert hands like those of my parents'. Her brother kept attempting to rid himself of those unpleasant digital housekeeping tasks, towards which purpose he pushed the parents to use apps installed on their phones rather than on their PC, since smartphone apps are simpler to restore and far more tolerant of misuse.

The same way as when making purchase plans for a new piece of hardware, intergenerational negotiations were also entered into the digital families when family

members needed or wanted to make a choice between different applications. In her report, the Finnish key informant Ella (aged 24) described one such situation, showing how differently the matter could be handled in her family, depending on whether the question was of purchasing new hardware for her younger brother or deciding on which applications he should use:

> My stepfather and my mother make often purchase decisions for my little brother [aged 11], but when it's about which applications to get, we sometimes first discuss the matter amongst us siblings, and then mull it over with my mother and my stepfather, trying to together figure out which ones my kid brother might be able to ready to start using.

The quote touches upon some interesting aspects of intergenerational relationships in digital families. First, parents as the financiers of hardware purchases might have the final say regarding them, but in the case of free-to-download mobile equipment applications they did not, or were not able to, leverage the same power. Second, since they tend to be less familiar with the diverse mobile applications than the younger members of their families, they can but trust in the information provided them by the young warm experts. Third, and perhaps most interestingly, the quote also reveals a normative aspect of intergenerational solidarity relating to the use of digital technologies (for more on that, see Chap. 8). Although the key informant and her siblings here might have had just outright dismissed their parents' opinions, letting their younger brother instal new applications for himself without consulting with his parents first, they nevertheless decided to ask for their parents' opinion, too. Indeed, they felt obliged to do so.

In a few key informant reports, however, a different aspect of normative expectations was brought up. This related to what we could call 'mothering'. As the reports showed, digitally skilled mothers sometimes considered themselves responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of software and applications in the family. Here, the traditional role of mothers as the maintainers of the home and domestic social relationships, including the dimension of family communication and care provision, was extended to software care, too. In one case, from Finland, the key informant Teresa (aged 24) described the situation as follows:

> My mother [aged 58] herself feels that she's the technical expert in the family, and that she should take care of all the downloading and purchases. But also the grown-up children can be asked for advice on these things, and sometimes, if it's about installations, the younger ones, too.

Also, others, like the Italian key informant Emma (aged 22), reported their mothers as feeling themselves responsible for ensuring the smooth functioning of the digital technologies at home. In Emma's case, while her grandmother 'blindly relies on her children for any problem, since she would not be able to either identify or fix any of them', it was particularly her mother who 'considers herself to be the one with the responsibility, fallen on her due to her high personal skills, for the correct functioning of the Internet, the online connection, and the phone plans'. As Emma's report suggests, with the rise of women's digital skills, digital housekeeping tasks may quietly end up becoming included in the already wide array of domestic chores that women are expected to handle and manage anyway.

Knowledge Transfer Within the Family

The third dimension of digital housekeeping relates to the transfer of knowledge about new digital media and communication technology (see, e.g. Kennedy et al., 2015; Tolmie et al., 2007). The existing research paints a picture of two-way knowledge transfer between family generations, one in which young people convey new knowledge and know-how to their parents and grandparents while the parents transfer certain knowledge, yet about very different matters, to their children (see Chap. 3). The Italian key informant Irene (aged 24) highlighted this difference particularly well when comparing the views of her young and middle-aged interviewees, naming these as the Young Group and the Middle Group, respectively:

> We can speak of a mutual exchange of knowledge: those in the Young Group are, for example, more practical and experienced on the application side of ICTs, while those in the Middle Group know better the technical side of these tools. In this way the people in the two groups complemented each other's different abilities. If something doesn't work properly in one of the classical technologies like the PC, it's the Middle Group that deals with it first, whereas if it's about some more recent technologies, it's every man for himself.

The mutual exchange of knowledge that Irene talks about here followed largely the same pattern that held for the hardware and software-related digital housekeeping tasks in families. As children, on average, appear to be more knowledgeable about mobile applications and computer programmes than their parents and grandparents, they pass their knowledge related to these areas to the older people in their families. As the Finnish key informant Sara (aged 25) explained:

> Younger interviewees tell that their parents use several different applications. These interviewees taught them in their use, advising them and showing them also concretely how a device or an application works. My brother told me that this instruction sometimes also takes place so that the parents just watch the younger people use the kind of apps they are interested in and want to start using.

In general, the knowledge younger people passed on to their parents and grandparents was offered in the form of concrete pieces of advice, such as about how to use a certain device, application, programme or service (as, e.g. in the families of Carla, aged 23, and Maria, aged 24, in Finland; Silvia, aged 25, and Marco, aged 24, in Italy; Sonja, aged 25, in Slovenia). The Italian Silvia (aged 25) had taught her great-uncle (aged 82) 'how to save a document, delete mail, and print stuff', while Anton (aged 29), from the same country, reported himself having 'taught everyone in my family how to use Google Hangouts, because they all have smartphones with the Android operating system that has the Hangouts pre-installed in it'.

In the same vein, the Finnish Rita (aged 34) maintained that she, her husband and her sister had taught their parents everything these knew today about how to use personal communication technologies and computer programmes. As she further stated, '[m]y father asks my husband for help with Windows and some other programme updates at least three times a year'. Then, turning the attention to her own daughter (aged 5), she went on to also describe the kind of knowledge that her own parents tried to pass on their next generation:

The same way, with my husband, we are slowly beginning to teach our daughter how to use telephone and send and receive text messages. We might get her a phone of her own when she starts school. My own parents, on the other hand, are trying to teach my sister, as diplomatically as possible, of course, about what information and images on Facebook might be worthwhile to share and with whom.

Rita was far from the only one to report about how, in digital families, parents' efforts to pass on to younger generations what they knew about digital technology and its use mainly involved notions about the 'right' and proper ways of using that technology and its pertinent applications. Other informants in other countries confirmed the validity of this observation in also their cases. The Slovenian key informant Klara (aged 28) did so when discussing what should and what should not be shared online:

The older family members teach the younger ones about how it's not wise to share your personal photos, events, and data with the broader public on social networks. My mother [aged 56] is very adamant about this, always telling me and my sister that we shouldn't share our personal photos with others on Facebook and other social networks.

Willingness to engage in this kind of knowledge transfer might, however, also been seen as a mere extension of parents' general desire to protect their children and raise them in a safe environment. Yet, at the same time, the above quotes also speak of parents' relatively disadvantaged position in today's world of digital technologies. The key informants' late-middle-aged parents had never in their own childhood and youth encountered the kind of risks today's digital media and communication entail, and hence lacked a point of reference for how to deal, as parents, with those risks and the exposure to them. Because of that, they were largely dependent on secondary information and knowledge about appropriate parental strategies, often acquired from the media.

To summarize, this chapter on the intergenerational dynamics of digital housekeeping practices has shown how in Finnish, Italian and Slovenian families digital housekeeping tasks and responsibilities tend to be typically assigned to the young warm expert(s) in the family. While this was especially clearly so when those tasks involved attending to software-related problems or questions, in hardware-related matters the family's digital housekeeper could also be someone else, such as the father of the family. Overall, we can expect digital housekeeping tasks and responsibilities to become reorganized and redistributed when family members grow older, the family changes shape or older family members gain more digital skills. Complementing recent research that has found digital housekeeping to also involve certain duties facilitating intergenerational cooperation (Fortunati, 2018), this chapter suggests that this cooperation among other things empowers younger family members, consolidates family connections and enhances solidarity across generations.

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