

# DO BOYS AND GIRLS READ DIFFERENTLY ONLINE? EVIDENCE FROM PISA 2009 DIGITAL READING ASSESSMENT



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Dr Tom Lumley has been a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Council for Educational Research since 2004. With an early background in teaching ESL, Tom has more than twenty years experience in language and literacy test design and development projects, in various languages. In recent years he has played a leading role in the development of the print and digital reading materials and marker training for the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). He has delivered workshops on reading item development and marker training for PISA and related projects in Australia, Europe and Mexico.

He has had major involvement in a wide range of other projects assessing the reading and writing proficiency of school students and adults in many countries, including New Zealand, the UK and the United Arab Emirates. Before joining ACER, Tom held research and teaching posts at the University of Melbourne and Hong Kong Polytechnic University. In earlier years he played a major role in the development of a range of language tests and classroom-based assessment procedures used in Australia and South-East Asia.



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Dara Ramalingam is a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Council for Educational Research. She is part of a test development team that specialises in constructing, describing and validating developmental continua, particularly in the area of language and literacy. She is currently the manager of instrument development for the computer-based assessment of problem solving for the OECD's Programme for International Assessment (PISA) and co-project director of ACER's International Schools' Assessment (ISA). She played a leading role in test development for the PISA 2009 Reading Assessments (both digital and paper-based) and the OECD Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies computer-based assessment of literacy. In addition to her international work, Dara has extensive test development experience for national and state-based assessment work in Australia.

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## ABSTRACT

According to the results of PISA 2009, while girls are more proficient readers than boys in both print and digital media, it appears that the gap in performance is narrower in the digital medium. It has been suggested that the narrowing of the gender reading gap might be attributed to relatively strong navigational skill on the part of boys. This presentation will explore the evidence for this suggestion, and will also look at other possible reasons for boys' relative success in the PISA digital reading assessment, including the types of texts represented in the assessment and the proportions of different item formats.