
*London School of Economics and Political Science*

*EU KIDS ONLINE II*

# TECHNICAL REPORT

**January 2011**

## CONTENTS

## List of Tables



## APPENDICES

## Executive Summary

*EU Kids Online II: Enhancing Knowledge Regarding European Children's Use, Risk and Safety Online* is funded from 2009-2011 by the EC Safer Internet Programme.

The project aims to enhance knowledge of European children's and parents' experiences and practices regarding risky and safer use of the internet and new online technologies, in order to inform the promotion of a safer online environment for children among national and international stakeholders.

The study centred around analysis of a large scale primary survey of children and parents to measure children's online access, use risk, coping and safety awareness on the internet, conducted by Ipsos.

In each of 25 European countries, c.1,000 children aged 9-16 who use the internet and their parents were interviewed.

Households were selected using random sampling methods and interviews were carried out face to face in homes using CAPI (Computer Administered Personal Interviewing) or PAPI (Paper Administered Personal Interviewing).

The methodology adopted was approved by the LSE Research Ethics Committee and appropriate protocols were also put in place to ensure the rights and wellbeing of children and families were protected during the research process. At the end of the interview, children and families were also provided with a leaflet providing tips on internet safety, and details of relevant help lines.

The sampling procedure for selecting addresses to approach was as follows:

- For each country, samples were stratified by region and level of urbanisation.
- Sampling points were selected from official and complete registers of geographical or administrative units.
- Addresses were selected randomly by using Random Walk procedures in most countries. In a small number of countries we used an alternative approach to recruitment, which fitted better with local standard practice, while keeping to the principle of random selection.
- At each address which agreed to interview we randomly selected one child from all eligible children in the household (i.e. all those aged 9-16 who use the internet) on the basis of whichever eligible child had their birthday most recently. Where a household contained more than one parent, we selected the parent who knew the most about the child and their internet usage.

Fieldwork was carried out between April and August 2010. A parent interview was conducted for every child interviewed. The child interview contained a self-completion component, which covered the more sensitive questions relating to online risks among children, as well as an interviewer-administered one. Incentives were used to encourage participation in some countries.

The questionnaires were developed by LSE and EU Kids Online Network, within guidance and input from Ipsos. They were then tested and refined through a two-phase process of cognitive interviewing and pilot testing. The list of local agencies used for the project can be found in the appendix.

The final data are weighted at country level according to the number of children in the household, age and gender of child, region and education of the chief income earner, and a European weight has been applied to ensure the aggregate data represents countries according to the estimated population size of children aged 9-16 internet users in each country.

The following table summarises the mainstage fieldwork approach used in each country.

*Table 1: Interview/address selection methods and fieldwork dates for each country*

| Country | Interview methodology | Method of address selection | Fieldwork dates | Complete number of interviews |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | PAPI | Random Walk | 24 April – 25 July 2010 | 1,000 |
| Belgium | PAPI | Random Walk | 6 May – 14 July 2010 | 1,006 |
| Bulgaria | PAPI | Random Walk | 6 May – 24 June 2010 | 1,088 |
| Cyprus | PAPI | Random Walk | 17 May – 20 Sept 2010 | 806 |
| Czech Republic | PAPI | Pre-selected households - telephone recruitment | 21 May – 2 July 2010 | 1,009 |
| Denmark | CAPI | Pre-selected households of children aged 0-17, tele-phone recruitment | 30 April – 14 June 2010 | 1,001 |
| Estonia | CAPI | Random Walk | 10 May – 14 July 2010 | 1,005 |
| Finland | CAPI | Random Walk | 28 April – 2 July 2010 | 1,017 |
| France | PAPI | Random Walk | 6 May – 3 July 2010 | 1,000 |
| Germany | CAPI | Random Walk | 20 May – 7 July 2010 | 1,023 |
| Greece | PAPI | Random Walk | 10 May – 2 July 2010 | 1,000 |
| Hungary | PAPI | Pre-selected households with children aged 9-16 | 10 May – 15 June 2010 | 1,000 |
| Ireland | CAPI | Random Walk | 5 May – 24 July 2010 | 990 |
| Italy | CAPI | Random Walk | 28 April – 3 July 2010 | 1,021 |
| Lithuania | PAPI | Random Walk | 23 April – 6 July 2010 | 1,004 |
| Netherlands | PAPI | Pre-selected households - telephone recruitment | 3 May – 5 August 2010 | 1,004 |
| Norway | CAPI | Pre-selected households - telephone recruitment | 21 May – 19 Oct 2010 | 1019 |
| Poland | PAPI | Pre-selected households with children aged 9-16 | 6 May – 26 July 2010 | 1,034 |
| Portugal | PAPI | Random Walk | 29 April – 30 July 2010 | 1,000 |
| Romania | PAPI | Random Walk | 16 May – 25 June 2010 | 1,041 |
| Slovenia | CAPI | 10% Random Walk and 90% Pre-selected households with children aged 9-16 | 3 May – 27 Aug 2010 | 1000 |
| Spain | CAPI | Random Walk | 10 May – 15 July 2010 | 1,024 |
| Sweden | CAPI | Pre-selected households with children aged 9-16 - telephone recruitment | 27 May – 20 Sept 2010 | 1000 |
| Turkey | CAPI | Random Walk | 3 May – 17 June 2010 | 1,018 |
| UK | PAPI | Random Walk | 1 May – 21 June 2010 | 1,032 |

Generating a representative sample of children aged 9-16 online and their parents was a challenging task for a number of reasons: the lack of pre-existing sample frames for this population and therefore the need to identify this low penetration audience from all households in general; a lack of relevant profile information for data weighting; and also challenges associated with gaining the co-operation of parents and children given the sensitive nature of the subject matter. However, methodologies and strategies employed were carefully developed and implemented to address these challenges for all stages for the research process, including sampling, fieldwork and respondent engagement processes and data weighting. This has ensured that samples in each country are as representative as possible, and that data can be treated with confidence for understanding children's online experiences.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

*EU Kids Online II: Enhancing Knowledge Regarding European Children's Use, Risk and Safety Online* is funded from 2009-2011 by the EC Safer Internet Programme.

The project aims to enhance knowledge of European children's and parents' experiences and practices regarding risky and safer use of the internet and new online technologies, in order to inform the promotion of a safer online environment for children among national and international stakeholders.

Adopting an approach which is child-centred, comparative, critical and contextual, EU Kids Online II has conducted a major quantitative survey of children's experiences (and their parents' perceptions) of online risk in 25 European countries. The findings will be disseminated through a series of reports and presentations during 2010-2.

### 1.2 Background

As technological innovation continues apace, the opportunities to gain online access are flourishing. Whilst the benefits of internet access have been widely documented it is imperative that the scope for vulnerability and harm on the World Wide Web is not ignored.

As governments and private sector organisations embrace technology in an attempt to enhance educational opportunities, participation, creativity and communication, it is vital to focus on maximising potential whilst minimising risk.

Previous EU Kids Online research[i] identified a complex array of online opportunities and risks experienced by children. Interestingly, the risks of concern to children may not be those that lead to adult anxiety. Also, it appears that the more children go online to gain the benefits, the more they may encounter risks, accidentally or deliberately.

Risks are not limited to a certain type of internet user and it is important to note that the assumption that the internet is an immediate hazard to all children has not been supported by evidence. The main concern is perhaps that the speed at which children are gaining online access and experience is outstripping national awareness-raising, parental understanding, regulation and general online safety advice.

It is entirely feasible that to adopt too cautionary an approach to child safety online could act as a severe limitation to digital literacy and opportunities online. And so, parents, teachers and stakeholders must carefully strike a balance between the provision of adequate safety and knowledge without creating obstructions to the enormous possibilities inherent within the internet.

### 1.3 Objectives

The overall focus of the project was on the possible consequences, beneficial or harmful, of going online. The research focuses in particular on the harmless effects of Internet use.

The specific objectives of the current survey were:

- To design a robust survey instrument appropriate for identifying the nature of children's online access, use, risk, coping and safety awareness.
- To design a robust survey instrument appropriate for identifying parental experiences, practices and concerns regarding their child's internet use.
- To administer the survey in a reliable and ethically-sensitive manner to national samples of internet users aged 9-16 and their parents in Europe.
- To analyse the results systematically to identify core findings and more complex patterns among findings on a national and comparative basis.
- To disseminate the findings in a timely manner to a wide range of relevant stakeholders nationally, across Europe, and internationally.
- To identify and disseminate key recommendations relevant to the development of safety awareness initiatives in Europe.
- To identify remaining knowledge gaps and methodological guidance to inform future projects on the safer use of online technologies.

This document provides technical details about the methodology and implementation of the study, providing full information about questionnaire development and testing, sample, fieldwork, and data production, editing and weighting.

## 2. Survey Development and Piloting

### 2.1 Overview

The questionnaires were developed by EU Kids Online with guidance and input from Ipsos. They were then tested and refined through a two-phase process of cognitive interviewing and pilot testing.

- Phase one cognitive testing involved 20 cognitive interviews (14 with children and six with parents) in England using an English language questionnaire. Several refinements were then made to the questionnaires.
- The amended master questionnaires were then translated and cognitively tested via a total of 113 interviews across the remaining 24 countries (at least 4 per country), to ensure testing in all main languages. Again, amendments to the questionnaires were made for the final versions.
- Prior to main-stage fieldwork, a pilot survey was conducted to test all aspects of the survey including sampling, recruitment and the interview process. A total of 102 pilot interviews (43 with 9-10s and 59 with 11+) were carried out across five countries: Germany, Slovenia, Ireland, Portugal and the UK.

Further details of each stage of the questionnaires' development are provided below.

### 2.2 Questionnaire development

Prior to Ipsos involvement in the project, initial stages of questionnaire development had already been completed by the LSE, as project coordinator, in conjunction with the EU Kids Online network. This development stage took the research design from a scoping of the theoretical framework and pressing research and policy issues, through to a draft questionnaire to children and to parents that encompassed the key issues to be addressed, and seeking to optimise question formats and response options so as to be readily comprehensible by children.

Following this early development work, Ipsos reviewed the draft questionnaires at several stages, making recommendations with regards to ensuring question wordings conformed to best practice for generating accurate and meaningful answers from respondents, and in particular making recommendations for the approach to child question elements.

### 2.3 Cognitive testing

Cognitive testing is a diagnostic technique that explores the processes employed by people when they answer survey questions, such as comprehension, recognition, recall and decision-making/response (e.g. how do they respond to being asked potentially sensitive questions and/or how suitable are the pre-code lists for capturing all types of valid response)[1].

By exploring in a qualitative way the processes by which people interpret and respond to questions, we can identify potential sources of measurement error and ideally address them via appropriate revisions to the questionnaire to ensure it measures what we want it to measure as accurately as possible. This can be particularly helpful for surveys among children, given the difference in cognitive ability between adult researchers who are designing the questionnaire, and the child informants completing them. In the context of international surveys, cognitive testing can help to ensure that the wording of questions and response options generate and capture the same meaning across all countries.

[1] R. Groves, F. Fowler Jr, M. Couper, J. Lepkowski, E. Singer and R. Tourangeau, *Survey Methodology*, (2004), p. 202.

Findings can also be useful when interpreting findings in the sense that they provide extensive qualitative data on the types of aspects respondents are thinking about when they give particular answers to particular questions.

Two rounds of cognitive testing were conducted for this study by Ipsos and and local fieldwork agencies.

*Phase one cognitive testing*

This stage involved 20 cognitive interviews (14 with children and six with parents) in England. Four of the children were aged 9-10, four aged 11- 12, five were aged 13-14 and one was aged 15-16. There were eight females and six males. In terms of social economic status, three parents were from social groups ABC1 (households where the chief income earner is in a professional, managerial or clerical position) and three were from social groups C2DE (households where the chief income earner is a skilled manual worker, semi-skilled or unskilled or not working).

This stage of testing tested all key aspects of the main questionnaire, including respondent comprehension, the layout of the self completion module, and the acceptability and suitability of approaches for sensitive subject matter.

A significant amount of refinement was implemented following this wave. Many changes were made in order to increase clarity and comprehension and ensure consistent and unambiguous interpretation. For example, further clarification was given regarding specific timeframes to think about when asking children about frequency of internet based activities; more specific definitions and supporting examples were given to describe generic internet terms and concepts, such as social networking.

Some changes were also made to increase ease of completion of the self-completion elements, such as reducing complexity of routing, and making instructions for navigation more prominent through the use of colour for younger children.

The questionnaire was then translated into all languages relevant to the 25 country study

*Phase two cognitive testing*

This stage involved cognitive interviews (113 in total) in the remaining 24 countries, to ensure testing across different languages and cultural contexts. Four or more interviews were conducted with children in each country, and a small number of parent interviews were also conducted. Whilst a range of age groups were included, 9-10 year olds were over-sampled to ensure that the questionnaire was sufficiently tested among the age group likely to have most difficulties with completing it.

This stage of testing was designed to assess the suitability and efficacy of questioning approaches used and comparability of meaning generated from the translated questionnaires across countries, languages and cultures. It also tested the effectiveness of the questionnaire following amendments made after stage one testing.

The testing identified a range of country specific translation issues, which were then addressed. It also highlighted differing issues in different countries relating to the sensitivity of some questions, and concerns about the length and complexity for younger age groups. As a result, the length of the questionnaire and level of filtering was reduced for all children, and some further sensitive items cut out for 9-10 year olds, especially detailed questions relating to online content of a sexual or violent nature.

A particular challenge emerged for generating comparable meanings across countries for questions measuring negative emotional impact of risk exposure on children. A challenge lay in identifying a wording that generated meaning of the same *level* of harm in each country. The wording finalised for use in the survey focused on whether the children were 'bothered' by an experience, together with related words like 'upset', 'worried' or 'uncomfortable.' However, users of the data should note that there remain some differences in interpretation across countries.

### 2.4. Survey pilot

Before the main fieldwork, a dress rehearsal pilot survey was conducted to test key aspects of implementation, in as close to "live conditions" as possible. A total of 102 pilot interviews were carried out across five countries: Germany, Slovenia, Ireland, Portugal and the UK (43 with children aged 9-10 and 59 with children aged 11-16).

The pilot study checked the efficacy of random walk sampling procedures, contact and screening procedures, fieldwork materials, and all protocols for how to communicate about the survey, gain informed respondent consent and respondent co-operation. It also tested the length and effectiveness of the survey tools themselves in "live" conditions.

As a result of the pilot, some final minor modifications were made to the questionnaire, mainly to reduce length.

Refinements were also made to the screening contact sheets to make them more user-friendly for interviewers, taking into account the large quantity of addresses that needed to be screened to identify eligible households.

The pilot also identified challenges relating to respondent engagement in communicating the survey and parental concern about the sensitivity of the subject matter. The guidance already provided to interviewers on how to handle this during fieldwork was therefore expanded on for the main stage, taking into account learning from the pilot.

## 3. Questionnaire

### 3.1 Types of tool and survey content

There were three main survey tools administered in each household as follows:

- An interviewer administered parent questionnaire, covering:
    - Household demographics and internet access
    - Parent experiences of and attitudes to the internet
    - Perceptions of the selected child's internet usage and exposure to risk
    - Parent mediation of online risks for the selected child
    - Sources of education, advice and support
- An interviewer administered child questionnaire, covering:
    - Patterns of child internet usage (detailed information)
    - Perceptions of parent mediation of online risks
- A child self-completion questionnaire, covering:
    - Experience of online risks
    - Coping with online risks
    - Perceptions of parent mediation
    - Sources of education, advice and support.

The "contact sheets" used by interviewers to introduce the survey, screen for eligible households, and gain informed respondent consent to the study was also designed to collect a small amount of demographic information about screened households where possible (i.e. before respondent refusal, for example).

*Mode of completion*

The survey was carried out face to face in home, rather than by telephone, for example, due to the sensitivity of the subject matter and the need to gain rapport with families to engage them in the survey work. Questionnaires were administered either using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) or on paper (PAPI), depending on local practice in each country (see below section: 5.2).

Furthermore, whilst the first two survey tools were administered by interviewers face to face with the respondent, a self completion mode was used among children to help ensure confidentiality of responses to sensitive questions, and to minimise the potential of social desirability bias – eg under-reporting of exposure to online risks – that might be caused by the presence of the interviewer or other household members.

Children were carefully briefed by interviewers about how to complete the self-completion questionnaire, and were also provided with clear written instructions about how to do so.

All children were given an envelope in which to place their completed forms, to help reassure them about the confidentiality of their responses.

Two versions of the self completion tool were developed, one for 9-10 year olds and one for 11-16 year olds.

*Tailored approach for younger respondents*

The version for 9-10 year olds excluded some questions relating to sex and violence related to on-line risks that were felt to be less appropriate for this age group. To keep the length to an acceptable minimum for this age group, some of the follow-up questions relating to the detail of specific risks experienced were also omitted and asked only of 11-16 year olds. This version was also divided into five separate documents so that the interviewer could provide more guidance at each step of the way about how each one should be completed. For this age group, text that gave instructions about routing through the questionnaire was also shown in red font to help ensure that it was not missed.

**3.2 Translation**

A master questionnaire was finalised in the English language. National versions were then produced in appropriate languages as follows:

| Country | Languages |
|---|---|
| Austria | German |
| Belgium | Dutch, French |
| Bulgaria | Bulgarian |
| Cyprus | Greek |
| Czech Republic | Czech |
| Denmark | Danish |
| Estonia | Estonian, Russian |
| Finland | Finnish |
| France | French |
| Germany | German |
| Greece | Greek |
| Hungary | Hungarian |
| Ireland | English |
| Italy | Italian |
| Lithuania | Lithuanian, Russian |
| Netherlands | Dutch |
| Norway | Norwegian |
| Poland | Polish |
| Portugal | Portuguese |
| Romania | Romanian |
| United Kingdom | English |
| Slovenia | Slovene |
| Spain | Spanish (Castilian), Catalan |
| Sweden | Swedish |
| Turkey | Turkish, Kurdish |

After the master questionnaire was finalised and approved the translation process progressed as follows:

1. The master questionnaire was sent to the national agencies using a specific format designed for multilingual questionnaires. It was easy to understand as the source language and the target language could be simultaneously viewed.
2. In the national agencies, two researchers that had at least two years of experience of opinion surveys independently translated the questionnaire into their mother tongue. After this, they met to compile the two translations into one which was then sent to the Ipsos coordination centre.
3. The core team in the coordination centre verified that everything had been translated, after which the questionnaires were sent to back-translation. A native English speaker with a sufficient level of the source language then translated it back to English.
4. The back-translated documents were returned to the coordination centre where the team checked them against the original English master. Each country was given feedback based on this exercise and all necessary adjustments were made to the final questionnaire by the national agencies.
5. The national agencies sent the final national questionnaires to the coordination centre.

Academic representatives in every country in the EU Kids Online Network also reviewed translations to double check that the meaning of key terms was as intended. In particular, a list of concepts for which there were challenges ensuring translation generated identical meaning across countries was drawn up ("upset" is one example) and network members input to ensure the most comparable terminologies were used. Network members also helped to provide nationally relevant examples to support communication of key concepts, such as social networking.

## 4. Sampling

The sampling for the project followed a robust approach, for example, reflecting processes and standards common for many large scale Europe-wide surveys conducted by and on behalf of the European Commission.

### 4.1 Selection of sample points and addresses

An official and complete register of geographical units was used as the sampling frame for each country. However, in some countries, certain areas were excluded from the sampling frame for reasons of practicality, reflecting standard approaches to fieldwork in the country concerned. These regions included Mount Athos in Greece, The Wadden Eilanden in the Netherlands, Madeira and Azores Islands in Portugal, Ceuta and Melilla in Spain and The Channel Islands, Isle of Man, and the area north of the Caledonian Canal in the UK. In all countries where small geographical areas have been excluded, population coverage is still extremely high (eg over 95%) meaning negligible impact on survey estimates. The approach taken reflects standard approaches to survey work in each country in this regard.

Prior to selection of sampling points, the list of geographical units was stratified (ordered) by:

1. Region (NUTS 2, 3 or 4, or other nationally appropriate system of regional classification); and then
2. Population density or degree of urbanisation, where data was available.

The table below outlines the method of stratification (region and degree of urbanisation) used in each country for both.

***Table 2. Method of stratification by region and urbanisation***

| Country | Type of Primary Sampling Unit | Indicator for stratification by region | Indicator for stratification by degree of urbanisation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Austria** | Locality (village/town/city) | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality and number of children aged 9-16 living in locality |
| **Belgium** | Locality (village/town/city) | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality and number of children aged 9-16 living in locality |
| **Bulgaria** | Locality (village/town/city) | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality and number of children aged 9-16 living in locality |
| **Cyprus** | Municipalities | by district (Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, Pafos, Famagusta) | Municipalities defined as Urban/Rural by the Department of town Planning and Housing in Cyprus. |
| **Czech Republic** | Municipalities and postal districts for the cities over 50 thousands of inhabitants. | NUTS 3 | Total number of inhabitants in municipalities or postal districts |

(Continued…)

| Country | Type of Primary Sampling Unit | Indicator for stratification by region | Indicator for stratification by degree of urbanisation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Denmark** | Postal district | NUTS 2 | Number of children aged 9-16 living in locality |
| **Estonia** | Locality (village/town/city) | NUTS 3 | Number of children aged 9-16 living in locality |
| **Finland** | Postal district | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality |
| **France** | Locality (village/town/city) | UDA 5 (regions) | Population Density |
| **Germany** | Postal district | ADM (Arbeitskreis deutscher Marktforscher = Association of German market research-ers) sampling points | ADM sample points have urban/rural indicators |
| **Greece** | Administrative district | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality |
| **Hungary** | Locality (village/ town/ city/districts of the capital) | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality and number of children aged 9-16 living in locality |
| **Ireland** | Electoral district | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality |
| **Italy** | Locality (village/town/city) | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality |
| **Lithuania** | Locality (village/town/city) | Counties | Population density |
| **Netherlands** | Locality (village/town/city) and postal for larger cities | NUTS 1 | Number of addresses per km2 |
| **Norway** | Locality (village/town/city) | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality |
| **Poland** | Administrative areas - Gminas | NUTS 2 | Population density and number of children aged 9-16 living in locality |
| **Portugal** | Locality (village/town/city) | NUTS 2 | Total population resident in the locality |
| **Romania** | Locality (village/town/city) | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality |
| **Slovenia** | Administrative areas defined by Slovenian statistical office | NUTS 3 | City size (number of inhabitants) and percentage of agricultural population |
| **Spain** | Administrative area | NUTS 2 | Number of children aged 10-15 living in locality |
| **Sweden** | Postal district | NUTS 2 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality |
| **Turkey** | Administrative district | NUTS 1 | Total number of inhabitants living in locality |
| **UK** | NUTS 4 | NUTS 1 | Number of children aged 9-16 living in locality |

In all countries sampling points were then selected with Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS). This means that the chance of selection is equivalent to the number of children living there. For example, if the total population of children aged 9-16 is 2 million, the probability of selecting an area with 50,000 children is 0.025 and the probability of selecting an area with 10,000 children is 0.005. The number of sampling points varied by country, according to local circumstances (see Table 3 below).

All addresses were selected using random probability sampling approaches, but the precise approach varied by country reflecting different circumstances on the ground, the nature of sample frames available, and cultural differences with regards to whether initial contact was thought to be most appropriate by telephone or face to face, bearing in mind the sensitive subject matter. In most cases "random walk" sampling and face to face recruitment was used. In a small number of countries, households were selected from national population registers (either households in general, or households with children) and pre-selected addresses were visited in person, or contacted by telephone in the first instance.

The table below shows the number of sampling points selected in each country, along with the address-selection method used. More detailed information about the different methods then follows.

***Table 3: Sampling information***

| Country | Methodology | Type of national register used | No. of sampling points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Austria** | Random Walk | | 125 |
| **Belgium** | Random Walk | | 102 |
| **Bulgaria** | Random Walk | | 290 |
| **Cyprus** | Random Walk | | 84 |
| **Czech Republic** | Pre-selected households - telephone recruitment | Registered directory of fixed line telephones. Held by Nexos. | 140 |
| **Denmark** | Pre-selected households of children aged 0-17, telephone recruitment | Sample was purchased from "Forbrugerliv" a company owned by Jyllands-Posten Holding AS (the largest media-provider of Denmark) | 148 |
| **Estonia** | Random Walk | | 137 |
| **Finland** | Random Walk | | 100 |
| **France** | Random Walk | | 120 |
| **Germany** | Random Walk | | 212 |
| **Greece** | Random Walk | | 125 |
| **Hungary** | Pre-selected households with children aged 9-16 | Addresses were selected from the Citizens' Personal Data and Address Register, held by The Central Office for Administrative and Electronic Public Services (Hungary). | 163 |
| **Ireland** | Random Walk | | 170 |
| **Italy** | Random Walk | | 103 |
| **Lithuania** | Random Walk | | 101 |

(continued…)

| Country | Methodology | Type of national register used | No. of sampling points |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Netherlands** | Pre-selected households - telephone recruitment | Addresses were selected from the Nationale Telefoongids, published by KPN Telecom. | 125 |
| **Norway** | Pre-selected households - telephone recruitment | Addresses were purchased from "Norstat" using the "EasyConnect" database – the largest database of private households and telephone numbers in Norway | 16[2] |
| **Poland** | Pre-selected households of children aged 9-16 | PESEL - Universal Electronic System for Registration of the Population . Addresses were selected by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration | 218 |
| **Portugal** | Random Walk | | 128 |
| **Romania** | Random Walk | | 135 |
| **Slovenia** | 10% Random Walk – 90% national register of households with 9-16s | Central Population Register | 350 |
| **Spain** | Random Walk | | 140 |
| **Sweden** | Pre-selected households with children aged 9-16 - telephone recruitment | Addresses were selected from a random sample of households with children aged 9-16. The sample was provided by PAR (Postens Adressregister, the postal office address register, which itself is drawn from SPAR, the Swedish Population register. | 40 |
| **Turkey** | Random Walk | | 115 |
| **UK** | Random Walk | | 179 |

[2] Typically, a larger numbers of sampling points are preferred since they reduce the risk of homogenous responses within clusters which has the potential to reduce a survey's effective sample size, (the extent to which there are systematic differences in findings between survey clusters). However, the lower number of sample points in Norway has not caused a problem in this regard: despite the relatively small number of sampling points, the effective sample size for Norway is estimated at 729 which is in line with other countries (see Table 20 below). This means that the smaller number of sample points used in Norway did not have a larger negative impact on the reliability of Norway's findings.

*Random walk method - details*

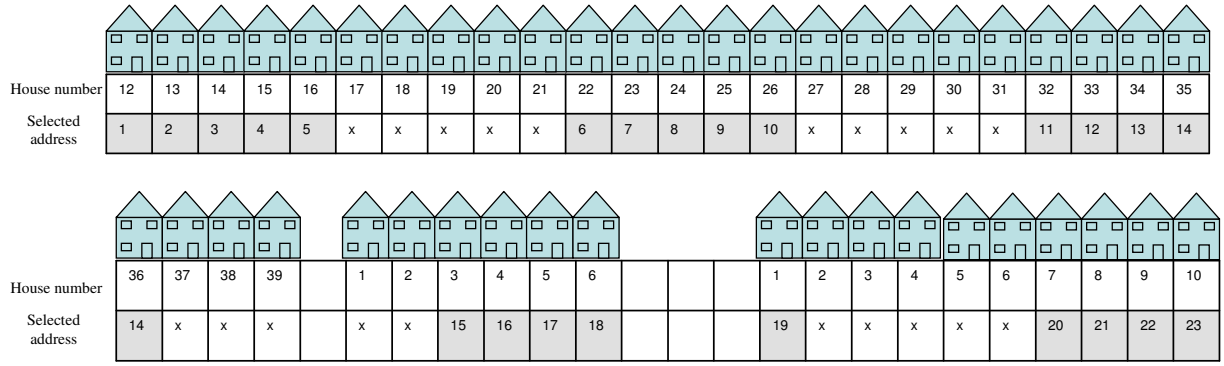
In each of the selected sampling points, one address is drawn at random from the register of households or from the listing of streets in the geographical area of the sampling point. This 'seed' address is the first in the sample and acts as the start point for the random walk.

The remaining addresses in the sample point were selected using a strict pre-defined random-walk procedure which makes the selection independent of the interviewer's decision. Specifically, the interviewer selected a batch five of addresses before counting five on their route and then selecting another batch of five. The procedure is as follows:

- Standing at the seed address, the interviewer faced the street and turns left. He/she identifies the next four immediately neighbouring addresses as the next in the sample – a batch of five addresses has been selected together.

- The interviewer then continued along the route counting houses/flats/apartments, leaving five addresses before identifying the next five neighbouring addresses as the next in the sample.

- When turning at the end of the street, the interviewer did not stop counting housing units/addresses.



| House number | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Selected address | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | x | x | x | x | x | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | x | x | x | x | x | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |

| House number | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Selected address | 14 | x | x | x | | x | x | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | | | | 19 | x | x | x | x | x | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |

Every effort was made to screen each sampled address and achieve an interview at eligible households, with the following fieldwork requirements followed:

- At least 4 attempts to make contact at each address.
- Contact attempted at different times of day (including evenings), and at weekends as well as weekdays.
- No substitution of selected addresses – this means that if an address is unproductive or appears unsuitable from the outside, the interviewer still had to make contact there; they could not choose a neighbour to try instead.

*Alternative approaches*

- **In-home recruitment from national registers:** In Hungary, Poland and Slovenia[3] a sample of households with children aged 9-16 were drawn from population sample frames as the sample to be issued. In each of these countries, all selected addresses were sent a copy of the letter in advance. This served to notify them of the survey and inform them to expect an interviewer to call. The selected household was then visited by an interviewer and screened on the doorstep following exactly the same contact procedure as in countries using Random Walk (and discussed further below).

- **Telephone recruitment from national registers:** Sweden used a register which identified households (in the selected sampling points) with children aged 9-16 and Denmark used a register that identified households with 0-17s. Czech Republic, Norway and the Netherlands used national registers of households in general. In each case, households (in the selected sampling points) were randomly selected from the register for contact and screening. In all four of these countries, the pre-selected households were initially contacted and screened by telephone with an interviewer then visiting responding households to conduct the interviews in person after appointments had been made. In the Netherlands, in cases where an appointment with a respondent was broken and could not be rescheduled, the interviewer had the option of sampling/screening new households using strict random walk methods.

### 4.2 Respondent selection

Each selected household was screened to identified eligible households (with a child aged 9-16 who uses the internet). An interview with one child and one parent/carer was required.

Where there was more than one eligible child present, one child per household was selected using the last birthday method.

The parent/carer interview was conducted with the parent/carer who knew the most about the child and their internet use. In around three-quarters of households, the mother was interviewed, around one-fifth, the father, and in around one-in-twenty households another household member (step parent, grandparent, or other) was interviewed.

### 4.3 Contact sheets and the screening processes

Two types of contact sheet were provided to interviewers, guiding them through the screening process, and on which key screening and sample outcome information was recorded.

First, a summary contact sheet was used to check if the property was residential/occupied and if so, to identify if a child aged 9-16 was present in the household.

Secondly, at households with a 9-16 year old present, fuller screening processes were carried out using a more detailed follow-up contact sheet:

- completing eligibility screening (identifying children using the internet)

- identifying and selecting the appropriate child and parent/carer respondent

- securing co-operation and informed consent from parents and children (see section below: 6. Ethics and child protection)

[3] In Slovenia, the survey began with a random walk methodology, but the approach was switched to this method early in on in fieldwork due to difficulties identifying eligible households using random walk methods.

- capturing some profile information about all households with children that could be used for profiling and weighting purposes: age, gender and internet use of all children in the household, and education and employment status of the chief income earner in the household.

In order to support communication of the survey requirements and gain respondent co-operation, a letter from the LSE was shown to the respondents, emphasising the importance and value of the study. A copy of the English version of the letter is provided in the appendices. In countries using face to face recruitment from pre-selected addresses, the letter was posted in advance. In some countries, a respondent incentive was also used to encourage co-operation. In most cases only the children were rewarded but agencies in the Netherlands and Czech Republic also included parents. (see below: Table 4).

## 5. Survey Implementation and Fieldwork

### 5.1 Fieldwork dates, interviewer selection and training and respondent incentives

*Fieldwork dates*

Fieldwork started in April and for all data cases included for reporting in October, fieldwork was completed between April and July 2010; further details of fieldwork dates by country are detailed in Table 4. below.

*Use of incentives*

The decision whether or not to use incentives was taken at the local agency level. Using their experience of conducting in home surveys with parents and children within their market, agencies considered whether they thought the offer of incentives would increase response rates enough to offer value for money. In some cases, incentives were introduced part way through fieldwork to help improve response rates. Again, further details of the use of incentive by country can be found in Table 4. below.

*Interviewer selection*

All countries recruited interviewers based on experience, not just in research, but more specifically with F2F surveys and random walk procedures where appropriate, and experience of research with children. Agencies acknowledged the complexity and sensitive nature of the questionnaires and allocated the individuals they felt would achieve the best results. As detailed in Table 4, the number of interviewers working on the project ranged from 27 in Turkey, to 400 in Germany.

*Interviewer briefings*

All interviewers received intensive project-specific training and briefings and written guidance materials, covering all aspects of survey implementation, including guidance on how to conduct sensitive interviews with children.

All project managers and interviewers were supplied with detailed and uniform instructions supplied by the Ipsos coordination centre. These Training Booklets and Interviewer Packs covered the following topics:

- Overall briefing on EU Kids Online Survey:
- Detailed description of the sampling procedures and random walk methodology where applicable
- Full questionnaire review, clarifying terminology and data collection
- Review of ESOMAR ethical rules and other ethical issues and protocols associated with this project, including relating to child protection, and informed respondent consent
- Briefings on key techniques and protocols for interviewing children and parents
- Fieldwork management rules
- Specific techniques to convert refusals and maximise the response rate
- A reminder of how the quality of their work will be supervised and managed, including back-checking procedures.

Interactive telephone briefings with the project managers from each country were led by the Ipsos Coordination centre during early April 2010. Further to discussing the information detailed in the Training Booklets above, briefings also gave guidance on data processing and how project managers should deliver local interviewer briefings.

Finally, country specific interviewer briefings were then conducted locally. These half-day or one-day sessions are organised centrally or at regional level and often included role plays where interviewers worked in pairs to practice delivering the questionnaire.

***Table 4: Number of interviewers, respondent incentives, and fieldwork dates, by country***

| Country | No. of interviewers | Respondent incentives | Fieldwork dates |
|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 45 | 5 EUR Amazon voucher given to the child upon completion | 24 April – 25 July 2010 |
| Belgium | 44 | A 5 EUR voucher for the child, conditional on taking part. | 6 May – 14 July 2010 |
| Bulgaria | 136 | Stationary for the child (coloured pencils, ruler, pocket books worth approximately €1.5). | 6 May – 24 June 2010 |
| Cyprus | 39 | None | 17 May – 20 Sept 2010 |
| Czech Republic | 146 | Incentives given to the parent: a gift bought by the interviewer – most often some kind of premium coffee, chocolate or tea costing on average 4 EUR. The children were given a flash disk costing 8 EUR. Both conditional on participation | 21 May – 2 July 2010 |
| Denmark | 160 | Each responding household received an incentive of 100 DKR. Normally the child was offered the incentive. Each respondent could choose between a gift-card or donating the amount to a Child Welfare Organisation. 42% of respondents chose charity donation. | 30 April – 14 June 2010 |
| Estonia | 70 | None | 10 May – 14 July 2010 |
| Finland | 54 | A small chocolate or candy bar was provided to the child as a gift after the interview was completed (worth approximately €2). | 28 April – 2 July 2010 |
| France | 83 | None | 6 May – 3 July 2010 |
| Germany | 400 | None | 20 May – 7 July 2010 |
| Greece | 52 | None | 10 May – 2 July 2010 |
| Hungary | 123 | None | 10 May – 15 June 2010 |
| Ireland | 103 | None | 5 May – 24 July 2010 |
| Italy | 56 | None | 28 April – 3 July 2010 |

(continued…)

| Country | No. of interviewers | Respondent incentives | Fieldwork dates |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lithuania | 52 | None | 23 April – 6 July 2010 |
| Netherlands | 100 | The original incentive was a lottery with prizes as follows (or cash equivalent); | 3 May – 5 August 2010 |
| | | 5x weekend in a bungalow park (worth approximately €400 each) | |
| | | 5x game consoles (worth approximately €250 each) | |
| | | 10x Nintendo DS (worth approximately €200 each) | |
| | | 1x weekend EuroDisney (family max. 4 persons €450 per person) | |
| | | To boost response rates part way through fieldwork, a conditional incentive of 10 EUR was given | |
| Norway | 90 | Every family received 300 NOK | 21 May – 19 Oct 2010 |
| Poland | 149 | Chocolate was given to one of the parents conditional on participation (worth approximately €3) | 6 May – 26 July 2010 |
| Portugal | 47 | None | 29 April – 30 July 2010 |
| Romania | 67 | A key holder or a pocket calculator for the child on completion (worth approximately €3) | 16 May – 25 June 2010 |
| Slovenia | 200 | None | 3 May – 27 Aug 2010 |
| Spain | 60 | An incentive of 6 EUR (gift card) was given to parents as a gift for the children. The incentive was provided upon completing the interview | 10 May – 15 July 2010 |
| Sweden | 64 | A gift voucher of SEK 100 (ca €10), signed for by the parent but aimed at the child; this incentive was later increased to two cinema tickets (value ca €18). | 27 May – 20 Sept 2010 |
| Turkey | 27 | A notebook and a pen were given to the child upon completion (worth approximately 2TL) | 3 May – 17 June 2010 |
| UK | 105 | £10 per household upon completion of the survey | 1 May – 21 June 2010 |

### 5.2 Survey mode and interview length

Questionnaires were administered either using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) or on paper (PAPI). As mentioned earlier, some sections were interviewer-administered, whilst sensitive questions among children were administered via a self interviewing in a self-completion questionnaire.

The interview length was measured per household, encompassing the length of time it took to complete the parent, child face-to-face and self-completion questionnaires. The total average across all countries was 55.8 minutes.

The table below indicated the survey mode for each country, and summarises the range in interview duration across the countries and provides a comparison between households where a child aged 9-10 was interviewed and those where a child aged 11-16 was interviewed. The interview duration covers the period of time taken to complete the questionnaire tools, not the full time spent in the household.

*Table 5: Survey mode and interview length*

| Country | Survey Mode | Average interview time for child + parent interview combined (All households) | Average interview time for child + parent interview combined (Households where a 9-10 year old was interviewed) | Average interview time for child + parent interview combined ( Households where a 11-16 year old was interviewed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | PAPI | 59.4 | 61.8 | 58.6 |
| Belgium | PAPI | 53.3 | 51.9 | 53.8 |
| Bulgaria | PAPI | 56.2 | 56.2 | 56.2 |
| Cyprus | PAPI | 42.4 | 40.6 | 42.7 |
| Czech Republic | PAPI | 58 | 59.5 | 57.5 |
| Denmark | CAPI | 63.8 | 62.1 | 64.4 |
| Estonia | CAPI | 68.1 | 69.9 | 67.6 |
| Finland | CAPI | 54.6 | 50.8 | 55.8 |
| France | PAPI | 47.3 | 58.5 | 56.7 |
| Germany | CAPI | 49 | 47.7 | 49.4 |
| Greece | PAPI | 52.9 | 54.3 | 52.2 |
| Hungary | PAPI | 63.6 | 64.5 | 63.4 |
| Ireland | CAPI | 53.5 | 52.1 | 53.9 |
| Italy | CAPI | 53.3 | 53.5 | 53.2 |
| Lithuania | PAPI | 56.9 | 56.8 | 57 |
| Netherlands | PAPI | 65.6 | 66.8 | 65.2 |
| Norway | CAPI | 66.4 | 67.4 | 66.1 |
| Poland | PAPI | 57.8 | 60.6 | 57 |
| Portugal | PAPI | 49.8 | 51 | 49.3 |
| Romania | PAPI | 53.5 | 52.1 | 53.9 |
| Slovenia | CAPI | 48.4 | 45.2 | 49.3 |
| Spain | CAPI | 56.3 | 51.7 | 57.7 |
| Sweden | CAPI | 61.2 | 59.7 | 61.8 |
| Turkey | CAPI | 55.3 | 54.9 | 55.5 |
| UK | PAPI | 48.6 | 48.8 | 48.5 |
| **Average across Europe** | | **55.8** | **55.9** | **56.3** |

### 5.3 Supporting respondents with questionnaire completion

It was important to ensure that where possible, children and parents were not excluded from the research due to language or communication difficulties. In cases where child or parent did not speak the main language(s) of the country well enough to complete the survey, another household member was asked to provide support. If a child had communication difficulties, where appropriate, the parent or interviewer provided support. However, for the self-completion element of the study, interviewers were instructed to ensure that support was kept to a minimum, to avoid biasing the findings. Types of support received by respondents was recorded by interviewers, and this information is included in the survey data set (see section 5.4 below).

### 5.4 Context effects and child comprehension

As part of the survey's quality procedures, interviewers were asked to record details relating to the child's comprehension of survey questions and who was present in the room during the child's interview. The detail below comments on the overall average and maximum and minimum findings across all countries; further detail, by country, can be found in the SPSS data (QC343-QC348). It should be noted that the figures outlined below are based on all unweighted data.

Interviewers were asked to observe how well they thought the child understood the questions asked during the interview. Overall, more than nine in ten children were thought to have understood the interview questions *very* or *fairly well* (93%), rising to as much as 98% in Greece and Italy. Comprehension was less proficient in Belgium and Turkey where 13% of children were thought to understand questions *not very well/not at all well*.

In total, one in ten children had some form of help (language or communication) from a family member in order to answer the survey questions (10%). Overall, two per cent of adults and three percent of children required language help to take part in the survey; five per cent of children required some form of communication help.

Showing the importance of the self-completion sections of the questionnaire, more than three in five child interviews were conducted with the parent respondent present in the room (63%); a further three per cent had another adult present other than the parent respondent. The proportion of households where the parent respondent was present ranged from 29% in the Czech Republic to 80% in Spain and Romania, and 83% in Turkey.

As well as noting adult presence during the child survey, interviewers were also asked to observe the extent to which the parent respondent tried to involve themselves in the child interview (for example, if they were concerned about the sensitivity of some of the subject matter). In the vast majority of cases this was not an issue: overall, two-thirds of parents made no attempt to be involved (66%), with a further fifth having made little attempt (21% *not very much)*; equating to 87% of parents overall. In contrast, four per cent of parents attempted to be involved *a great deal* with a further one in ten *a fair amount (*10%). Parents in Spain were the most fervent, with around three in ten attempting to be involved *a great deal/a fair amount* (29%). Interviewers were fully briefed on how to manage these types of situation, for example, explaining the importance of confidentiality, reassuring that the child could skip any question they did not like, and allowing the parent to see a blank copy of the questionnaire before the child interview took place.

## 6. Ethics and child protection

Children's exposure to risks on the internet is a particularly sensitive topic; it was therefore paramount that fieldwork was conducted in an appropriately ethical manner. The project received ethical clearance from the London School of Economics Research Ethics Committee and all aspects of methodology and approaches to survey implementation were developed with child and respondent wellbeing in mind. Key points are described below. Further information is also provided in a full Ethical Statement document.

*Gaining informed consent*

An essential requirement was to gain informed consent from both the parent and the child. Several, several mechanisms were put in place to ensure that parents and children had all the information necessary to make an informed judgement about taking part in the survey.

- Each house was presented with written information about the study, as well as interviewers explaining this carefully to parents and children verbally. The letter contained both LSE and Ipsos branding and was translated into the relevant local languages and was available online on the EU Kids Online website. The key points covered including the funding and purposes of the project, the nature of the interview, the value of the project to policy makers seeking to improve internet safety for children, and contact details for the national fieldwork organisation (contracted by Ipsos), the national EU Kids Online network representative, and the project director (Sonia Livingstone for EU Kids Online at LSE). Where a parent wished for more time to consider taking part, the information letter was left with the household for several days before the interviewer returned at a later date.
- A signature was required from parents confirming consent to their own interview and consent to us approaching the child to invite their participation in the child interview in all countries except from Germany, where local laws prohibited written signatures being obtained and where instead interviewers were asked to sign to confirm that the parent had given their permission for the interview to take place. Child consent was also recorded by the interviewer signing in writing that this had been given verbally by the child.
- Particular attention was taken to ensure that the text and words spoken in the letter and consent form were age appropriate. Across all languages, separate versions of the text were tailored for parents and children of different ages. A copy of the information letter, safety tips leaflet and consent form can be found in the appendix.
- Anonymity and confidentiality of responses was guaranteed to both parents and children, with the exception that the child reports that they are being harmed in some way will be handled as an explicit condition limiting the promise of confidentiality (see below).

*Ensuring respondent wellbeing during the interview*

All fieldwork was conducted in line with stipulated ESOMAR ethical guidelines for conducting research with children and young people, as well as those specified by the LSE Research Ethics Committee.

Interviewers were selected on their experience of working with children and further training and briefing was provided as outlined above in Section 5.1. Relevant security checks were carried out on interviewers where appropriate according to country specific legal requirements.

Confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed to survey questions.

Interviewers were instructed to ensure that parents remained in the vicinity within the household whilst the children interview was being conducted (with the door open, for example).

Whilst in the field, all children were advised of the fact that it was their right to stop the interview at any point and that they could choose not to answer a question if they felt uncomfortable doing so.

In designing the questionnaire, several measures were also put in place to make the child as comfortable as possible.

- The most sensitive questions relating to risky behaviour were asked in a self completion format where children were assured that neither the interviewer nor the parent would be able to see their answers.
- Discretion was used to consider whether questions were suitable for the youngest participants, the most sensitive and more mature themed questions were only asked to those aged 11 years and above.
- A *Prefer not to say* option was also included in those questions where a child might feel uncomfortable about disclosing their behaviour.
- The routing and introduction to questions ensured that the interview does not introduce the child for the first time to ideas or material that may be ethically problematic. For example, children were immediately routed out of sections about risky behaviour if it became apparent that they had not experienced the risk, and introductory wording was used where appropriate to forewarn of the nature of the subsequent questions.

All respondents, parents and children, were provided with an information leaflet at the end of the survey visit, containing tips and advice about online risk and safety. The leaflet was tailored for each country and included the contact details of local help lines (or other appropriate provision for children identified through the conduct of the survey as in some way 'at risk'), whereby the respondent can access private, confidential help and advice. These leaflets were developed for the project by the national Insafe nodes of the EC's Safer Internet Programme, with input also from Child Helpline International (see www.childhelplineinternational.org).

*Procedure for dealing with children at risk*

Given the topics considered in this project, it was important to establish an agreed approach to intervention prior to fieldwork, as to what would happen if it became apparent that a child was at risk of harm. This approach was agreed between Ipsos and the LSE and cleared by the LSE Research Ethics Committee.

To ensure guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity, intervention from fieldworkers was only considered on the basis of relatively serious harm being identified, ie on the broad principle that the risk identified was "something any reasonable person could not ignore". The notes below outline the agreed approach of dealing with identified risk, although it is important to note that a different approach was considered depending on whether or not the risk was identified within the survey questions.

*Actions arising from responses to survey questions.*

- The questionnaire design and methodology meant that risk of current harm would not identifiable from the study at the time of the interview. First, survey questions ask about exposure to risks in the *past* and do not directly identify current issues; secondly questions on risk were asked within self completion modules and as such interviewers were not aware of the child's responses. We therefore took a universal approach to responding to possible risk for all children.
    - Interviewers explained to all children that if they have they have experienced harm, they should tell a trusted adult;
    - As mentioned above, the interviewer left a leaflet with helpline numbers and 'top-tips' for online safety.
    - In addition, fieldwork agencies abided by any local laws regarding actions required to protect children.

*(ii) Protocols to be taken if a participant made a disclosure to the interviewer outside their response to a survey question and/or the interviewer witnessed something in the household suggesting that a child was at risk.*

- If the interviewer became aware of risk of harm to a child that no reasonable person could ignore, or that required action within national laws, they were to follow specific agreed protocols as below.
- Given that disclosure of harm in this scenario is outside the main interview questions, this approach does not conflict with guarantees of respondent confidentiality with regards to survey responses.
- The interviewer was instructed to report the "incident" to the project manager/field supervisor for action to be taken by the Institute, according to national law. Where institutes are not competent to make a decision of this kind, a legal person was to be consulted before action is decided upon.
- In such cases, the interviewer was also instructed to tell the child that they are concerned and talk to them about the action that they will be taking.
- As mentioned above, the interviewer was also briefed to encourage the child to talk to a trusted adult (if they have not already done so) and provide them with the leaflet of top tips/help line support services.

Importantly, and reassuringly, there were no such incidents reported during fieldwork.

*Data processing and analysis*

Finally, confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed during the data processing stage of the project by removing key identifiers from the data set.

## 7. Fieldwork Outcomes and Response Rates

### 7.1 Number of interviews

The table below shows sample sizes achieved and incorporated into October reporting.

***Table 6: Number of interviews achieved by country***

| Country | Total interviews achieved | Total 9-10 interviews achieved | Total 11-16 interviews achieved |
|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 1000 | 249 | 751 |
| Belgium | 1006 | 281 | 725 |
| Bulgaria | 1088 | 282 | 806 |
| Cyprus | 806 | 124 | 682 |
| Czech Republic | 1009 | 278 | 731 |
| Denmark | 1002 | 263 | 739 |
| Estonia | 1005 | 226 | 779 |
| Finland | 1017 | 240 | 777 |
| France | 1000 | 342 | 658 |
| Germany | 1,024 | 233 | 790 |
| Greece | 1000 | 323 | 677 |
| Hungary | 1000 | 228 | 772 |
| Ireland | 990 | 234 | 756 |
| Italy | 1021 | 247 | 774 |
| Lithuania | 1007 | 270 | 737 |
| Netherlands | 1004 | 226 | 778 |
| Norway | 1019 | 253 | 766 |
| Poland | 1034 | 229 | 805 |
| Portugal | 1000 | 327 | 673 |
| Romania | 1041 | 270 | 771 |
| Slovenia | 1000 | 204 | 796 |
| Spain | 1024 | 239 | 785 |
| Sweden | 1000 | 242 | 758 |
| Turkey | 1018 | 290 | 228 |
| UK | 1025 | 334 | 691 |
| **Total across Europe** | **25142** | **6433** | **18709** |

### 7.2 Sample outcomes and response rates

The tables below set out the detailed sample outcomes and response rates for all countries.

The first three tables present *numeric* sample outcome data, with one table for each stage of the screening and respondent recruitment process; a forth table provides *percentage* figures for sample eligibility and response rates calculated based on using the numeric outcome data in the first three tables.

In summary:

- Table 7: Shows sample outcomes from the first screening stage, designed to identify whether sampled addresses were residential, and if so whether a child aged 9-16 was present.

- Table 8: Shows sample outcomes from the second stage of screening stage, seeking to identify whether households with children aged 9-16 had at least one child who used the internet (and are therefore eligible for the survey), and also among these also check which would be available for fieldwork (ie excluding those away for the whole of fieldwork/ill/unable to participate due to language or communication requirements).

- Table 9: Shows sample outcomes from the final stage of respondent engagement. It shows sample outcomes for those who were theoretically available, but who did not participate (refusals and non-contacts etc).

- Table 10: Shows eligibility and response rates at each stage of the screening process separately, and then combined.

Further detail about the screening and selection process is outlined earlier in section 4.3 above; however further commentary is provided below to provide a context to the interpretation of the sample outcomes and response rates detailed throughout the section.

*Screening stage 1*

The first screening stage identified whether sampled addresses were residential, and if so whether a child aged 9-16 was present. Table 7 overleaf presents the numeric sample outcomes for this stage.

As mentioned, *percentage* stage 1 screening and eligibility rates (for one or more children aged 9-16 in household) are presented later in Table 10 (columns A-D). Note that in Table 10, the *screening rate* (column 10C) is calculated as a percentage of residential properties; and *child aged 9-16 eligibility* (10D) is calculated as a proportion of those households that have been successfully screened for children aged 9-16 (ie, excluding non-residential, refusals and non-contacts).

Please note that the variation in sample outcome, screening rates and eligibility rates for this stage reflect the difference in sampling methodology across countries (see Table 3 in section 4.1).

- As might be expected, countries which used a register of households (rather than properties) have low numbers of *non-residential* (7B) addresses (eg Denmark);
- As might be expected, those which used a register of households with children/children aged 9-16 have low number of *no child aged 9-16* (7E), which in turn produces higher *eligibility rates* (10D); (eg Poland, Hungary, Denmark, Sweden and Slovenia)
- those who used telephone pre-recruitment, - eg Netherlands - have a higher number of *non contacts* (7C) and *refusals* (7D), which in turn produces a lower *screening rate* (10C).

Given the sensitive nature of the project, household members contacted were often keen for the interviewer to tell them detailed information about the topic of the survey at the start of the screening and recruitment process. It is therefore important to note that some households *declined to co-operate* in the screener questionnaire itself, and are therefore reflected as *refused* in Table 7 (7D).

Only those households successfully screened and identified as having one or more children aged 9-16 progressed on to the second stage of screening.

*Table 7: Detailed sample outcomes – Screening stage 1*

| | 7A | 7B | 7C | 7D | 7E | 7F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total number of addresses visited (N) | Non-residential property (N) | Non-contacts (N) | Refusals (N) | No child aged 9-16 in house-hold (N) | Stage 1 Eligible – 1+ child aged 9-16 in house-hold (N) |
| Austria | 9363 | 237 | 607 | 3557 | 3846 | 1116 |
| Belgium | 9598 | 1102 | 2598 | 1281 | 3586 | 1031 |
| Bulgaria | 19789 | 1014 | 1711 | 1080 | 14346 | 1638 |
| Cyprus | 21382 | 360 | 2632 | 10850 | 6258 | 1282 |
| Czech Rep | 26250 | 3859 | 6037 | 7745 | 7153 | 1456 |
| Denmark | 6283 | 0 | 1036 | 1096 | 2022 | 2129 |
| Estonia | 12050 | 79 | 799 | 681 | 9348 | 1143 |
| Finland | 3263 | 63 | 212 | 459 | 1344 | 1185 |
| France | 15600 | 119 | 742 | 7709 | 5892 | 1138 |
| Germany | 6610 | 47 | 2036 | 2524 | 979 | 1024 |
| Greece | 4435 | 70 | 202 | 917 | 2246 | 1000 |
| Hungary | 1731 | 29 | 92 | 563 | 39 | 1008 |
| Ireland | 21000 | 205 | 12327 | 384 | 6560 | 1524 |
| Italy | 48071 | 3301 | 4483 | 16756 | 21968 | 1563 |
| Lithuania | 13240 | 241 | 875 | 1906 | 9211 | 1007 |
| Netherlands | 77928 | 1252 | 21224 | 18754 | 33877 | 2821 |
| Norway | 71743 | 27207 | 24653 | 4646 | 13542 | 1695 |
| Poland | 2781 | 21 | 206 | 1520 | 0 | 1034 |
| Portugal | 5309 | 286 | 493 | 629 | 2866 | 1035 |
| Romania | 8055 | 179 | 387 | 479 | 5834 | 1176 |
| Slovenia | 3661 | 5 | 527 | 1935 | 62 | 1132 |
| Spain | 16611 | 352 | 4275 | 1627 | 9108 | 1249 |
| Sweden | 2703 | 7 | 2 | 550 | 1007 | 1137 |
| Turkey | 7124 | 616 | 169 | 2291 | 3017 | 1031 |
| UK | 11134 | 207 | 1540 | 1621 | 6638 | 1128 |
| **Total** | **425714** | **40858** | **89865** | **91560** | **170749** | **32682** |

*Screening stage 2 and respondent engagement*

The second stage of screening sought to identify whether households with children aged 9-16 had at least one child who used the internet (and are therefore eligible for the survey), and who among these would be available for fieldwork (ie excluding those away for the whole of fieldwork/ill/unable to participate due to language or communication requirements). Among those available, interviewer then went on to seek co-operation for a child and parent interview.

Table 8 details the sample outcomes for this second stage of screening and attempts to achieve actual interviews. Households who have *not been successfully screened for internet use* (column 8C) refer to those where the parent did not know whether the children used the internet or where the respondent refused this next stage of screening. The number of households in column 8E - *unavailable for fieldwork* - reflects those households which were eligible (ie contained a child aged 9-16 who used the internet), but where the selected parent/selected child was ill/away during fieldwork or where the language barrier was too significant for a face-to-face interview to be conducted successfully – ie, it would not be theoretically possible to conduct an interview with the selected child/parent for the duration of the fieldwork period. Those in column 8F reflect the total number of households where it would theoretically possible to conduct an interview, but participants were either not contacted, refused to take part or the interview was incomplete – this is detailed further in Table 8.

Table 10 further down presents the percentage screening and eligibility rates at this second stage of screening (columns E-G) along with fieldwork availability rates and interviewing success rates (columns H-J), derived from these numeric data.

As Table 10 shows, for some countries – Germany, Greece, Hungary, Turkey – internet eligibility looks particularly high; however, as noted above, many households sought detailed information about the topic of the study (internet) and dropped out of the process prior to screening for internet use. It might be hypothesised that households dropping out earlier on are more likely to have been non-users (ie they dropped out earlier when they heard about the survey topic), and this would help to explain the apparently high expected eligibility rates at the second stage of screening. This issue appears particularly relevant in Germany, Greece and Denmark.

Interviewing success rates at the final stage of engagement in many countries are also high. This is common in studies with multi-stage fieldwork screening approaches, because many non-responders drop out at earlier stages of recruitment.

*Table 8: Detailed sample outcomes - Screening stage 2, and overall interview response*

| | 8A | 8B | 8C | 8D | 8E | 8F | 8G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Stage 1 eligible – has child 9-16 (N) | Successfully screened for internet use (N) | Not successfully screened for internet use (N) | Total stage 2 (internet) eligible - household with 1+ child using internet (N) | Total internet eligible but unavailable for fieldwork (ill/away during fieldwork/ language barrier/other) (N) | Total internet eligible but unsuccessful (refused or incomplete) (N) | Total successfully interviewed (N) |
| Austria | 1116 | 1113 | 3 | 1101 | 1 | 100 | 1000 |
| Belgium | 1031 | 1017 | 13 | 1017 | 0 | 11 | 1006 |
| Bulgaria | 1638 | 1588 | 50 | 1408 | 16 | 304 | 1088 |
| Cyprus | 1282 | 1282 | 0 | 1160 | 54 | 300 | 806 |
| Czech Rep | 1456 | 1455 | 1 | 1438 | 0 | 429 | 1009 |
| Denmark | 2129 | 2082 | 47 | 2051 | 0 | 1050 | 1001 |
| Estonia | 1143 | 1109 | 34 | 1098 | 13 | 80 | 1005 |
| Finland | 1185 | 1152 | 33 | 1145 | 8 | 120 | 1017 |
| France | 1138 | 1138 | 0 | 1114 | 25 | 89 | 1000 |
| Germany | 1024 | 1024 | 0 | 1024 | 0 | 1 | 1023 |
| Greece | 1000 | 1000 | 0 | 1000 | 0 | 0 | 1000 |
| Hungary | 1008 | 1008 | 0 | 1003 | 1 | 2 | 1000 |
| Ireland | 1524 | 1004 | 520 | 1004 | 1 | 13 | 990 |
| Italy | 1563 | 1517 | 46 | 1295 | 0 | 274 | 1021 |
| Lithuania | 1007 | 1007 | 0 | 1007 | 0 | 1 | 1006 |
| Netherlands | 2821 | 2821 | 0 | 2797 | 159 | 1634 | 1004 |
| Norway | 1695 | 1692 | 3 | 1669 | 0 | 650 | 1019 |
| Poland | 1034 | 1034 | 0 | 1034 | 0 | 0 | 1034 |
| Portugal | 1035 | 1016 | 19 | 1010 | 0 | 10 | 1000 |
| Romania | 1176 | 1151 | 25 | 1093 | 0 | 52 | 1041 |
| Slovenia | 1132 | 1132 | 0 | 1132 | 0 | 132 | 1000 |
| Spain | 1249 | 1228 | 21 | 1191 | 4 | 163 | 1024 |
| Sweden | 1137 | 1133 | 4 | 1125 | 16 | 109 | 1000 |
| Turkey | 1031 | 1018 | 13 | 1018 | 0 | 0 | 1018 |
| UK | 1128 | 1102 | 26 | 1091 | 4 | 55 | 1032 |
| **Total** | **32682** | **31823** | **858** | **31025** | **302** | **5579** | **25144** |

Table 9 presents more detailed sample outcomes from the final stage of respondent engagement when interviewers sought to gain co-operation for a child and parent interview. It shows sample outcomes for those who were theoretically available (ie a household where there was at least one child aged 9-16 who uses the internet), but who did not participate. Note that the figures presented here across columns 9A-9F sum to the total of *eligible but unsuccessful* shown in column 8F of Table 8 above; this should not be confused with column 8E which gives the number of households where it would not be possible to conduct an interview with the selected child/parent for the **duration** of fieldwork due to illness, absence or language difficulty.

***Table 9: Detailed sample outcomes in eligible households where no interview was achieved***

| | 9A | 9B | 9C | 9D | 9E | 9F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Parent not contacted (N) | Child not contacted (N) | Parent refusal (N) | Child refusal (N) | Other refusal (N) | Broken appt or partial interview (N) |
| Austria | 0 | 27 | 61 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Belgium | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Bulgaria | 13 | 36 | 163 | 48 | 33 | 11 |
| Cyprus | 7 | 40 | 175 | 41 | 30 | 7 |
| Czech Rep | 81 | 0 | 342 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Denmark | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1050 | 0 |
| Estonia | 5 | 8 | 19 | 11 | 15 | 22 |
| Finland | 4 | 4 | 29 | 44 | 23 | 16 |
| France | 0 | 0 | 26 | 60 | 0 | 3 |
| Germany | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Greece | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hungary | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ireland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Italy | 21 | 146 | 27 | 37 | 34 | 9 |
| Lithuania | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Netherlands | 6 | 1 | 177 | 42 | 1392 | 16 |
| Norway | 0 | 0 | 29 | 116 | 505 | 0 |
| Poland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Portugal | 0 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Romania | 3 | 1 | 32 | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| Slovenia | 0 | 66 | 10 | 18 | 0 | 38 |
| Spain | 15 | 14 | 37 | 6 | 80 | 11 |
| Sweden | 0 | 0 | 13 | 94 | 0 | 2 |
| Turkey | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| UK | 0 | 2 | 22 | 11 | 14 | 6 |
| **Total** | **155** | **346** | **1174** | **548** | **3193** | **163** |

*Overview of screening, eligibility and response rates*

Building on the numeric data in presented in Tables 7-9, Table 10 below presents *percentage* success rates across of the screening and respondent engagement process. Columns A-J provide per centage rates for each of these three stages individually: screening stages 1 and 2 and interview engagement. (NB, see earlier sections of this chapter for explanation for how the calculations below are constructed for each of these three stages individually).

In addition, Table 10 provides two types of *combined* eligibility and response rate figures:

- Sample eligibility and response rates (based on the full eligible population – columns K and L). This provides the best view of *sample quality*;
- Field eligibility and response rates (based on those potentially available for interview – columns M and N). This provides the best indication of *fieldwork performance*.

Note that column K combines both stages of screening and assesses the proportion of all households successfully screened for a child aged 9-16 (at the first stage of screening) who have at least one child aged 9-16 who used the internet. The combined response rate in column L is calculated by combining the response rate at the first and second stages of screening (columns C and E) with the proportion of interviewed households out of those with a child aged 9-16 who used the internet.

Column M and N follow a similar path to L and M but remove households who were eligible but were not available for fieldwork from the base.

As Table 10 shows, c*ombined* response rates are low in some countries. It is common for combined response rates to be lower in studies with have multiple stages of screening than in studies with less complex recruitment processes. The variability that can be seen by country is also common for multi-country studies. And again, as noted above in Table 8, it is worth reiterating that some variability in response rates between countries are reflective of the different sample frames and recruitment methods used across the project.

*Table 10: Overview of eligibility and response rates*

| | Screening stage 1 (of all properties) | | | | Screening stage 2 (of households with one or more child aged 9-16) | | | Outcomes at the interview stage (among households with internet using children) | | | Combined sample eligibility and response rates | | Combined field eligibility and rates | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 10A | 10B | 10C | 10D | 10E | 10F | 10G | 10H | 10I | 10J | 10K | 10L | 10M | 10N |
| | Total addresses visited (N) | Total residential properties (N) | Screened for a child aged 9-16 (out of residential properties) (%) | Child Eligible (households with a child aged 9-16 out of those screened) (%) | Screened for internet use (out of those with 9-16s) (%) | Internet Eligible (household with 1+ internet using child out of those screened for internet use) (%) | Total with internet eligible children (households with 1+ child who uses the internet) (N) | Total available for fieldwork (out of eligible but excluding ill/away/language barrier) (N) | Total interviewed (N) | Interviewed (out of available for fieldwork) (%) | Fully eligible (out of all screened for child aged 9-16) (%) | Combined sample response rate (%) | Available for fieldwork (households with 1+ child using internet who are not ill/away/language barrier) (%) | Combined response rate based on those available for fieldwork (%) |
| Austria | 9363 | 9126 | 54.4% | 22.5% | 99.7% | 98.9% | 1101 | 1100 | 1000 | 90.9% | 22.2% | 49.3% | 22.2% | 49.3% |
| Belgium | 9598 | 8496 | 54.3% | 22.3% | 98.6% | 100.0% | 1017 | 1017 | 1006 | 98.9% | 22.0% | 53.0% | 22.0% | 53.0% |
| Bulgaria | 19789 | 18775 | 85.1% | 10.2% | 96.9% | 88.7% | 1408 | 1392 | 1088 | 78.2% | 8.8% | 63.8% | 8.7% | 64.5% |
| Cyprus | 21382 | 21022 | 35.9% | 17.0% | 100.0% | 90.5% | 1160 | 1106 | 806 | 72.9% | 15.4% | 24.9% | 14.7% | 26.1% |
| Czech Rep | 26250 | 22391 | 38.4% | 16.9% | 99.9% | 98.8% | 1438 | 1438 | 1009 | 70.2% | 16.7% | 27.0% | 16.7% | 27.0% |
| Denmark | 6283 | 6283 | 66.1% | 51.3% | 97.8% | 98.5% | 2051 | 2051 | 1001 | 48.8% | 49.4% | 31.5% | 49.4% | 31.5% |

Cont/

| | Screening stage 1 (of all properties) | | | | Screening stage 2 (of households with one or more child aged 9-16) | | | Outcomes at the interview stage (among households with internet using children) | | | Combined sample eligibility and response rates | | Combined field eligibility and rates | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 10A | 10B | 10C | 10D | 10E | 10F | 10G | 10H | 10I | 10J | 10K | 10L | 10M | 10N |
| | Total addresses visited (N) | Total residential properties (N) | Screened for a child aged 9-16 (out of residential properties) (%) | Child Eligible (households with a child aged 9-16 out of those screened) (%) | Screened for internet use (out of those with 9-16s) (%) | Internet Eligible (household with 1+ internet using child out of those screened for internet use) (%) | Total with internet eligible children (households with 1+ child who uses the internet) (N) | Total available for fieldwork (out of eligible but excluding ill/away/language barrier) (N) | Total interviewed (N) | Interviewed (out of available for fieldwork) (%) | Fully eligible (out of all screened for child aged 9-16) (%) | Combined sample response rate (%) | Available for fieldwork (households with 1+ child using internet who are not ill/away/language barrier) (%) | Combined response rate based on those available for fieldwork (%) |
| Estonia | 12050 | 11971 | 87.6% | 10.9% | 97.0% | 99.0% | 1098 | 1085 | 1005 | 92.6% | 10.5% | 77.8% | 10.3% | 78.8% |
| Finland | 3263 | 3200 | 79.0% | 46.9% | 97.2% | 99.4% | 1145 | 1137 | 1017 | 89.4% | 45.3% | 68.2% | 45.0% | 68.7% |
| France | 15600 | 15481 | 45.4% | 16.2% | 100.0% | 97.9% | 1114 | 1089 | 1000 | 91.8% | 15.8% | 40.8% | 15.5% | 41.7% |
| Germany | 6610 | 6563 | 30.5% | 51.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 1024 | 1024 | 1023 | 99.9% | 51.1% | 30.5% | 51.1% | 30.5% |
| Greece | 4435 | 4365 | 74.4% | 30.8% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 100.0% | 30.8% | 74.4% | 30.8% | 74.4% |
| Hungary | 1731 | 1702 | 61.5% | 96.3% | 100.0% | 99.5% | 1003 | 1002 | 1000 | 99.8% | 95.8% | 61.3% | 95.7% | 61.4% |

Cont/

| | Screening stage 1 (of all properties) | | | | Screening stage 2 (of households with one or more child aged 9-16) | | | Outcomes at the interview stage (among households with internet using children) | | | Combined sample eligibility and response rates | | Combined field eligibility and rates | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 10A | 10B | 10C | 10D | 10E | 10F | 10G | 10H | 10I | 10J | 10K | 10L | 10M | 10N |
| | Total addresses visited (N) | Total residential properties (N) | Screened for a child aged 9-16 (out of residential properties) (%) | Child Eligible (households with a child aged 9-16 out of those screened) (%) | Screened for internet use (out of those with 9-16s) (%) | Internet Eligible (household with 1+ internet using child out of those screened for internet use) (%) | Total with internet eligible children (households with 1+ child who uses the internet) (N) | Total available for fieldwork (out of eligible but excluding ill/away/language barrier) (N) | Total interviewed (N) | Interviewed (out of available for fieldwork) (%) | Fully eligible (out of all screened for child aged 9-16) (%) | Combined sample response rate (%) | Available for fieldwork (households with 1+ child using internet who are not ill/away/language barrier) (%) | Combined response rate based on those available for fieldwork (%) |
| Ireland | 21000 | 20795 | 38.9% | 18.9% | 65.9% | 100.0% | 1004 | 1003 | 990 | 98.7% | 12.4% | 25.3% | 12.4% | 25.3% |
| Italy | 48071 | 44770 | 52.6% | 6.6% | 97.1% | 85.4% | 1295 | 1295 | 1021 | 78.8% | 5.5% | 40.2% | 5.5% | 40.2% |
| Lithuania | 13240 | 12999 | 78.6% | 9.9% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 1007 | 1007 | 1006 | 99.9% | 9.9% | 78.5% | 9.9% | 78.5% |
| Netherlands | 77928 | 76676 | 47.9% | 7.7% | 100.0% | 99.1% | 2797 | 2638 | 1004 | 38.1% | 7.6% | 17.2% | 7.2% | 18.2% |
| Norway | 71743 | 44536 | 34.2% | 11.1% | 99.8% | 98.6% | 1669 | 1669 | 1019 | 61.1% | 11.0% | 20.9% | 11.0% | 20.9% |

Cont/

| | Screening stage 1 (of all properties) | | | | Screening stage 2 (of households with one or more child aged 9-16) | | | Outcomes at the interview stage (among households with internet using children) | | | Combined sample eligibility and response rates | | Combined field eligibility and rates | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 10A | 10B | 10C | 10D | 10E | 10F | 10G | 10H | 10I | 10J | 10K | 10L | 10M | 10N |
| | Total addresses visited (N) | Total residential properties (N) | Screened for a child aged 9-16 (out of residential properties) (%) | Child Eligible (households with a child aged 9-16 out of those screened) (%) | Screened for internet use (out of those with 9-16s) (%) | Internet Eligible (household with 1+ internet using child out of those screened for internet use) (%) | Total with internet eligible children (households with 1+ child who uses the internet) (N) | Total available for fieldwork (out of eligible but excluding ill/away/language barrier) (N) | Total interviewed (N) | Interviewed (out of available for fieldwork) (%) | Fully eligible (out of all screened for child aged 9-16) (%) | Combined sample response rate (%) | Available for fieldwork (households with 1+ child using internet who are not ill/away/language barrier) (%) | Combined response rate based on those available for fieldwork (%) |
| Poland | 2781 | 2760 | 37.5% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 1034 | 1034 | 1034 | 100.0% | 100.0% | 37.5% | 100.0% | 37.5% |
| Portugal | 5309 | 5023 | 77.7% | 26.5% | 98.2% | 99.4% | 1010 | 1010 | 1000 | 99.0% | 25.9% | 75.5% | 25.9% | 75.5% |
| Romania | 8055 | 7876 | 89.0% | 16.8% | 97.9% | 95.0% | 1093 | 1093 | 1041 | 95.2% | 15.6% | 83.0% | 15.6% | 83.0% |
| Slovenia | 3661 | 3656 | 32.7% | 94.8% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 1132 | 1132 | 1000 | 88.3% | 94.8% | 28.9% | 94.8% | 28.9% |
| Spain | 16611 | 16259 | 63.7% | 12.1% | 98.3% | 97.0% | 1191 | 1187 | 1024 | 86.3% | 11.5% | 53.8% | 11.5% | 54.0% |

Cont/

| | Screening stage 1 (of all properties) | | | | Screening stage 2 (of households with one or more child aged 9-16) | | | Outcomes at the interview stage (among households with internet using children) | | | Combined sample eligibility and response rates | | Combined field eligibility and rates | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 10A | 10B | 10C | 10D | 10E | 10F | 10G | 10H | 10I | 10J | 10K | 10L | 10M | 10N |
| | Total addresses visited (N) | Total residential properties (N) | Screened for a child aged 9-16 (out of residential properties) (%) | Child Eligible (households with a child aged 9-16 out of those screened) (%) | Screened for internet use (out of those with 9-16s) (%) | Internet Eligible (household with 1+ internet using child out of those screened for internet use) (%) | Total with internet eligible children (households with 1+ child who uses the internet) (N) | Total available for fieldwork (out of eligible but excluding ill/away/language barrier) (N) | Total interviewed (N) | Interviewed (out of available for fieldwork) (%) | Fully eligible (out of all screened for child aged 9-16) (%) | Combined sample response rate (%) | Available for fieldwork (households with 1+ child using internet who are not ill/away/language barrier) (%) | Combined response rate based on those available for fieldwork (%) |
| Sweden | 2703 | 2696 | 79.5% | 53.0% | 99.6% | 99.3% | 1125 | 1109 | 1000 | 90.2% | 52.5% | 70.4% | 51.7% | 71.5% |
| Turkey | 7124 | 6508 | 62.2% | 25.5% | 98.7% | 100.0% | 1018 | 1018 | 1018 | 100.0 % | 25.1% | 61.4% | 25.1% | 61.4% |
| UK | 11134 | 10927 | 71.1% | 14.5% | 97.7% | 99.0% | 1091 | 1087 | 1032 | 94.9% | 14.0% | 65.7% | 14.0% | 65.9% |
| **Total** | **425714** | **384856** | **52.9%** | **16.10%** | **97.4%** | **97.8%** | **31025** | **30723** | **25144** | **81.8%** | **15.3%** | **41.8%** | **15.1%** | **42.2%** |

## 8. Data Processing, quality control and editing

### 8.1 Data entry and processing

As noted above some countries administered surveys using CAPI, others used PAPI. CAPI captures respondents' answers electronically during fieldwork, so no data entry is required. For countries using PAPI, the data from paper questionnaires was either scanned, or data entered by local data processing teams. Industry standard quality control and back check procedures were carried out to ensure a high quality of data (see below: section 8.2).

Although all local agencies processed their own data, a uniform collection of data across all countries was ensured through the use of a single datamap provided centrally by the core survey team. Raw datasets were uploaded by agencies to WebADC - a centralised online data processing platform – with each case containing contact sheet, screening, parent questionnaire and child questionnaire data for one household.

To ensure that data was processed correctly, local agency data sets had to pass a series of basic quality checks before being accepted by the WebADC platform. Such checks included considering if responses were valid and whether ID variables were consistent. A range of further quality, consistency and edits checks were considered centrally by the core project team using Initial data – more detail about the edits applied to the data set is provided below.

At all times, and in line with data protection legislation and professional industry standards (ESOMAR), data was held securely and kept confidential. Furthermore, only anonymised data were uploaded via Web ADC for anonymised central analysis.

### 8.2 Quality control

Strict quality measures were implemented at every stage of the data collection and production process. This tight monitoring allowed for the early detection of any potential problems which could be addressed in a timely way, thus maintaining quality of data throughout.

Checks for all returned materials included:

- Check of returned Summary Contact Sheets: to ensure that the pre-defined random-walk procedure was strictly applied and that a summary outcome was coded for the addresses contacted.
- Check of returned Follow-Up Contact Sheets: to ensure that the birthday method for random-child selection was correctly used[4], to ensure that the parent and child consent was obtained for all interviews and that the interviewers had completed the child and head of household profile information for all households with a child aged 9-16.
- Check of returned interview packs: to ensure that the correct survey forms were used and none were missing.

In total 15% of interviews for each interviewer received a quality back check, focused on either the contact sheet or the interview itself: For around five per cent, local supervisors checked contact sheet processes were implemented correctly on the ground during fieldwork. For around 10%, telephone call backs to respondents checked the following:

- Respondent's memory of the interview (gender of interviewer, day, time and duration, mode of interviewing, use of show cards, topics of the survey)
- Answers to some key questions (mainly screener questions about the parent and child).

[4] In a small number of cases in the final data set, a non-selected child had been interviewed. However, the profile by age and gender was reviewed and addressed in the overall approach to non-response weighting, discussed further below.

Checks on early completed questionnaires check:

- If filtering and routing was working correctly/being respected.
- If questions had been missed out due to interviewer error.
- The general quality of the data.

Each agency completed a quality-check monitoring form (provided by central project team) early on in fieldwork confirming that the appropriate checks had been completed, and any issues rectified.

At the data entry stage, for a proportion of cases in each country, data entry was back-checked to verify that data entry was set-up according to the data map provided and to check if responses were captured exactly in the way they were recorded by interviewers and respondents. Checks required by local agencies included:

- Ensuring filtering has been set up correctly
- No questions missed
- No responses miss-keyed
- If there are blanks or don't knows in the demographic section, the fieldwork department was encouraged to contact the interviewer or interviewee in order to complete the missing information.
- If Contact sheet ID numbers are missing, they had to be identified and entered for 100% of cases
- If there were multiple blanks or don't knows across the entire questionnaire and/or sections of the questionnaire are not filled in or filters/routings are not respected properly, the questionnaire was not retained for subsequent processing. A data count was run checking for instances where more than 30% of responses to the parent and the child questionnaire were not valid, and this enabled the survey team order to consider whether such instances should be treated as incompletes and potentially removed from the data. There were no cases where both the parent and child interview had over 30% invalid responses and needed to be removed.

**8.3 Data editing**

A wide range of automatic routing and edit checks (ie checks to disallow out of range responses) are built into CAPI to ensure accuracy of completion.

However, for paper-based surveys this is not possible, and as for all PAPI studies it was necessary to carry out edit checks on the data to identify and address errors on a small proportion of cases for some questions. Inconsistencies are particularly likely to occur with any self-completion questionnaire due to the lack of interviewer administration. Therefore particular attention was paid to the child self completion questionnaires.

The first step was to investigate any inconsistencies found with fieldwork agencies to identify possible courses and solutions – for example, checking for any data entry errors that could be corrected, or raising issues with interviewers to establish why issues might have occurred. Where inconsistencies still remained, data editing was considered, and applied where logical to support data quality and consistency. Importantly, edits were also applied in ways that supported consistency with edit checks and routing implemented in CAPI. The level of editing required was low reflecting that children had a good level of understanding of the questionnaire. The edits applied were as follows.

*Routing:* A check was carried out to identify instances where questions with filtered bases routed from responses to previous questions had been answered by the respondents whose previous responses indicated eligibility to proceed. Based on a review of the responses to those follow-up questions, edits were applied to route respondents out of later questions where earlier responses indicated that the questions were not relevant to them. For example, a review of follow-up responses identified that in many cases respondents had coded response options such as "don't know" or "not very much," or "not applicable". This approach also provided consistency between PAPI and the routing built into CAPI.

*Inappropriate multi-coding:* There were some instances where multiple codes were selected at single code questions. In these cases it is not possible to know which is the "correct" answer, so items were coded as "no answer" for cases where this applied. There were also some instances of multi-code questions, where a respondent had chosen one or more answer options – and also a don't know or prefer not to say option. In these cases, based on a review of the data it seemed appropriate to edit out the don't know/prefer not to say response, because the main response codes coded seemed likely to be valid.

*Addressing inconsistent responses:* A range of consistency checks were carried out to check responses that were illogical based on responses to other questions, or general reasonableness. The table below details the checks carried out, and any edits which were applied to address these.

*Table 11: Detail of non-routing based edits*

| Questions | Approach/ Details of any edits applied |
|---|---|
| **Child age**<br><br>Checking contact sheet: SCR.3b/4b Age of selected child;<br><br>Against the child age question in the parent questionnaire: Q.201 What is the age of your child? | The age of the interviewed child in the contact sheet was edited, where necessary, to ensure it referenced the child who had completed the questionnaires.<br><br>If there was more than one possible match (among the children recorded in the contact sheet data) then the child that uses the internet (SCR3D) was identified as the selected child. If both/all (or neither/none) used the internet then one child was selected at random. In order to avoid confusion, the contact sheet selected child age variable was not included in the main survey data set (just in the contact sheet data set). This ensured that all data users will use the same variable for analysis on child age (as recorded during the main interview). All selected children were then coded as internet users at SCR3D for consistency (as per the profile of survey participants desired). |
| **Child gender**<br><br>Checking contact sheet: SCR.3c/4c Gender of selected child;<br><br>Against the child gender question in the parent questionnaire: Q.201b Gender1 of child? | As above. |
| **Number of children living in house**<br><br>Checking contact sheet: SCR.2 Number of children aged 9-16 living in the household;<br><br>Against parent questionnaire variable: Q202 number of children aged 0-17 living in the household. | If more children were reported at SCR2 than Q202, Q202 was edited to be equal to the response at SCR2. If there was no valid response at Q202 and SCR2, answers were back-coded from SCR3. If there was no data recorded at SCR2,SCR3 and Q202 responses were edited to refer to 1 child. |
| Child use of communication media on the internet.<br><br>Q324a-f asked children which of a range of activities they had done in the last year. This was checked against answers at Q308a-f which asked how often they had done the same activities in the past month.<br><br>a) email usage<br>b) visited a social networking profile<br>c) Visited a chat room<br>d) used instant messaging<br>e) Played games with other people on the internet<br>f) Spent time in a virtual world | If a child had coded “no” (not done in the past year) at Q324 for activities they had reported doing in the past month at Q308, the response at Q324 was edited to show that they had participated in it. |

## 9. Data outputs

### 9.1 Main outputs

Data from the study has been made available in a number of formats:

- *European wide computer tables, by country and demographic variables*: Computer tables have been provided in pdf and excel formats, detailing per centage findings for all questions in the survey for Europe as a whole, and broken down by country and other key demographics (one set provides data by country, and one by demographic variables).
- *Individual country tables*: again, in both pdf and excel formats, 25 individual sets of country-level tables have been produced, detailing per centage findings for all questions in the survey for the country as a whole, and by demographics and region within each country.
- *European wide SPSS:* All questionnaire data and some key contact sheet variables (such as region, education and occupation of head of household), along with weighting variables, and some para-data (eg who was present in the room when interviews were conducted) have been provided in an SPSS file. Details of the content, structure, and labelling conventions used in the SPSS are provided in a separate Data Dictionary.
- *Individual Country SPSS:* Separate individual SPSS files are also available for each country. These files reflect the same content/structure/labling as the European data, but excluding country-specific variables relevant to the other countries. Again, details of the content, structure, and labelling conventions used in the SPSS are provided in a separate Data Dictionary.
- *Verbatims file:* The survey included two open ended questions (QP230 and QC323) where parents and children were asked to comment on their experience of potential risks on the internet. These verbatim comments were produced in a separate excel file, alongside the case Serial Number (to allow for verbatims to be matched back to SPSS data), region, gender and age.

### 9.2 Derived variables

Once the data had been processed and all edits applied, derived variables were created to allow for further analysis which considered differences between groups of respondents.

*Social Economic Status (SES)*

One key derived variable was the SES status of the household. Information relating to the chief income earner's level of education and occupation was collected during the screening process. As outlined in the table below, responses to level of education and employment were then grouped and cross-referenced with each other to calculate one of three levels of SES: low, middle and high.

***Table 12: Socio-Economic Status of the Chief Income Earner***

| | | Education of Main Wage Earner (SCR6) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Less than primary | Primary | Secondary | Tertiary |
| **Occupation of Main wage earner (SCR7)** | General management / Self employed professional | Low | Middle | High | High |
| | Employed professional / Middle management / Business prop | Low | Low | High | High |
| | Farmer / Fisherman | Low | Low | High | High |
| | Employed desk position / Owner of shop, craftsmen | Low | Low | Middle | High |
| | Employed position, not at a desk / Supervisor, skilled manual worker | Low | Low | Middle | High |
| | Unskilled manual worker, servant | Low | Low | Low | Low |
| | Non active (housework, student, unemployed) | Low | Low | Low | Middle |
| | Non active retired | Low | Low | Middle | Middle |

However, it should be noted that, as is often the case with European research, a uniform approach was taken to the calculation of SES across all 25 countries, and therefore SES is not relative to the differences between the socio-demographic make up of each country.

Further details of this and all other derived variable and how they have been created can be found in the Data Dictionary. An additional 'SES pack' has been provided in both table and SPSS format, allowing for further exploration into the relationship between education and occupation in each country.

*Urban/rural indicator*

Another key variable for understanding the data is 'rurality'. Given that there is no standard European-wide measure of rurality, information on the local population has been provided in two variables: size of locality per sample point (named 'AreaSize' in the SPSS file) and population density per square kilometre (named 'PopDensity' in SPSS file). However, in using these variables it should be noted that: i) 'Size of locality' has been collected at the lowest possible level, and therefore the geographical unit which the 'size of locality' variable refers to varies by country; and ii) only 13 countries have access to population density data at a suitably local level.

As noted above there is no standard European-wide measure of rurality, therefore in order to aid analysis of the data set, a new bespoke derived variable called 'Rurality' was created. As outlined in the table below, three degrees of urbanisation - 'small', 'medium' and 'large' - were identified for each country using population density or, where this was not available, size of locality. It should be noted that rather than reflecting official national statistics of urban/rural indicators in each country, this variable has been created so that each country has a broadly even split of each level of rurality: 1/3 'small'; 1/3 'medium' and 1/3 'large'. This variable provides an indication of the *relative* rurality/urbanity of the address of each respondent within each country: those in the 'small' category live in relatively rural areas of the country, and those classified as living in 'large' areas in relatively urbanised areas of the country. Note that the distribution of interviews across the 'AreaSize' and 'PopDensity' variables varies by country, which reflects the different types and sizes of primary sampling units used in each country.

Using Austria as an example, the table outlines that those households classed as having a 'small' degree of urbanisation are those with a population density of between 0-150 people per square km; those with a 'medium' degree of urbanisation have a population density of between 150-300; and a 'large' degree of urbanisation is defined as areas with 1,000+ per square km.

***Table 13: Definition of degrees of urbanisation in variable: 'Rurality'***

| | Size of locality (per sampling point) | | | | | | | Population Density (per square km) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Less than 2,000 | 2,001-10,000 | 10,001-20,000 | 20,001-50,000 | 50,001-100,000 | 100,001-500,000 | More than 500,001 | 0-10 | 10-25 | 25-50 | 50-75 | 75-100 | 100-150 | 150-300 | 300-1000 | 1000+ |
| Austria | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | | | | MEDIUM | | LARGE |
| Belgium | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | | | | | MEDIUM | LARGE |
| Bulgaria | SMALL | | | MEDIUM | | | LARGE | | | | | | | | | |
| Cyprus | SMALL | MEDIUM | | LARGE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Czech Rep | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | | | | | MEDIUM | LARGE |
| Denmark | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | | | MEDIUM | | LARGE | |
| Estonia | | | | | | | | SMALL | | MEDIUM | | | | | | LARGE |
| Finland | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | MEDIUM | | | | LARGE | |
| France | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | | | | MEDIUM | | LARGE |
| Germany | SMALL | | | | MEDIUM | | LARGE | | | | | | | | | |
| Greece | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | | | MEDIUM | | | LARGE |
| Hungary | SMALL | | | MEDIUM | | | LARGE | | | | | | | | | |
| Ireland | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | MEDIUM | | | | | LARGE |
| Italy | SMALL | | | MEDIUM | | | LARGE | | | | | | | | | |
| Lithuania | SMALL | | | MEDIUM | | | LARGE | | | | | | | | | |
| Netherlands | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | | | | | MEDIUM | LARGE |
| Norway | SMALL | | | | | MEDIUM | LARGE | | | | | | | | | |
| Poland | SMALL | | | MEDIUM | | | LARGE | | | | | | | | | |
| Portugal | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | | | MEDIUM | | | LARGE |
| Romania | SMALL | | MEDIUM | | LARGE | | | | | | | | | | | |

(Continued…)

| | Size of locality (per sampling point) | | | | | | | Population Density (per square km) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Less than 2,000 | 2,001-10,000 | 10,001-20,000 | 20,001-50,000 | 50,001-100,000 | 100,001-500,000 | More than 500,001 | 0-10 | 10-25 | 25-50 | 50-75 | 75-100 | 100-150 | 150-300 | 300-1000 | 1000+ |
| Slovenia | SMALL | MEDIUM | | | LARGE | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spain | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | | | | MEDIUM | | LARGE |
| Sweden | SMALL | | | | MEDIUM | LARGE | | | | | | | | | | |
| Turkey | SMALL | MEDIUM | LARGE | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| UK | | | | | | | | SMALL | | | | | | | MEDIUM | LARGE |

## 10. Data weighting and design effects

Weights were applied to the data to improve the representativeness of the achieved sample.

There are three forms of weighting applied to the data:

- country-specific design weights which adjust for unequal probabilities of selection; for example, these correct for the fact that children in households with two eligible children only had half the chance of selection as one-child households;
- country-specific non-response weights which correct for bias caused by varying response rates across different types of respondent within each country. These weights correct for differences between the achieved profile of respondents and the population profile on key demographic variables – age, gender, region and education of the chief income earner in the household;
- a European level weight which adjusts for country level contribution to the overall results. This weight corrects for the fact that the same number of interviews were conducted per country, despite the fact that the population of (internet-using) 9-16 year olds in each country is different. This weight adjusts each country's contribution to the European-level results in proportion to the actual population size of internet-using children.

As the survey did not use a simple random sampling methodology, we have also calculated the design effects associated with the method. Design effects are used to calculate the loss of precision associated with the results derived from any method which departs from a simple random sampling approach. This loss of precision is caused by two elements of survey design: (i) the clustering of interviews geographically, and (ii) weighting. The design effects associated with our fieldwork and weighting approach are described below in section 10.7.

### 10.1 Approach to non-response weighting

Non-response weights were calculated separately for each country.

Most survey designs would require only one stage of non-response weighting: the achieved sample would be weighted back to the profile of either the issued sample or the survey population. However, with this survey the achieved sample is purposively different from the issued sample, since we screened all the issued sample to identify a sub-set of households in the population (i.e. those containing at least one child aged 9-16 who used the internet).

The sample issued in each country was representative of the country's population, while the population we interviewed was children who use the internet. As such, the issued sample includes households which were ineligible for the survey: i.e. households which did not include children, and households which included children who were not internet users. Given the specific nature of the population the survey represents – i.e. children aged 9-16 who use the internet – there is no accurate population data available to use for weighting.

Instead, the non-response weights are based on data collected during the screening process on contact sheets and combined with general population data relating to households with children at national level. This has been done based on data from two stages of the sampling and recruitment process. First our screened sample (consisting of all children in screened households including both internet users and non-users) was weighted according to the known population data for all children aged 9-16 (users + non-users) by age, gender and region.

Once the first stage of weights had been applied, the non-internet users were excluded to provide a sample of internet users that is representative of the population of internet-using children in terms of age, gender and region. It is this that was used to weight the interviewed sample back to.

By weighting the screened sample first, we can be confident that the starting point (the screened sample of children) is representative of the population in terms of these variables and therefore when the sample of users is extracted, we can be confident that the profile used to weight the interviewed sample is also representative.

### 10.2 Stages of weighting

The three types of weighting, with non-response weighting being split into two, meant that weights are calculated and applied in four stages (see below). However they are combined to give a single weight for analysis:

- Together, the design weights and the two stages of non-response weighting, produce an **individual weight** for each respondent. This weight should be applied whenever any analysis is conducted for a single country (for example, looking at results and sub-group differences for Denmark). This weight is labelled 'weightb' in the SPSS file.
- The final European adjustment is calculated at the **country level**, which means that every respondent in the same country will be given the same final adjustment factor. This factor is combined with the individual weight to give a single weight which should be applied when analysis of the whole dataset is conducted (for example, looking at results and sub-group differences for Europe). This weight is labelled 'weight' in the SPSS file.

### 10.3 Individual weights

Further information about the construction of the individual weight is provided below.

1) **Non-response weights 1** - applied to the sample of *all screened children* (ie this will include not only those who completed an interview, but those who were eligible but were not interviewed and those who were ineligible non-users of the internet). For each country, population distributions of the population of children aged 9-16 by age, gender and region were identified by local agencies. These are used as targets for *rim weighting* for each country. Rim weighting is a process whereby the population figures are fed into a piece of software which iteratively runs through different possibilities until it comes to the best fit weights for the data[5].

   Profiles for the rim weights were created for each country based on age x gender, and region. The regions used were those corresponding to the region variables in the final data file, and are typically the regions used at the sampling stage.

[5] With this approach, rather than interlocking all weighting variables, each is treated on a marginal basis. For example breaking the sample down into cells by age within sex within region is usually impractical due to limitations on the sample size. All that rim weighting requires is the distribution for each of these variables. The computer then calculates the 'best' fit for the data across all the variables included in the weighting. The advantages to this approach are that the weighting can include a greater number of variables, and it is not necessary to have targets for all the interlocked cells. As such, rim-weighting is the preferred option in most situations.

*Table 14. Regions used for Non-response weighting by country*

| Regions used for Non-response weighting by country | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Austria** | NUTS 2 | **Ireland** | NUTS 3 |
| **Belgium** | NUTS 2 | **Italy** | NUTS 1 |
| **Bulgaria** | NUTS 2 | **Lithuania** | NUTS 3 |
| **Cyprus** | CY cities | **Netherlands** | Major regions |
| **Czech Republic** | NUTS 3 | **Norway** | Major regions |
| **Denmark** | NUTS 2 | **Poland** | NUTS 2 |
| **Estonia** | NUTS 3 | **Portugal** | NUTS2 |
| **Finland** | NUTS 2 | **Romania** | NUTS 2 |
| **France** | Major regions | **Slovenia** | NUTS 3 |
| **Germany** | NUTS 1 | **Spain** | NUTS 2 |
| **Greece** | NUTS 2 | **Sweden** | NUTS 2 |
| **Hungary** | NUTS 2 | **Turkey** | NUTS 1 |
| | | **UK** | NUTS 1 |

2) **Design weights** - applied to the sample of *all eligible children* (all children aged 9-16 who use the internet). Design weights adjust for unequal probabilities of selection during sampling: at eligible addresses one child per household was selected for interview from all those who were eligible. This introduces unequal probabilities of selection whereby a child from a household with a number of eligible children has a lower chance of selection than a child from a household with only one eligible child. We applied design weights to correct for these unequal probabilities of selection.

   The weights are calculated as the inverse of the selection probability, for example where there are 3 eligible children (aged 9-16 who use the internet) the weight would be 1/(1/3) = 3.

3) **Non-response weights 2** - applied to the final sample of *all interviewed children.* The weighted profile (ie with NR1 x DW already applied to the data) of all eligible children – distributions of children by age, gender, region and education of the chief income earner in the household – are used as targets for rim weighting for each country. The regions used for weighting are the same as those used for Non-response weights 1, as described above.

These three stages are combined to produce one single weight for each respondent. Weights are capped (a maximum of 6 times the average weight is set) to avoid any extreme weights which could cause peculiarities in the data as well as large design effects. The weights were then rescaled (divided by the average weight for each country); a purely aesthetic process which means the weighted base reflects the number of respondents interviewed.

Since these individual weights are calculated separately for each respondent based on household make-up and demographic profile of the country, the range and average weight varies from one country to the next.

**10.4 European weights (for analysis of the aggregate dataset)**

4) **European weights** - applied to the *full aggregate dataset* (all countries) as the last stage of the weighting process, in order to adjust the contribution each country makes to the data at the European level

This is a final weight for European level analysis which adjusts for country level contribution to the overall results relative to population size. Respondents in countries with a large population of child internet users are given a greater weight than those in countries with a smaller population which means that the larger countries contribute more to the total figures than smaller ones.

As there is no available data on the population of children aged 9-16 who use the internet by country to use for this stage we have estimated these figures using a combination of data from a range of sources. For most countries we drew on data from the Eurobarometer and Eurostat. Eurobarometer data from 2008 showed the proportion of children in the country using the internet; other data from Eurobarometer showed the change over time in internet use for 16-24 year olds for 2008-2009. We used these data to derive an estimate of the proportion of children age 9-16 using the internet in 2009 (i.e. by applying the same rate of increase as observed for 16-24 year olds to the 2008 Eurobarometer figures for internet use among 9-16 year olds). In five countries where Eurobarometer data on the changing proportion of internet users over time were not available, we scaled figures by the average increase (2%) across Europe. In two countries, data on the proportion of 9-16 year olds using the Internet in 2008 was unavailable: in Norway, we assumed the same proportion of internet users as in Sweden; for Turkey results were estimated from two key Turkish Government data sources[6].

[6] The sources used were: the Ministry of Social and Family Research, whose data showed 67.2% children age 13-18 use the Internet, and results from the 'ICT Usage in Households, 2004-2010' from the Turkish Statistical Institute (2010) which showed 62.9% 16-24 had used the internet in the last 3 months. An average of these two figures was taken and used as the internet penetration rate for 9-16 year olds.

*Table 15. Number of children aged 9-16 who use the internet, per country*

| Country | Children in population 9-16 years[7] (N) | Estimated children online[8] (%) | European internet-using children per country (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Austria (AT) | 739,722 | 86% | 1.49% |
| Belgium (BE) | 974,461 | 78% | 1.78% |
| Bulgaria (BG) | 554,032 | 91% | 1.2% |
| Cyprus (CY) | 82,059 | 68% | 0.13% |
| Czech Republic (CZ) | 809,443 | 90% | 1.71% |
| Denmark (DE) | 558,236 | 97% | 1.27% |
| Estonia (EE) | 105,460 | 96% | 0.24% |
| Finland (FI) | 501,387 | 98% | 1.15% |
| France (FR) | 6,005,850 | 87% | 12.26% |
| Germany (DE) | 6,419,300 | 86% | 12.95% |
| Greece (EL) | 862,481 | 59% | 1.19% |
| Hungary (HU) | 854,406 | 93% | 1.86% |
| Italy (IT) | 4,516,646 | 55% | 5.83% |
| Ireland (IE) | 458,260 | 93% | 1. 00% |
| Lithuania (LT) | 320,821 | 96% | 0.72% |
| Netherlands (NL) | 1,582,903 | 96% | 3.57% |
| Norway (NO) | 503,160 | 98% | 1.16% |
| Poland (PL) | 3,490,271 | 97% | 7.94% |
| Portugal (PT) | 871,444 | 78% | 1.59% |
| Romania (RO) | 1,821,471 | 78% | 3.33% |

[7] Population figures taken from Eurostat.

[8] Figures for internet penetration are estimated from a combination of data from the Eurobarometer (% children using the internet in 2008) and Eurostat (change in internet penetration, as measured among 16-24s 2008-2009). Internet penetration for 2010 was estimated by taking the actual penetration in 2008 and extrapolating the rate of growth in internet use measured by Eurostat across 2009-2010. As 2009 data was unavailable for the UK and Belgium, estimates for UK and Belgium are based on 2008 data, scaled up by the average population change across the countries where 2009 data are available. Eurostat gives figures for the changing proportion of 16-24 year olds who have used the internet in the past year, and those who have ever used the internet. The change in internet penetration was estimated at being between these two figures. Where data on the change in internet penetration among 16-24s was unavailable, the average rate of change of 2 percentage points was assumed. Generally figures were rounded up rather than down, since the change in internet use among 9-16s was assumed to be higher than among 16-24 year olds. Note that figures for Norway were unavailable and so were estimated based on the data for Sweden. Figures for Turkey were estimated from two local sources: the Ministry of Social and Family Research, whose data showed 67.2% children age 13-18 use the Internet, and results from the 'ICT Usage in Households, 2004-2010' from the Turkish Statistical Institute (2010) which showed 62.9% 16-24 had used the internet in the last 3 months. An average of these two figures was taken and used as the internet penetration rate for 9-16 year olds.

(Continued…)

| Country | Children in population 9-16 years[9] (N) | Estimated children online[10] (%) | European internet-using children per country (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Slovenia (SI) | 154,063 | 95% | 0.34% |
| Spain (ES) | 3,401,338 | 80% | 6.38% |
| Sweden (SE) | 861,183 | 98% | 1.98% |
| Turkey (TR) | 10,297,791 | 65% | 15.70% |
| United Kingdom (UK) | 5,861,598 | 98% | 13.20% |

These figures were used to generate an estimate of the total number of 9-16 year old internet-users in the population of each country. These figures were then used to calculate the proportion of internet users across the 25 countries covered by the survey that fall within each country. For example, 4% of all internet users across the countries covered by the survey are in Belgium, and therefore results from Belgium are weighted down to account for only 4% of the total 25,000 interviews. The EU relative weights therefore adjust the data to be representative of the internet-using 9-16 year old population of the 25 countries covered by the survey.

[9] Population figures taken from Eurostat.

[10] Figures for internet penetration are estimated from a combination of data from the Eurobarometer (% children using the internet in 2008) and Eurostat (change in internet penetration, as measured among 16-24s 2008-2009). Internet penetration for 2010 was estimated by taking the actual penetration in 2008 and extrapolating the rate of growth in internet use measured by Eurostat across 2009-2010. As 2009 data was unavailable for the UK and Belgium, estimates for UK and Belgium are based on 2008 data, scaled up by the average population change across the countries where 2009 data are available. Eurostat gives figures for the changing proportion of 16-24 year olds who have used the internet in the past year, and those who have ever used the internet. The change in internet penetration was estimated at being between these two figures. Where data on the change in internet penetration among 16-24s was unavailable, the average rate of change of 2 percentage points was assumed. Generally figures were rounded up rather than down, since the change in internet use among 9-16s was assumed to be higher than among 16-24 year olds. Note that figures for Norway were unavailable and so were estimated based on the data for Sweden. Figures for Turkey were estimated from two local sources: the Ministry of Social and Family Research, whose data showed 67.2% children age 13-18 use the Internet, and results from the 'ICT Usage in Households, 2004-2010' from the Turkish Statistical Institute (2010) which showed 62.9% 16-24 had used the internet in the last 3 months. An average of these two figures was taken and used as the internet penetration rate for 9-16 year olds.

The table below outlines the difference between unweighted and weighted data once this fourth stage of weighting has been applied.

***Table 16: Weighted and unweighted country profiles***

| Country | Actual number of interviews conducted | % of total number of in-terviews | Weighted number of interviews for 'All Country' analysis | % of weighted total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 1000 | 4.0% | 375 | 1.5% |
| Belgium | 1006 | 4.0% | 448 | 1.8% |
| Bulgaria | 1088 | 4.3% | 302 | 1.2% |
| Cyprus | 806 | 3.2% | 33 | 0.1% |
| Czech Republic | 1009 | 4.0% | 430 | 1.7% |
| Germany | 1023 | 4.1% | 3257 | 13.0% |
| Denmark | 1001 | 4.0% | 319 | 1.3% |
| Estonia | 1005 | 4.0% | 60 | 0.2% |
| Greece | 1000 | 4.0% | 299 | 1.2% |
| Spain | 1024 | 4.1% | 1605 | 6.4% |
| Finland | 1017 | 4.0% | 289 | 1.2% |
| France | 1000 | 4.0% | 3083 | 12.3% |
| Hungary | 1000 | 4.0% | 468 | 1.9% |
| Ireland | 990 | 3.9% | 251 | 1.0% |
| Italy | 1021 | 4.1% | 1466 | 5.8% |
| Lithuania | 1004 | 4.0% | 181 | 0.7% |
| Netherlands | 1004 | 4.0% | 898 | 3.6% |
| Norway | 1019 | 4.1% | 292 | 1.2% |
| Poland | 1034 | 4.1% | 1997 | 7.9% |
| Portugal | 1000 | 4.0% | 400 | 1.6% |
| Romania | 1041 | 4.1 | 837 | 3.3% |
| Sweden | 1000 | 4.0% | 498 | 2.0% |
| Slovenia | 1000 | 4.0% | 86 | 0.3% |
| Turkey | 1018 | 4.0% | 3948 | 15.7% |
| UK | 1032 | 4.1% | 3320 | 13.2% |

### 10.5 Weighting variables in the SPSS file

There are five variables in the SPSS file: Weight, Weightb, Weightc, Weightd, and Weighte.

The main weighting variable ('Weight' in the SPSS file) was used for all European level analysis as it incorporates individual respondent weights as well as the country-level adjustment. As a function of the survey design – i.e. equal numbers of interviews in all European countries, irrespective of their population size – the final European adjustment weights are large for some countries. For example, respondents in Turkey have large up-weights because the country has such a large population. This variable was used for overall results, and analysis at the European level by age, gender, and socio-economic status.

A separate weighting variable ('Weightb' in the SPSS file) was used for country by country analysis, and for analysis looking at any single country. This weight incorporates the individual within-country weights which combine any non-response and design weights that were calculated.

Note that the SPSS file contains three additional weighting variables ('Weightc', 'Weightd' and 'Weighte'). These should not be used for data analysis. These are intermediate weights that cover the first stages of the weighting calculations. 'Weighte' includes the Design Weight, 'Weightd' the Non-response 1 weight, and 'Weightc' the Non-response 1 and design weights. These variables are included for users to judge the impact of the final stage of non-response weighting has had (in some cases very little).

### 10.6 Sampling tolerances

When interpreting the findings it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of children aged 9-16 who use the internet, and not the entire population of 9-16 year olds in each country. Therefore, we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if the whole population of 9-16 year olds in each participating jurisdiction had been interviewed (the 'true' values).

The "margin of error" is a common summary of ***sampling error***, which quantifies uncertainty about (or confidence in) a survey result. Usually, one calculates a 95 percent confidence interval of the format: ***survey estimate +/- margin of error***.

The margin of error depends on the size of the sample: the more interviews conducted (sample size), the smaller the margin of error. It also depends on the study design: any sample design that departs from a simple random design, and any weighting applied to the survey data normally results in a "design effect" that reduces the *effective* sample size (the size that is effective for statistical reliability tests), and a higher margin of error.

### 10.7 Design effects

Design effects are 'the ratio of the sampling variance for a static computed using a [particular design] divided by the sampling variance that would have been obtained from a [Simple Random Sample] of exactly the same size'[11]. The design effect statistic can be usefully applied to indicate the loss of precision in survey results derived using a particular methodology compared with the reliability of results derived using a Simple Random Sampling method. This loss of precision is often indicated by showing how the margin of error for each survey statistic is widened as a result of the survey design. Each statistic in a survey has its own design effect.

[11] Groves, 'Survey Methodology', Wiley (2004), p.105

Design effects apply to the methodology used for EU Kids Online II in a number of ways:

(i) Clustering of interviews: because a face-to-face fieldwork methodology was used, interviews in each country were clustered in geographical areas (rather than being spread randomly across the country). This clustering leads to a loss of precision, insofar as variance in survey results differ between rather than across clusters.

(ii) Weighting: as described above, several stages of weights were applied to adjust country-level estimates. All weights applied are associated with a design effect.

(iii) In addition, at the European level: disproportionate stratification of samples: rather than being sampled in proportion to the population of children within each country, 1,000 interviews were conducted per country. This has the advantage of producing reliable estimates per country. At the aggregate level, however, this design requires corrective weighting (so that each country's results are weighted back to reflect that country's relative population size within the 25 participating countries). These weights are also associated with a design effect. For example, whilst ca. 1,000 interviews are being conducted in both Ireland and Germany, in the European data set as a whole, Ireland cases will be weighted down, whilst Germany cases will be weighted up, reflecting the smaller and larger sizes of the eligible population in each, respectively. As would be the case for any study generating European estimates, design effects arising from this are large, due to the considerable variability in population size between each country.

*Estimating effective sample sizes and sampling tolerances*

Since every estimate in a survey has a different design effect, design effects were calculated in STATA on a range of survey variables. These variables were selected purposively to cover a range of different types of question, and therefore to give an indication of the range of design effects that may apply to different types of question. These questions were also selected to cover some of the key measures of interest from the survey (including of internet use, parental monitoring and knowledge, exposure to risks online and child self-sufficiency) and to provide an indication of the psychological profile of children from different sampling points. The variables used are shown in the table below.

***Table 17. Variables used to calculate design effects***

| Parent variables | Child variables |
|---|---|
| QP215: Do you personally use the internet? Yes/No | QC301a: Please tell me where you use the internet these days? Your bedroom (or other private room) at home. Yes/No |
| QP220a: Which of the following things, if any, do you (or your partner/ other carer) sometimes do with your child? Talk to him/her about what he/she does on the internet. Yes/No/Don't know | QC303: How often do you use the internet? Every day or almost every day/ Once or twice a week/ Once or twice a month/ less than once a month/ Don't know |
| QP220b: Which of the following things, if any, do you (or your partner/ other carer) sometimes do with your child? Sit with him/her while s/he uses the internet (watching what s/he is doing but not really joining in). Yes/No/Don't know | QC110: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered you in some way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it? Yes/No/Prefer not to say/ Don't know |
| QP224a: Do you (or your partner/carer) make use of any of the following for the computer that your child uses MOST OFTEN at home? Parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of website. Yes/No/Don't know | QC106a: How true is this of you? I am easily distracted and find it difficult to concentrate. Not true/ A bit true/ Very true |

(continued…)

| | |
|---|---|
| QP224b: Do you (or your partner/carer) make use of any of the following for the computer that your child uses MOST OFTEN at home? Parental controls or other means of keeping track of the websites they visit. Yes/No/Don't know | QC106b: How true is this of you? Other people my age often treat me as if I wasn't there. Not true/ A bit true/ Very true |
| QP224c: Do you (or your partner/carer) make use of any of the following for the computer that your child uses MOST OFTEN at home? A service of contract that limits the time your child spends on the internet. Yes/No/Don't know | QC106c: How true is this of you? If I am in trouble I can usually think of something to do. Not true/ A bit true/ Very true |
| QP228: As far as you are aware, in the past year, has your child seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered them in some way? For example, made them feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel they shouldn't have seen it? Yes/No/Prefer not to say/Don't know | QC106d: How true is this of you? I take things that are not mine from school, home or elsewhere. Not true/ A bit true/ Very true |
| QP235a: Please tell me whether or not your child has done [each of the following] in the PAST YEAR, as far as your are aware: Gone to a meeting with someone face to face (in person) that he or she first met on the internet. Yes/No/Don't know. | QC106e: How true is this of you? I get on better with adults that with people my own age. Not true/ A bit true/ Very true |
| QP235b: Please tell me whether or not your child has done [each of the following] in the PAST YEAR, as far as your are aware: Seen images on the internet that are obviously sexual – for example, showing people naked or people having sex. Yes/No/Don't know. | QC106f: How true is this of you? I can generally work out how to handle new situations. Not true/ A bit true/ Very true |
| QP235f: Please tell me whether or not your child has done [each of the following] in the PAST YEAR, as far as your are aware: Sent someone else sexual messages (e.g. words, pictures of videos) on the internet. By this we mean images of people naked or having sex. Yes/No/Don't know. | QC106g: How true is this of you? I have many fears, and I am easily scared. Not true/ A bit true/ Very true |

The programme detects the design effect from the sample design and weighting.

The table below shows the results by country, and for the European sample as a whole, giving the unweighted sample size for each country – i.e. the actual number of interviews conducted – as well as the design effects. The easiest way to interpret the design effect is with reference to the effective sample size (calculated as: actual sample/design effect). The effective sample size shows the amount of confidence we have in the reliability of our figures, after adjusting for the impact of the survey design – for example, although 1,005 children in Estonia were interviewed, we have as much confidence in the results as we would have from a simple random sample of 688 children in Estonia.

The European level design effect in particular is inevitably large with this type of design: equal numbers of interviews were conducted in all countries, despite the very large differences in population size, and then large weights were applied to weight the contribution of each country appropriately within the aggregate figures. The main contributing factor to these large design effects is the large European weights. While the total number of interviews conducted was over 25,000 therefore, this equates to an effective sample of 8,509 (i.e. the same level of reliability applies to our achieved sample of 25,000 using a clustered and disproportionately stratified design, as to a sample of 8,509 using a simple random sample).

***Table 18: Design effects and effective sample sizes by country***

| Country | Actual sample size (unweighted base) | Approximate design effect | Approximate effective sample size | Approximate effective sample efficiency | Approximate design factor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | | N | % | |
| Austria | 1,000 | 1.79 | 591 | 59% | 1.34 |
| Belgium | 1,006 | 1.68 | 644 | 64% | 1.30 |
| Bulgaria | 1,088 | 1.56 | 711 | 65% | 1.25 |
| Cyprus | 806 | 1.79 | 591 | 73% | 1.34 |
| Czech Republic | 1,009 | 1.60 | 668 | 66% | 1.27 |
| Germany | 1,023 | 1.67 | 626 | 61% | 1.29 |
| Denmark | 1,001 | 1.45 | 723 | 72% | 1.20 |
| Estonia | 1,005 | 1.51 | 688 | 68% | 1.23 |
| Greece | 1,000 | 1.75 | 616 | 62% | 1.32 |
| Spain | 1,024 | 1.69 | 640 | 62% | 1.30 |
| Finland | 1,017 | 1.38 | 830 | 82% | 1.17 |
| France | 1,000 | 1.36 | 744 | 74% | 1.17 |
| Hungary | 1,000 | 1.57 | 662 | 66% | 1.25 |
| Ireland | 990 | 1.31 | 784 | 79% | 1.14 |
| Italy | 1,021 | 2.05 | 533 | 52% | 1.43 |
| Lithuania | 1,004 | 1.62 | 651 | 65% | 1.27 |
| Netherlands | 1,004 | 1.79 | 591 | 59% | 1.34 |
| Norway | 1,019 | 1.47 | 729 | 72% | 1.21 |
| Poland | 1,034 | 1.75 | 634 | 61% | 1.32 |
| Portugal | 1,000 | 1.63 | 661 | 66% | 1.27 |
| Romania | 1,041 | 1.71 | 663 | 64% | 1.31 |
| Sweden | 1,000 | 1.40 | 771 | 77% | 1.18 |
| Slovenia | 1,000 | 1.51 | 682 | 68% | 1.23 |
| Turkey | 1,018 | 2.39 | 473 | 46% | 1.55 |
| UK | 1,032 | 1.52 | 694 | 67% | 1.23 |

The table below also provides indicative design effects for some key population sub-groups. Design effects are calculated for European level and have been pro-rata'd to other sub-groups to give an indication of the effective sample size per group.

***Table 19: Design effects and effective sample sizes for key sub-groups***

| Population | Actual sample size (unweighted base) | Approximate design effect | Approximate effective sample size | Approximate effective sample efficiency | Approximate design factor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | | N | % | |
| **European wide sample – child-level**[12] | | | | | |
| All | 25,142 | 1.72 | 8,509 | 34% | 1.31 |
| Girls | 12,501 | 1.72 | 4,231 | 34% | 1.31 |
| Boys | 12,641 | 1.72 | 4,278 | 34% | 1.31 |
| 9-10 | 6,433 | 1.72 | 2,177 | 34% | 1.31 |
| 11-12 | 6,249 | 1.72 | 2,115 | 34% | 1.31 |
| 13-14 | 6,239 | 1.72 | 2,112 | 34% | 1.31 |
| 15-16 | 6,221 | 1.72 | 2,105 | 34% | 1.31 |
| SES high[13] | 8,432 | 1.72 | 2,854 | 34% | 1.31 |
| SES medium | 10,629 | 1.72 | 3,597 | 34% | 1.31 |
| SES low | 4,816 | 1.72 | 1,630 | 34% | 1.31 |

[12] Figures for child-level design effects are shown here because most analysis in the report is based on child-level data. Parent design effects at the EU level were slightly less marked: the overall effective sample size for parents was 9,002.
[13] SES classification missing for 1,265 respondents.

*Estimating sampling tolerances*

The tables below provide approximate indications for the sampling tolerances that apply to data from the survey at the '95% confidence interval'. This means that the chances are 19 in 20 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range, taking into account the design effect figures above.

Sampling tolerances vary depending on the distribution of responses, and are highest for survey estimates that are 50% of the sample, and lower for smaller proportions. As such figures have been provided for three different survey estimates. For example, for results based on all children in the 25 European countries covered, if 30% children have given a particular answer we can be 95% confident that the 'true' response among the whole population would lie within +/- 1 percentage point of our finding – i.e. in the range 29-31%. To take another example: with a country-specific effective sample size of c.800 where 30% give a particular answer, the margin of error/specified range will be plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

***Table 20: Approximate sampling tolerances based on calculated design effect by country***

| Population | *Actual* sample size | *Approximate effective* sample size | Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels for the effective sample size indicated | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 10% or 90% ± | 30% or 70% ± | 50% ± |
| Austria | 1,000 | 591 | 2.4 | 3.7 | 4.0 |
| Belgium | 1,006 | 644 | 2.3 | 3.5 | 3.9 |
| Bulgaria | 1,088 | 711 | 2.2 | 3.4 | 3.7 |
| Cyprus | 806 | 591 | 2.4 | 3.7 | 4.0 |
| Czech Republic | 1,009 | 668 | 2.3 | 3.5 | 3.8 |
| Germany | 1,023 | 626 | 2.4 | 3.6 | 3.9 |
| Denmark | 1,001 | 723 | 2.2 | 3.3 | 3.6 |
| Estonia | 1,005 | 688 | 2.2 | 3.4 | 3.7 |
| Greece | 1,000 | 616 | 2.4 | 3.6 | 4.0 |
| Spain | 1,024 | 640 | 2.3 | 3.6 | 3.9 |
| Finland | 1,017 | 830 | 2.0 | 3.1 | 3.4 |
| France | 1,000 | 744 | 2.2 | 3.3 | 3.6 |
| Hungary | 1,000 | 662 | 2.2 | 3.5 | 3.8 |
| Ireland | 990 | 784 | 2.1 | 3.2 | 3.5 |
| Italy | 1,021 | 533 | 2.5 | 3.9 | 4.2 |
| Lithuania | 1,004 | 651 | 2.3 | 3.5 | 3.8 |
| Netherlands | 1,004 | 591 | 2.4 | 3.7 | 4.0 |
| Norway | 1,019 | 729 | 2.2 | 3.3 | 3.6 |
| Poland | 1,034 | 634 | 2.3 | 3.6 | 3.9 |
| Portugal | 1,000 | 661 | 2.3 | 3.5 | 3.8 |
| Romania | 1,041 | 663 | 2.3 | 3.5 | 3.8 |
| Sweden | 1,000 | 771 | 2.1 | 3.2 | 3.5 |
| Slovenia | 1,000 | 682 | 2.3 | 3.4 | 3.8 |
| Turkey | 1,018 | 473 | 2.7 | 4.1 | 4.5 |
| UK | 1,032 | 694 | 2.2 | 3.4 | 3.7 |

***Table 21. Approximate sampling tolerances based on calculated design effect for key sub-groups***

| Population | *Actual* sample size | *Approximate effective* sample size | Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels for the effective sample size indicated | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 10% or 90% ± | 30% or 70% ± | 50% ± |
| Country specific | c1,000 | 829-473 | 2-2.7 | 3.1-4.1 | 3.4-4.5 |
| | | | | | |
| European wide sample | | | | | |
| All | 25,142 | 8,509 | 0.6 | 1 | 1.1 |
| Girls | 12,501 | 4,231 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.5 |
| Boys | 12,641 | 4,278 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.5 |
| 9-10 | 6,433 | 2,177 | 1.3 | 1.9 | 2.1 |
| 11-12 | 6,249 | 2,115 | 1.3 | 2 | 2.1 |
| 13-14 | 6,239 | 2,112 | 1.3 | 2 | 2.1 |
| 15-16 | 6,221 | 2,105 | 1.3 | 2 | 2.1 |
| SES high | 8,432 | 2,854 | 1.1 | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| SES medium | 10,629 | 3,597 | 1 | 1.5 | 1.6 |
| SES low | 4,816 | 1,630 | 1.5 | 2.2 | 2.4 |

*Source: Ipsos*

# APPENDICES

## A. Information letter to parents

April 2010

Dear Parent

**EU Kids Online survey**

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in our survey. At the London School of Economics we lead this important project for the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme.

We are working with university researchers in 25 different countries, plus international expert advisors who make sure that the results will be useful for initiatives to make the internet safer for children. These advisors include Save the Children, European Schoolnet, and a European network for safety awareness-raising (Insafe).

We have designed this survey for parents and children from all over Europe, and the findings will be important for advising schools, child welfare, youth workers and others who work to enable children to get the best out of the internet while minimising online risks.

For example, knowing what children do online can help teachers to devise cyberbullying programmes. It will also help governments in deciding whether parts of the internet should be better regulated. Youth workers and other professionals who work with children also need to know what to warn or advise children about. And our work will also provide guidance for parents, so they can learn ways to help and support their children when using the internet.

The survey also aims to get the risks faced by some children into perspective, by discovering the beneficial things children do on the internet and the great ways children are learning to use the internet sensibly and well. This is why our survey asks lots of questions – so that we can understand the different kinds of experiences that children of different ages and backgrounds may have in different countries.

Information about the researchers and advisors in each country is available on our website at www.eukidsonline.net. The findings will be reported by the European Commission on 21st October 2010 in Luxembourg. We will post the findings on our website on that date – please visit the website if you would like to know the results.

Again, many thanks for participating in this survey.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sonia Livingstone
Director, EU Kids Online project
Department of Media and Communications
London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK
Telephone +44(0)2079557710 Email s.livingstone@lse.ac.uk

## B. Safety tips leaflet

ins@fe EU Kids Online

WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP YOU STAY SAFE ONLINE

TOP TIPS

The internet is a great place to learn, discover, communicate and have fun. But just as in the real world, there are some risks as well as great benefits. Take note of the tips below to help you and your family to stay safe online.

**1. What does your digital footprint look like?**

Think before you post! Everything you put online stays there and becomes your digital footprint which can be seen by anyone. Remember that something you post today may be read by someone in 5 or 10 years time. Will it paint the best picture of you?


**2. i h8 u**

Always treat others as you would like them to treat you. If you are the victim of cyberbullying, tell a trusted adult – someone who can help you. Don't suffer in silence and if you do receive a nasty text or IM, keep the evidence!


**3. Who are you talking to?**

Be a responsible net citizen – remember that people who you only know online are still really strangers. It is important to keep online friends online – don't meet up with online friends in the real world without talking to an adult you trust first.


**4. How can you report a problem?**

If something goes wrong and you feel uncomfortable or upset when you are online, there are things you can do. Tell your parents or carers or another trusted adult. You can always check for a report abuse button on the site you are on, or contact the helpline. There is more information about this on the back of this leaflet.

**5. Do you believe everything you see online?**

http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus Remember that anyone can create online content – you can't always believe everything that you find on the internet. When you use the internet for homework or research, remember to check the information you find carefully. Use another website and see if it gives the same information – ask who the website was created by. Don't forget – if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is!

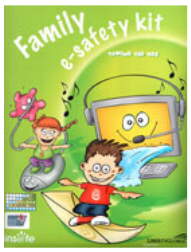
Co-funded by The European Union EU Kids Online - template for information leaflet to be left following interviews

Insafe is a European network of Awareness Centres promoting safe, responsible use of the Internet and mobile devices to young people. It is co-funded by the Safer Internet Programme. Further information is available from www.saferinternet.org
EU Kids Online II is a new project designed to examine children's and parents' experiences and practices regarding use, risk and safety online. Between 2009 and 2011, EU Kids Online II is conducting original empirical research across member states with national samples of children aged 9-16 years old and their parents. Further information is available from http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/EUKidsOnline/

For further information about any online safety issues, please don't hesitate to contact the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre who are the safer internet awareness centre for the UK. Their website can be found at www.thinkuknow.co.uk or you can call **0870 000 3344**

**Q. Where can I report illegal content?**
A. Illegal content can be reported to the Internet Watch Foundation which is the hotline in the UK. www.iwf.org.uk

**Q. Who can I speak to if I have concerns about something that is happening online?**
A. Speak to your parents or a trusted adult or call the helpline. In the UK you can call Childline on **0800 1111** and speak to someone in confidence.




**Q. Where can I find out more information about how to keep my family safe online?**
A. Visit your safer internet awareness centre's website at www.thinkuknow.co.uk or use our online family esafety kit at www.esafetykit.net
You can also find more information at www.saferinternet.org

Tips for parents

- Talk to your children; ask them to show you what they are doing online. Dialogue is the key to prevention, just as it is in the offline world.
- Keep in touch with latest online safety issues by subscribing to the Insafe newsletter at http://www.saferinternet.org/web/guest/newsletter
- Most risks on internet are about behaviour, not technology. Your life experience is the best guide they can have in the online and offline world.

## C. Consent form wording

**RESPONDENT INTRODUCTION AND CONSENTS**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is … from (NAME OF INSTITUTE) and I would like to ask your help with an important survey to help keep children safe when they use the internet.**

**(NAME of INSTITUTE), Ipsos and the London School of Economics are carrying out a survey with parents and young people for the European Commission. So that we can learn how to help children, the survey is asking about young people's experiences of being online - where and when they go online, what they do online, and also about any possible harmful or inappropriate material they might have experienced (such as content that would normally be for adults). We also want to find out what parents know about how to keep their children safe or what further information and support parents might want or need. This important survey is being carried out across 24 European countries. The results will be used by European and national governments to help ensure that children are safe when they go online and to support parents in helping to protect their children from online risks.**

**We'd like to carry out a short interview with you and your child. Your household has been selected completely at random. The findings will not identify individuals or families. The names of those who take part will not be passed on to anyone outside (NAME OF INSTITUTE), or used for anything other than this research project. All information will be treated in the strictest of confidence. You and your child will be able to skip any question that you would prefer not to answer, and can stop the interview at any point. At the end of the interview we will also leave you with some further information for parents and children about keeping safe on the internet.**

**PARENTAL CONSENT FOR CHILD INTERVIEW**

**9. I would like to do a 30 minute interview with <SELECTED CHILD>. Can I invite your child to take part?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 1 | -> ASK PARENT TO SIGN CONSENT FORM & CONTINUE |
| No | 2 | -> THANK AND CLOSE |

## INTRODUCTION AND CHILD CONSENT FOR CHILD INTERVIEW

**ASK 9-10s**

Hello, my name is (INSERT NAME) and I am from (NAME OF INSTITUTE) a company that asks people questions about lots of different things and we are working on a project with other researchers at the London School of Economics and Ipsos. We'd like to ask you about how you use the internet, and the sorts of things you see and do on line including things that you have liked and things that you have not liked or which have bothered you. The research will be used to help make the internet safer for other children and young people in the future.

There aren't any right or wrong answers, and nobody will know what you have said. If there is a question you don't like, you don't have to answer it. The only thing we would have to tell someone about is if you said that you or someone else was being hurt, but we would talk to you about that first, ok?

It will take about 30 minutes. Some of the questions I will just ask you, and some of them I will ask you to fill in by ticking boxes yourself. ADD IF NECESSARY: It won't be hard – it's not a test – we just want to find out what you think, and I will be here to help you. You can stop at any time.

**ASK 11-16s**

Hello, my name is (INSERT NAME) and I am from (NAME OF INSTITUTE), the research company (we find out what people think about things using questionnaires and surveys). We are working on a project with other researchers at the London School of Economics and Ipsos. We'd like to ask you about how you use the internet, and the sorts of things you see and do on line including things that you have liked and things that you have not liked or which have bothered you. The research will be used to help make the internet safer for other children and young people in the future.

The research is being carried out across Europe and the findings will be used help make the internet safer for young people to use.

There aren't any right or wrong answers, and nobody will know what you have said. If there is a question you don't like, you don't have to answer it. The only thing we would have to tell someone about is if you said that you or someone else was being hurt, but we would talk to you about that first, ok?

It will take about 30 minutes. Some of the questions I will just ask you, and some of them I will ask you to fill in by ticking boxes yourself. ADD IF NECESSARY: It won't be hard – it's not a test – we just want to find out what you think, and I will be here to help you. You can stop at any time.

**10. Can you take part?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 1 | -> INTERVIEWER SIGN AND PROCEED WITH THE INTERVIEW |
| No | 2 | -> THANK AND CLOSE |

# D. List of local agencies

| Country | Agency |
|---|---|
| Austria | SPECTRA |
| Belgium | IPSOS BELGIUM |
| Bulgaria | MARKET TEST |
| Republic of Cyprus | CYPRONETWORK |
| Czech Republic | IPSOS TAMBOR CZ |
| Denmark | DMA/RESEARCH A/S |
| Estonia | TURU UURINGUTE A.S. |
| Finland | TALOUSTOUKIMUS OY |
| France | ALTERNATIVE INTERNA-TIONAL RESEARCH (OBJEC-TIF MARKETING) |
| Germany | IPSOS GmbH |
| Greece | OPINION S.A. |
| Hungary | IPSOS SZONDA |
| Ireland | IPSOS MORI |
| Italy | IPSOS ITALY |
| Lithuania | RAIT |
| Netherlands | IBT |
| Norway | IPSOS NORWAY |
| Poland | IPSOS POLAND |
| Portugal | IPSOS PORTUGAL |
| Romania | MERCURY RESEARCH |
| Slovenia | IPSOS PULS SLOVENIA |
| Spain | IPSOS SPAIN |
| Sweden | IMRI |
| Turkey | IPSOS KMG |
| UK | ROSSLYN RESEARCH |

Co-funded by the European Union

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

# Risks and safety on the internet

## The perspective of European children

Full findings and policy implications from the *EU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents in 25 countries

**Sonia Livingstone, Leslie Haddon, Anke Görzig and Kjartan Ólafsson, with members of the *EU Kids Online* network**

www.eukidsonline.net

ISSN 2045-256X

**Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children. Full findings and policy implications from the *EU Kids Online* survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents in 25 countries.** This report, based on the final dataset for all 25 countries, presents the final full findings for *EU Kids Online Deliverable D4: Core findings* to the European Commission Safer Internet Programme (13 January 2011).

It has been produced by the project Coordinator: Sonia Livingstone, Leslie Haddon, Anke Görzig and Kjartan Ólafsson, with members of the *EU Kids Online* network (Annex 2), as advised by the International Advisory Panel (Annex 1). (An early version of this report, 'Initial findings', was launched at the Safer Internet Forum on 21st November 2010, based on data collection from 23 countries.)

Please cite this report as:

Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., and Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children*. *Full Findings.* LSE, London: EU Kids Online.

The report includes, as Section 12: Policy Implications, a summary of O'Neill, B., and McLaughlin, S. (2010). *Recommendations on safety initiatives.* LSE, London: EU Kids Online. Available at www.eukidsonline.net

**Previous reports and publications from *EU Kids Online* include:**

- de Haan, J. and Livingstone, S. (2009) *Policy and research recommendations*. London: LSE, EU Kids Online (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24387/)
- Hasebrink, U., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L. and Ólafsson, K. (eds) (2009) *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online* (2nd edn). London: LSE, EU Kids Online (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24368/)
- Livingstone, S. and Haddon, L. (2009) *EU Kids Online: Final report*. London: LSE, EU Kids Online (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24372/)
- Livingstone, S. and Haddon, L. (eds) (2009) *Kids online: Opportunities and risks for children*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Livingstone, S. and Tsatsou, P. (2009) Guest editors for special issue, 'European children go online: issues, findings and policy matters', *Journal of Children and Media*, *3*(4).
- Lobe, B., Livingstone, S. and Haddon, L., with others (2007) *Researching children's experiences online across countries: Issues and problems in methodology*. London: LSE, EU Kids Online (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/2856/)
- Lobe, B., Livingstone, S., Ólafsson, K. and Simões, J.A. (eds) (2008) *Best practice research guide: How to research children and online technologies in comparative perspective*. London: LSE, EU Kids Online (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/21658/)
- Staksrud, E., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L. and Ólafsson, K. (2009) *What do we know about children's use of online technologies? A report on data availability and research gaps in Europe* (2nd edn). London: LSE, EU Kids Online (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24367/)
- Stald, G. and Haddon, L. (eds) (2008) *Cross-cultural contexts of research: Factors influencing the study of children and the internet in Europe* (national reports also available at www.eukidsonline.net)
- Tsaliki, L. and Haddon, L. (eds) (2010) *EU Kids Online*, special issue. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, *6*(1).

**EU Kids Online II: Enhancing Knowledge Regarding European Children's Use, Risk and Safety Online**

This project has been funded by the EC Safer Internet Programme from 2009-11 (contract SIP-KEP-321803). Its aim is to enhance knowledge of European children's and parents' experiences and practices regarding risky and safer use of the internet and new online technologies in order to inform the promotion among national and international stakeholders of a safer online environment for children.

Adopting an approach that is child-centred, comparative, critical and contextual, EU Kids Online II has designed and conducted a major quantitative survey of 9-16 year olds experiences of online use, risk and safety in 25 European countries. The findings will be systematically compared to the perceptions and practices of their parents, and they will be disseminated through a series of reports and presentations during 2010-12.

For more information, and to receive project updates, visit www.eukidsonline.net


# CONTENTS


# KEY FINDINGS

## The *EU Kids Online* survey

This report presents the full findings from **a new and unique survey** designed and conducted according to rigorous standards by the *EU Kids Online* network. It was funded by the European Commissions' Safer Internet Programme in order to strengthen the evidence base for policies regarding online safety.

- **A random stratified sample of 25,142 children** aged 9-16 who use the internet, plus one of their parents, was interviewed during Spring/Summer 2010 in 25 European countries.
- **The survey investigated key online risks:** pornography, bullying, receiving sexual messages, contact with people not known face-to-face, offline meetings with online contacts, potentially harmful user-generated content and personal data misuse.
- In this report, **'children' refers to internet-using children aged 9-16 across Europe**. 'Using the internet' includes any devices by which children go online and any places in which they go online.

## Uses and activities online

- **Use is now thoroughly embedded in children's daily lives:** 93% of 9-16 year old users go online at least weekly (60% go online every day or almost every day).
- **Children are going online at ever younger ages** - the average age of first internet use is seven in Denmark and Sweden and eight in several Northern European countries. Across all countries, one third of 9-10 year olds who use the internet go online daily, this rising to 80% of 15-16 year olds.
- The most common location of internet use is at home (87%), followed by school (63%). But **internet access is diversifying** – 49% use it in their bedroom and 33% via a mobile phone or handheld device. Access via a handheld device exceeds one in five in Norway, the UK, Ireland and Sweden.
- **Children do a range of diverse and potentially beneficial things online:** 9-16 year olds use the internet for school work (85%), playing games (83%), watching video clips (76%) and instant messaging (62%). Fewer post images (39%) or messages for others to share (31%), use a webcam (31%), file-sharing sites (16%) or blog (11%).
- **59% of 9-16 year olds have a social networking profile** – including 26% aged 9-10, 49% aged 11-12, 73% aged 13-14 and 82% aged 15-16. Social networking is most popular in the Netherlands (80%), Lithuania (76%) and Denmark (75%), and least in Romania (46%), Turkey (49%) and Germany (51%).
- **Among social network users, 26% have public profiles** – more in Hungary (55%), Turkey (46%), and Romania (44%); 29% have more than 100 contacts, although many have fewer.
- Among social network users, 43% keep their profile private so that only their friends can see it. A further 28% report that their profile is partially private so that friends of friends and networks can see it. **Notably, 26% report that their profile is public so that anyone can see it.**

## Digital skills

- It is likely that **more use facilitates digital literacy and safety skill**s. Only a third of 9-16 year olds (36%) say that the statement, "I know more about the internet than my parents," is 'very true' of them, one third (31%) say it is 'a bit true' and one third (33%) say it is 'not true' of them.
- **Younger children tend to lack skills and confidence.** However, most 11-16 year olds can block messages from those they do not wish to contact (64%) or find safety advice online (64%). Around half can change privacy settings on a social networking profile (56%) compare websites to judge their quality (56%) or block spam (51%).

## Risk and harm

**Risk does not necessarily result in harm, as reported by children.** Children who use the internet were asked if they had encountered a range of online risks and, then, if they had been bothered by this, where 'bothered' was defined as something that *"made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it."* Findings vary by child (e.g. age, gender), country and risk type, so generalisations should be treated with caution.

- **12% of European 9-16 year olds say that they have been bothered or upset by something on the internet.** This includes 9% of 9-10 year olds. However, most children do not report being bothered or upset by going online.
- **Risks are not necessarily experienced by children as upsetting or harmful**. For example, s**eeing sexual images and receiving sexual messages online** are encountered by one in eight children but they are generally not experienced as harmful except by a few of the children who are exposed to them.
- **By contrast, being bullied online** by receiving nasty or hurtful messages is relatively uncommon, experienced by one in twenty children, but it is the risk most likely to upset children.
- **Further, only 1 in 12 children have met an online contact offline, and also this risk rarely has a harmful consequence, according to children.**
- Boys, especially teenagers, are more exposed to sexual images online, while teenage girls are slightly more likely to receive nasty or hurtful messages online. However, **girls are generally more likely to be upset by the risks they experience.**
- The survey asked about a range of risks, as detailed in what follows. Looking across all these risks, 41% of European **9-16 year olds have encountered one or more of these risks**.
- **Risks increase with age**: 14% of 9-10 year olds have encountered one or more of the risks asked about, rising to 33% of 11-12 year olds, 49% of 13-14 year olds and 63% of 15-16 year olds.

## Pornography

- **14% of 9-16 year olds have in the past 12 months seen images online that are *"obviously sexual – for example, showing people naked or people having sex."***
- Of those who have seen sexual or pornographic images online, one in three were bothered by the experience and, of those, half (i.e. one sixth of those exposed to sexual images or around 2% of all children) were either fairly or very upset by what they saw.
- **Looking across all media, 23% of children have seen sexual or pornographic content in the past 12 months – with the internet now as common a source of pornography as television, film and video.**
- Older teenagers are four times more likely than the youngest children to have seen pornography online or offline and the sexual images they have seen online are more explicit. But, y**ounger children are more bothered or upset by sexual images online than teenagers.**
- **53% of those who had been bothered by seeing sexual images online told someone about this the last time it happened** – 33% told a friend, 25% told a parent. However, 25% simply stopped using the internet for a while and a few changed their filter or contact settings.

## Bullying

- **In relation to online bullying, 6% of 9-16 year olds have been sent nasty or hurtful messages online, and 3% have sent such messages to others.** Over half of those who received bullying messages were fairly or very upset.
- Since 19% have been bullied either online or offline (compared with 6% online), and 12% have bullied someone else either online or offline (compared with 3% online), it seems **more bullying occurs offline than online.**
- Most children who had received nasty or hurtful messages online called on social support: a quarter had not told anyone. Six in ten also used online strategies – deleting hurtful messages or blocking the bully; this last strategy was seen by children as effective.


## 'Sexting'

- **15% of 11-16 year olds have received peer to peer *"sexual messages or images …[meaning] talk about having sex or images of people naked or having sex,"* and 3% say they have sent or posted such messages.**
- Of those who have received such messages, nearly one quarter have been bothered by this. Further, of those who have been bothered, nearly half were fairly or very upset. So, overall, one eighth of those who received such messages, or nearly 2% of all children, have been fairly or very upset by sexual messaging.
- **Among those who had been bothered by 'sexting', about four in ten blocked the person who sent the messages (40%) and/or deleted the unwanted sexual messages (38%).** In most cases, the child said that this action helped the situation. Such constructive coping responses could be encouraged among more children.

## Meeting online contacts offline

- The **most common risky activity** reported by children online is communicating with new people not met face-to-face. **30% of European children aged 9-16 who use the internet have communicated in the past with someone they have not met face-to-face before, an activity that may be risky but may also be fun.**
- It is more rare for children to meet a new online contact offline. **9% of children have met an online contact offline in the past year. 1% of all children (or one in nine of those who went to a meeting) have been bothered by such a meeting.**
- Although 9-10 year olds are the least likely to have met an online contact offline, they are most likely to have been bothered by what happened (31% of those who had been to such a meeting).

## Other risks

- The second most common risk is exposure to potentially harmful user-generated content. **21% of 11-16 year olds have been exposed to one or more types of potentially harmful user-generated content: hate (12%), pro-anorexia (10%), self-harm (7%), drug-taking (7%) or suicide (5%).**
- **9% of 11-16 year olds have had their personal data misused – abuse of the child's password (7%) or their personal information (4%), or they have been cheated of their money online (1%).**
- **30% of 11-16 year olds report one or more experiences linked to excessive internet use 'fairly' or 'very often'** (e.g. neglecting friends, schoolwork or sleep).

## Differences across countries

- **Comparing across countries, encounters with one or more online risks include around six in ten children in Estonia, Lithuania, Norway, the Czech Republic and Sweden.** Lower incidence of risk is found in Portugal, Italy and Turkey.
- **C**hildren are more likely to say they have been bothered or upset by something on the internet in Denmark (28%), Estonia (25%), Norway and Sweden (23%) and Romania (21%); they are less likely to say this in Italy (6%), Portugal (7%) and Germany (8%).
- The more children in a country use the internet daily, the more those children have encountered one or more risks. However, **more use also brings more opportunities and, no doubt, more benefits.**
- The greatest range of activities online is also claimed by children in Lithuania, the Czech Republic Estonia, France and Sweden, while the least are undertaken in Ireland and then Turkey. In other words, internet use brings both risks and opportunities, and the line between them is not easy to draw.

## Parental awareness

- **Among those children who have experienced one of these risks, parents often don't realise this.**
- 40% of parents whose child has seen sexual images online say that their child has not seen them; 56% of parents whose child has received nasty or hurtful messages online say that their child has not.
- 52% of parents whose child has received sexual messages say that their child has not; 61% of

parents whose child has met offline with an online contact say that their child has not.

- Although the incidence of these risks affects a minority of children in each case, the level of parental underestimation is more substantial.

## Parental mediation

- **Most parents talk to their children about what they do on the internet (70%) and stay nearby when the child is online (58%). But one in eight parents (13%) seem never to do any of the forms of mediation asked about, according to their children.**
- Over half of parents also take positive steps such as suggesting how to behave towards others online (56%) and talking about things that might bother the child (52%), and a third have helped their child when something arose in the past (36%).
- Parents also restrict children's disclosure of personal information (85%), uploading (63%) and downloading (57%).
- One in two parents monitors their child's internet use (after use), making this the least favoured strategy by comparison with positive support, safety guidance or making rules about internet use.
- **The use of technical safety tools is relatively low: just over a quarter of parents block or filter websites (28%) and/or track the websites visited by their child (24%).**
- Both children and parents consider parental mediation helpful, especially 9-12 year olds.
- Most parents (85%) are confident about their role, feeling that they can help their child if the latter encounters something that bothers them online. Parents are also confident in their child's ability to cope with things online that may bother them (79%), and 15% claim that they mediate differently because of something that had bothered the child in the past.
- **Two thirds of children (68%) think their parents know a lot or quite a bit about their children's internet use. However, 29% say they ignore their parents a little and 8% of children say they ignore their parents a lot.**
- Less than half (44%) of children think that parental mediation limits what they do online, 11% saying it limits their activities a lot. Children in some countries feel rather more restricted by parental mediation (e.g. in Turkey, Ireland and Bulgaria) than in others (e.g. Hungary, and the Netherlands). 15% would like their parents to do a little or a lot more and 12% would like their parents to do rather less.
- Many parents (73%) are confident that it is not very or at all likely that their child will encounter anything that bothers them in the next six months.

## Other sources of safety advice

- **Around half of children think that their teachers have engaged with their internet use in most of the ways asked about, and 73% of children say their teachers have done at least one of the forms of active mediation asked about.**
- **Age differences are noteworthy: teachers' engagement with children's internet use is least among 9-10 year olds.**
- There is a fair degree of national variation in the role that teachers play, from 97% of teachers in Norway engaging with children's internet use to a low of 65% in Italy.
- Three quarters (73%) of children say their peers have helped or supported their internet use in at least one of the five ways asked about.
- Peers are much more likely to mediate in a practical way, helping each other to do or find something when there is a difficulty.
- **44% of children say they have received some guidance on safe internet use from their friends, and 35% say that they have also provided such advice to their friends.**
- **Comparing across sources of safety advice online, it seems that most advice is received from parents (63%), then teachers (58%), then peers (44%).**
- But for the older teenagers and for children from lower socio-economic status (SES) homes, advice from teachers overtakes that of parents.
- Other relatives (47%), interestingly, are generally as important as peers in providing advice to children on how to use the internet safely.
- Information aimed at children via the traditional mass media (20%) is less used, with online sources being even less frequently used (12% have gained safety advice from websites).


- Parents get internet safety advice first and foremost from family and friends (48%), then traditional media (32%), the child's school (27%), internet service providers (22%) and websites (21%).
- **Only around 9% of parents say that they don't want further information on internet safety. Many parents want far more information on internet safety than they actually get from the child's school, from government or local authorities, from welfare organisations and charities but also, though to a lesser extent, from manufacturers and retailers.**

## Policy implications

The findings have implications for multiple stakeholders.

- The priority for awareness-raising for parents should be on alerting parents to the nature of the risks their children may encounter online while encouraging dialogue and greater understanding between parents and children in relation to young people's online activities.
- **Parents would prefer to get information** on internet safety from their child's school, so greater efforts should be undertaken by the education sector. But, since parental and children's use of industry tools (such as online safety information, filters, 'report abuse' buttons etc) is relatively low, greater public awareness, trust and ease of use should also be developed by industry.
- As use of the internet becomes more personalised, the role of parents and teachers becomes difficult. This places **greater responsibility on industry** to manage the nature of the risks children encounter, and to ensure they have the tools they need to prevent or cope with harm. It also burdens children more with the responsibility for their own safety, and thus internet safety messaging should seek to build confidence, resilience and **digital citizenship skills among children**.
- **Industry efforts** to support positive content as well as internet safety should be improved. Technical tools to support blocking, reporting and filtering should also be a cornerstone of industry child protection policy with a need to increase awareness of such mechanisms and to improve their accessibility and usability to aid better take up by parents and children.
- **Children** should also be encouraged to assume responsibility for their own safety as much as possible with a focus on empowerment, emphasising responsible behaviour and digital citizenship.
- Since many children do not report encountering the risks asked about, with even fewer having been bothered or upset by their online experiences, future safety policy should target resources and guidance where they are particularly needed – especially for **younger children** who go online. Indeed, a new policy focus is vital for awareness-raising and support measures designed to suit the needs of much younger internet users, especially by primary schools.
- **Digital skills training** needs continued emphasis and updating in terms of training, safety features and applications operation to ensure that all children reach a minimum basic standard and to prevent digitally isolated and unskilled children. This should also seek to broaden the range of activities undertaken by children, since many make little use of creative opportunities online.
- Moreover, since less than half of 9-16 year olds are very satisfied with levels of online provision available to them, even fewer among younger children, there is a responsibility on all policy actors to ensure **greater availability of age-appropriate positive content** for children, especially in small language communities.

## Note on methodology

- This report is **the work of the *EU Kids Online* network**, coordinated by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), with research teams and stakeholder advisers in each of the 25 countries and an International Advisory Panel.
- Initial findings from this report were presented at the Safer Internet Forum on 21 October 2010. The present report presents full findings from the survey for all 25 countries.
- **Countries included in *EU Kids Online* are** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy,

Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK. Unless countries are specified, findings are weighted averages across all countries.

- It is acknowledged that it is particularly difficult to measure private or upsetting aspects of a child's experience. The survey was conducted in children's homes, as a face-to-face interview. It included a self-completion section for sensitive questions to avoid being heard by parents, other family members or the interviewer.
- For **full details and availability of the project methodology**, materials, technical fieldwork report and research ethics, see www.eukidsonline.net.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Context

**The rapidity with which children and young people are gaining access to online, convergent, mobile and networked media is unprecedented in the history of technological innovation. Parents, teachers and children are acquiring, learning how to use and finding a purpose for the internet within their daily lives. Stakeholders – governments, schools, industry, child welfare organisations and families – seek to maximise online opportunities while minimising the risk of harm associated with internet use.**

Diverse and ambitious efforts are underway in many countries to promote digital technologies in schools, e-governance initiatives, digital participation and digital literacy. As many families are discovering, the benefits are considerable. New opportunities for learning, participation, creativity and communication are being explored by children, parents, schools, and public and private sector organisations.

Previous *EU Kids Online* research identified a complex array of online opportunities and risks associated with children's internet use.[1] Interestingly, the risks of concern to children often are not those that lead to adult anxiety.[2] Also, it appears that the more children go online to gain the benefits, the more they may encounter risks, accidentally or deliberately.[3]

Risks may arise when children are sophisticated, confident or experimental internet users, as observed in 'high use, high risk' countries or when, as in 'new use, new risk' countries, children gain internet access in advance of an infrastructure of awareness-raising, parental understanding, regulation and safety protection. So, although the popular fear that the internet endangers all children has not been supported by evidence, there are grounds for concern and intervention.

Further, despite the popular rhetoric of 'digital natives', many children still lack resources to use the internet sufficiently to explore its opportunities or to develop vital digital literacy skills.[4] Thus it is important to encourage and facilitate children's confident and flexible internet use. A difficult balancing act faces stakeholders: promoting online opportunities without careful attention to safety may also promote online risk, but measures to reduce risk may have the unintended consequence of reducing opportunities.[5]

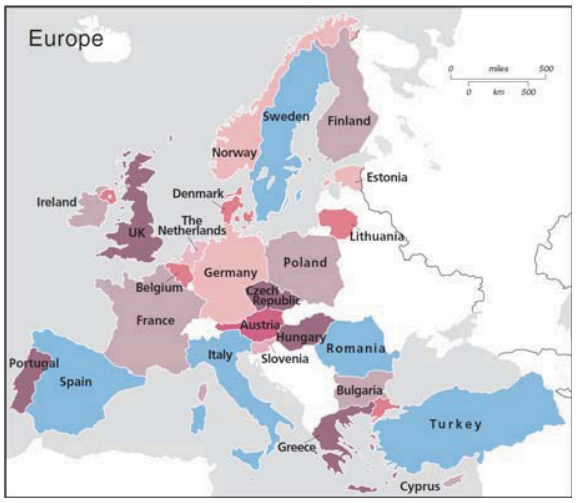
## 1.2. This report

**This report presents the findings for *EU Kids Online Deliverable D4: Core Findings*, based on a new and unique project designed and conducted by the *EU Kids Online* network and funded by the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme.[6]**

The *EU Kids Online* project aims to enhance knowledge of European children's and parents' experiences and practices regarding risky and safer use of the internet and new online technologies, and thereby to inform the promotion of a safer online environment for children.

It has generated a substantial body of new data – rigorously collected and cross-nationally-comparable – on European children's access, use, opportunities, risks and safety practices regarding the internet and online technologies. Significantly, findings come from interviews conducted directly with children from 25 countries across Europe (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Countries surveyed by *EU Kids Online***



**This is the first of several reports to be produced by the network during 2010-12**. It replaces the earlier report of initial findings, based on 23 of the 25 countries in the project, and includes *EU Kids Online Deliverable 7.1: Policy Implications*. Subsequent reports will explore the complex relations among the variables to identify groupings of children and of countries, to test hypotheses, and to explore particular areas of interest and policy relevance, including the nature of children's resourcefulness and vulnerability and the benefits of parental mediation and other safety practices.

## 1.3. The policy agenda

In recent years, the policy agenda concerned with both online opportunities (focused on access to education, communication, information and participation) and with the risks of harm posed to children by internet use has gained momentum in many countries.

In relation to risks, the main focus of this report, the agenda remains highly contested. This is partly because the evidence base that informs it is patchy, in some countries more than others. It is also because the benefits of particular policy actions, whether focused on state intervention, industry self-regulation, educational initiatives or parent (and child) safety awareness, are as yet unproven. Last, it is contested because children's safety gives rise to considerable public anxiety, even moral panic over childhood freedom and innocence, all compounded by an uncertainty, perhaps fear, of the power of new and complex technologies.

**The *EU Kids Online* project seeks to explore children's online experiences, informed by research considerations (theoretical and methodological) and by the policy agenda of the EC's Safer Internet Programme. One challenge of an evidence-based policy designed to reduce harm is to understand how children's online activities intersect with their wider online and offline environment so as to understand which factors increase or decrease the risk of harm.**

Note that there is a complex relation between evidence and policy. Research may identify the factors that reduce risks, but policy may decide it is better to tolerate some risks than to implement a strategy to reduce them. This may be because the costs are too high for the child (e.g. their freedoms are overly restricted), to the state (e.g. too heavy a burden of implementation and compliance) or to the industry (e.g. too much regulation). Research findings, therefore, inform but do not determine policy directions.

**To clarify the approach taken in this report, consider a familiar everyday parallel**. In their daily lives, children engage in many activities – learning, playing, cycling, socialising, fighting, being naughty and more. Much of this is beneficial but not all. Determining which activities are beneficial and which carry a risk of harm is not easy. It may also be that an activity is neither beneficial nor harmful, or that the same activity is beneficial under some circumstances and harmful under others. Much depends on the child (their knowledge, skills, circumstances, vulnerabilities, etc) and on their environment (its features, design, sources of support, etc). Much also depends on how benefits and harms are conceived and evaluated, this depending on shifting social norms and cultural values.[7]

Among those children who ride a bicycle, a small percentage will have an accident. The risk of harm is calculable, a function of the likelihood of an accident and its severity. Protective factors reduce the risk (either reducing the likelihood or severity of an accident); these may be environmental factors (e.g. provision of cycle paths, careful drivers, a park nearby) or individual factors (the child has received road safety training, or has good coordination). Risk factors increase the likelihood of harm and/or its severity; these too may be environmental factors (ill-regulated roads, careless drivers, long distances to travel) or individual factors (lack of road sense or insufficient parental supervision).[8]

**In policy terms, there are multiple points of intervention, and several may be pursued simultaneously**. Still, a balance must be sought in enabling children to cycle and reducing the risk of harm. Simply banning cycling may seem the simplest solution, but it has two costs: first, cycling is a valued opportunity for children; second, by taking some degree of risk, children learn to become more confident and resilient.[9]

Much of this analysis applies equally in the online realm. Importantly, in surveying children's online activities we begin by making no inherent judgement about what is 'good' or 'bad' for children. The evidence needed for policy must distinguish the ways in which children (themselves a diverse group) interact with the online environment (also diverse) in an effort to trace any beneficial and/or harmful consequences for children.


**Now consider how the offline parallel applies online**. Take the child who goes to an offline meeting with someone they first met online. As with cycling, this activity carries a risk of harm. But that risk may be small, and the same activity may bring benefits in terms of new friends and interests. For young children, it may be appropriate to curtail the activity itself to prevent such meetings (e.g. by parental restriction, or by excluding them from sites where new contacts are made or personal information exchanged). Even though there is an opportunity cost to such restrictions, it may be judged that young children lack the protective factors needed to keep them relatively safe (e.g. social judgements, self-protective skills).

**Table 1: Risks relating to children's internet use (*exemplars only*)**

| | ***Content*** Receiving mass-produced content | ***Contact*** Participating in (adult-initiated) online activity | ***Conduct*** Perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Aggressive*** | **Violent / gory content** | **Harassment, stalking** | **Bullying, hostile peer activity** |
| ***Sexual*** | **Pornographic content** | **'Grooming', sexual abuse or exploitation** | **Sexual harassment, 'sexting'** |
| ***Values*** | **Racist / hateful content** | Ideological persuasion | **Potentially harmful user-generated content** |
| ***Commercial*** | Embedded marketing | **Personal data misuse** | Gambling, copyright infringement |

For older children, it may be judged that, provided protective factors are in place to minimise the likelihood of harm (e.g. establishing usable privacy settings online, advising teenagers about safety precautions when meeting people offline), children may be free to explore and experiment. Still, in a small minority of cases, such meetings will result in harm, and the severity of this will range from mildly upsetting to criminal abuse. Societal responses to children's activities, online or offline, must clearly take into account a complex array of factors.

***EU Kids Online* has classified the risks of harm to children from their online activities as follows**. The classification distinguishes content risks (in which the child is positioned as recipient), contact risks (in which the child in some way participates, if unwillingly) and conduct risks (where the child is an actor) (see Table 1).[10]

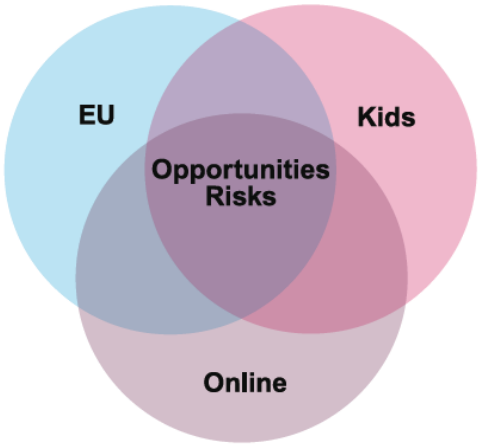
Each of these has been discussed, to a greater or lesser degree, in policy circles, and some have been the focus of considerable multi-stakeholder initiatives. Nonetheless, the nature of the harm at stake is not always clear. In other words, although society tends to be anxious about children's exposure to pornography or racism or the circulation of sexual messages, the nature of the harm that may result and which, presumably, motivates the anxiety, nonetheless often goes ill defined.

**Measuring the incidence, distribution, severity and consequence of any harm to children resulting from these and other risks has proved a significant challenge. Until now, no research has examined online risks in a methodologically rigorous, cross-nationally comparative, ethically sensitive manner, especially by conducting research directly with children. This, then, has been our task, in order to inform an evidence-based, proportionate policy framework in relation to children and the internet.**

## 1.4. Framing the project

The *EU Kids Online* project contextualises both the opportunities and risks to children associated with internet use in terms of the intersection of three wider spheres – European society and policy, childhood and family life, and continued technological change (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Focus of the *EU Kids Online* project**

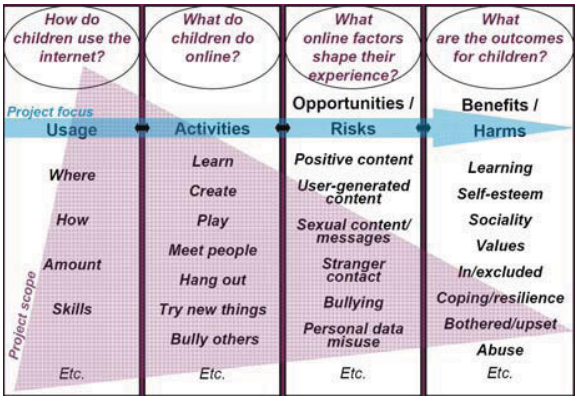


**As shown in Figure 3, we propose a path that traces how children's internet use and activities, being shaped by online and online factors, may have harmful as well as beneficial outcomes for children.**

We begin by examining the range of ways in which children use the internet, recognising that this varies by the location and device for going online, the amount of use and the digital skills a child has at his or her disposal. Children's use is hypothesised to depend on the socioeconomic status (SES) of their household as well as on their age, gender and, of course, country.

Second, we recognise that once online, children do many things that, crucially, cannot in and of themselves be described as 'beneficial' or 'harmful', for such judgements depend on the outcome of the activity rather than the activity itself. Some activities are likely to prove beneficial (e.g. school work) and others seem more negative (e.g. bullying others). Many, however, are indeterminate (e.g. downloading music, making new friends online). Some activities are motivated by a desire to take risks, for in this way young people explore the boundaries of their social world, learning through transgressing as well as adhering to social norms and so building resilience.

**Figure 3: Possible consequences of online activities**




In the *EU Kids Online* survey, following the questions on internet use, children were asked about their online activities, thereby acknowledging their agency in choosing how to act online and how to embed the internet in their daily lives.[11] These activities may vary by demographic and country variables, as examined in this report.[12]

Third, it is recognised that when children go online, they do so in a particular environment (see opportunities and risk factors in Figure 3). They engage with certain services. The online interfaces they visit have their own character. Some contents are more available or easier to access than others. Crucially too, many other people are already online. All these 'environmental factors' interact with the child's activities in shaping their online experiences:

- Some factors may enhance the benefits of going online: they may be labelled 'opportunities', for example the provision of own-language creative or playful content, or a lively community of people who share one's hobby.
- Some factors may enhance the likelihood of harm from going online: thus they may be labelled 'risks', for example the ready availability of explicit pornography or the activities of people who are aggressive, racist or manipulative.
- Some factors are ambiguous: for example, music downloading sites or video hosting sites may be fun, creative and empowering; but they may break copyright, or exploit intimacy or facilitate hostile interactions.

In the parallel domain of cycling, opportunities include having a cycle path or green space nearby one's home. Examples of risk factors would include a busy road or bad drivers in the neighbourhood, or even a peer culture that ridicules wearing cycle helmets. All these are hypothesised to increase the risk of an accident (i.e. the probability of harm). Focusing on the online domain, the survey investigated aspects of the online experience that may increase the risk of harm. These included exposure to pornography and the prevalence of sexual messaging and bullying, and the circumstances of making new contacts online, especially if these result in meetings offline.

As the final column in Figure 3 shows, the *EU Kids Online project* examines the outcomes of internet use for children. This is the most challenging part of the project. **As marked by the shaded funnel in the figure, the scope of the *EU Kids Online* project encompasses just part of this larger picture. It traces the path from children's use and activities (experienced by most European children), through their encounters with factors hypothesised to increase the probability of harm (these are likely to be experienced by a smaller proportion of children). Finally, the project examines the outcomes for children in terms of subjective harm**

**or, more positively, coping by children encountering these risk factors (hypothesised to affect an even smaller proportion of children).**

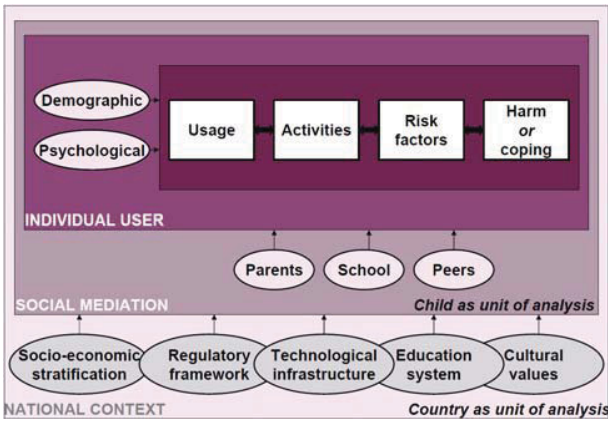
The relation between the third and fourth columns in Figure 3 is complex. For some risks, the harm seems all but inevitable – bullying, for example, may be a factor in a child's life that, if it occurs, seems very likely to result in some degree of harm. Exposure to pornography, however, is considered harmful by some but, for others, whether harm results will depend on the circumstances.

To the extent that there is a gap between experiences of risk and experiences of harm, different explanations of the two may apply. For example, lonely children may be more likely to be bullied and more likely to be adversely affected if bullied. However, boys may be more likely to be exposed to pornography (i.e. a higher risk) but girls may be more likely to be upset by such exposure (i.e. greater harm).[13] The *EU Kids Online* project explores some of these contingencies.

## 1.5. Project design

Within the wider context just outlined, the present report is organised according to a hypothesised sequence of factors relating to internet use that may shape children's experiences of harm. Figure 4 traces the core of our analysis from children's internet use (amount, device and location of use) through their online activities (opportunities taken up, skills developed and risky practices engaged in) to the risks encountered.

**Figure 4: Relating online use, activities and risk factors to harm to children**




The factors hypothesised to increase risk of harm include encountering pornography, bullying/being bullied, sending/receiving sexual messages (or 'sexting'[14]) and going to offline meetings with people first met online. Also included are risks linked to negative user-generated content and personal data misuse. Last, we ask how children respond to and/or cope with these experiences, recognising that to the extent that they do not cope, the outcome may be harmful.

As shown in Figure 4, many external factors may also influence children's experiences. Three levels of influence may differentiate among children, shaping the path from internet use to possible harm:

- Demographic factors such as the child's age, gender, socio-economic status (SES), and psychological factors such as emotional problems, self-efficacy and risk-taking.[15]
- Social factors that mediate children's online and offline experiences, especially the activities of parents, teachers and friends.
- National context – a range of economic, social and cultural factors are expected to shape the online experience as shown in the model; examining the role of these remains for a later report.

## 1.6. Methodology

**A total of 25,142 children who use the internet were interviewed, as was one of their parents, during Spring/Summer 2010, across 25 European countries.**

Full details of the project's methods are provided in the accompanying Annexes (which are online at www.eukidsonline.net).

**Key features include:**

- Two rounds of cognitive testing, in addition to piloting, to check thoroughly children's understandings of and reactions to the questions.
- Random stratified survey sampling of some 1000 children (9-16 years old) per country who use the internet.
- Survey administration at home, face-to-face, with a self-completion section for sensitive questions.
- A detailed survey that questions children themselves, to gain a direct account of their online experiences.
- Equivalent questions asked of each type of risk to compare across risks.

- Matched questions to compare online with offline risks, to put online risks in proportion.
- Matched comparison questions to the parent most involved in the child's internet use.
- Measures of mediating factors – psychological vulnerability, social support and safety practices.
- Follow up questions to pursue how children respond to or cope with online risk.
- The inclusion of the experiences of young children aged 9-10, who are often excluded from surveys.

**The design is comparative in several ways**, comparing:

- Children's experiences of the internet across locations and devices.
- Similarities and differences by children's age, gender and SES.
- A range of risks experienced by children online.
- Children's perception of the subjective harm associated with these risks.
- Children's roles as 'victim' and 'perpetrator' of risks.
- Accounts of risks and safety practices reported by children and their parents.
- Data across countries for analysis of national similarities and differences.

The resulting findings from 25 participating countries (see Figure 1) thus contribute to the evidence base that underpins policy initiatives by the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme and by national and international organisations.

**Note that findings reported for children across all countries are calculated as the average across the particular 25 countries included in this project. In other words, the 'Europe' of this report is distinct from although overlapping with the European Union (EU).**

## 1.7. The population

**The population interviewed in the *EU Kids Online* survey is children aged 9-16 years old who use the internet at all.**

*Note that, in countries where nearly all children use the internet, internet-using children are almost the same as the population of children aged 9-16 years in those countries. But in countries where some children still do not have access, or for whatever reason do not use the internet, internet-using-children (the population sampled for this project) is not the same as all children.*

In Annex 3 we estimate the proportion of internet-using children out of all children in each country. It is particularly important to keep this in mind when interpreting cross-country differences.

Additionally, to pinpoint the support children can call on at home, the *EU Kids Online* survey interviewed the parent 'most involved in the child's internet use', while also recording the existence of other adults in the household.

Throughout this report, the term 'parent' refers to the parent or carer most involved in the child's internet use. This was more often mothers/female carers (some three in four) than fathers (in a quarter of cases).

Demographic variables: in the present report, we have compared children by age and gender throughout. We have also compared them according to the socioeconomic status (SES) of their household. SES assessed by combining two measures – the level of education and the type of occupation of the main wage earner in the household. Educational systems vary across countries, so national measures were standardised using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).[16]

## 1.8. Research agency

**Following a public procurement procedure conducted in accordance with EC guidelines, Ipsos MORI was commissioned to work with *EU Kids Online*** (coordinated by LSE) to provide support with questionnaire design and testing, and to conduct the fieldwork and produce the data sets. Ipsos MORI, in turn, contracted with fieldwork agencies in each country, in order to ensure a standard approach across Europe.

In each of 24 European countries, around 1,000 children aged 9-16 who use the internet were interviewed, as was one of their parents. (In the 25th country, Cyprus, it proved problematic to achieve this sample size and so 800 children were interviewed in that country.) Households were selected using random sampling methods and interviews were carried out face-to-face in homes using CAPI (Computer Administered Personal Interviewing) or PAPI (Paper Administered Personal Interviewing).

The LSE Research Ethics Committee approved the methodology and appropriate protocols were put in place


to ensure that the rights and wellbeing of children and families were protected during the research process. At the end of the interview, children and families were provided with a leaflet providing tips on internet safety and details of relevant help lines.

## 1.9. Research limitations

Every effort has been made in designing, administering and analysing the survey to provide the best account possible of children's internet use in Europe. Inevitably, however, the project has limitations, and these should be borne in mind when interpreting and using the results.

- *Limits on sampling* – despite repeated return visits to sampled households and every effort made to encourage participation, it must be acknowledged that the recruitment process may not have reached the most vulnerable or marginalised children.
- *Questionnaire limits* – the questionnaire was designed to take, on average, 30 minutes for children to complete (and 10 minutes for parents), although in practice, it took rather longer than this (just under one hour for the child and parent interviews combined). It is difficult to hold children's attention for longer than this, and so difficult decisions had to be taken about which questions to include or exclude.
- In over half the countries, the self-completion section of the questionnaire was completed by pen and paper – this limited *the degree of routing* (i.e. the degree to which questions could follow up on children's answers). Last, for ethical reasons (as confirmed by cognitive testing and pilot interviews), intimate, embarrassing or certain explicit questions could not be asked.
- *Survey context* – every effort was made to encourage honest answers, to promise anonymity and privacy (including reassuring children that their parents would not see their answers). However, any survey takes place within some social context. Here, the fact that it was conducted in homes with parents in the vicinity may have influenced the answers of some children, meaning they gave more 'socially desirable' answers. As detailed in the online technical report, in two thirds of cases, interviewers reported that parents were wholly uninvolved in the child's interview; in a fifth of cases they were 'not very much' involved, and in one in seven cases they were more involved.
- *Findings* – the present report includes top line findings by standard demographic variables and by country. Recognising that many more complex relations among variables, and more subtle categorisations of children and of countries are important in interpreting the findings, these will be pursued in future reports.
- *Confidence intervals* – it should be kept in mind throughout that all findings in the report have a margin of error. For analysis on the European level for all children this margin is very small but becomes significantly larger for smaller subsets of the data. Confidence intervals have been calculated for the percentages reported throughout the report. For most numbers, the confidence interval is below +/-5%. Where the confidence interval is between 5-10%, this is marked, meaning that there is a 95% certainty that the interval of +/- 5-10% around the marked number contains the true percentage in the population. For a few numbers, the confidence interval exceeds 10% and these are also marked, meaning that there is a 95% certainty that the interval of +/- 10+% around this number contains the true percentage in the population); such a number is included only as a mere approximation of the population value not ensuring accuracy. This is further outlined in Annex 3.
- *National data* – the findings for countries combine different regions and urban and rural settings – in some countries the national averages might mask quite diverse patterns within the country.
- *Sample sizes* - although overall the sample size is substantial, some events being measured affect relatively few children. In cases where base sizes are small, the categories shown in tables or graphs with fewer than 15 respondents are omitted as inferences to the population would be unreliable.

*Note: Throughout this report we illustrate the text with direct quotations from children in the EU Kids Online survey. Children were asked to write down, "What things on the internet would bother people about your age?*


# 2. USAGE

**What do 9-16 year old children in Europe say about how they use the internet? The face-to-face interview with children included a range of questions about 'using the internet'. As was emphasised throughout the interview, 'using the internet' refers to any and all devices by which children go online, and it includes any and all places in which the child goes online.**

Levels and patterns of usage are important in understanding risks as well as opportunities because they shape the context within which children are exposed to risk factors and for which policy needs to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place. Importantly, levels and methods of access are increasing and diversifying, so that safety policy in turn needs to broaden and diversify to keep up with trends in this fast changing arena.

Of particular note, policy will need to respond to new empowerment and protection needs arising from children starting to use the internet at an increasingly young age, as well as from the increasing proportion of children using the internet independent of adult supervision, especially through mobile technology.

## 2.1. Where children use the internet

**Each location of use implies particular social conventions of freedom, privacy, sociality and surveillance**. Until recently, the internet was accessed via a desktop computer, and parents were advised in safety campaigns to locate this in a public room and/or to install filtering or monitoring software.

With the spread of mobile and personalised devices, the ways in which children go online are diversifying, and in their bedroom, or when 'out and about', children may escape supervision entirely, using the internet privately. Further, while schools are generally highly supervised locations of use, cybercafés are popular in some countries and here children may enjoy unsupervised access.

In the survey, children were asked in which locations they use the internet, recognising it is possible that more private locations are associated with more experience of online risks. Further, in relation to safety, the location of use suggests which adults, if any, could mediate children's experiences, whether encouraging them to take up opportunities or helping them to minimise risks.

Of the children surveyed (i.e. out of all children who use the internet at all), 85% use it at home.

Table 2 shows the percentage of children who say that they use the internet at the locations asked about, bearing in mind that they may use it in more than one location.

- **Half (49%) of all children who use the internet use it in their bedroom or other private room at home.**
- **62% use it in the living room or other public room at home.**
- **Overall, 87% use it at home - 49% in their bedroom, 38% elsewhere only at home** (Figure 5).
- Two implications stand out. First, in addition to addressing children themselves, raising safety awareness among parents may be the best way of reaching the largest proportion of children. Second, many children are now using the internet in a location where it is difficult for parents to share or monitor.
- **The second most common location, after the 87% who use it at home, is use of the internet at school or college (63%).**
- This makes the school an important site for internet guidance and advice from teachers. But it is noteworthy that, although most schools in Europe now have internet access somewhere on the premises,[17] over a third of 9-16 year olds do not use the internet at school and so may not be reached by such a policy.
- Home and school account for a large proportion of children's reported average of three locations for going online. Other common locations include use of the internet at a friend's house, reported by half of the sample (53%), and at a relative's house (42%).
- Less common is the use of the internet in public places, with 12% using it in an internet café, 12% in a public library or other public place and 9% using it generally when 'out and about'.

**Table 2: Where children use the internet**

| % of children who say they use the internet at the following locations | |
|---|---|
| At school or college | 63 |
| Living room (or other public room) at home | 62 |
| At a friend's home | 53 |
| Own bedroom (or other private room) at home | 49 |
| At a relative's home | 42 |
| In an internet café | 12 |
| In a public library or other public place | 12 |
| When 'out and about' | 9 |
| Average number of locations of use | 3 |

QC301a-h: Looking at this card, please tell me where you use the internet these days.[18] *(Multiple responses allowed)*

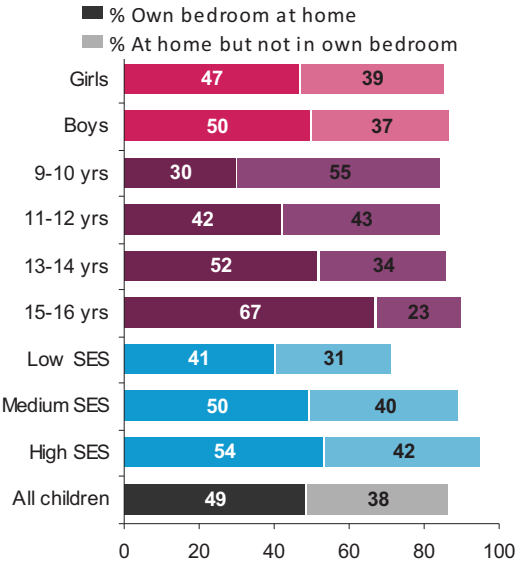
Base: All children who use the internet.

**Given that the most common location of internet use is at home, this deserves closer attentio**n. Figure 5 shows the contrast between use at home in private spaces (own bedroom) and use only in public rooms (although it should be noted that use in a bedroom may itself mean use in a room shared with other siblings).

The percentages for use in public rooms include only children who do not use the internet in their bedroom (i.e. they do not access it in a private space at home). However, it is possible, even likely, that those who use the internet in their bedroom may also use it elsewhere at home – thus the finding for 'own bedroom' identifies all those who can use the internet in a private space.

- **For many European children, the internet has become a private phenomenon, or at least private from parents (although greatly shared with peers): more use it at home in their bedroom (49%) than elsewhere only in the home (38%).** Advice on parental supervision of children's internet use (e.g. to put the computer in a public space) needs updating to take this into account.
- **Private use in the child's bedroom is strongly differentiated by age – for younger children, use is generally in a public room, for teenagers it occurs more often in private.**
- The differences in access/use by SES are notable – both the overall difference in access at home (only 72% of children from low homes use the internet at home) compared with 96% of those from high SES homes) and the difference in private/personal access (41% vs. 54%).[19]
- Gender differences in access are minor, though there is a slight tendency for boys to have better access.
- This suggests a rather different quality to the online experience of children from different households. Having private access may offer a range of benefits – e.g. freedom to explore, privacy, flexibility in use. Insofar as these benefits are socially stratified, such differences are pertinent to policies regarding digital exclusion and the European Digital Agenda.[20]

**Figure 5: Children's use of the internet at home**

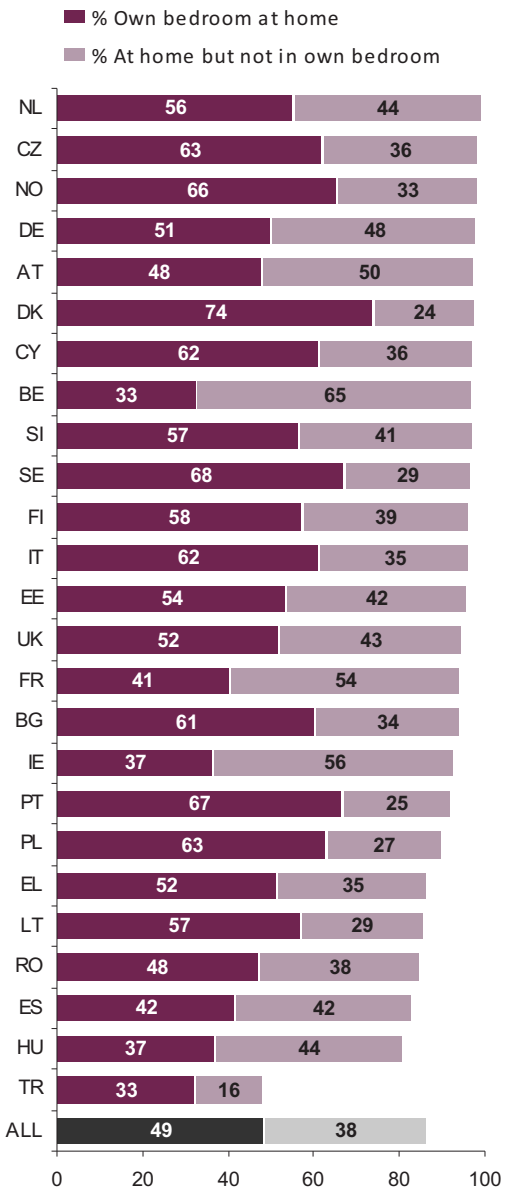



QC301a, b: Looking at this card, please tell me where you use the internet these days.

Base: All children who use the internet.

However, European countries vary, and children's use of the internet at home varies considerably by country (Figure 6 – see Annex 2 for the country initials).

**Figure 6: Children's use of the internet at home, by country**




QC301a, b: Looking at this card, please tell me where you use the internet these days.

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Noting, first, the overall length of the bars, nearly all internet-using children in Europe use the internet at home. **Use at home is far lower in Turkey (49%) than in other countries**
- Using the internet in the child's bedroom shows a different pattern, being as low in Belgium as in Turkey (both 33%), with Ireland (37%) and Hungary (37%) close behind; private use is highest in Denmark (74%), Portugal and Sweden (67%), and Norway (66%).
- It may be, that in some cases, (e.g. Denmark, Sweden), the household has multiple points of access, including in the child's own room, but that in others, the only access point has been given to the child (e.g. Poland and Portugal).

**Thus most teenagers use the internet at home in the privacy of their own bedroom** as opposed to in a public area of their home. So the challenge for parents of teenagers is different from that of parents of younger children.

Since school is the second most common location at which children use the internet, teachers have an important role to play when it comes to educating children about the safe and responsible use of the internet. Only schools have the capability to educate all children on this issue, and their resourcing should support this crucial role.

## 2.2. How children access the internet

Since personal and mobile devices permit children to go online flexibly, there is increasing overlap between where and with what devices children connect to the internet. Further, children do not always grasp the technical distinctions among devices that are relevant to policy makers or technology providers.

The *EU Kids Online* survey asked children which device they use to go online, permitting multiple responses (Table 3).

- **Most (58%) children still access the internet via a shared personal computer (PC), although access via their own PC is next most common (35%).**
- **Nearly one third (32%) go online through their television set, around another third do so via a mobile phone (31%), and a quarter access the internet via a games console (26%).** Given that computer access has long predominated, these other options have clearly been taken up in recent years
- **About a quarter go online using a personal laptop (24%) or a shared laptop (22%)**, reflecting the

growth in the use of laptops in general and, clearly, the greater access that children now have to them.

- **12% go online using a handheld or portable device** (e.g. iPod Touch, iPhone or Blackberry).

### Table 3: Devices through which children access the internet

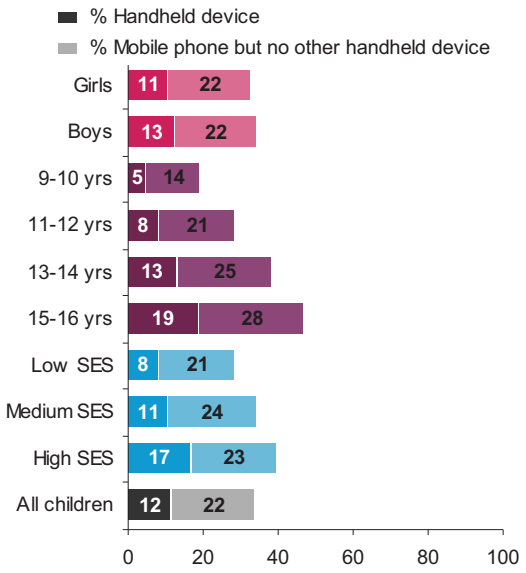
| % children who use the internet | |
|---|---|
| Shared PC | 58 |
| Own PC | 35 |
| Television set | 32 |
| Mobile phone | 31 |
| Games console | 26 |
| Own laptop | 24 |
| Shared laptop | 22 |
| Other handheld or portable device (e.g. iPod Touch, iPhone or Blackberry) – *hereafter 'Handheld device'* | 12 |
| Average number of devices of use | 2.5 |

QC300a-h: Which of these devices do you use for the internet these days? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

**Possibly the main recent change is the growth in access to the internet via mobile phones, smart phones or other handheld devices** (e.g. iPod Touch). Figure 7 shows the proportion of children, broken down into demographic variables, who access the internet in this way, and Figure 8 shows these findings by country.

### Figure 7: Child accesses the internet using a mobile phone or handheld device




QC300h, e: Which of these devices do you use for the internet these days? [21]

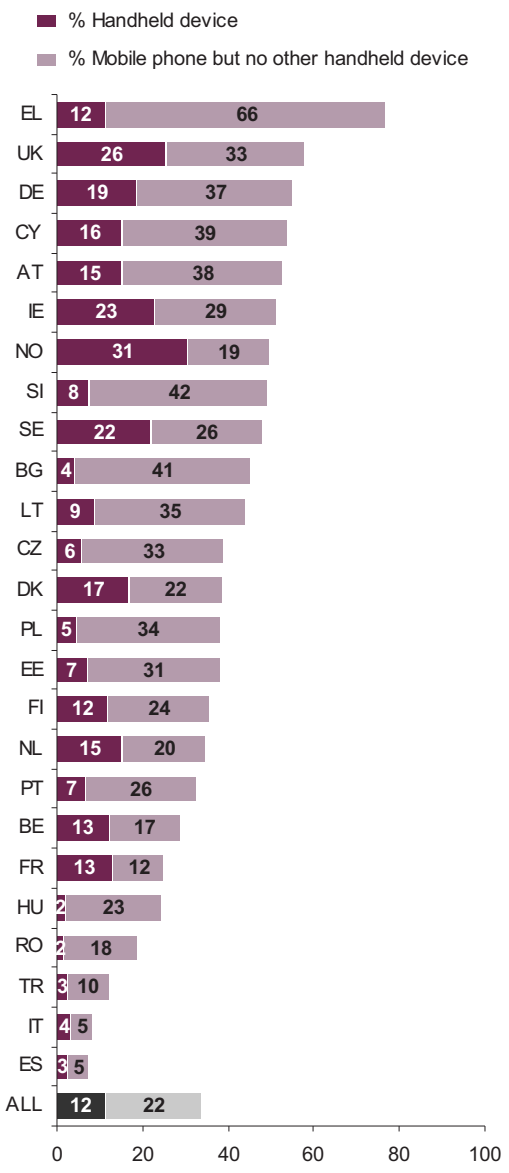
Base: All children who use the internet

- **One in three 9-16 year olds who use the internet goes online via a mobile or handheld device** (33%, comprising 12% via a handheld device and 22% only via an ordinary mobile phone).[22]
- Children from higher SES homes are more likely to go online using handheld devices (17%). So too are teenagers, especially those aged 15-16 years old (19%).

Overall, access to the internet through mobile technology is, to some degree, stratified by age and SES in fairly predictable ways.

As for country differences in mobile use of the internet, these are fairly substantial (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Child accesses the internet using a mobile phone or handheld device, by country**




QC300h, e: Which of these devices do you use for the internet these days?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Using a handheld device to access the internet is most common in Norway (31%), the UK (26%), Ireland (23%) and Sweden (22%).
- Children in Southern and Eastern European countries are least likely to have internet access via a handheld device.
- A somewhat different pattern is evident for accessing the internet by means of a regular mobile phone – this is most common in Greece, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Austria, Lithuania and Poland

It seems likely that children are increasingly accessing and using the internet from personal communications devices other than home or school computers. This means that their internet access and usage cannot always be monitored by parents and/or teachers. That leaves two strategies for policy makers to promote – the contribution of educators in teaching children digital literacy and self protective skills, and the role of self-regulatory and/or co-regulatory management of the online technologies and services.

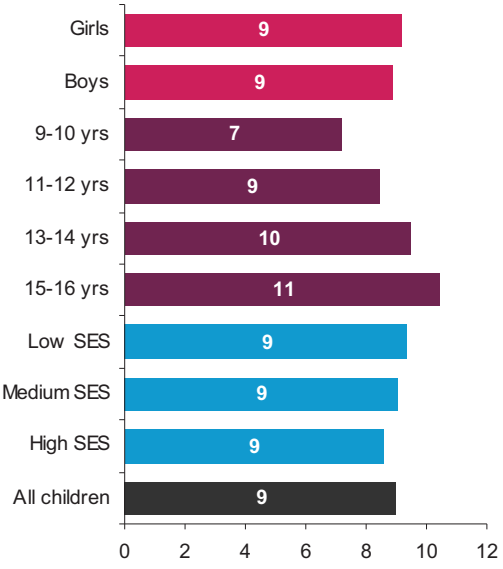
## 2.3. How much children use the internet

**Previous research has suggested that the more children use the internet, the more they gain digital literacy, the more opportunities they take up, and the more risks they encounter**.[23] Greater use suggests a deeper embedding of online activities in children's everyday lives at home, at school and with friends. While less use may reflect the choice not to use the internet, it may also indicate digital, and possibly social, exclusion.

The *EU Kids Online* survey measured the amount of use in several ways – the age when children first go online, the frequency of going online and the time spent online (on school days, at the weekend). Consider, first, how old children were when they started to use the internet (Figure 9).

- **On average, children aged 9-16 years old were nine when they first went online. This varies by age, with the youngest group saying they were seven, on average, while the 15-16 year olds say they were 11 on first use.**
- There is no evident gender difference in the number of years that children have used the internet, nor is there a difference for SES (the slight difference in bar lengths in the graph reflects minor differences in months).

**Figure 9: Average age (years) when child first used the internet**




QC302: How old were you when you first used the internet?

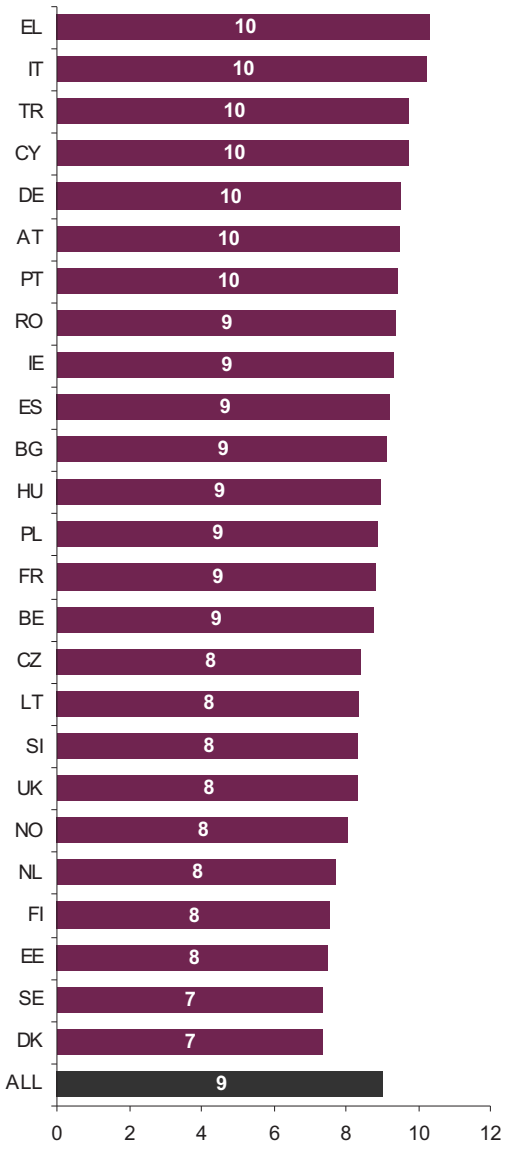
Base: All children who use the internet.

It seems likely, therefore, that the age of first use is dropping across Europe. Further, the age at which children first use the internet varies by country (Figure 10).

- **The average age of first internet use is seven in Denmark and Sweden and eight in several other Northern countries (Norway, Finland, the Netherlands and the UK) as well as in Estonia.**
- Average ages are higher (10 years old) in Greece, Italy, Turkey, Cyprus, Denmark, Austria and Portugal.

Since children are going online at younger and younger ages, internet safety campaigns and initiatives must be targeted at/tailored towards younger age groups, while also sustaining existing efforts for older children. To the extent that, until now, efforts have concentrated on secondary more than primary schools, **this has implications for curricula and teacher training in primary schools especially.**

**Figure 10: Average age (years) when child first used the internet, by country**



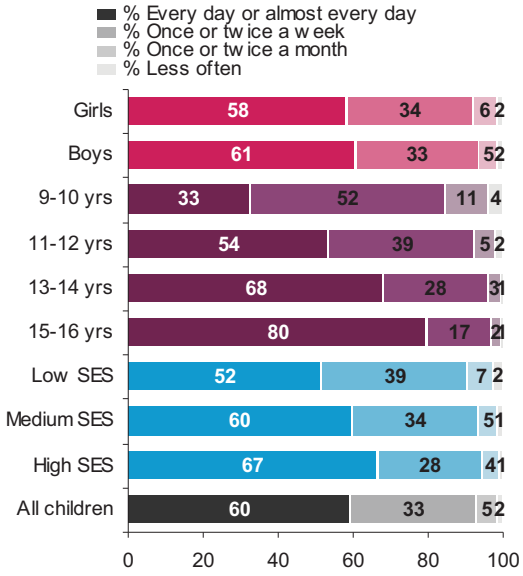

QC302: How old were you when you first used the internet?

Base: All children who use the internet.

**The second measure of use in the survey was frequency of use, giving an indication of how embedded the internet is in children's lives.** It may be argued that daily or near daily use is necessary for the communication and networking functions of the internet.

*Recall that the population surveyed includes all children who go online at all, whether frequently or rarely.* How often children go online is shown in Figure 11.

**Figure 11: How often children use the internet**

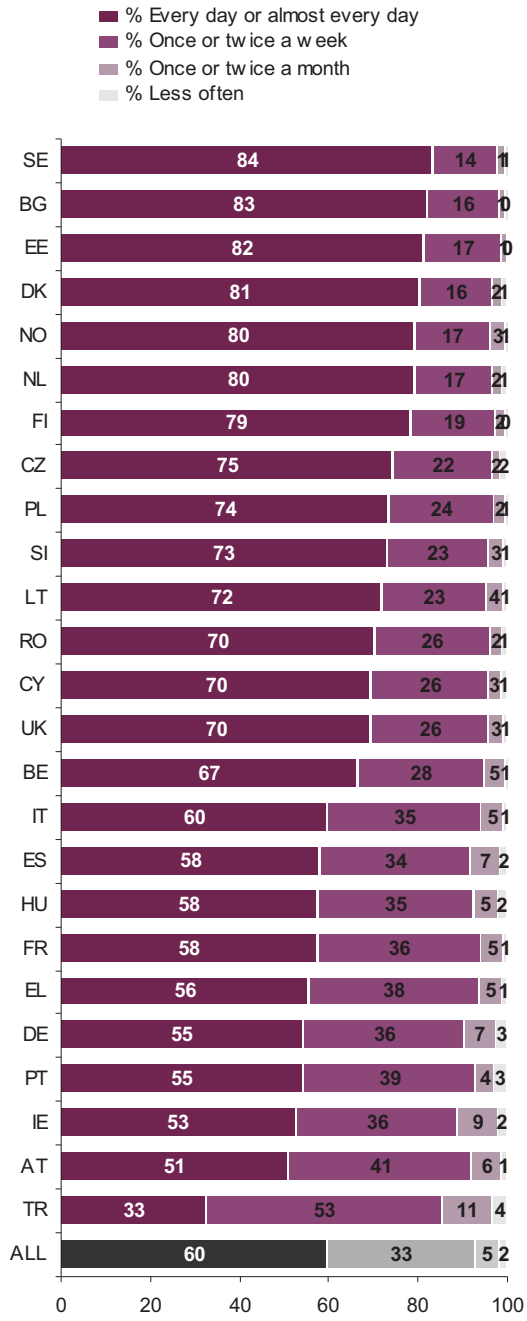



QC303: How often do you use the internet?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Child internet users can be divided into two groups: those who use the internet daily or almost daily (60%) and those who use it once or twice a week (33%). Combined, this is 93% of all children who go online at all; 5% go online once or twice a month, 2% less often.**
- There is little gender difference in frequency of use, although boys are slightly more likely to be daily users (61%, compared with 58% of girls).
- SES differences are more evident: 67% of children from high SES homes go online daily, compared with 52% from lower SES homes. It seems likely that this reflects differences in quality of access, since children from high SES homes are more likely to have access at home, in their bedroom and via a handheld device.
- **Age differences in frequency of use are the most strongly marked. For 9-10 year olds, one third (33%) go online daily. This percentage rises steadily until for 15-16 year olds, four fifths (80%) go online every day.**

**Figure 12: How often children use the internet, by country**




QC303: How often do you use the internet?

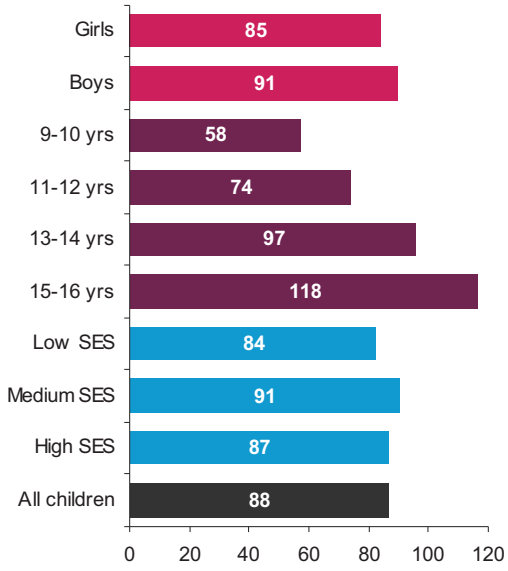
Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Four in five children from 9-16 in Sweden, Bulgaria, Estonia, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands use the internet daily. This applies to fewer than half of the children in Turkey, where 33% of children go online daily** (Figure 12).

Last, consider the amount of time children spend online each day. Time spent online was calculated using a method widely used to measure television viewing. It asks children for separate estimates for an average school day and an average non-school day. These are combined to estimate average internet use each day (see Figure 13).

*Note that time spent online was difficult to measure because younger children in particular find time estimates difficult and because children multitask, going online while doing other activities while not turning off the internet.*

**Figure 13: How long children use the internet for on an average day** (in minutes)




Derived from QC304 and QC305: About how long do you spend using the internet on a normal school day / normal non-school day?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **The average time spent online by 9-16 year olds is around an hour and a half per day (88 minutes).**
- Gender differences in time spent online are small (boys go online for an average of six minutes per day more than girls). SES differences are also small.
- The largest difference in time spent online is by age. The 15-16 year olds spend almost two hours per day, on average (118 minutes) twice that of the youngest group (9-10 year olds average 58 minutes per day).

It remains to be seen whether children will spend even more time online in the coming years. What is clear is that, for many European children, internet use is already thoroughly embedded in their daily lives and everyday routines.

## 2.4. Digital literacy and safety skills

**'Digital literacy' (or 'media literacy', 'competence' or 'skills'), plays a vital role in children's use of the internet.** It is assumed to result from and to stimulate the range and depth of children's online activities. Policy makers anticipate that the more digitally literate or skilled children become, the more they will gain from the internet while also being better prepared to avoid or cope with online risks. While digital literacy is generally defined as including a broad range of skills and competences, digital safety represents a subset of digital or media literacy.

Measuring digital literacy, including digital safety skills, is difficult, especially when using methodologies where no direct observation of the child's internet use is possible. Three self-report measures, themselves positively correlated, are often used in surveys:[24]

1. *Range/depth of online activities*. This assumes that the more (or less) a child does on the internet, the greater (or weaker) their skills will be, since skills develop through use. Skills are not themselves directly measured; rather, the focus is on activities (see Section 3 on Activities).
2. *Self-efficacy* is a simple self-report of ability to use the internet. The *EU Kids Online* survey asked parents ('how good are you at using the internet?') and children ('how true is it for you: I know a lot about the internet' and 'how true is it for you: I know more about the internet than my parents'). This may be more a measure of confidence than skill.
3. *Specific concrete skills* are hypothesised as part of digital literacy. This approach was followed in the survey for 11-16 year olds, with the focus on critical and safety skills (not, say, on creative skills or production knowledge).


**Eight specific digital skills were asked of the 11-16 year olds, as shown in Table 4.**

**Table 4: Children's digital literacy and safety skills** (age 11+)

| | 11-12 year old | | 13-16 year old | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % who say they can… | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | All |
| Bookmark a website | 52 | 45 | 72 | 70 | 64 |
| Block messages from someone you don't want to hear from | 45 | 46 | 72 | 72 | 64 |
| Find information on how to use the internet safely | 51 | 43 | 71 | 69 | 63 |
| Change privacy settings on a social networking profile | 34 | 35 | 65 | 66 | 56 |
| Compare different websites to decide if information is true | 43 | 37 | 64 | 62 | 56 |
| Delete the record of which sites you have visited | 37 | 29 | 63 | 59 | 52 |
| Block unwanted adverts or junk mail/spam | 36 | 32 | 61 | 56 | 51 |
| Change filter preferences | 15 | 12 | 41 | 29 | 28 |
| Average number of skills | 3.0 | 2.7 | 4.9 | 4.6 | 4.2 |

QC320a-d and QC321a-d: Which of these things do you know how to do on the internet? Please say yes or no to each of the following... If you don't know what something is or what it means, don't worry, just say you don't know.

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

- **On average, children say they have four of the eight skills asked about. Most 11-16 year olds can bookmark a website (64%), block messages from someone they do not wish to be in contact with (64%) or find safety information online (63%).**
- **Roughly half can change privacy settings on a social networking profile (56%), compare websites to judge the quality of information (56%), delete their history (52%) or block junk mail and spam (51%).**
- **Only about a quarter can change filter preferences (28%).**

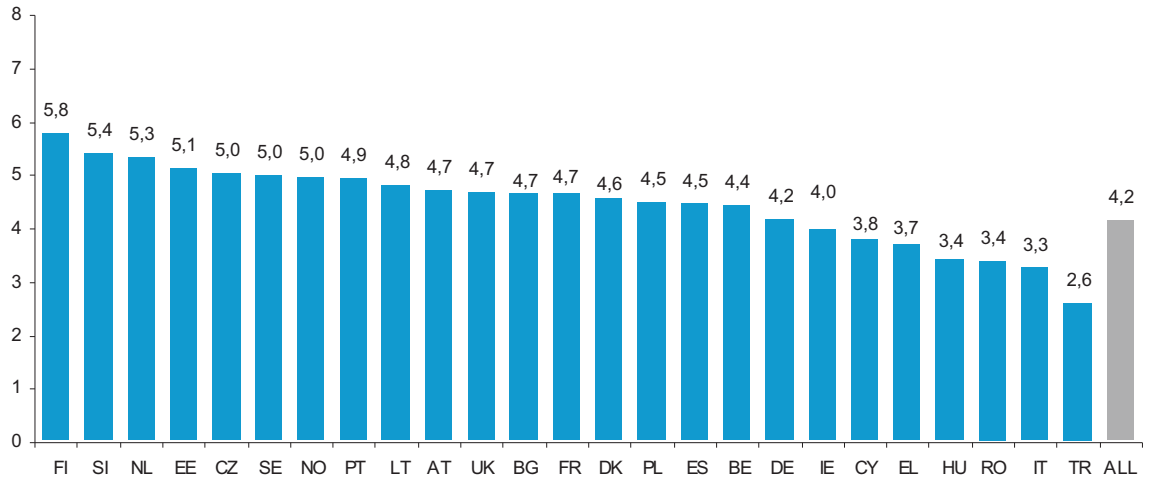
Young people's skills, it seems, include a mixture of critical skills and safety skills. Some skills widely promoted as part of safety programmes are, clearly, not yet in place. For example, the percentage that can change their privacy settings on a social networking profile is lower than those who have such a profile (see Section 3.5), a point that we will pursue in subsequent analysis. Blocking people is more manageable, it seems, than changing filter preferences. Demographic differences are significant.

- The teenagers (aged 13-16) claim considerably more skills than the younger children (aged 11-12).
- Boys claim slightly more skills than girls, as is consistent with previous research.[25]

It has already been shown that the range of access platforms available to children and, related to this, how much they use the internet, varies considerably across different European countries. Are there similar national differences in self-reported digital skills? (See Figure 14)

- **Most skills are claimed by children in Finland, Slovenia, the Netherlands and Estonia.**
- **Fewest skills are claimed by children in Turkey, Italy, Romania and Hungary.**

**Figure 14: Children's digital literacy and safety skills, by country** (age 11+)




QC320a-d and QC321a-d: Which of these things do you know how to do on the internet? Please say yes or no to each of the following... If you don't know what something is or what it means, don't worry, just say you don't know. *(Scale shows average number out of the 8 skills asked about in Table 4)*

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

Additionally, as a simple, global measure of self-confidence among European youth, the *EU Kids Online* survey also asked the children (now including the 9-10 year olds) to say how true it is for them that "I know more about the internet than my parents".

Figure 15 shows their answers by demographic variables:

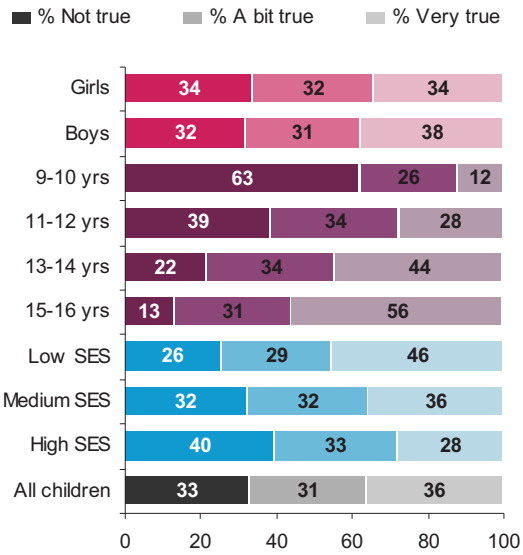
- **On average, one third of 9-16 year olds (36%) say that the statement, "I know more about the internet than my parents," is 'very true' of them, one third (31%) say it is 'a bit true' and one third (33%) say it is 'not true' of them.**
- The gender difference here is even less than was found with measures of concrete skills (above), although boys (38%) are slightly more than girls (34%) to say this statement is 'very true' of them.
- **Age differences are marked. It seems that, although sizeable numbers of 9-10 year olds use the internet, they have little confidence that they know much about it compared with their parents – 63% say this statement is 'not true' for them.**
- By contrast, teenagers are confident: 56% of 15-16 year olds say this statement is 'very true' for them.
- SES differences are less marked but still noticeable, with children from lower SES homes more confident that they know a lot about the internet than those from higher SES homes.

In terms of the digital literacy and safety skills that children are gaining across Europe, the 'glass half full' approach would emphasise that the majority of 11-16 year olds can manage most of the specific skills we asked about. Moreover, one third are very confident, and a further third are a bit confident that they are the generation that knows a lot about using the internet, especially compared with parents.

However, the 'glass half empty' conclusion is that one third says it is not true for them that they know more than their parents about using the internet. Further, of the eight skills we asked them about, on average they can only do three of them, and more than four in ten do not know how to block messages, bookmark sites, find safety information, change privacy settings or determine whether websites are reliable.

The lower levels of skills and confidence claimed by younger children are especially of concern, given that they are increasingly using the internet in substantial numbers.

**Figure 15: "I know more about the internet than my parents"**




QC319a: How true are these of you? I know more about the internet than my parents. Please answer not true, a bit true or very true.

Base: All children who use the internet.

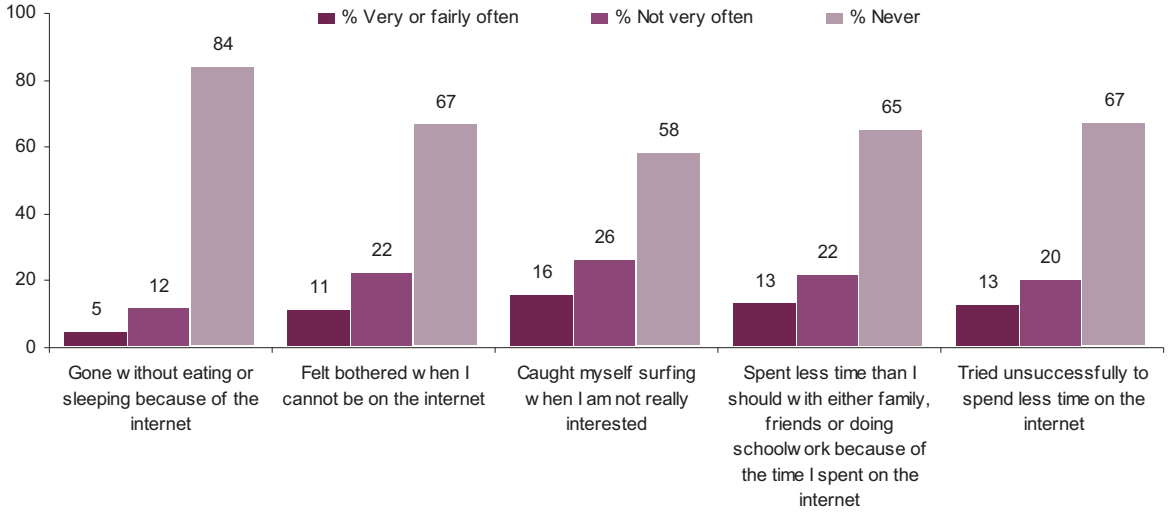
## 2.5. Excessive use of the internet

The arrival of each new medium has been accompanied by public anxiety over its potential dominance of children's time and attention – past examples include television and the home computer. Concern over 'internet addiction' is growing, with parallel efforts among researchers and clinicians to measure it, and to decide whether the internet is addictive in the same sense as alcohol or drugs.[26]

Although the question of 'addiction' remains contested, consensus is growing that 'excessive' use of the internet is worth investigating. Drawing on prior measurement of computer or games 'addiction', such research focuses on circumstances in which the internet displaces children's social or personal needs in a way that they cannot control. Thus a curvilinear relationship is proposed between use and benefit, such that more use is likely to be beneficial up to a point but, if excessive, it may become problematic.

Questions about excessive use were asked of the 11-16 year olds, as shown in Figure 16. These questions were selected from wider investigations into excessive use of the internet.[27] As will be seen, the focus is not simply on overall amount of use but on the conflict this may introduce with family or schoolwork, together with the experience of not being able to reduce or stop the activity.

**Figure 16: Excessive use of the internet among children** (age 11+)




QC144a-e: How often have these things happened to you?

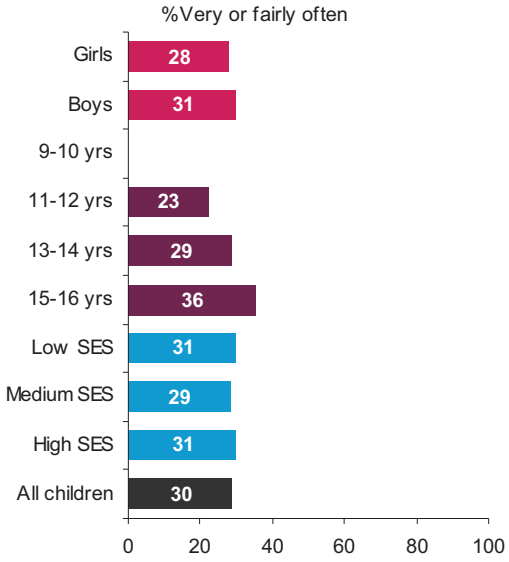
Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

- Many agree with the statement, “I have caught myself surfing when I am not really interested”. Four in ten (42%) children agree with this, though only 16% say this happens fairly or very often.
- Around one third say they have spent less time than they should with friends, family or doing schoolwork because of the time they spend online (35%). A similar proportion has tried unsuccessfully to spend less time on the internet (33%) and/or they feel bothered when they cannot be on the internet (33%).
- In each case, some one in eight says this happens to them fairly or very often.
- Fewer children (17%) say that they have gone without eating or sleeping because of the internet – 5% say this happens fairly or very often.
- It seems, therefore, that as an activity which children would like to cut down on, and which has some adverse effects on other aspects of their lives, excessive use is a problem for a minority of children.

The next two graphs are based on a composite index – the percentage of children, out of all children, who answer ‘fairly’ or ‘very often’ to one or more of these five experiences. Figure 17 shows differences by demographic variables.

- This reveals no differences by SES of household, and only a marginal difference by gender, with boys slightly more likely to report one or more of the forms of excessive use (24%, compared with 22% of girls).
- Differences by age are more marked, with one quarter (23%) of 11-12 year olds, rising to over a third (36%) of 15-16 year olds, experiencing the consequences of excessive use.

**Figure 17: Child has experienced one or more form of excessive internet use fairly or very often** (age 11+)

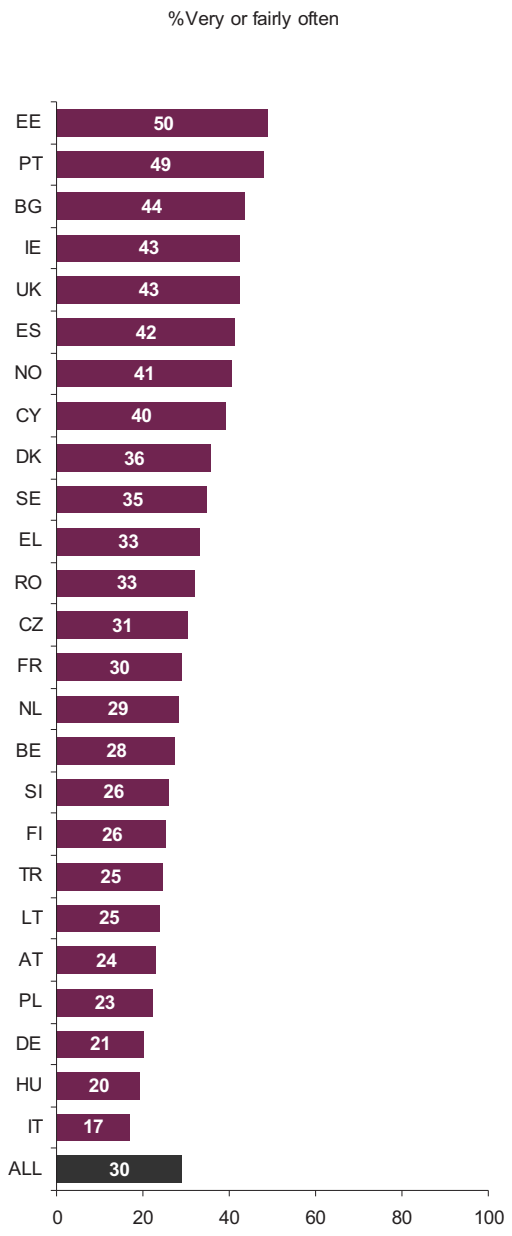



QC144a-e: How often have these things happened to you? The graph shows the percentage of children who answer ‘fairly’ or ‘very often’ to one or more of the five statements in Figure 16.

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

Country differences in children’s excessive use of the internet are shown in Figure 18.

**Figure 18: Child has experienced one or more form of excessive internet use fairly or very often, by country** (age 11+)




QC144a-e: How often have these things happened to you? The graph shows the percentage of children who answer 'fairly' or 'very often' to one or more of the five statements in Figure 16.

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

- **Almost a third (30%) of children report one or more of the experiences associated with excessive internet use 'fairly' or 'very often'.**
- **This percentage rises to half of the 11-16 year olds surveyed in Estonia (50%) and over four in ten in Portugal (49%), Bulgaria (44%), Ireland (43%) and UK (43%).**
- **Fewer children report consequences of excessive internet use in Italy (17%) and Hungary (20%).**

"Lack of sleep, you don't do your homework if you are too much on the computer and can't concentrate to study" **(Boy, 14, Finland)**

Further analysis of the relation between these experiences, and of the characteristics of those children who report more than one of them, will be included in our future reports. At that point, we will also investigate the possible relation between excessive use and other online risk experiences, since previous research suggests these to be correlated.[28]

## 2.6. Parental use of the internet

Popular conceptions of 'digital immigrants' and 'digital natives', although contested by empirical research,[29] have stimulated policy discussion of the responsibility that parents are able to bear in managing their children's internet use. While the concept potentially refers to rather more than the balance in online competence between children and parents, we have data to explore this particular balance below.

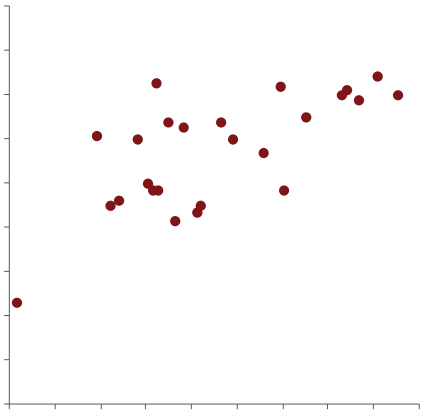
**Analysis of the Flash Eurobarometer survey of European parents in 2008 showed that, since the previous Eurobarometer survey in 2005, parents have been 'catching up' with their children in many countries**. The 2008 data showed that, in most countries, parents are as likely, or more likely, to use the internet compared with their children.[30] This matters because, as previous research has shown, the more parents use the internet, the more skilled they are and the more they manage their children's internet use.[31]

Figure 19 shows the relative balance of daily use among children and parents, by country. *Recall that in the EU*

*Kids Online project, 'parent' refers to the parent or carer who is most involved in the target child's internet use.*

*Importantly, this figure plots countries according to the overall percentage of daily use among internet-using-children against daily use among the parents of these children (whether or not these parents use the internet at all). Thus it tells us whether the parents of internet-using children in each country use the internet as much, more or less than children.*

**Figure 19: Children's daily use (%) by parental daily use (%), by country**




# 3. ACTIVITIES

## 3.1. Range of children's online activities

What do European children aged 9-16 say they do when they go online? The *EU Kids Online* survey asked children about which online activities they take up, so as to understand the opportunities they enjoy and to provide a context for the investigation of online risks.

We explore children's online activities in this report for two reasons. First, by mapping the range of activities they undertake and, it may be assumed, generally enjoy, a balanced view can be obtained of the benefits the internet affords children against which our subsequent examination of risks should be considered. Second, as noted in Section 1, there is no easy line to be drawn between activities which result in benefits and those that carry a risk of harm. Understanding the nature of children's activities is necessary if research is to dissect the interplay between benefits and harm, recognising that this may vary for different groups of children.

Perhaps surprisingly, little previous research has examined online activities of children systematically across Europe, especially for younger children.[33] Notably, although access and to a lesser degree amount of use does vary by children's age and household SES,[34] previous research suggests children's online activities depend less on SES and more on age and gender.

Table 5 shows how many children do each of a range of activities, by age and gender.

- **Use of the internet for school work is the top online activity of the common things that children do online (85%)**, confirming the importance of incorporating the internet into educational contexts.
- **Playing games (e.g. 83% playing against the computer), receiving content produced by others (e.g. watching video clips, 76%), and communicating (e.g. social networking and instant messaging, 62%) are the next most popular online activities.**
- This contrasts with the various ways of creating user-generated content. **Posting images (39%) or messages (31%) for others to share, using a webcam (31%), file-sharing sites (18%), spending time in a virtual world (16%) or writing a blog (11%) are all less common**. This is perhaps surprisingly given popular attention to the supposed rise of a more 'participatory culture'.[35]

If the internet is to become a truly participatory and creative opportunity for most young people rather than only the privileged few, it is important that policymakers actively seek to promote such activities in educational, leisure and civic forums as appropriate.

- Gender differences are generally small, which is perhaps a little surprising given that past research has referred to differences between girls and boys in tastes and interests. It is noteworthy that boys overall have a slightly wider repertoire of online activities, and they play more games against others online; further, teenage boys play games against the computer more than teenage girls.
- Teenage girls appear less interested than boys in creating an avatar or spending time in a virtual world. Whether this is an age or a cohort effect remains to be seen in future research. For example, a possible age effect is that teenage girls prioritise socialising offline to spending that time in virtual worlds.[36] Or, services directed to younger girls (e.g. *Habbo*, *GoSuperModel*, where using an avatar on a social networking site (SNS) s promoted as being "safer" for the youngest group), may explain greater use of avatars by younger than older girls.
- **Age differences are greater, with the exception of using the internet for school work: 9-12 year olds are much less likely that 13-16 year olds to use the internet for watching or posting video clips or messages, reading or watching the news, instant messaging, social networking and email or downloading music or films.**

In all, there is evidence of considerable breadth in children's internet use, with younger children doing on average over five activities and teenagers doing eight or nine activities. As earlier research has suggested, these findings support the 'ladder of opportunities'. This hypothesises that certain basic activities tend be done first, and by most children. However, more creative or participatory activities come later, and are undertaken by fewer children.[37]

**Table 5: Children's activities online in the past month**

| | 9-12 year old | | 13-16 year old | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % who have… | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | All |
| Used the internet for school work | 79 | 82 | 87 | 90 | 85 |
| Played internet games on your own or against the computer | 86 | 84 | 88 | 71 | 83 |
| Watched video clips | 66 | 64 | 87 | 85 | 76 |
| Visited a social networking profile | 40 | 42 | 80 | 81 | 62 |
| Used instant messaging | 43 | 47 | 76 | 77 | 62 |
| Sent/received email | 42 | 47 | 74 | 76 | 61 |
| Read/watched the news on the internet | 38 | 36 | 60 | 57 | 48 |
| Played games with other people on the internet | 47 | 33 | 63 | 33 | 44 |
| Downloaded music or films | 27 | 26 | 61 | 56 | 44 |
| Put (or posted) photos, videos or music to share with others | 22 | 24 | 54 | 55 | 39 |
| Used a webcam | 23 | 25 | 37 | 38 | 31 |
| Put (or posted) a message on a website | 18 | 19 | 44 | 40 | 31 |
| Visited a chatroom | 14 | 14 | 35 | 28 | 23 |
| Used file sharing sites | 11 | 8 | 30 | 22 | 18 |
| Created a character, pet or avatar | 20 | 17 | 21 | 13 | 18 |
| Spent time in a virtual world | 15 | 14 | 21 | 12 | 16 |
| Written a blog or online diary | 4 | 6 | 15 | 18 | 11 |
| Average number of activities | 5.7 | 5.4 | 9.0 | 8.1 | 7.1 |

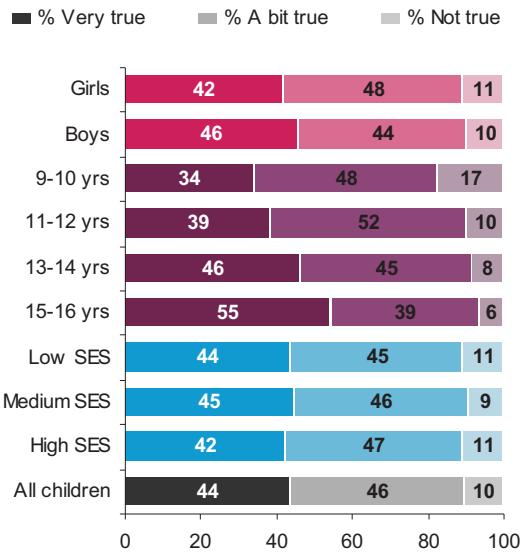
QC102: How often have you played internet games in the past 12 months? QC306a-d, QC308a-f and QC311a-f: Which of the following things have you done in the past month on the internet?[38] *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

## 3.2. Perceived quality of online content

Children do not enjoy equivalent opportunities across Europe. In some countries there are more online resources, often as a result of differential investment and/or because national markets vary in size and wealth. Familiarity with the English language in each country, especially among children, also matters. Although an objective assessment of online opportunities is difficult, the *EU Kids Online* survey asked children for their own assessment (see Figure 20).

**Figure 20: "There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age"**




QC319c: There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age. Response options: very true, a bit true, not true.

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Over four in ten (44%) 9-16 year olds are very satisfied with the online provision available to them**.
- A further half of the population is somewhat satisfied: **for 46% of children, it is 'a bit true' that there are lots of good things for children of their age to do online. For one in ten, provision is – in their judgement – insufficient.**

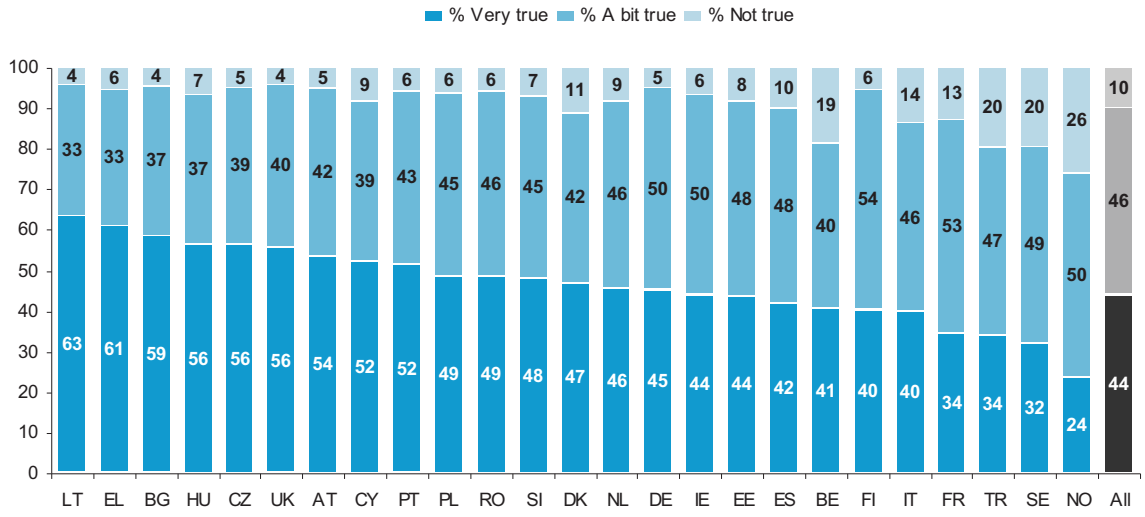
- There appear few notable differences by SES or gender, although perhaps boys are a little more satisfied and children from high SES homes a little less. Some differences by age are intriguing.
- **The youngest age group is markedly less satisfied by online provision – only 34% of 9-10 year olds say there are lots of good things for children of their age to do online.** Teenagers, by contrast, are the most satisfied (55%), presumably because they share in wider public provision.

Figure 21 shows these findings broken down by country.

- The rank order of countries is puzzling, since at least half of the children in some countries with small language communities (Lithuania, Greece, Bulgaria and Hungary) consider it 'very true' that there are good things online. Possibly a generalised enthusiasm about the internet in some countries may shape this judgement.
- There does seem, however, to be a less positive response from children in several large language communities (France – 34% very true, Spain – 42% very true) and in well-resourced Northern European countries. In the Netherlands, 46% are very positive (i.e. 'very true'), in Finland 40%, Sweden 32% and Norway only 24%.
- Children in the UK and Ireland are uniquely positioned, since they can access all English-language websites. This may account for the relative satisfaction among UK children: 56% 'very true' and 40% 'a bit true' that there are lots of good things for them online. By contrast, Irish children are less satisfied, suggesting that language may not be the only factor, and that locally produced content matters.

In the context of current European efforts to increase the availability of 'positive online content' for children, both to increase benefits and to reduce harm,[39] several conclusions may be drawn. First, it appears that the youngest children, aged 9-10 years, have started using the internet before there is sufficient content provided for them. It may also be that there is little provided for older children also, but they are satisfied with generic content and do not require special provision. There is, second, clearly some improvement in content for children required in several countries, notably France, Turkey, Sweden and Norway.

**Figure 21: "There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age", by country**




QC319c: There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age. Response options: very true, a bit true, not true.

Base: All children who use the internet.

## 3.3. Children's use of SNSs

Although not quite the most popular activity, social networking is arguably the fastest growing online activity among youth. Certainly, social networking sites (SNS) have attracted widespread attention among children and young people, policy makers and the wider public. By integrating chat, messaging, contacts, photo albums and blogging functions, SNSs potentially integrate online opportunities and risks more seamlessly than was previously possible.

On the one hand, policy makers seek to capitalise on the benefits of social networking by developing educational, participatory, creative and other resources linked to web 2.0 platforms. On the other hand, public policy concerns centre on the uneasy relation between the design of the SNS interface and emerging social conventions of use in terms of notions of 'friendship', the management of privacy and intimacy, awareness of the permanence of what is uploaded, techniques for age verification, and possibilities of 'flaming', hacking, harassment and other risky communications.

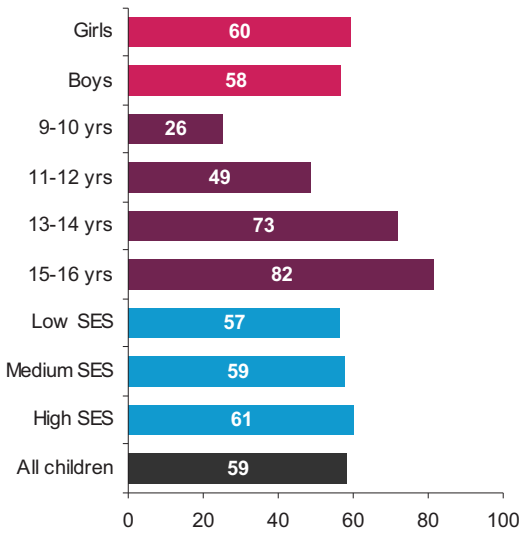
Research thus far has proved contradictory about whether SNSs are more or less risky than instant messaging, chat, or other online communication formats,[40] and it is as yet unclear whether risks are 'migrating' from older formats to SNSs. Nonetheless, efforts are underway to ensure effective self-regulation of social networking on a European level and beyond.[41]

As was seen in Table 5, 62% of European 9-16 year olds use SNSs. Such 'use' may include visiting the profiles of others, so Figure 22 shows which children have their own profile on a social networking site.

- **Among all 9-16 year olds across Europe, 59% report having their own social networking profile.**
- Social networking varies hardly at all by gender, with 58% boys and 60% girls having their own profile.
- It also varies very little by SES also (ranging from 57% for children from low SES homes to 61% for those from high SES homes).
- Most policy attention has focused on the age of users, and here the differences are more dramatic. **One quarter (26%) of the 9-10 year olds report having their own profile, compared with half (49%) of 11-12 year olds. For teenagers, percentages are much higher – 73% of 13-14 year olds and 82% of 15-16 year olds.**

Different SNSs set different lower age limits on use, but it seems likely that significant numbers of 'underage' children are using SNSs. In future reports, we will analyse findings for SNSs separately.

**Figure 22: Children who have a profile on a social networking site**




QC313: Do you have your OWN profile on a social networking site that you currently use, or not?

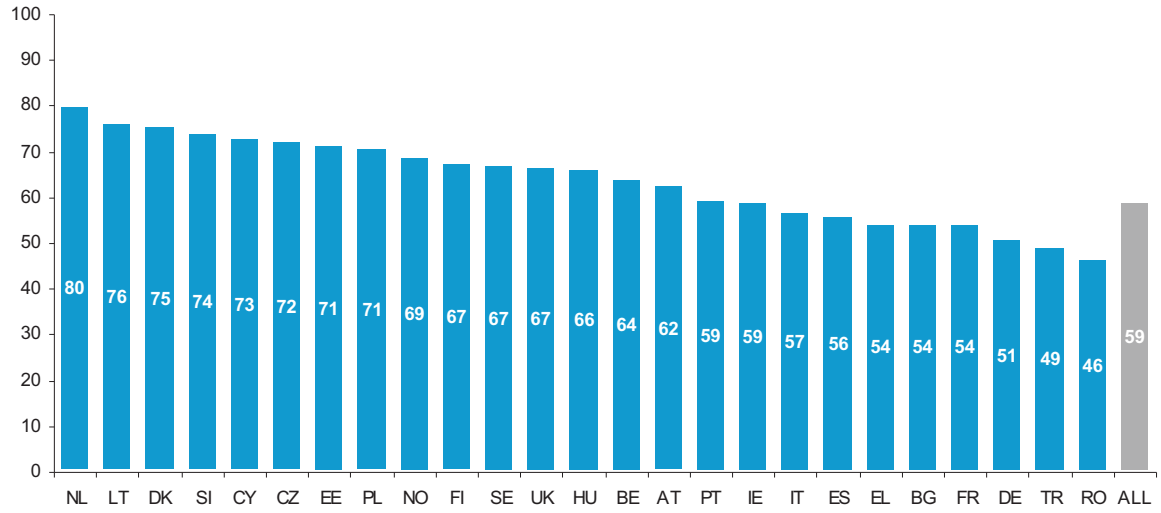
Base: All children who use the Internet.

Figure 23 shows which children have their own profile by country.

- **Social networking is most popular, it appears, in the Netherlands (80%), Lithuania (76%) and Denmark (75%), and least practised in Romania (46%) and Turkey (49%) and Germany (51%).**
- Even in these countries, half of the population aged 9-16 years old claims to have their own social networking profile, rising to three quarters in a few countries.

"Facebook is dangerous when we put the name and address and can see my stuff." **(Boy, 9, Portugal)**

**Figure 23: Children who have a profile on a SNS, by country**




QC313: Do you have your OWN profile on a social networking site that you currently use, or not?

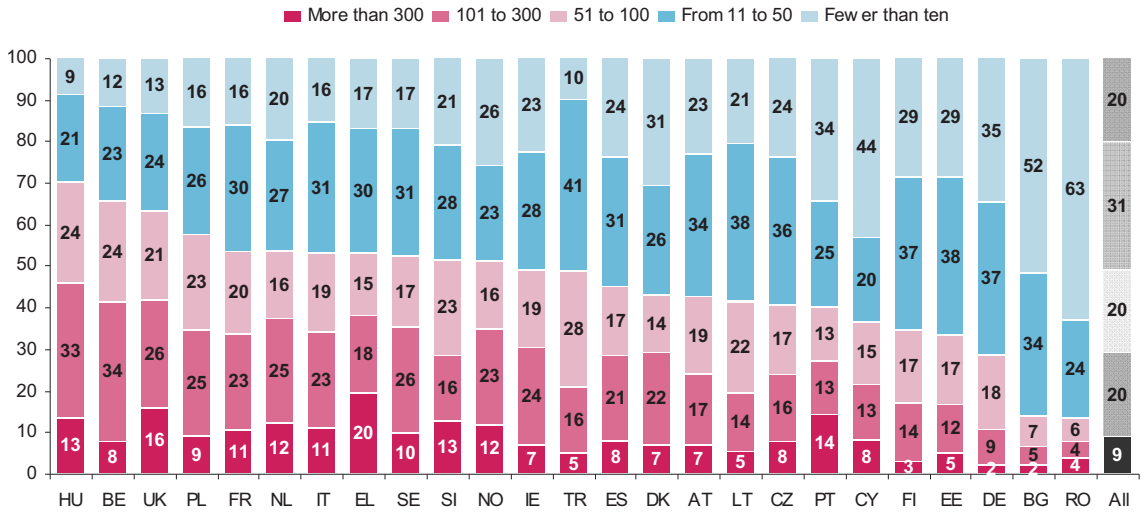
Base: All children who use the internet.

## 3.4. Nature of children's SNS contacts

With whom are children in contact via SNSs? Figure 24 shows the number of contacts on children's profiles, interesting insofar as large circles of contacts may constitute as a possible risk factor.

- **Despite popular media stories of children with hundreds of contacts, few overall report having more than 300 contacts on their social networking profile (9%), although one in five (20%) has between 100 and 300.**
- **Half (51%) have fewer than 50 contacts and 20% have fewer than 10.**
- Considerable country differences are evident in Figure 24, with Greek, British and Portuguese children reporting the most contacts overall. Fewest contacts are reported by children in Bulgaria, Germany, Finland and Romania.
- Understanding the possible consequences of these wider or narrower circles of contacts will be a focus of our future analysis.

**Figure 24: Number of contacts on children's social networking profiles, by country**




QC316: Roughly how many people are you in contact with when using [name of child's (most used) social networking site]?

Base: All children who have a profile on a social networking site.

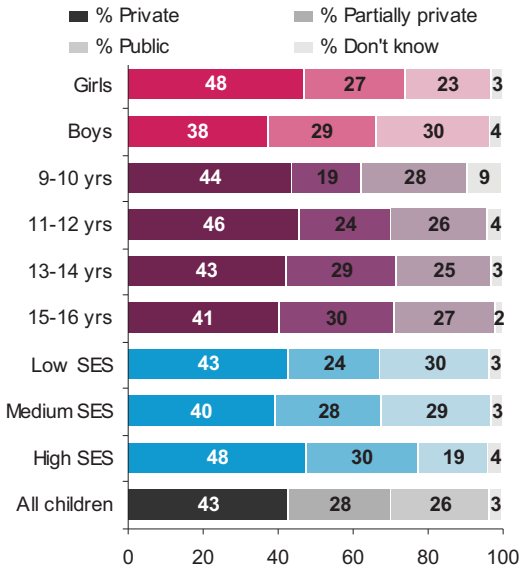
## 3.5. Use of SNS privacy settings

Many factors may influence the number of contacts by country, from norms of 'friending' and 'defriending' to the size of school community or industry conventions for default settings on different SNSs. Do such wide circles of contacts imply that children have no sense of privacy, that they might include anyone in their contact list? Research shows that children care considerably about keeping certain kinds of information private, carefully managing with whom they share particular kinds of information.[42]

Figure 25 shows that among children with a SNS profile, their privacy settings (for their most used social networking profile) vary by gender, age and SES. Recall that, as shown in Figure 22, this includes one quarter of 9-10 year olds rising to four fifths of 15-16 year olds.

"Be invited at parties in the vicinity with free drugs – saw that on my brother's Hi5." **(Girl, 16, Greece)**

**Figure 25: Children's use of SNS privacy settings**




QC317: Is your profile set to …? Public, so that everyone can see; partially private, so that friends of friends or your networks can see; private so that only your friends can see; don't know.

Base: All children who have a profile on a social networking site.


- **Among social network users, 43% keep their profile private so that only their friends can see it. A further 28% report that their profile is partially private so that friends of friends and networks can see it. Notably, 26% report that their profile is public so that anyone can see it.**
- **Girls, and children from high SES homes appear more likely to keep their SNS profile private.** If having one's profile public is linked to the risk of inappropriate contact, then it is boys and children from lower and medium SES homes who should be targeted by awareness-raising.
- There are few differences by age in terms of privacy settings. It is surprising that older teenagers are not more likely to keep their profile private, given the awareness-raising messages to which they will have been exposed. On the other hand, it is possible that parents have advised the youngest children to set their profiles to private. It may also be suspected that the 9-10 year olds were unsure how to answer this question, given the higher proportion (9%) of 'don't know' answers. This too suggests the need for awareness-raising and digital skills among the youngest children.

Whether it matters that children's profiles are set to public or private depends on the information they post on their profile. Table 6 shows several measures of the personal information children include in their profile, by country.

- The variation across countries in whether or not children's social networking profiles are public is noteworthy. Bearing in mind that those who have their profiles set to public are more often teenagers than younger children, **around half of social networking youth in Hungary (55%), Turkey (46%) and Romania (44%) have public profiles.** By contrast, less than a fifth have set theirs to public in the UK (11%), Ireland (12%) and Spain (14%). (*Note: the table shows information posted by all those with a SNS profile, not just those whose profile is public*).
- **Mostly, children appear to have learned that it is unwise to post their address or phone number on their SNS profiles. Overall, 14% have posted such information, although in Lithuania, 35% of children have done this, as have 31% in Hungary.**

**Table 6: What information children show on their social networking profile, by country**

| | % SNS profile is public | % address or phone number | % shows incorrect age | Average from six identifying features |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AT | 19 | 15 | 14 | 2.7 |
| BE | 27 | 13 | 21 | 2.9 |
| BG | 30 | 10 | 10 | 2.3 |
| CY | 27 | 6 | 23 | 2.4 |
| CZ | 33 | 20 | 13 | 2.7 |
| DE | 22 | 12 | 9 | 2.6 |
| DK | 19 | 13 | 25 | 2.8 |
| EE | 29 | 27 | 20 | 2.7 |
| EL | 36 | 12 | 19 | 2.2 |
| ES | 13 | 10 | 27 | 2.4 |
| FI | 28 | 7 | 14 | 2.4 |
| FR | 21 | 8 | 18 | 2.6 |
| HU | 54 | 31 | 2 | 3.5 |
| IE | 12 | 8 | 24 | 2.4 |
| IT | 34 | 16 | 20 | 2.7 |
| LT | 30 | 35 | 9 | 2.8 |
| NL | 18 | 16 | 6 | 3.1 |
| NO | 19 | 16 | 17 | 2.8 |
| PL | 37 | 22 | 3 | 3.4 |
| PT | 25 | 7 | 25 | 2.1 |
| RO | 42 | 21 | 12 | 2.2 |
| SE | 30 | 9 | 19 | 2.6 |
| SI | 23 | 16 | 21 | 2.7 |
| TR | 44 | 22 | 18 | 2.8 |
| UK | 11 | 7 | 21 | 2.8 |
| ALL | 26 | 14 | 16 | 2.8 |

QC317: Is your profile set to …? Public, private or partially private. QC318a-f: Which of the bits of information on this card does your profile include about you? *(Multiple responses allowed)* Identifying features asked about, which are summed in the final column: a photo that clearly shows your face, your last name, your address, your phone number, your school, your correct age.

Base: All children who have a profile on a social networking site.

- The question of showing a correct or incorrect age is significant, because 'exaggerating' one's age is said to be a fairly common practice among younger children in order to obtain a profile on age-restricted sites.[43] As column 3 shows, 17% (or 1 in 6 children) have posted an incorrect age and it may be assumed that these present the child as older than they really are. Such a practice is most common in Spain (27%), Denmark (25%), Ireland (24%) and Cyprus (23%).
- Finally, of the six types of identifying information asked about (a photo that clearly shows your face, your last name, your address, your phone number, your school, your correct age), children have included an average of 2.8 of these on their profile, ranging from 2.1 in Portugal to 3.5 in Hungary.

It seems, in sum, to be a fairly common practice for children to post identifying information of some kind or other on their SNS profile. Some information is routinely asked for by sites (e.g. a clear photo) or a correct age, although not all children provide this. Some is not asked for but is still provided by a minority of children (e.g. phone number). Further, SNSs vary in their default practices. Clearly, there is a balance to be struck between the design of sites, especially those much used by children, in terms of default settings and advice/warnings about what to post, and the responsibility of children and those who advise them regarding what they post.

"Voting on a person or groups that are organised online and operate against you (threats, slanders, taking over personal sites)." **(Girl, 14, Austria)**

## 3.6. Children's approach to online communication

Drawing the line between activities that facilitate beneficial outcomes and those that increase risk of harm is not straightforward. One aspect of contact and conduct risks that particularly challenges policy makers is that children's agency, although generally to be celebrated, may lead them to adopt risky or even deliberately risk-taking behaviours.[44] Focusing on communication online, we explored this by inviting children to compare their approach to communication online and offline (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Online and offline communication compared** (age 11+)

| % how true is this of you… | Not true | A bit true | Very true |
|---|---|---|---|
| I find it easier to be myself on the internet than when I am with people face-to-face | 50 | 38 | 12 |
| I talk about different things on the internet than I do when speaking to people face-to-face | 55 | 34 | 11 |
| On the internet I talk about private things which I do not share with people face-to-face | 68 | 24 | 8 |
| Average | 58 | 32 | 10 |

QC103a-c: How true are these of you?

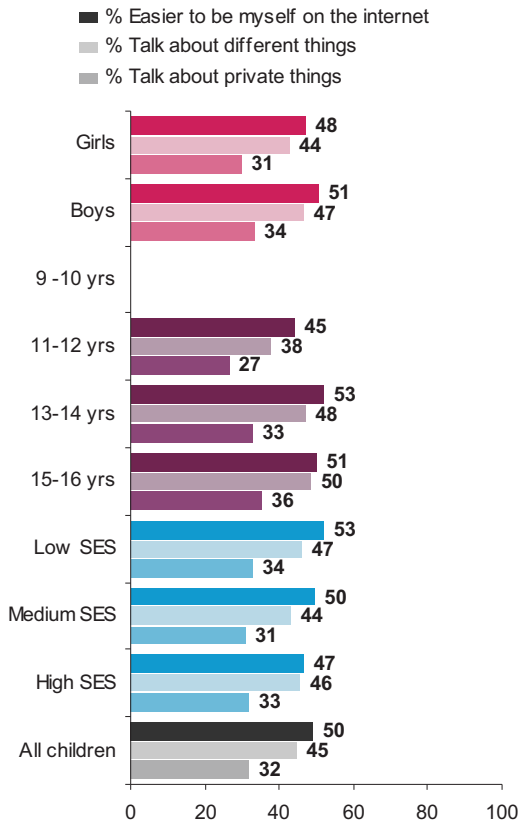
Base: All children aged 11-16 years who use the internet.

- **Half (50%) of those aged 11-16 across Europe say it is a bit or very true of them that they find it easier to be themselves on the internet than when with other people face-to-face. Half, however, say this is not true of them.**
- Nearly half (45%) say they talk about different things on the internet than when speaking to people face-to-face. Again, over half say this is not true of them.
- **One third (32%) say that they talk about private things online that they do not discuss face-to-face. Two thirds say this is not true for them.**

It seems that children divide into those for whom face-to-face and online communication are not especially distinct, and those for whom the internet offers possibilities for more varied or private or authentic communication that can be difficult to express with people face-to-face.

Figure 26 shows children's approach to online communication by demographic variables.

**Figure 26: Online and offline communication compared** (% aged 11+ who say a bit true or very true)




QC103: How true are these of you? Percentage who said 'A bit true' or 'Very true'

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

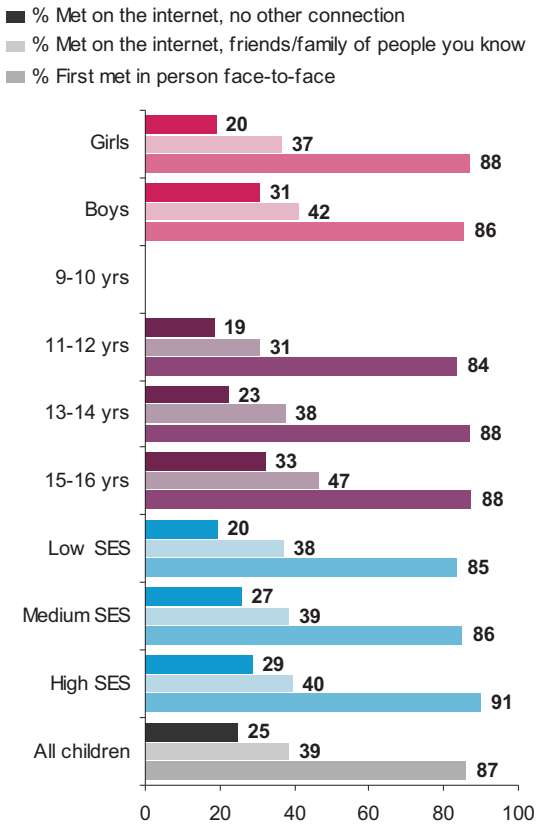
- For age, the trend is notable: older teenagers are more likely to agree with each statement, again suggesting that as children move through adolescence, the internet offers a valued opportunity for different, perhaps more intimate, communication.
- For gender and SES the differences are slight.

If the internet offers some children an opportunity for more personal or intimate communication, this raises the crucial question, with whom are they communicating? For each platform (email, SNS, chatrooms, instant messaging, games, virtual worlds) that the child had used in the past month, he or she was asked about "the types of people you have had contact with" (Figure 27).

This question pursued the common assumption that it is 'strangers' who threaten children's safety through online contact although, as previous research suggests, people from within a child's social circle can also pose a threat.[45]

- **A sizable minority (39%) are in touch with people who they first met on the internet but who have a connection with friends or family offline**: they may be said to be part of the child's wider circle offline although the child has not met them face-to-face.
- **One quarter of children aged 11-16 (25%) say they communicate online with people who they met online and who have no connection with their offline social networks**. It is these contacts, arguably, for which a better understanding is needed in the context of risk and safety issues.
- The gender difference observed mainly focuses on this last category – substantially more boys (31%) than girls (20%) communicate online with people who they only know online. It may be that these are contacts sustained through online gaming (as shown earlier, gaming is the main online activity that distinguishes between girls and boys).
- **Four fifths of children in each age group communicate online with their existing offline social circle.** But as children grow older, they widen their circle by communicating with people online who are connected to their offline circle but whom, nonetheless, they first met on the internet: 31% of 11-12 year olds, 38% of 13-14 year olds and 47% of 15-16 year olds.
- **The age difference for communicating with people who they first met on the internet (and who have no other connection with their lives) is striking: 19% of 11-12 year olds, 23% of 13-14 year olds and 33% of 15-16 year olds.**
- Differences by SES of household show a similar trend: more children from high SES households have wider and more diverse circles of online contacts, communicating with more people they met on the internet than do the low SES group (29% vs. 20%).

**Figure 27: Nature of children's online contacts** (age 11+)




QC310: I am going to read out each of the things you have just told me you do (e.g. email or whatever). For each one, I'd like you to tell me the types of people you have had contact with when doing each of these things. Response options: people who you first met in person face-to-face; people who you first met on the internet, but who are friends or family of other people you know in person; people who you first met on the internet, but who have no other connection to your life outside of the internet. *(Multiple responses allowed)*

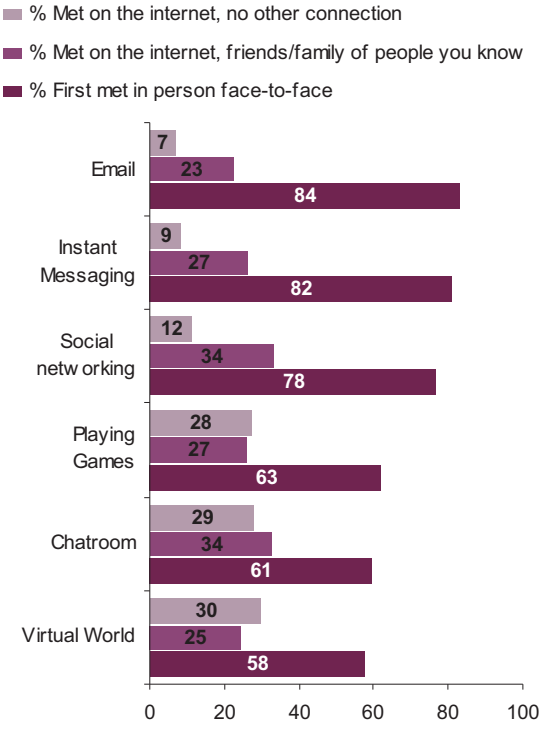
Base: All children aged 11-16 who use internet and have given at least one valid response about the nature of their online contacts.

- **Most children who communicate online are in touch with people they already know in person face-to-face (87%).** Thus online communication draws from and complements the communication that occurs in pre-existing social networks in daily life.

If it is considered that meeting people online, especially when there is no offline connection with an existing social circle, is a risky practice, then awareness-raising efforts should focus on boys, older teenagers, and those from high SES homes.

Whether or not having such contacts is actually associated with increased risk of harm remains for further analysis. However, it is possible here to examine the kind of contact according to the type of online communication used (see Figure 28).

**Figure 28: Nature of children's online contacts, by type of communication** (age 11+)




QC310: I am going to read out each of the things you have just told me you do (e.g. email or whatever). For each one, I'd like you to tell me the types of people you have had contact with when doing each of these things. Response option as before. *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children aged 11-16 who communicate on the internet in each of the ways shown (email, instant messaging, etc).

- Three applications provide the key means by which children communicate online with people they already know in person face-to-face. Of the 11-16 year olds who use email, 84% use it to contact people they know in person. For instant messaging, the percentage is 82%; for social networking sites it is a little lower at 78%.


- For those who use virtual worlds, play games online or visit chatrooms, around six in ten are in touch with people they know in person (58%, 63% and 61%).
- Each application is used by between a quarter and a third to communicate with people they have not met face-to-face but who are part of their social circle offline.
- **For virtual worlds, game playing and chatrooms, over one quarter use these applications to communicate with people they have no other connection with than their contact via the internet. For email, instant messaging and social networking, such contacts are much fewer.**
- **However, it is significant that, still, 12% or one in eight of those using social networking sites are in touch this way with people they have no other connection with.**

**Table 8: Children's actions in relation to online contacts**

| % who have, in the past 12 months . . . | Never/ not in past year | Less than monthly | More often |
|---|---|---|---|
| Looked for new friends on the internet | 60 | 19 | 21 |
| Added people to my friends list or address book that I have never met face-to-face | 66 | 18 | 16 |
| Pretended to be a different kind of person on the internet from what I really am | 84 | 10 | 6 |
| Sent personal information to someone that I have never met face-to-face | 85 | 9 | 6 |
| Sent a photo or video of myself to someone that I have never met face-to-face | 86 | 9 | 5 |

QC145a-c and QC146a-b: Have you done any of the following things in the PAST 12 MONTHS; if yes, how often have you done each of these things?

Base: All children who use the internet.

Finally in this section, children were asked about their practices in engaging with online contacts (see Table 8).

- Most children aged 9-16 say that in the past year they have not sent a photo or video of themselves (86%) or personal information (85%) to someone they have never met face-to-face. Nor have they pretended to be a different kind of person on the internet (84%).
- Two thirds (66%) say that they have not added people to their friends' list or address book who they have never met face-to-face, nor have they (60%) looked for new friends on the internet.
- However, a minority of children say they have done some of these things. **Four in 10 (40%) have looked for new friends on the internet, half of these more often than monthly. One third (34%) have added contacts they don't know face-to-face, half of these more often than monthly.**
- **Fewer have sent personal information (15%) or images of themselves (14%) to people they haven't met in person.**

Some of these approaches to communication might be judged to involve children in 'risky' practices. But as our overall framework asserts, the key question is whether or not undertaking these practices results in more risk-related behaviours or, importantly, more harm - a key question for further analysis.

"That older guys from other countries add you on Facebook. But then again, you don't have to accept."

**(Girl, 16, Sweden)**


# 4. RISK AND HARM

## 4.1. Methodological issues

It is acknowledged from the outset that it is particularly difficult to measure private or upsetting aspects of a child's experience. Our approach to mapping the online risk experiences of European children centres on several key responses to the methodological challenges faced:

- To maximise the quality of children's answers, the survey was conducted in home, face-to-face with children. This meant the interviewer could check the child's understanding, clarifying both questions and answers as needed.
- Every effort was made to provide the child with a quiet space to answer, without oversight or interference from a parent or others.
- Sensitive questions on risk, parental mediation and items where privacy should be respected were presented to children using a self-completion format so that neither the interviewer nor any family member present could oversee the child's response.[46]
- Rather than using emotive terms ('bully', 'stranger'), verbal definitions were provided using child-friendly language to ensure that children understood what was being asked of them.
- The questionnaires were tried out and then refined, using cognitive testing in each country, to ensure children's comprehension.
- To ensure questions were comparable across languages, the *EU Kids Online* network checked 'tricky' terms (both sensitive ones, and technical ones) in the translation and back translation process.
- Questions focused on children's reports of what had actually happened to them within a set time period, or the last time something happened, rather than inviting general statements of opinion or response.
- Every attempt was made to phrase questions neutrally, avoiding value judgements. Children were asked if a specific experience had bothered them without assuming that it had indeed been problematic (experienced as harmful) by all children.
- 'Bothered' was defined thus: *"for example, [something that] made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it."*
- Thus harm was measured subjectively in terms of the severity and duration of their responses. Within a survey, an objective account of harm is not obtainable (as might, for instance, be possible using the records from law enforcement or clinicians).[47]
- Detailed follow up questions on what children have experienced online, how they felt and how they may have coped were asked for four main risks of harm to the child's safety – bullying, pornography, sending/receiving sexual messages ('sexting') and meeting online contacts ('strangers') offline.
- It was recognised that children may either be victims or perpetrators of certain harms (or both), as explored for bullying and sending/receiving sexual messages.
- An effort was made to keep online risks in proportion by comparing the incidence of online and offline risk experiences where appropriate.
- There was a direct comparison of the incidence of risks as reported by a child and by the parent most involved in their internet use, to pinpoint parental awareness of children's online experiences.
- A leaflet of helpful advice and sources of further support and guidance was provided for every child. We thank Insafe for compiling this, with a version for each country and language.[48]
- For sensitive questions, children could always answer 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say', rather than being forced to provide an answer when uneasy. In general, few children selected these options but ethically it was important to give children the option[49].

A detailed account of the methodological principles employed in the project, especially on the ethics of asking children questions about sensitive or private or 'adult' matters, is available online at www.eukidsonline.net.[50] This includes the research ethics approval process undertaken and the technical report on survey design, sampling and administration.

"I am bothered by advertisements, which say that you have won and if you click on it, it takes you to paid mobile services pages." **(Boy, 16, Estonia)**

## 4.2. Overall experiences of harm

Before asking children about their specific online experiences associated with risk, we included both closed and open-ended questions in the survey that invited an overall view from the children. Quotations from their answers to the open-ended question are included throughout this report.[51]

Adopting an approach that we then repeat for the risk sections that follow (pornography, sexual messaging, etc), we decided to ask children about experiences that had bothered them in some way. The interviewer explained that by *'bothered'* we meant, *"made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it."* The aim was to focus on the child's self-report of concern or distress in a way that avoided an adult framing (e.g. danger, risk, bad things, problem).

After this introduction, children were asked two closed questions:

- *Do you think there are things on the internet that people about your age will be bothered by in any way?*
- *In the past 12 months, have you seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered you in some way?*

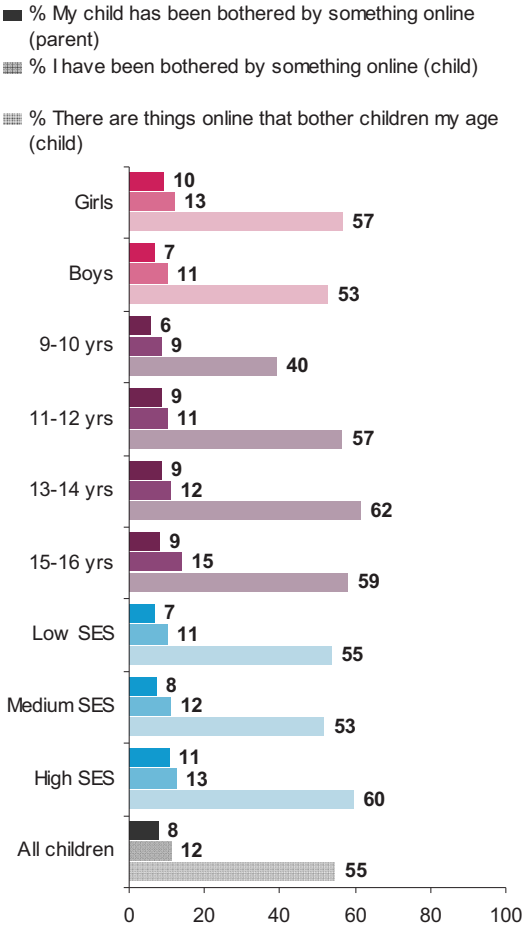
Also parents were asked:

- *As far as you are aware, in the past year, has your child seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered them in some way?* [closed-ended question]

Children's and parents' answers are shown in Figure 29:

- In a classic case of the 'third person effect',[52] children are roughly four times more likely to say that there are things on the internet that will bother other children (55%) compared to saying that there are things that have bothered them personally in the past year (12%).
- In terms of the magnitude of the answers, it is striking that over half of European children aged 9-16 think that there are things on the internet that will bother children of their age.
- Clearly, many children do not regard the internet as a totally safe or unproblematic environment. This is slightly more for teenagers than for younger children.

**Figure 29: Online experiences that have bothered children, according to child and parent**




QC110: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered you in some way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it. QP228: As far as you are aware, in the past year, has your child seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered them in some way? QC322: Do you think there are things on the internet that people about your age will be bothered by in any way?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- **In terms of their own experiences of problematic events, a sizeable minority – 12% (or one in eight children) – say that they have been bothered by something on the internet in the past year. This is a somewhat higher percentage than reported by parents (8%).**


- There are some differences by SES of household, with higher SES parents reporting a greater likelihood that their child has been bothered (around 12% from high and 13% from medium SES homes compared with 7% from low SES homes).
- **The youngest children, aged 9-10 years, are least likely to have been bothered by something online (9%) compared with older children (11-15%). Parents appear most likely to underestimate problems experienced by the oldest age group.**

Figure 30 shows the distribution by country of children's and parents' perceptions of problematic aspects of the internet, ranked by how children describe their own experiences:

- **Children's overall perceptions of the internet for children their own age vary considerably, from Denmark and Spain, where nearly all children think there are things on the internet that bother children of their age (94% and 92% respectively) to the much lower estimates from children in Slovenia (40%), Bulgaria (41%) and Turkey (42%). The average across all countries is 55%.**
- In relation to children's reporting that they themselves have been bothered by something online, much lower estimates apply (with an average across countries of 12%). There is no obvious pattern connecting estimates of risk to oneself and to others, although any relationships can be examined further.
- **Around one quarter of children in Denmark (28%), Estonia (25%) and Norway (23%), Romania (23%) and Sweden (23%) say that they have been bothered by something on the internet. These percentages are around double the European average of 12%, and notably higher than in Italy (6%), Portugal (7%) and Germany (8%).**
- **In most countries, children are more likely to report a problem than their parents (overall average 8%), and this difference is marked in Denmark, Estonia and, especially, Romania (where only 7% of parents, but 21% of children, say the child has been bothered by something online). Only in Finland and France are parents marginally more likely to perceive a problem than their children**.

Several conclusions may be drawn. First, over half (55%) of all children consider that there are things on the internet that will bother children about their own age. It is worth contrasting this finding with that shown in Figure 20, namely that 90% think it true that there are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of their age (44% "very true" and 46% "a bit true"). On balance, therefore, children see the internet positively, but clearly they are aware of both the opportunities and the risks it affords them.

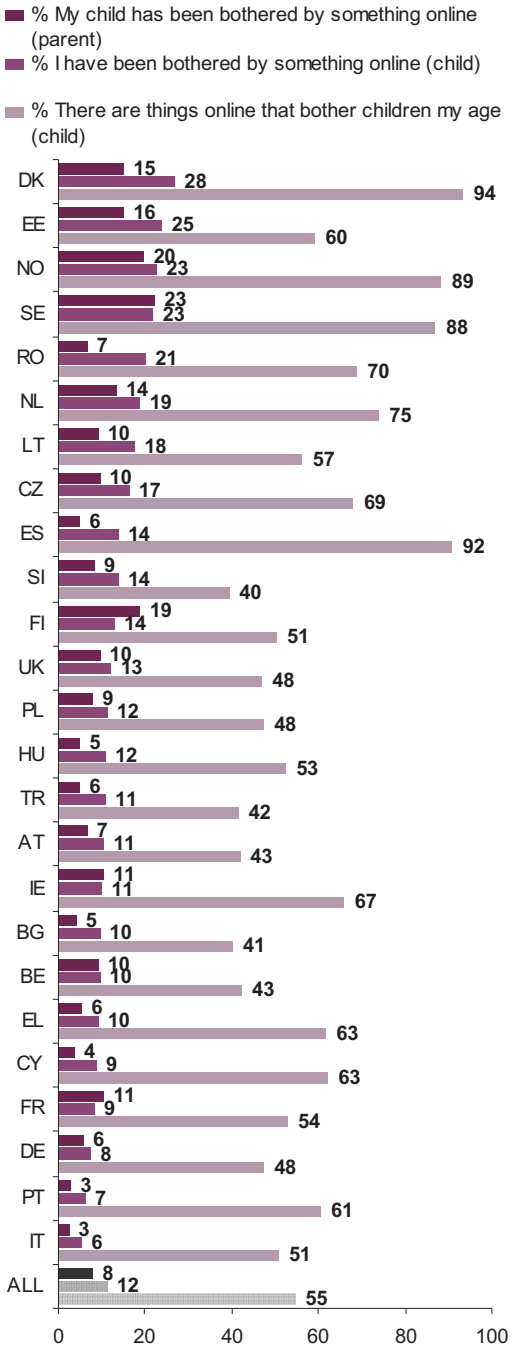
Second, although many children perceive that internet use may be risky, they do not themselves report that they have experienced harms from internet use in any great numbers. One in eight children reporting some problem is noteworthy, and may justify policy attention. But it is, nonetheless, a small minority of children who use the internet, many of them daily and for a considerable amount of time.

Third, although previous research has observed a gap in perceptions between parents and children,[53] here the gap is relatively small, although it is more sizable in some countries. It may be concluded that parents are becoming more aware of the experiences their child may have online.

In this section, we have not examined the nature of the problems children experience on the internet, but merely the overall perception that there are things that have bothered them. In the following sections, we examine children's reported experiences (nature, incidence, severity and coping) regarding a series of particular risks of harm.

"I don't know. I think absolutely nothing. There isn't any kind of thing that you can't get over in less than….10 seconds and forget about until tomorrow." **(Girl, 14, Romania)**

**Figure 30: Online experiences that have bothered children, according to child and parent, by country**




QC110: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered you in some way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it. QP228: As far as you are aware, in the past year, has your child seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered them in some way? QC322: Do you think there are things on the internet that people about your age will be bothered by in any way?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

"Many people get viruses when downloading music/films and later they learn that they downloaded viruses instead." **(Girl, 14, Estonia)**

# 5. SEEING SEXUAL IMAGES

## 5.1. Where children have seen sexual images online

Pornography is not easy to define. It covers a wide range of material from the everyday to the illegal. It may or may not be harmful to those exposed to it. In terms of the classification of risks presented earlier in Table 1, it constitutes a content risk, positioning the child as receiver of what is, generally, mass-produced content distributed via the internet.

> "Pornographic pictures are too widely available and unsuitable for children my age and younger, videos of violence" **(Boy, 15, Slovenia)**

For ethical reasons, pornography cannot be defined very explicitly in a closed-ended survey with children, for to do so might introduce new ideas to children who are hitherto unaware of such phenomena. Consequently, although this section broadly concerns pornography, the term itself was not used in the interview with children.[54]

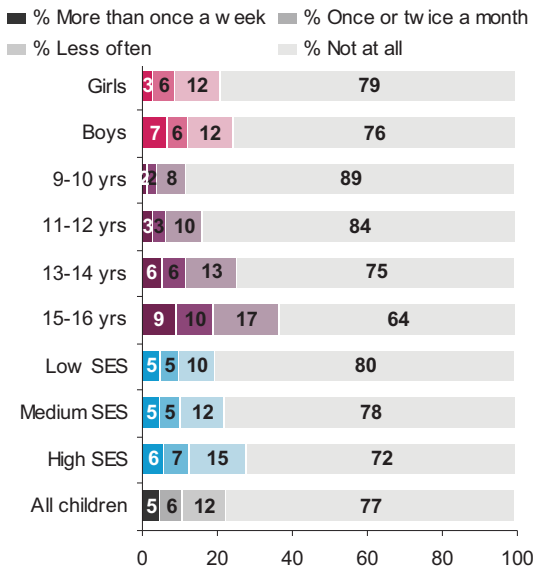
Questions about pornography were introduced to children in the following way:

*"In the past year, you will have seen lots of different images – pictures, photos, videos. Sometimes, these might be obviously sexual – for example, showing people naked or people having sex."*

To contextualise online pornography within the wider context of exposure to pornography across any media, children were first asked, "*Have you seen anything of this kind in the past 12 months?"* Figure 31 shows that most 9-16 year olds in Europe say that they have not seen sexual images of any kind:

- One in five (23%) say that they have seen obviously sexual images in the past 12 months, whether online or offline.
- **Among the 23% who have seen sexual images, online or offline, around half have seen this at least once or twice a month, while half have seen it less often.**
- **Seeing sexual images at all is related to age. One third of 15-16 year olds (36%) have seen such images compared with just 11% of 9-10 year olds; teenagers also see such images more often.**
- There are few or no differences by gender or SES.

**Figure 31: Child has seen sexual images online or offline in past 12 months**




QC128: Have you seen anything of this kind [obviously sexual] in the past 12 month? QC129: How often have you seen [images, photos, videos that are obviously sexual] in the past 12 months.

Base: All children who use the internet.

This exposure may derive from seeing pornography in any of a range of media (see Table 9).

- **The most common ways for children to see sexual images are on the internet (14%) and on television, films or videos (12%).[55]**
- **Less common is seeing sexual images in magazines or books (7%) and only 3% report seeing such images on their mobile phone.**

- Although the trend for increasing exposure with age is strong, it does not appear to differ by medium. Overall, as children grow older, they are more likely to see sexual images across all media.

**Table 9: Child has seen sexual images online or offline in past 12 months, by age**

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| On any websites | 5 | 8 | 16 | 25 | 14 |
| On television, film or video/DVD | 6 | 8 | 13 | 21 | 12 |
| In a magazine or book | 3 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 7 |
| By text (SMS), images (MMS), or otherwise on my mobile phone | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| By Bluetooth | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Has seen at all, online or offline | 11 | 16 | 25 | 36 | 23 |

QC128: Have you seen anything of this kind [obviously sexual] in the past 12 month? QC130a-f: In which, if any, of these places have you seen [images, photos, videos that are obviously sexual] in the past 12 months? QC131: Have you seen [images, photos, videos that are obviously sexual] on any websites in the past 12 months? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

> "Sexual sites that show naked people or people having sex; especially fatal are webpages with naked children."
>
> **(Girl, 15, Austria)**

> "What really affects me and my psychology are the ones depicting rape and sexual acts." **(Girl, 11, Turkey)**

**Although it is commonly supposed that boys are more exposed to pornography, the only observable gender difference is that teenage boys (13-16) are more likely than girls to see sexual images on websites (24% vs. 17%)** (See Table 10).

**Table 10: Child has seen sexual images online or offline in past 12 months, by age and gender**

| % | 9-12 years | | 13-16 years | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| On any websites | 7 | 6 | 24 | 17 | 14 |
| On television, film or video/DVD | 8 | 6 | 18 | 16 | 12 |
| In a magazine or book | 4 | 3 | 10 | 9 | 7 |
| By text (SMS), images (MMS), or otherwise on my mobile phone | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| By Bluetooth | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Has seen at all, online or offline | 15 | 13 | 33 | 28 | 23 |

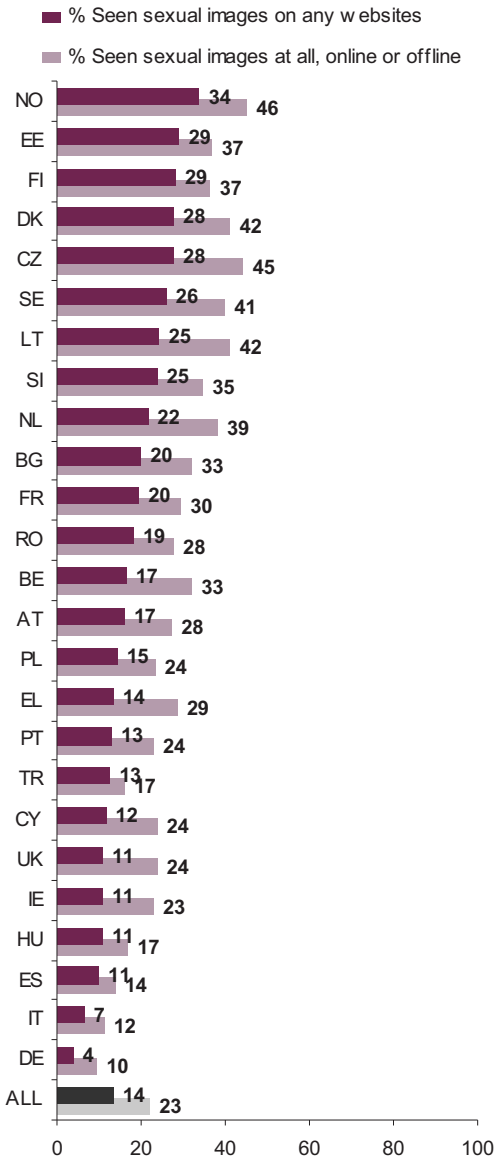
QC128: Have you seen anything of this kind [obviously sexual] in the past 12 month? QC130a-f: In which, if any, of these places have you seen [images, photos, videos that are obviously sexual] in the past 12 months? QC131: Have you seen [images, photos, videos that are obviously sexual] on any websites in the past 12 months? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

Country differences in exposure to sexual images online are shown in Figure 32. This reveals striking differences across Europe.

- **The greatest exposure to sexual images online is among children in Northern European countries (Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland) and Eastern European countries (the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Estonia and Slovenia), with around one third having seen sexual images either online or offline.**
- Least exposure is in large, 'older' members of the EU - Germany, Italy, Spain, Ireland and the UK – possibly countries where technical safety infrastructure is more developed than it is in newer entrant countries.

**Figure 32: Child has seen sexual images online or offline in past 12 months, by country**




QC128: Have you seen anything of this kind [obviously sexual]?
QC131: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet.

The overall reported exposure to sexual images in this survey is somewhat lower than found in other surveys, although others may use milder definitions of pornography (here, the emphasis was on sexuality including images of people having sex) and, generally, others have surveyed teenagers.[56] In the present survey, the one in five who reports exposure to sexual images across media represents an average of all age groups from the lowest (one in nine of the 9-10 year olds) to the highest (more than one in three of the 15-16 year olds). It is also an average across all countries, where a similar range occurs (from countries where more than one third of all children have seen sexual images to those where only one in eight has seen it).

On average, 14% of the children surveyed have seen sexual images online. It is noteworthy that exposure to such images on the internet is roughly associated with exposure across all media – in countries where more children have seen sexual images in general (especially, on television, film or video/DVD), it seems that children in those countries are also more likely to have encountered it online. In some countries, the internet represents a proportionately less important source of exposure to pornography (e.g. Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Greece and the UK). This suggests that if children do see sexual images in these countries it is often on other media. In other countries, it seems that the internet has become as or more common than any other source of pornography (e.g. Estonia, Finland, Turkey and Spain). National studies are needed to provide an explanation of these differences.

## 5.2. How children have seen sexual images online

Although it is difficult to determine whether children's exposure to sexual images is deliberate, accidental, or something in between, one follow-up question pursued the ways in which such exposure occurs, to shed some light on the question of intent (see Table 11). It seems that many children who report having seen sexual images online were exposed to them accidentally:

- 7% of 9-16 year olds overall (46% of children who have seen sexual images online) came across them as images that pop up accidentally.
- 5% of children overall (or 32% of those who have seen sexual images online) have seen them on a video hosting site such as YouTube.
- Slightly fewer have seen sexual images on adult sites, social networking sites or elsewhere on the internet (2-4% in each case).

- As before, the age trends do not appear to differ by type of exposure (e.g. via pop-ups or adult sites or SNSs). Rather, as children become teenagers, they are more likely to see sexual images in a range of ways.

"I was playing a game with [my friend] online and we bumped into something like sex and it was all over the screen" **(Boy, 11, Belgium)**

**Table 11: How child has seen sexual images online in past 12 months, by age**

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| By images that pop up accidentally | 2 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 7 |
| On a video-hosting site | 2 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 5 |
| On an adult/X-rated website | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 4 |
| On a social networking site | 1 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 3 |
| Some other type of website | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| In a gaming website | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| On a peer to peer file-sharing website | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Seen sexual images online | 5 | 8 | 16 | 25 | 14 |

QC131: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months? QC132: Which types of website have you seen [any kind of sexual images] on in the last 12 months? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

"When there are some embarrassing pictures in a game. Video clips. Pictures and images that can not be blocked." **(Girl, 11, Bulgaria)**

It may be wondered just what kind of sexual images children have seen. Those aged 11+ were asked what exactly they had seen (see Table 12).

- **The most common type of sexual image that children report is images or videos of someone who is naked – 11% of all children aged 11-16 (and almost 70% of those who have seen sexual images online).**
- **8% of 11-16 year olds (13% of 15-16 year olds) say they have seen someone having sex on the internet, and 8% have seen someone's genitals (termed 'private parts' in the UK survey and appropriately translated using child-friendly terms in the other languages).**
- In all, nearly half of those who report seeing sexual images online claim to have seen images or videos of someone's private parts or of people having sex.
- **Least common was seeing the kind of content most likely to be extreme, as a form of pornography, namely images or movies showing violent sexual content – just 2% of children. Still, one in six of those who have seen sexual images online have seen portrayals that show violent sexual activity.**

**Table 12: What kind of sexual images the child has seen online in past 12 months, by age** (age 11+)

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| Images or video of someone naked | n/a | 5 | 11 | 17 | 11 |
| Images or video of someone having sex | n/a | 3 | 8 | 13 | 8 |
| Images or video of someone's 'private parts' | n/a | 3 | 7 | 12 | 8 |
| Images or video or movies that show sex in a violent way | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Something else | n/a | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Seen sexual images online | n.a | 8 | 16 | 25 | 14 |

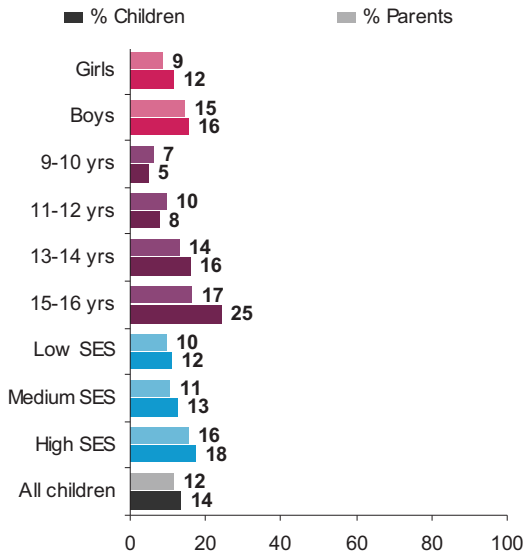
QC131: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months? QC133: Which, if any, of these things have you seen on a website in the last 12 months? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children 11-16 who use the internet.

## 5.3. Children's and parents' accounts compared

Previous research raised questions about how much parents really know about their children's experiences online, finding that parents significantly underestimate the risk reported by children. [57] Figure 33 compares overall reporting by children and parents of the child's exposure to sexual images online.

**Figure 33: Children's and parents' accounts of whether child has seen sexual images online**



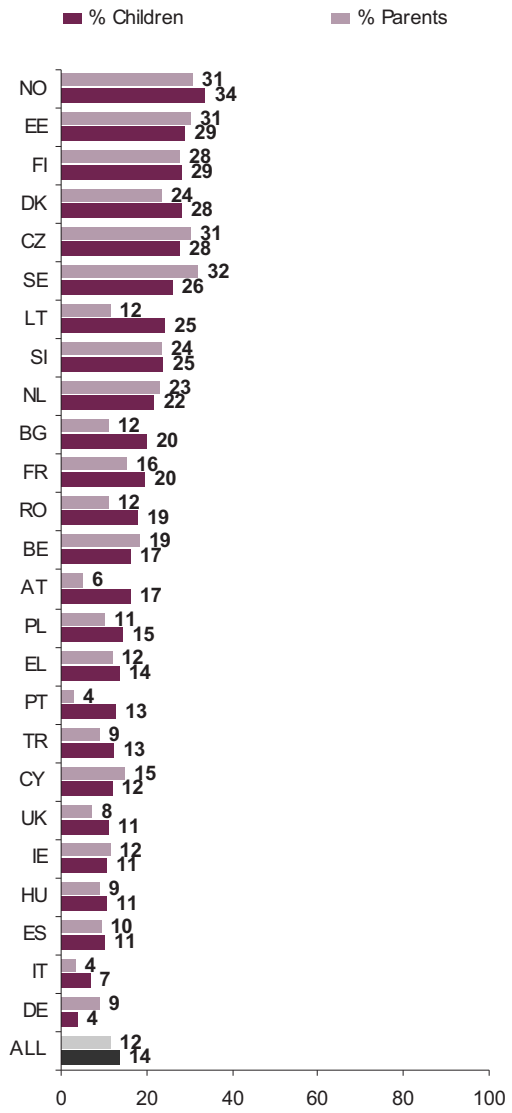

QP235: [Has your child] seen images on the internet that are obviously sexual - for example, showing people naked or people having sex. QC131: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- Parents and children give similar answers regarding the child's exposure to sexual images online. It seems that there has been a reduction in the generation gap noted in previous research. Possibly, recent improvements in filter and spam controls have reduced children's accidental or unwanted exposure.
- **However, parents tend slightly to overestimate exposure to sexual or pornographic content for younger children and slightly to underestimate it for older children (relative to children's answers).**

As before, country differences in the gap between child and parent perceptions are evident (Figure 34).

**Figure 34: Children's and parents' accounts of whether child has seen sexual images online, by country**




QP235: [Has your child] seen images on the internet that are obviously sexual – for example, showing people naked or people having sex. QC131: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- Children's overall level of exposure to sexual images online appears least unrecognised by parents in Lithuania, Austria, Portugal, Bulgaria and Romania. This suggests that initiatives to improve parental knowledge of children's online experiences could be beneficial in these countries.
- Parents appear most likely to over-report exposure, if one takes the child's word for it, in Sweden, Germany, Cyprus and the Czech Republic. This could be for a number of reasons ranging from parental anxiety to less concern about sexual images in these countries, although overall the differences are very small.

However, the foregoing graphs compare children overall with the answers given by parents overall. As will be seen, this gives a rather misleading impression of child/parent agreement. Another way of presenting the same data is shown in Table 13, now exploiting the unique features of the *EU Kids Online* survey in which answers can be analysed for each child/parent pair.

**Table 13: Comparison between children's and parents' accounts of whether child has seen sexual images online**

| Child has seen sexual images on the internet? | Child's answer | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| % Parent answer: | | |
| Yes | 35 | 15 |
| No | 40 | 68 |
| Don't know | 26 | 17 |
| | 100 | 100 |

QP235: [Has your child] seen images on the internet that are obviously sexual - for example, showing people naked or people having sex. QC131: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months?

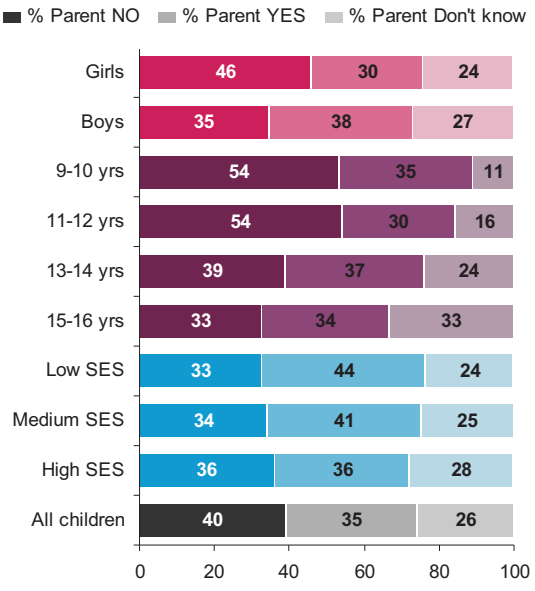
Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- **Among just those children who have seen sexual images online, one in three (35%) of their parents agree this has occurred. One in four (26%) of their parents say that they don't know and, significantly, 40% say their child has not seen sexual images on the internet.**
- Among children who have not seen sexual images online, most (68%) parents say the same, although one fifth is uncertain and one sixth thinks their child has seen this on the internet.

Most policy concern has focused on those cases where the child has seen sexual images online. Which parents are aware of this (see Figure 35)?

- **Parents appear less aware that their child has seen sexual images online in the case of daughters and younger children.**
- While they are more likely to recognise that their teenagers have seen sexual images online, they are also more uncertain, with a higher percentage of 'don't know' answers.
- It is noteworthy that among younger children and girls who have seen sexual images online, parents are least cautious – possibly popular assumptions about exposure to pornography (i.e. that it is seen by boys, teenagers) makes them more confident than they should be that they know what younger children/daughters have seen.
- There is little difference by SES.

**Figure 35: Parents' accounts of whether child has seen sexual images online** (children who have seen such images)




QP235: [Has your child] seen images on the internet that are obviously sexual - for example, showing people naked or people having sex.

Base: All children who use the internet and who have seen sexual images online, and one of their parents.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 9-10 year olds are fairly high at +/- 5-10%.

"Young people in my age can be bothered by announcements of the internet paedophiles and large quantities of pornography."

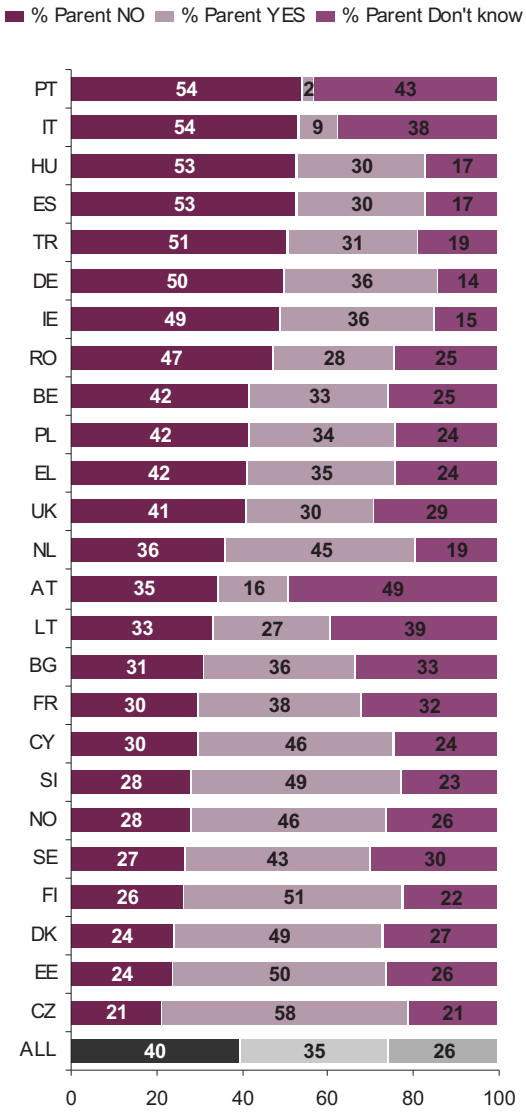
**(Boy, 16, Estonia)**

Figure 36 again shows considerable cross-national variation in the degree of child/parent agreement regarding the child's exposure to sexual images online.

- **In cases where the child has seen such content, it is parents in Portugal, Italy, Hungary and Spain who are least likely to recognise this.**
- By contrast, parents are most likely to recognise when their child has seen online sexual images in the Czech Republic, Estonia and Denmark.
- 'Don't know' responses among parents differ very substantially, with least knowledge (high number of 'Don't know' answers) of children's experience of sexual or pornographic content claimed by parents in Austria, Portugal and Lithuania, and most knowledge claimed in Germany and Ireland (lower numbers of 'Don't know' answers).

"While you are undressing dolls you click "girls" and photos of naked women appear." **(Girl, 11, Lithuania)**

**Figure 36: Parents' accounts of whether child has seen sexual images online, by country** (children who have seen such images)




QP235: [Has your child] seen images on the internet that are obviously sexual – for example, showing people naked or people having sex.

Base: All children who use the internet and who have seen sexual images online, and one of their parents.

Note: The 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) or very high (+/- 10%) and some cell sizes are below 15 respondents. So the numbers for individual countries should be considered as indicative only.

## 5.4. Perceived harm from sexual images online

When does risk translate into harm? As noted at the outset, the notion of risk refers to a probability not a necessity of harm. Unless one makes the strong case that any exposure to sexual images is inevitably harmful in some degree, it must be recognised that some children may, for instance, be exposed to pornographic content with no adverse effects. Others, however, may be harmed – whether upset at the time of the exposure, or worried later, or even influenced in their attitudes or behaviour years subsequently.[58]

While acknowledging that children may not evaluate an experience in the same way as adults, the value of the *EU Kids Online* survey is that we asked children directly about their online experiences. So as not to presume that all risks result in harm, we asked further questions to all those children who said they had seen sexual images online. These questions were prefaced as follows:

*Seeing sexual images on the internet may be fine or may not be fine. In the LAST 12 MONTHS have you seen any things like this that have bothered you in any way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen them.*

The purpose was to explore the relation between the prevalence of a risk factor (here, exposure to online pornography) and the degree of harm as subjectively perceived by the child.

Table 14 shows the relation between seeing sexual images online in the past 12 months and being bothered by such images. In the questions that followed, we sought to focus children's memories by asking about the *LAST TIME* they were bothered in this way.

- **Although only one in seven (14%) of Europe's 9-16 year olds have encountered sexual images online, one in three of those who have seen it (4% of all children) were bothered by this experience.**
- The relation between risk and harm (as perceived by children) varies by country in a complex way. For example, in Bulgaria, one in five children (20%) had been exposed to sexual images online but fewer than one in five of those children (17%) were bothered by what they saw. By contrast, only around one in nine Irish children (11%) have seen sexual images online, but nearly four in ten (38%) of those who had seen it were bothered by it.

**Table 14: Child has seen sexual images online and was bothered by this, by country**

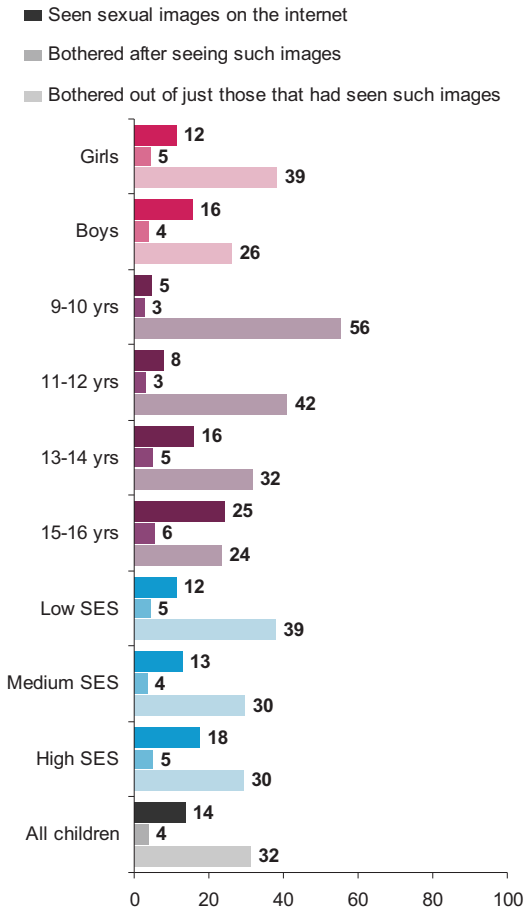
| | All children who use the internet | | Child bothered, of those who have seen sexual images online |
|---|---|---|---|
| % | Child has seen sexual images online | Child bothered by seeing sexual images online | |
| AT | 17 | 5 | 30 |
| BE | 17 | 5 | 30 |
| BG | 20 | 4 | 17 |
| CY | 12 | 3 | 26 |
| CZ | 28 | 6 | 23 |
| DE | 4 | 2 | 35 |
| DK | 28 | 8 | 28 |
| EE | 29 | 14 | 49 |
| EL | 14 | 2 | 15 |
| ES | 11 | 3 | 32 |
| FI | 29 | 6 | 20 |
| FR | 20 | 6 | 32 |
| HU | 11 | 3 | 30 |
| IE | 11 | 4 | 38 |
| IT | 7 | 2 | 26 |
| LT | 25 | 6 | 23 |
| NL | 22 | 5 | 23 |
| NO | 34 | 9 | 23 |
| PL | 15 | 5 | 33 |
| PT | 13 | 3 | 23 |
| RO | 19 | 8 | 44 |
| SE | 26 | 7 | 26 |
| SI | 25 | 4 | 15 |
| TR | 13 | 6 | 49 |
| UK | 11 | 3 | 24 |
| ALL | 14 | 4 | 32 |

QC131: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months? And QC134: In the LAST 12 MONTHS have you seen any things like this that have bothered you in any way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen them.

Base: All children who use the internet. Only children who have seen sexual images online.

Note: The 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) or very high (+/- 10%). So the numbers for individual countries should be considered as indicative only.


**Figure 37: Child has seen sexual images online and was bothered by this**




QC131: Have you seen these kinds of things on any websites in the past 12 months? And QC134: In the LAST 12 MONTHS have you seen any things like this that have bothered you in any way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen them.

Base: All children who use the internet. Only children who have seen sexual images online.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 9-10 year olds are fairly high at +/- 5-10%.

"Naked pictures. Print screens of naked people on cam." **(Girl, 15, UK)**

As suggested at the outset of this report, variables that shape exposure to risk factors (e.g. exposure to pornography) may or may not be the same as those variables that shape the likelihood of harm (here measured in terms of whether or not the child has been bothered by such an experience). This point is well illustrated by the findings of Figure 37.

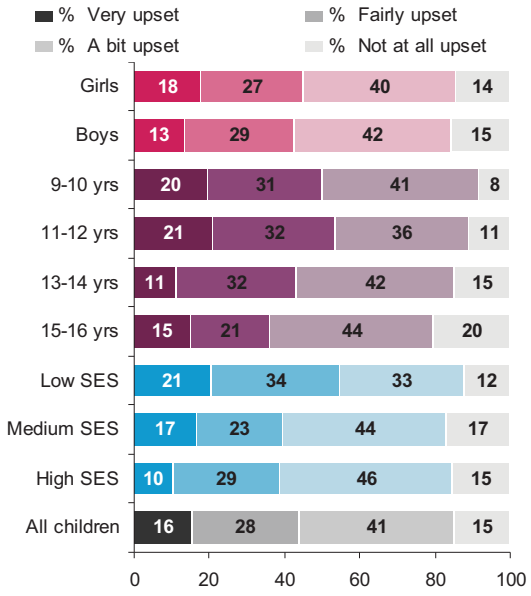
- **Girls are a little less likely to see sexual images online than boys (12% vs. 16%) but they are rather more likely to be bothered by it if they do see it (39% of those who see sexual images vs. 26% of boys).**
- **A similar situation holds for age. Thus 15-16 year olds are by far the most likely to see online sexual images (25%), followed by 16% of 13-14 year olds, 8% of 11-12 year olds and just 5% of 9-10 year olds. But, for those who are bothered by what they saw, the picture is reversed: 56% of those 9-10 year olds who have seen online sexual images were bothered by what they saw, as were 42% of 11-12 year olds. The percentages are lower for teenagers – 32% of 13-14 year olds and 24% of 15-16 year olds.**
- **To keep this in perspective, it means that overall, 3% of 9-10 year olds, rising to 6% of 15-16 year olds have been bothered by seeing sexual images online.**
- For SES also, the explanation for exposure to risk differs from that for the experience of harm. Children from higher SES homes are a bit more likely to be exposed to sexual images online (18%, vs. 12% for low SES children). But the high and medium SES children are less likely to be bothered by what they saw (around one third) compared with those from low SES homes (four in ten).

These findings – both the absolute levels of exposure to risk and experience of harm – should be born in mind in the remainder of this section, as we focus in on just those children who have been bothered by seeing sexual images on the internet.

In the remainder of this section, although the sample sizes are sufficient for a breakdown by demographic variables, they are too small for further cross-country analyses.[59]

To pursue what children meant by being bothered, two measures of subjective harm were used (still in relation to the LAST TIME the child was bothered by seeing online sexual images). These measures were severity (how upset were they?), shown in Figure 38 and duration (for how long did they feel like this?), shown in Figure 39.

**Figure 38: How upset the child felt after seeing sexual images online** (children who have been bothered by sexual images online in past 12 months)




QC135: Thinking about the last time you were bothered by [seeing sexual images online], how upset did you feel about it (if at all)?

Base: All children who have been bothered after seeing a sexual image online in the past 12 months.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 9-10 year olds are fairly high at +/- 5-10%.

- **Among those who have been bothered by sexual images online, almost half were either fairly (28%) or very (16%) upset at what they saw. The remainder were a bit upset (41%) or, despite having said they were bothered in some way, not at all upset (15%).**
- Overall there is no significant difference between boys and girls when it comes to how upset they are by the sexual images seen online.
- Younger children aged 9-12 (around 20%), are more likely to be 'very upset' than other groups, as are children from lower SES homes (21%).
- To put this the other way around, boys, teenagers and more privileged children appear less upset by online sexual or pornographic content that has, nonetheless, bothered them in some way.

**Figure 39: For how long the child felt like that after seeing sexual images online** (children aged 11+ who have been bothered by sexual images online in past 12 months)


It cannot be determined here whether these different age groups are responding differently to the same or different types of content. But it is clear that younger children are both more upset by what they see and that this reaction lasts for longer. Taking these as subjective measures of harm, it appears that, when exposed to online pornography, younger children are more likely to be harmed. Even so, this applies to less than half of those who have been exposed to sexual images online.

## 5.5. Coping with sexual images on the internet

A key feature of the *EU Kids Online* survey is that it follows up on how children respond to things that have bothered them online. How children respond can be understood in general terms, as a matter of broad coping strategies, and in specific terms, as a matter of specific activities that may or may not help to make things better.

We conceive of coping in three ways. The first, drawing on the established literature of adolescent coping,[60] distinguishes individual coping styles as applied across diverse situations in life. For example, a child may respond fatalistically (hoping the problem would go away by itself), proactively (trying to fix the problem) or in a self-accusatory way (feeling guilty or blaming oneself).

For those children who were bothered by seeing sexual images on the internet, Table 15 shows what children say they did after the last time this happened.

**Table 15: How the child coped after being bothered by seeing sexual images online** (age 11+)

| % | All |
|---|---|
| Hope the problem would go away by itself | 26 |
| Try to fix the problem | 22 |
| Feel a bit guilty about what went wrong | 9 |
| None of these things | 44 |

QC137: The last time this happened, did you do any of these things afterwards? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: Children aged 11-16 who use the internet and have been bothered by seeing sexual images online.

- **One quarter (26%) of those who had been bothered by sexual images online took what might be called a 'passive' approach, hoping the problem would go away; 22% took a more proactive approach, trying to fix the problem.**
- A minority felt a bit guilty (9%) while the largest group (44%) said they did none of these things.

The second form of coping explored by the *EU Kids Online* survey is seeking social support. Over and again, awareness-raising guidance has advised children to tell someone or talk to someone about what has happened when something difficult or upsetting occurs online.

Previous surveys have often found that children do not tell anyone what has happened. But the present findings point to more positive responses from children, possibly as a result of awareness-raising efforts (Table 16).

- **Over half (53%) of those children aged 9-16 who had been bothered by seeing sexual images online told someone about this the last time it happened.**
- This is a broadly positive finding, suggesting that children feel empowered to seek social support when upset by online sexual or pornographic content.
- Commonly, that person was a friend (33%), but one in four (25%) confided in a parent. Children's preference for telling a friend suggests the value of peer-mentoring schemes. Increasing the proportion that feel able to tell a parent would also be beneficial.
- Few children told any of the other people who might be expected to support a child who is upset – 9% told a sibling, 5% another trusted adult, 3% a teacher and 1% some other responsible person.
- The potential embarrassment involved in discussing pornography with adults appears to impede the social support available to children in coping with upsetting pornography.

"On MSN they display invitations, but when I accept, girls I don't know appear in some erotic advertising."

**(Boy, 14, Turkey)**

**Table 16: Who the child talked to after seeing sexual images online** (children who have been bothered by such images)

| % | All |
|---|---|
| Talked to anybody at all | 53 |
| A friend | 34 |
| My mother or father | 26 |
| My brother or sister | 9 |
| Another adult I trust | 5 |
| A teacher | 3 |
| Some one whose job it is to help children | 1 |

QC138: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by seeing sexual images on the internet], did you talk to anyone about what happened? QC139: Who did you talk to? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet and have been bothered by seeing sexual images online. Note: Cell sizes showing less than 3% are below 15 respondents.

The third type of coping response is more specific to the internet. In recent years, the providers of internet services and contents have been developing tools by which children may be safer online. To complement these, children have been advised through a range of campaigns how to make use of these tools. Possibly the least desirable outcome of a harmful experience is that it might lead the child to stop using the internet, thereby reducing the child's online opportunities.

It has to date been difficult to establish whether coping responses actually improve the situation, notwithstanding the claims made for them. By asking whether each strategy helped the situation *EU Kids Online* sought a simple solution to a difficult research problem.

Thus, when children reported using a particular strategy (e.g. deleting nasty messages or changing filter settings), they were also asked if this helped. *For comparability, findings are reported as a percentage of all children who have seen sexual images online, not as a percentage of those who used the strategy* (Table 17).

- **The most common response is to delete messages from whoever sent these images (26%), seen by children as a helpful strategy.**
- **It may seem unfortunate if understandable that children's next most common response to seeing sexual images online that bothered them is to stop using the internet for a while (25%).** Unsurprisingly, this helped in most cases, although at a cost of online opportunities.

**Table 17: What the child did after seeing sexual images online** (children who have been bothered by such images)

| % | Did this | Did this and it helped |
|---|---|---|
| I deleted any messages from the person who sent it to me | 26 | 19 |
| I stopped using the internet for a while | 25 | 18 |
| I blocked the person who had sent it to me | 23 | 15 |
| I changed my filter/ contact settings | 19 | 12 |
| I reported the problem (e.g. clicked on a 'report abuse' button, contact an internet advisor or 'internet service provider (ISP)') | 15 | 13 |
| None of these | 15 | 9 |
| Don't know | 31 | 25 |

QC140: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by seeing sexual images on the internet], did you do any of these things? QC141: Which, if any, of the things you did helped you? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet and have been bothered by seeing sexual images online.

- About a quarter of children blocked those who had sent sexual or pornographic messages to them (23%) or changed filter or contact setting (19%). Neither appears so helpful but still they helped in most cases.
- One in seven children reported the problem to an internet advisor or service provider, again a fairly helpful strategy, as assessed by the child.

Do children cope well with seeing sexual images online in a way that bothers or upsets them? Over half do tell someone about it, one fifth seeks to fix the problem in some way, and up to a third tries an online strategy (blocking, deleting or reporting what has happened).

Clearly, this leaves a sizeable number of children who do not adopt either a general or an internet-specific coping strategy, and many who do not even tell someone. Targeting those children who are bothered by an online experience to widen their repertoire of coping strategies would, if possible, surely be beneficial. Additionally, improving accessibility to or usability of online tools to support children is also required.

# 6. BULLYING

## 6.1. How often children are bullied

In terms of the classification of risks presented earlier n Table 1, being bullied is one of several conduct risks that may harm children when they use the internet. In some sense, bullying builds on children's availability through and/or conduct in peer-to-peer exchanges and, significantly, the threat comes from a peer.

Although the term 'bullying' has a distinct and familiar meaning in some countries, this is not universal, making the term difficult to translate. So, as with 'pornography', the term 'bully' was not used in the children's questionnaire. Instead, it was defined thus:[61]

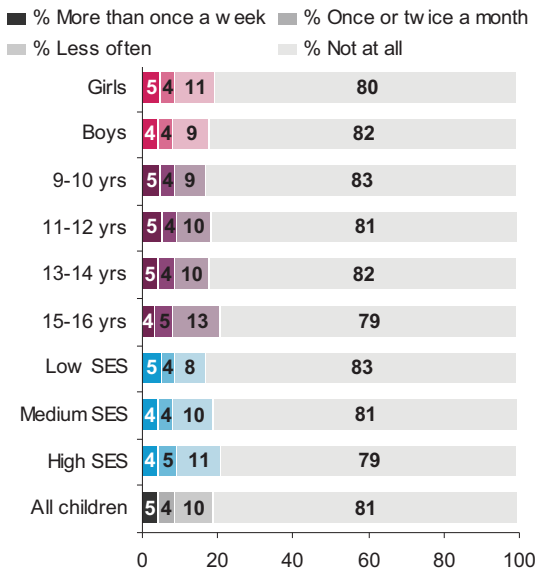
*"Sometimes children or teenagers say or do hurtful or nasty things to someone and this can often be quite a few times on different days over a period of time, for example. This can include: teasing someone in a way this person does not like; hitting, kicking or pushing someone around; leaving someone out of things."* [62]

The interviewer explained then to the child that these activities could refer to events that occur in person face-to-face, by mobile phone calls or texts, or on the internet – e.g. via email, social networking sites. (Recall that we are concerned to put online bullying or 'cyberbullying' in the context of other kinds of bullying 'offline').

Following this introduction, children were asked whether *someone has acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months.*

- **One in five (19%) 9-16 year olds across Europe say that someone has acted in a hurtful or nasty way towards them in the past 12 months.**
- **Bullying is rarely a frequent experience – 5% say someone acts towards them in a hurtful or nasty way more than once a week, for 4% it is once or twice a month, and for 10% it is less often, suggesting one or a few instances have occurred in the past year.**
- Few if any demographic differences can be seen in Figure 40. In this sense, bullying is spread thinly across the range of children.

**Figure 40: Child has been bullied online or offline in past 12 months**




QC112: Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months? QC113: How often has someone acted in this kind [hurtful and nasty] way towards you in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet.

## 6.2. How children are bullied

To contextualise online bullying in relation to other kinds of bullying, the 19% of children who reported that someone had acted in a hurtful or nasty way towards them were then asked how this had happened. Table 18 shows what children said about how this occurred.

> "If people take a picture of you and they edit it and make you look bad and the put it on the internet"
>
> **(Girl, 9, Ireland)**

**Table 18: Ways in which children have been bullied in past 12 months, by age**

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| In person face-to-face | 13 | 13 | 12 | 15 | 13 |
| On the internet | 3 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 6 |
| By mobile phone calls, texts or image/video texts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| Has been bullied at all, online or offline | 17 | 19 | 18 | 21 | 19 |

QC114: At any time during the last 12 months, has this happened [that you have been treated in a hurtful or nasty way]? QC115: At any time during the last 12 months has this happened on the internet. *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

**Table 19: Ways in which children have been bullied in past 12 months, by age and gender**

| % | 9-12 years | | 13-16 years | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| In person face to face | 13 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 13 |
| On the internet | 4 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 6 |
| By mobile phone calls, texts or image/video texts | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 3 |
| Has been bullied at all, online or offline | 18 | 18 | 18 | 21 | 19 |

QC114: At any time during the last 12 months, has this happened [that you have been treated in a hurtful or nasty way]? QC115: At any time during the last 12 months has this happened on the internet. *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **The most common form of bullying is in person face-to-face: 13% say that someone has acted in a hurtful or nasty way towards them in person face-to-face compared with 6% who say that this happened on the internet and 3% who say that this happened by mobile phone calls or messages.**
- Although overall, younger children are as likely to have been bullied as teenagers, they are less likely to be bullied by mobile phone or online. In other words, it seems that for teenagers, being bullied in one way (e.g. face-to-face) is more likely to be accompanied by bullying online and/or by mobile.
- Receiving nasty or hurtful messages online is more common with age, although it still affects only a small minority. One in 13 of the 15-16 year olds report having been treated in this way on the internet, half as many who have been bullied face-to-face in the past year.

Previous research findings are mixed on whether there are gender differences in patterns of bullying. Table 19 reveals few differences in ways that children are bullied by gender.

Country differences are noteworthy (see Figure 41).

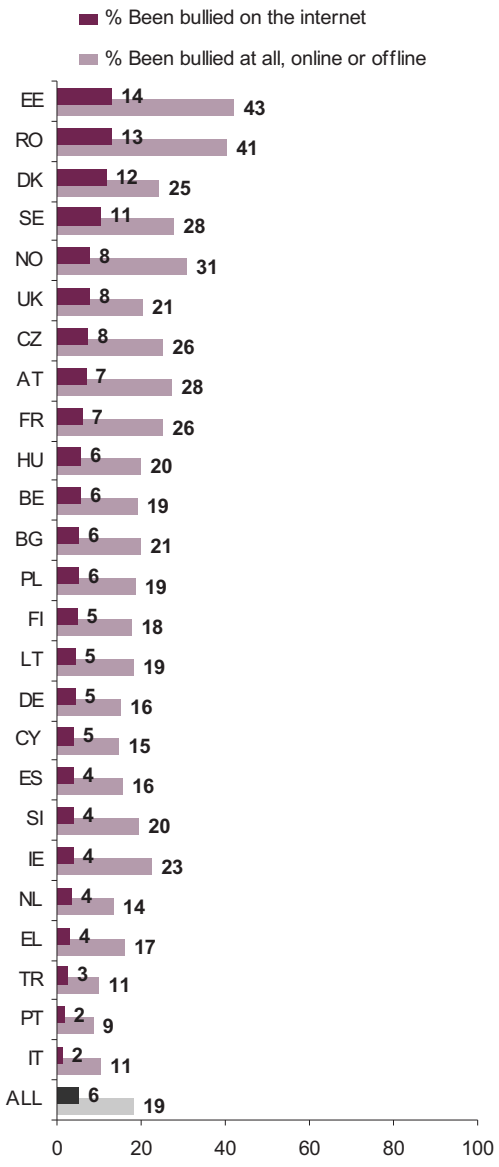
- In Romania and Estonia more than four in ten children report having been bullied, twice the average across all countries, and online bullying in these countries is more than twice the average at one in seven children who use the internet.
- Bullying is lowest in several Southern European countries (Portugal, Italy, Turkey and Greece) and the Netherlands.

**Bullying online appears more common in countries where bullying in general is more common (rather than, say, in countries where the internet is more established). This suggests online bullying to be a new form of a long-established childhood problem rather than, simply, the consequence of a new technology.**

"Insults that lower our self-esteem and affect us psychologically."

**(Girl, 15, Portugal)**

**Figure 41: Child has been bullied online or offline in past 12 months, by country**




QC112: Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months? QC115: At any time during the last 12 months has this happened on the internet?

Base: All children who use the internet.

## 6.3. In what ways children are bullied online

Bullying online can occur in a number of ways. One question is whether particular applications – email, social networking, chatrooms, etc. are more or less likely to provide a context for bullying. Those children who had been bullied online were asked how this happened. To keep the results in perspective, these are reported as a percentage of all children who use the internet, which means that the percentages are low compared to a table based on just the few children who have been bullied (see Table 20).

- Although overall, the vast majority of children have not been bullied on the internet, those who have been bullied online are more likely to have been bullied on a social networking site or by instant messaging than by email, in gaming sites or chatrooms, probably because these are less used applications.

**Table 20: Ways in which children have been bullied online in past 12 months, by age**

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| On a social networking site | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| By instant messaging | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| By email | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| In a gaming website | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| In a chatroom | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Some other way on the internet | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| At all on the internet | 3 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 6 |

QC115: At any time during the last 12 months had this happened on the internet? QC116: In which ways has this happened to you in the last 12 months? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

Just what has happened when children are bullied is difficult to determine. For the 11-16 year olds who had been bullied online, we asked what they had experienced (Table 21).

**Table 21: What happened when child was bullied online in past 12 months, by age** (age 11+)

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| Nasty or hurtful messages were sent to me | n/a | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 |
| Nasty or hurtful messages about me were passed around or posted where others could see | n/a | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Other nasty or hurtful things on the internet | n/a | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| I was threatened on the internet | n/a | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| I was left out or excluded from a group or activity on the internet | n/a | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Something else | n/a | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| At all on the internet | 3 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 6 |

QC115: At any time during the last 12 months has this happened on the internet? QC117: Can I just check, which of these things have happened in the last 12 months? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children 11-16 years old who use the internet.

- **Being the target of nasty or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying (4% of all 11-16 year olds). Having such messages passed around the peer group or posted where others can see is less common (2%). And only 1% has been threatened online.**
- Although being bullied online is generally more common among older children, no particular age trend in forms of bullying is evident.

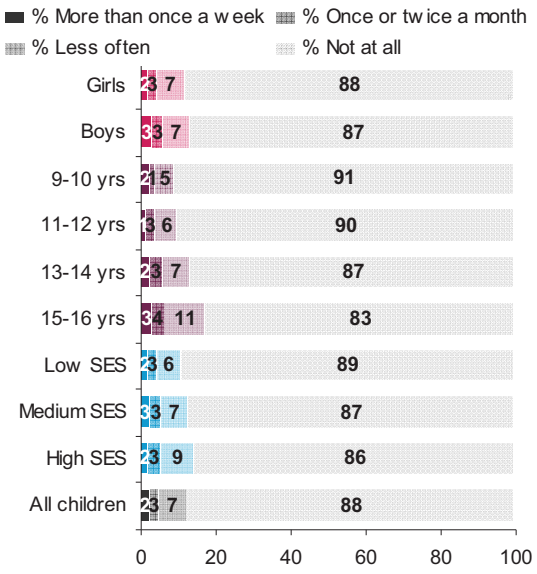
"Be made a ridicule by having personal stuff written about you and then made public." **(Boy, 11, Greece)**

## 6.4. When / how children bully others

Bullying is an activity that occurs largely among peers. It is, as classified earlier, a conduct risk. Thus it is possible that the children surveyed had not only been bullied but also that they had bullied others, either on the internet or in other ways. Indeed, research is beginning to suggest that these two groups may overlap – that some of those who bully others have also been bullied themselves.[63]

After being asked about their experiences of being bullied, children were asked if they themselves had acted in a hurtful or nasty way to others in the past year (Figure 42).

**Figure 42: Child has bullied others online or offline in past 12 months**




QC125: Have you acted in a way that might have felt hurtful or nasty to someone else in the past 12 months? QC126: How often have you acted in this kind [hurtful and nasty] way in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **In all, 12% of 9-16 year olds in Europe report that they have acted in a nasty or hurtful way to someone else in the past year. This finding may be compared with the 19% who say they have been bullied.**


- Although practised by only a small minority in any demographic group, bullying others is a little more common among older teenagers.
- In terms of frequency, over half of the bullying reported occurred less often than once per month.

As we saw with the finding for being bullied, bullying others is more common in person face-to-face than on the internet. Similar findings are found for children's reports of bullying others (see Table 22).

- **One in ten (10%) children reports having bullied others face-to-face, compared with 3% who have bullied others on the internet and 2% by mobile calls, texts or video.**
- The age trend for bullying others is similar for each form of bullying except to note that, among teenagers it seems that multiple methods may be used by those who bully others.

**Table 22: How child has bullied others in past 12 months, by age**

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| In person face-to-face | 8 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 10 |
| On the internet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| By mobile phone calls, texts or image/video texts | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Has bullied others at all, online or offline | 9 | 10 | 13 | 16 | 12 |

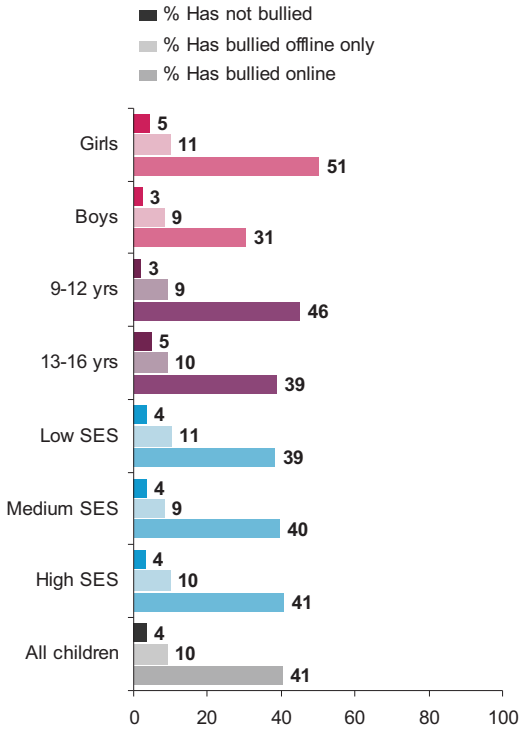
QC125: Have you acted in a way that might have felt hurtful or nasty to someone else in the past 12 months? QC127: In which of the following ways have you [acted in a way that might have felt hurtful or nasty to someone else] in the past 12 months? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

Overall, being bullied occurs more often face-to-face (13% of 9-16 year olds) than online (6%). Even though online bullying appears more common in countries where bullying is common than where the internet is widespread, online bullying still, of necessity, occurs where the internet is used. For teenagers in particular, it appears that being bullied offline may increasingly also include being bullied online (and via mobile phone – see Table 19), a point that requires further research. From Table 22, it seems the same may apply in cases where a child bullies others.

Overall, the ratio of being bullied overall to being bullied online (19% vs. 5%) is similar to the ratio of bullying others to bullying others online (12% vs. 3%). Does being bullied make some children retaliate by bullying others? Although a thorough analysis of this question remains, Figure 43 asks whether children have been bullied online, for three separate groups – those who have not bullied others at all, those who have bullied others offline (only), and those who have bullied others online (either online only or online and offline).

**Figure 43: Children who have been bullied online, out of those who have bullied others online, offline only or not at all**




QC125: Have you acted in a way that might have felt hurtful or nasty to someone else in the past 12 months? QC126: How often have you acted in this kind [hurtful and nasty] way in the past 12 months?

Base: Of all children who use the internet: only children who have not bullied at all, have bullied face-to-face and not online, have bullied online (and possibly face-to-face).

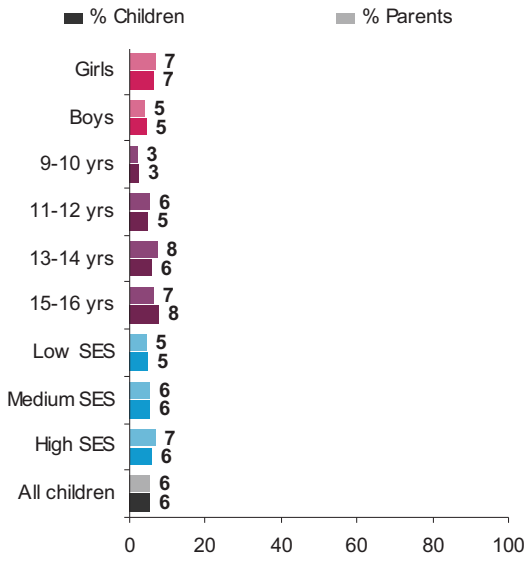
Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the socio-demographic breaks are fairly high at +/- 5-10%.

- The findings are striking. Among those who have not bullied others, just 4% have been bullied online. Among those who have bullied others offline only, 10% have themselves been bullied online.
- However, among those who have bullied others online, 41% have themselves been bullied online. It appears, therefore, that online bullying may be, in some cases, a two-way phenomenon – in which children both bully and are bullied by others. This is particularly noticeable among girls.

## 6.5. Children's and parents' accounts compared

In previous projects that compared data from children and their parents, it has been the gap between their accounts that is most striking.[64] That gap appears to be reducing, as we already saw in the section on sexual images (Section 5).

**Figure 44: Children's and parents' accounts of whether child has been bullied online**




QP235: [Has your child] been treated in a hurtful or nasty way on the internet by another child or teenager? QC115: Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

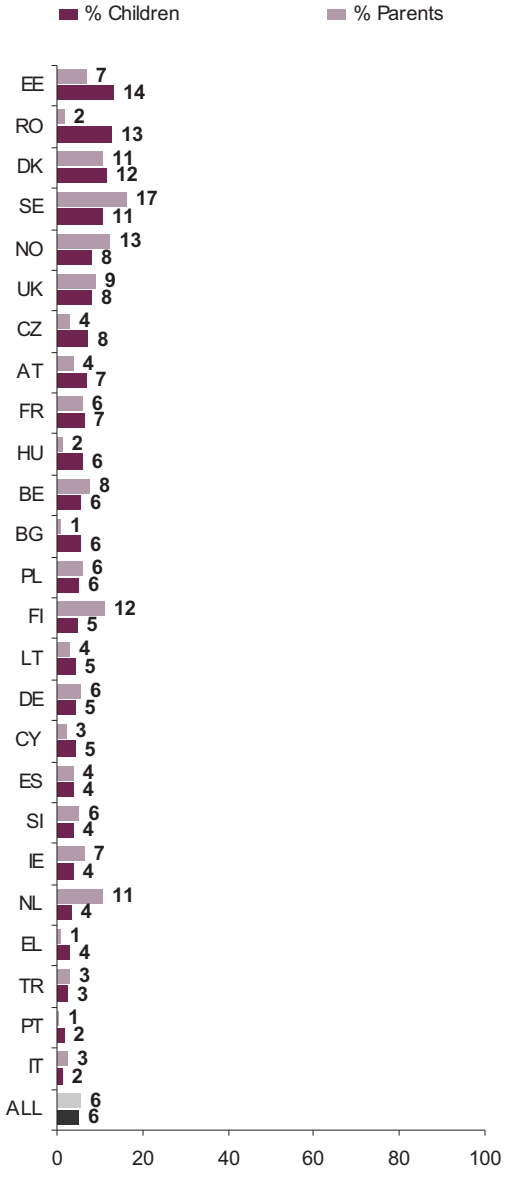
- **Overall, 6% of children and 6% of parents report that the child has been bullied on the internet** (Figure 44).
- Slightly more girls than boys (7% vs. 5%), and slightly more older teenagers (7% of 15-16 year olds) than younger children (3% of 9-10 year olds) say they have been bullied.
- There is a high level of agreement between children and their parents regarding whether or not the child been sent hurtful or nasty messages on the internet. Such agreement is mainly high insofar as both agree that their child has not been bullied online. Nonetheless, it seems that parents seem to have a fairly good idea about their child's experiences online.

"Bullying, negative comments, exclusion - not being allowed to participate in something online, like a game." **(Boy, 16, Norway)**

Country differences in relation to the child/parent gap in perceptions are small but noticeable (see Figure 45).

- **Overall child/parent agreement is a little lower in the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and Norway. In these countries, it seems that parents are more likely to think their child has been bullied online even when the child says they have not.**
- **In Romania, Estonia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Hungary, children are more likely to say they have been bullied online than are parents**. This suggests the value of greater parent-child communication in those countries.

**Figure 45: Children's and parents' accounts of whether child has been bullied online, by country**




QP235: [Has your child] been treated in a hurtful or nasty way on the internet by another child or teenager? QC115 Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

As for pornography earlier, such high levels of agreement overall masks some differences in parental understanding, focusing just on those children who have been bullied online.

**Table 23: Comparison between children's and parents' accounts of whether child has been bullied online**

| Child has been sent nasty or hurtful messages on the internet? | Child's answer: | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| % Parent answer: | | |
| Yes | 29 | 8 |
| No | 56 | 83 |
| Don't know | 15 | 10 |
| | 100 | 100 |

QP235: [Has your child] been treated in a hurtful or nasty way on the internet by another child or teenager? QC115: At any time during the last 12 months [have you been treated in a hurtful or nasty way] on the internet?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

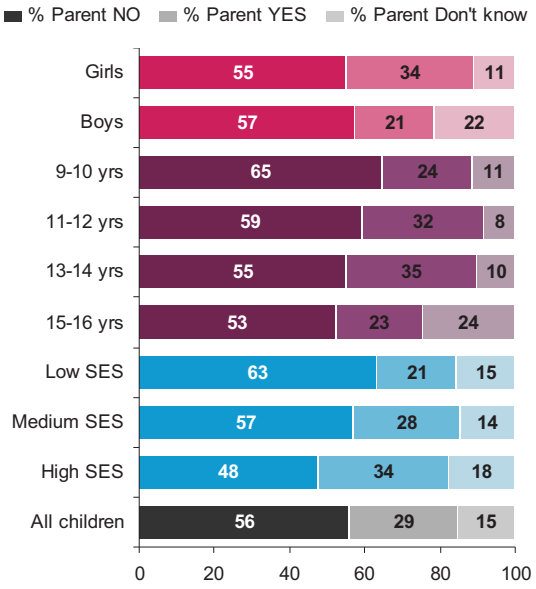
- **Among children who say "yes, I have been sent nasty or hurtful messages on the internet", one third (29%) of their parents also say that their child has been bullied online. But in over half of these cases (56%), parents say that their child has not been bullied, and in a further 15% of cases, the parent doesn't know** (Table 23).
- By contrast, in those cases (of which there are many more) in which the child says they have not been bullied, only 8% of the parents think they have been bullied.

Arguably the greatest concern regarding parents' versus children's accounts is whether the parent is aware of bullying in those cases in which the child says they have been bullied. Figure 46 focuses on just those children who have been bullied online, and reports parents' answers (i.e. yes, no or don't know if my child has been bullied).

"Violent video filmed at school or when somebody is harmed"

**(Girl, 10, Lithuania)**

**Figure 46: Parents' accounts of whether child has been bullied online** (children who have been bullied online)




QP235: [Has your child] been treated in a hurtful or nasty way on the internet by another child or teenager?

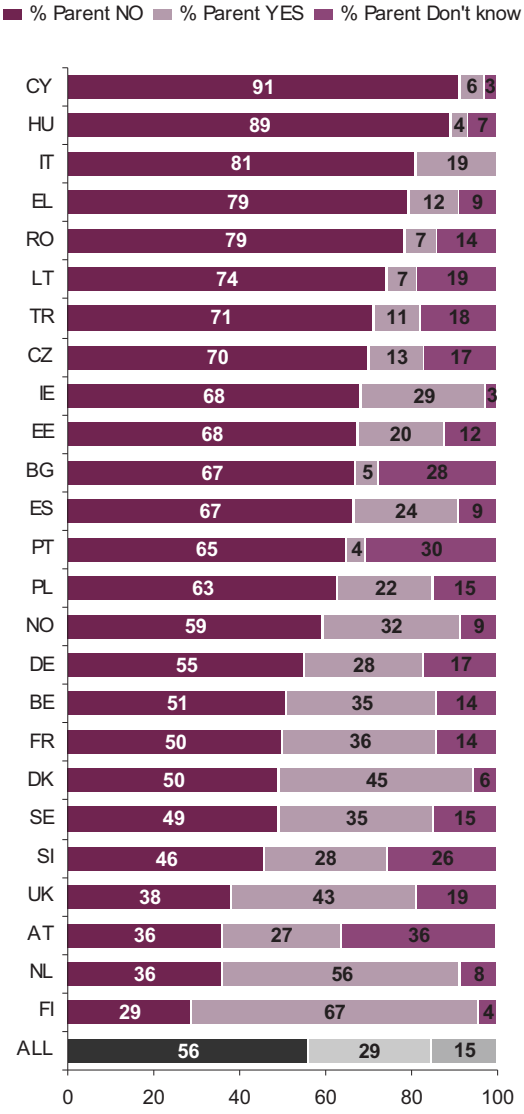
Base: One parent of children who use the internet and who have been sent nasty or hurtful messages online.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 9-12 year olds and low SES are fairly high at +/- 5-10%.

- As noted above, among the 3% of European children who report having been bullied on the internet, parents are aware of this in one third (29%) of the cases. In more than half (56%) of these cases, however, parents say their child has not been bullied.
- **Parents appear more aware that their child has been bullied if their child is a girl, or in the middle age groups (11-14) than if they are either older or younger.**
- Parents appear over-confident that the youngest group has not been bullied, when the child says they have.

Country differences for the same analysis, shown in Figure 47, reveal some striking differences.

**Figure 47: Parents' accounts of whether child has been bullied online, by country** (children who have been bullied online)




QP235: [Has your child] been treated in a hurtful or nasty way on the internet by another child or teenager?

Base: One parent of children who use the internet and who have been sent nasty or hurtful messages online.

Note: The 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) or very high (+/- 10%) and some cell sizes are below 15 respondents. So the numbers for individual countries should be considered as indicative only.

- Not forgetting that the incidence of children having been bullied online is rather rare, it is noteworthy that parents are most aware of when their child has been bullied online in Northern counties (Finland and the Netherlands) and Austria and least aware in some Southern and Eastern European countries.
- **Of more concern is the proportion of cases where the child's experience of being bullied goes unrecognised by parents. This is highest in Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Greece and Romania.**
- Also interesting is that in Austria and Portugal, roughly one third of parents say they don't know when asked if their child has been bullied online.

It might be concluded that in countries where the internet is most established, and accompanied by considerable investment in awareness raising activities, parents are most in touch with their child's online experiences. But there might be other explanations for these differences – as will be explored in future *EU Kids Online* reports.

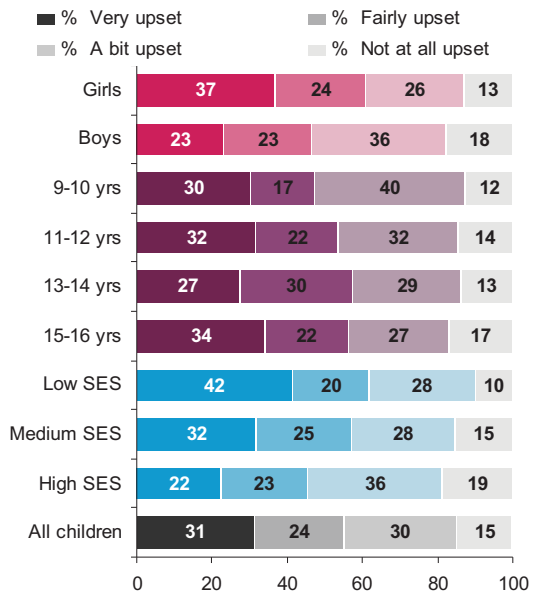
## 6.6. Perceived harm from being bullied online

A central question in the *EU Kids Online* project is to explore whether and when certain factors increase the likelihood of harm to the child. In the above case of pornography (and, later in this report, for sending sexual messages or meeting online contacts offline), we addressed this question by saying to the child, in the private, self-completion part of the questionnaire, *"sometimes this experience may be fine, sometimes it may not be fine"*. They were then asked if the experience bothered them. However, in relation to bullying, it did not seem plausible to say to a child that sometimes being bullied might be fine and sometimes it might not. So this step was omitted from questions about bullying.

Nonetheless, the two measures of subjective harm consistently used in the survey could be applied. Focusing on the LAST time the child was bullied online, we asked about the severity of the experience (i.e. how upset the child was) and its duration (i.e. for how long the child felt like this).

Figure 48 shows, for the 5% of children who have been bullied online, how upsetting this experience was, if at all, the last time it occurred.

**Figure 48: How upset the child felt after being bullied online** (children who have been bullied online in past 12 months)




QC118: Thinking about the last time you were [sent nasty or hurtful messages on the internet], how upset were you about what happened (if at all)?

Base: All children who have been bullied on the internet in the past 12 months.

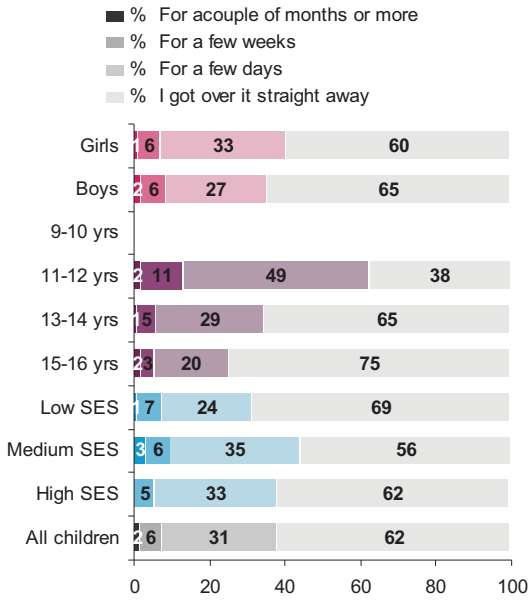
Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 9-12 year olds and low SES are fairly high at +/- 5-10%.

- **The 6% of children who have been bullied online divide fairly evenly into those who were very upset (31%), fairly upset (24%), a bit upset (30%) and, the smallest category, not at all upset (15%).**
- **It appears that children from lower SES homes are considerably more upset – nearly half of them (42%) compared with other groups.**
- **Girls (37%) are more likely to be 'very upset' compared with boys (23%).**

Thus it appears that although rather few children are bullied online, when this does happen it is a fairly or very upsetting experience for more than half of them. Nonetheless, nearly half were only a bit or not at all upset, suggesting considerable variation in response.

The duration of this response after the event also varies, as is revealed by answers to the question, '*how long did you feel like that for?'* (See Figure 49)

**Figure 49: For how long the child felt like that after being bullied online** (children aged 11+ who have been bullied online in past 12 months)




QC118: Thinking about the last time you were [sent nasty or hurtful messages on the internet], how long did you feel like that for?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who have been bullied online in the past 12 months.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 11-12 year olds are fairly high at +/- 5-10% and some cell sizes are below 15 respondents.

- **However children felt who had been bullied online, it seems that the majority (62%) 'got over it straight away'. One third (31%) still felt as they did for a few days. Just 6% felt the some response a few weeks later, and only 2% were affected for a couple of months or more.**
- Although the duration of response was, generally, very short lived, it appears longer lasting for the youngest group included in this part of the survey – the 11-12 year olds.

## 6.7. Coping with being bullied online

One reason that most children may have got over the experience of being bullied online fairly quickly may lie in the effectiveness of their coping responses.

- **The most common response to being bullied online was proactive – 36% tried to fix the problem themselves** (Table 24).
- **The next most common response was perhaps fatalistic – about one quarter (24%) hoped the problem would go away by itself.** However, it is easy to aggravate bullying by one's actions and this, too, could be a sensible response.
- One in eight (12%) felt a bit guilty about being bullied, which is arguably a less constructive response.

**Table 24: How the child coped after being bullied online** (age 11+)

| % who did… | All |
|---|---|
| Try to fix the problem | 36 |
| Hope the problem would go away by itself | 24 |
| Feel a bit guilty about what went wrong | 12 |
| None of these things | 16 |

QC120: The last time this happened, did you do any of these things afterwards? (*Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: Children aged 11-16 years who use the internet and have been sent nasty or hurtful messages online.

The second form of coping explored by the *EU Kids Online* survey is that of seeking social support. In previous surveys, it was often found that children did not tell anyone what had happened. However, the present survey suggests a more positive response from children, possibly resulting from awareness-raising efforts to stress the importance of discussion with others (Table 25).

- **Four in five (77%) children aged 9-16 who had been bullied online talked to someone about it.** A common source of social support is the child's friend(s) – 52% talked to a friend about what had happened.
- However, telling a parent is also common – 42% told their mother or father, a higher percentage than in much previous research, and this may explain the considerable child/parent agreement regarding the child's online experiences observed in this report.


- Although other sources of social support are less commonly turned to, one in six talked to a sibling (13%), one in twelve talked to another adult (8%) they trust, and 7% told a teacher.

**Table 25: Who the child talked to after being bullied online**

| % | All |
|---|---|
| Anybody at all | 77 |
| A friend | 52 |
| My mother or father | 42 |
| My brother or sister | 14 |
| Another adult I trust | 9 |
| A teacher | 7 |
| Some one whose job it is to help children | 2 |

QC121: Thinking about [the last time you were sent hurtful or nasty messages on the internet], did you talk to anyone about what happened? QC122: Who did you talk to? (*Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: Children who use the internet and have been sent nasty or hurtful messages online.

**Table 26: What the child did after being bullied online**

| % | Did this | Did this and it helped |
|---|---|---|
| I blocked the person who had sent it to me | 46 | 35 |
| I deleted any messages from the person who sent it to me | 41 | 23 |
| I stopped using the internet for a while | 20 | 13 |
| I changed my filter/ contact settings | 18 | 12 |
| I reported the problem (e.g. clicked on a 'report abuse' button, contact an internet advisor or 'internet service provider (ISP)') | 9 | 5 |
| None of these | 13 | 16 |
| Don't know | 16 | 16 |

QC123: Thinking about [the last time you were sent nasty or hurtful messages on the internet], did you do any of these things? QC124: Which, if any, of the things you did helped you? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: Children who use the internet and have been sent nasty or hurtful messages online.

The third type of coping response is specific to the internet, and these were put to those children who had been bullied online to see how they responded the last time this occurred (Table 26).

- **The most common actions taken when being bullied online are to block the person who sent the nasty or hurtful messages (46%) or to delete the nasty or hurtful messages (41%).**
- One fifth (20%) of those who had been bullied online stopped using the internet for a while, the bullying presumably being sufficiently upsetting that it did not seem worth going online at all.
- **Although less common, nearly one in five (18%) changed their filter or contact settings, and about one in ten (9%) reported the problem to someone (their internet service provider, advisor, or similar) who provides an online support system.**
- As may be seen, in the children's view, what helped or did not help varies by strategy. For those who blocked the bully, this almost always helped the situation. Deleting messages from the bully is, it seems, less effective, although it did help in two thirds of the cases where it was tried.
- Other strategies, although less commonly used, were also effective, helping in over two thirds of cases.

Children's approach to being bullied online is primarily to call on social support: only one fifth had not told anyone. This is encouraging for the success of peer mentoring processes, employed in some countries to tackle online and offline bullying.[65] Still, children's reluctance to discuss online problems with teachers and other adults trained to promote their welfare is a challenge for policy makers.

Nearly half of those bullied online also use online strategies – deleting hurtful messages or blocking the bully. This last – blocking the person who sent the hurtful messages – is seen by children as effective, and efforts to encourage more children to do this would be beneficial.

Since most children say that, even when bullied online and upset by what happened, they got over it quickly, one might conclude that the bullying is generally minor or, possibly, that children's coping strategies are effective.

Since children may be both victims and/or perpetrators in relation to bullying, it is important to teach children that online actions can have offline consequences they may not be aware but which can be significant for those affected.


# 7. SENDING/RECEIVING SEXUAL MESSAGES

## 7.1. Children's experience of sexual messages online

There is some evidence, and much speculation, that the internet facilitates the exchange of sexual messages among peers. Originating with the spread of mobile phone messaging more than online communication, and thus popularly labelled 'sexting' (an amalgam of 'sex' and 'texting'), such practices have given rise to popular and policy concern.[66]

This topic was explored in the survey because of both the intended and unintended consequences of sexual messaging. Exchanging messages with sexual content, whether in words or pictures, may merely make visible on the internet the kinds of practices in which children have always engaged, and this may be fun, part of flirtation, involving the exploration of developing sexuality and intimacy. On the other hand, when distributed on the internet, such messages may be circulated to unexpected recipients and hard to delete or edit in terms of their content.

> "In online games where you can get some bonus points. When a child meets someone unknown in such game and that person offers him or her buying those points if the child sends him some naked photos."
>
> **(Boy, 12, Czech Republic)**

Although the practice of sexual messaging online could be compared with offline equivalents (notably, via mobile text messaging), so the focus here is on the internet: how much do such practices occur, and among which children? As in Section 5 on pornography, it was judged appropriate first to ask children about these practices and then to ask if such practices had bothered them or not. As in Section 6 on bullying, questions concerned both receiving and, also, sending sexual messages. Last, for reasons of both research ethics and interview length, questions about sending and receiving sexual messages were not asked of 9-10 year olds.

The term 'sexting' was not used in the questionnaire. Children (and parents) were introduced to the questions on sending and receiving sexual messages as follows:

*"People do all kinds of things on the internet. Sometimes, they may send sexual messages or images. By this we mean talk about having sex or images of people naked or having sex."*

One complication of online communication, and one reason for public and policy concern about sexual messaging, is that these messages may be sent from peer to peer directly or they may be posted online (e.g. on a social networking site or message board) where they can be seen by others.

Consequently we asked about both sending/receiving messages and about posting/seeing messages. Seeing and receiving are treated in this section as passive (or, potentially, 'victim') activities. Posting or sending are treated as active (or, potentially, 'perpetrator') activities. As elsewhere in this report, the exact question asked in the survey is reproduced at the foot of each figure. It should be noted that the survey referred to *"sexual messages of any kind on the internet? This could be words, pictures or videos."*

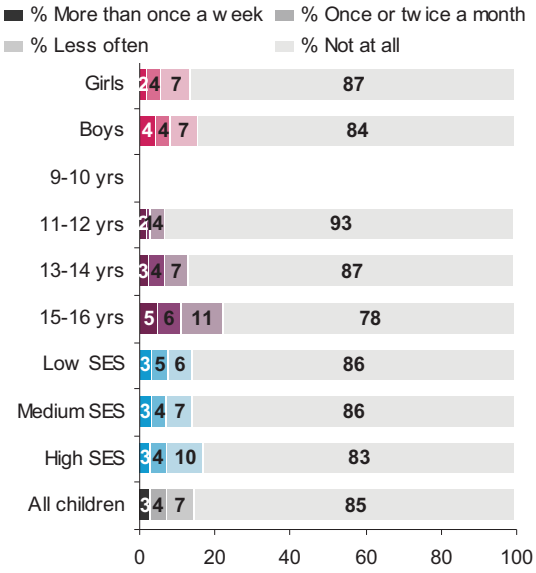
Figure 50 shows the survey findings for seeing/receiving sexual messages on the internet.

- When the decimal points are rounded up, **15% of European children aged 11-16 say that they have seen or received sexual messages on the internet in the past 12 months.**
- **The age trend is marked – 7% of 11-12 year olds, 14% of 13-14 year olds, and 22% of 15-16 year**

**olds have seen or received such messages. There are few differences by gender or SES.**

- For around half of those who have seen or received sexual messages, this is an infrequent experience (less than once a month), while for the other half, it occurs more often, and more than once a week for 5% of 15-16 year olds.

**Figure 50: Child has seen or received sexual messages online in past 12 months** (age 11+)



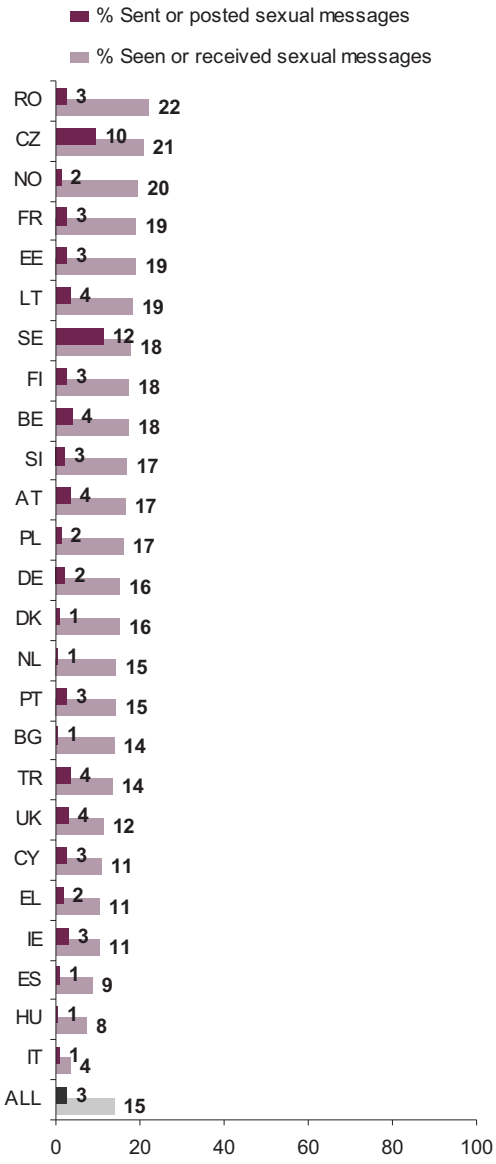

QC167: In the past 12 months have you seen or received sexual messages of any kind on the internet? QC168: How often have you received sexual messages of any kind on the internet in the past 12 months? This could be words, pictures or videos.

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

Countries vary in the practice of sexual messaging. Figure 51 includes the finding for posting or sending sexual messages, as well as seeing or receiving such messages.

- **Overall, seeing/receiving is more common (although still a minority practice at 15%) than is posting/sending. Only a small proportion of children – 3% of 11-16 year olds – say that they have posted or sent a sexual message in the past 12 months.**

**Figure 51: Child has seen/ received or posted/sent sexual messages online in past 12 months** (age 11+)




QC167: In the past 12 months have you seen or received sexual messages of any kind on the internet? This could be words, pictures or videos. QC179: In the past 12 months, have you sent or posted a sexual message (words, pictures or video) of any kind on the internet? This could be about you or someone else.

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.


- National differences are relatively minor – about two-thirds of countries are in the range from 14-20%. Seeing/receiving sexual messages is more common in some Eastern European countries (Romania, the Czech Republic and Estonia) and France, and least common in Italy, Hungary and Ireland. Interpreting the pattern of incidence by country is difficult.
- The relative balance between sending and receiving sexual messages is most equal in Sweden and the Czech Republic. In other countries, far fewer claim to have sent than to have received sexual messages on the internet.
- Generally there is little variation in the percentage of children who have sent or posted sexual messages, which in most cases ranges between 1% and 4%t. Sweden and the Czech Republic stand out in this respect, however, with more children (12% and 10% respectively) saying that they have sent such messages in the past 12 months.

> "Have had nightmares after writing mean things online about a friend. Feeling bad after that. Have friends that got dirty mails." **(Girl, 15, Sweden)**

What kinds of messages are children reporting on here? Table 27 shows their answers, where the low percentages once again reflect the fact that the table shows the occurrence of sexual messaging as a percentage of all children who use the internet.

**Table 27: Kinds of sexual messaging child has encountered online in past 12 months, by age**
(age 11+)

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| I have been sent a sexual message on the internet | n/a | 3 | 5 | 11 | 7 |
| I have seen a sexual message posted where other people could see it on the internet | n/a | 2 | 5 | 9 | 6 |
| I have seen other people perform sexual acts | n/a | 2 | 5 | 8 | 5 |
| I have been asked to talk about sexual acts with someone on the internet | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| I have been asked on the internet for a photo or video showing my private parts | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Has seen or received at all | n/a | 7 | 13 | 22 | 15 |

QC169: In the past 12 months, have any of these happened to you on the internet?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

- Most common among these generally relatively rare practices (a matter of decimal points before the percentages were rounded up) is being sent a sexual message on the internet – 7% of all 11-16 year olds. **While involving few younger children, being sent a sexual message online is reported by over one in ten of the 15-16 year olds.**
- Seeing a sexual message posted where others could see it is reported by 6% overall, with 9% of 15-16 year olds saying they had seen this.
- **5% of 11-16 year olds (most of them teenagers) say they have seen other people perform sexual acts on the internet, while 2% have been asked to talk about sexual acts with someone on the internet or to show a photo or video of their genitals to someone via the internet.**

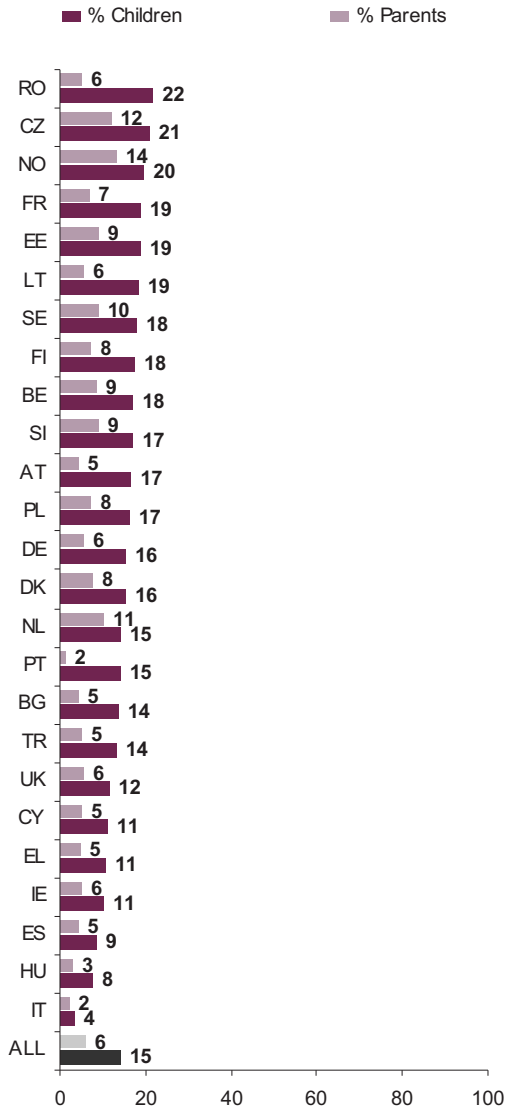
The purpose of these questions was to discover more about how explicit or extreme sexual messaging might be. Although this remains difficult to determine, it appears that most sexual messaging is relatively mild, with few occurrences involving direct portrayals, discussion about or incitement to sexual activity.

As with other risk factors shaping the online environment, it is meaningful to ask whether certain online services or applications are particularly associated with risky activities (see Table 28).

**Table 28: How child saw or received sexual messages online** (age 11+)

| | Age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | All |
| By 'pop up' | n/a | 2 | 5 | 7 | 5 |
| By instant messaging | n/a | 2 | 3 | 7 | 4 |

**Figure 53: Children's and parents' accounts of whether child has seen or received sexual messages online, by country** (age 11+)




QP235: [Has your child] seen or been sent sexual messages on the internet? QC167: In the past 12 months have you seen or received sexual messages of any kind on the internet? This could be words, pictures or videos?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet and one of their parents.

Figure 53 shows the national distributions of parents and children's accounts of sexual messaging:

- As already noted, there is some national variation in the amount of sexual messaging, as judged by children's accounts, ranging from 22% in Romania to 4% in Italy, with an average of 15% overall.
- **Parents underestimate sexual messaging compared to their children in all countries.**
- The degree of underestimation varies by county – in many countries it is a few percentage points, but occasionally it is more (e.g. Romania, 6% of parents vs. 18% of children).

A rather different picture emerges if we compare what a child and his or her own parent says. This pair-wise comparison between children and their parents' accounts is shown in Table 29.

- **Among the 15% of children who say they have seen or been sent sexual messages online, only 21% of their parents are aware of this. Over half (52%) of their parents say they have not experienced this – a considerable underestimation, and 27% of parents don't know.**
- Among those children who say they have not seen or received sexual messages (the vast majority of all children), few of their parents think that they have – just 4% of parents estimate that this has occurred when it has not. The majority of parents (84%) say their child has not experienced this, and so their view accords with their child's.

**Table 29: Comparison between children's and parents' accounts of whether child has seen or received sexual messages online** (age 11+)

| Seen or been sent sexual images on the internet? | Child's answer | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| % Parent answer: | | |
| Yes | 21 | 4 |
| No | 52 | 84 |
| Don't know | 27 | 12 |
| | 100 | 100 |

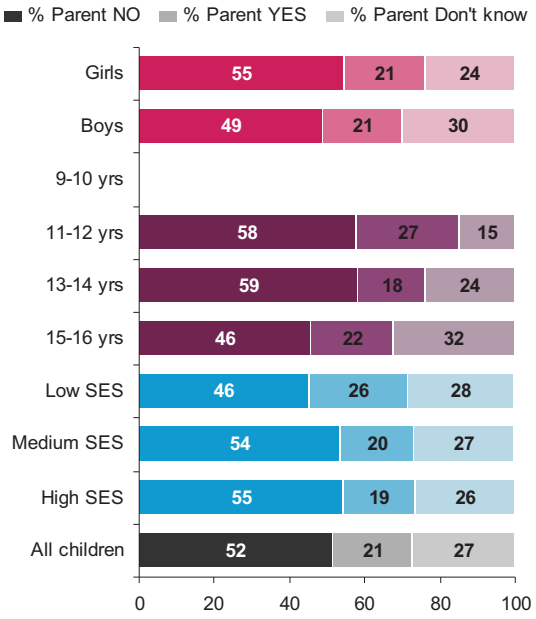
QP235: [Has your child] seen or been sent sexual messages on the internet? QC167: In the past 12 months have you seen or received sexual messages of any kind on the internet? This could be words, pictures or videos?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet and one of their parents.

In short, although within a national population, children and parents report a similar level of sexual messaging, at the individual level within families, there is a considerable difference of understanding. Half of parents do not recognise when their child has actually experienced sexual messaging.

This finding is examined by demographic factors in Figure 54. Here the answers of parents are shown, just for parents of those 15% of children who have seen or been sent sexual messages on the internet.

**Figure 54: Parents' accounts of whether child has seen or received sexual messages online** (children aged 11+ who have seen or received such messages)




QP235: [Has your child] seen or been sent sexual messages on the internet?

Base: One parent of children aged 11-16 who use the internet and who have seen or received sexual messages online.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 11-12 year olds are fairly high at +/- 5-10%.

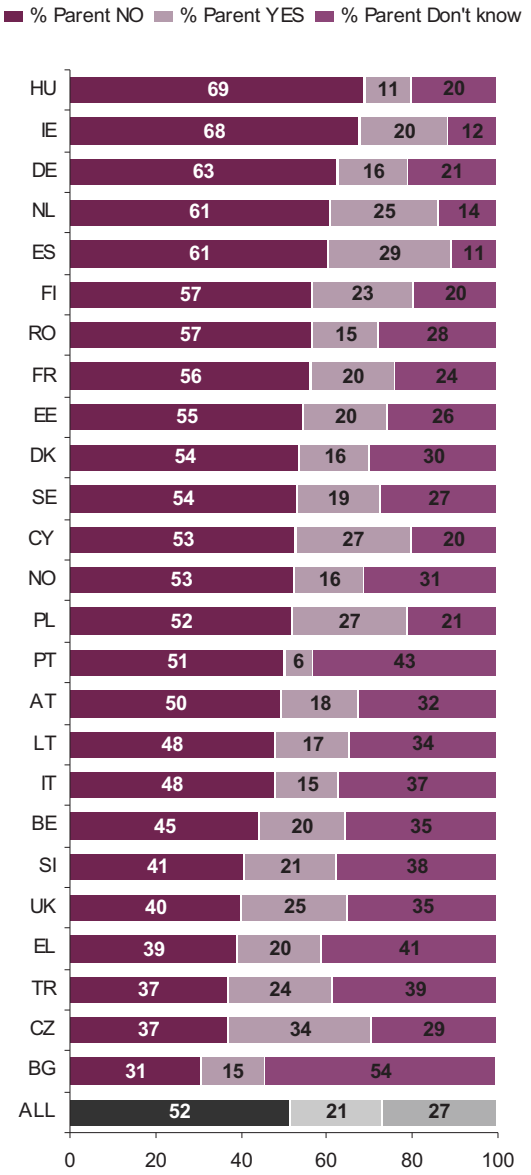
- As noted above, among children who have seen or received sexual messages, one fifth (21%) of their parents recognises this but half (52%) do not. Parents' views differ little depending on whether their child is a son or daughter, although they are a little more uncertain regarding sons. However, middle and higher SES parents are less likely to recognise that their child has had this experience.
- Age also matters. Parents of 11-12 year olds are more likely both to recognise (27%) and not to recognise (58%) that their child has seen or been sent sexual messages online.
- This is possible because the parents of 15-16 year olds are particularly likely to say they just don't know – 32%.

These findings are broken down by country in Figure 55.

- As before, this figure shows only parents of those children who have seen/received sexual messages – i.e. 15% of European children overall.
- At the top of the figure are those countries where parents are most likely to underestimate that the child has seen or received sexual messages (i.e. while the child answered 'yes' I have received this, the parent answered 'no').
- In Hungary (69%), Ireland (68%) and Germany (63%), parents are least likely to recognise their child's experience of sexual messaging, contrasting with Bulgaria (31%), the Czech Republic (37%) and Turkey (37%).
- In the middle section of the country bars are those parents who do recognise that their child has received such messages. This means the greatest agreement on the child's receipt of sexual messaging is to be found in the Czech Republic (34%) and Spain (29%) and the least in Portugal (6%) and Hungary (11%).
- Parents who don't know how to answer this question are also variably distributed across Europe, with many parents in Bulgaria (54%) and Portugal (43%), saying they don't know if their child has seen or received such message.

"In social networking sites it bothers me if there are foreigners who start bothering you and writing to you. They often ask for your MSN in order to see your Webcam." **(Girl, 16, Estonia)**

**Figure 55: Parents' accounts of whether child has seen or received sexual messages online, by country** (children aged 11+ who have seen or received such messages)




QP235: [Has your child] seen or been sent sexual messages on the internet?

Base: One parent of children aged 11-16 who use the internet and who have seen or received sexual messages online. Note: The 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) or very high (+/- 10%) and some cell sizes are below 15 respondents. So the numbers for individual countries should be considered as indicative only.

This examination of what parents know, in cases where the child has received sexual messages on the internet, suggests a considerable degree of misunderstanding. Parents are rather unlikely to consider that their child has received sexual messages when they have not. But they are very likely – half of all cases – not to recognise that the child has received sexual messages when they have.

Parents of boys, of teenagers and parents in lower SES homes are particularly likely to say they don't know, suggesting some parental uncertainty in these cases. Parents of younger children and higher SES parents are also most likely to underestimate their child's experience of sexual messaging, saying 'no' this hasn't happened when the child says it has. In some countries, parental underestimation is twice as likely as in others.

## 7.3. Perceived harm from sexual messaging online

As noted in the discussion of seeing pornography, unless one makes the strong case that any exposure to sexual messages is inevitably harmful in some degree, it must be recognised that some children may receive sexual messages with no negative effects. Others, however, may be upset. Table 30 shows national variation in being bothered by seeing or receiving sexual messages.

- **Although 15% of children has seen or received a sexual message online, only 4% of children aged 11-16 have been bothered by this experience.**
- **Looked at differently, one quarter (25%) of the 15% who saw or received sexual messages were bothered by this.**
- While there is some national variation in the right-hand column, in part this arises because of the low numbers of children who experience sexual messaging in the first place.
- Nonetheless, some variation seems noteworthy: **those children in Turkey, Romania, Estonia, Hungary and Poland who have received sexual messages appear particularly likely to have been bothered by this experience.** Whether this is because they are less prepared or because the messages are more explicit is difficult to determine.

**Table 30: Child has seen or received sexual messages online in past 12 months and was bothered by this, by country** (age 11+)

| | All children who use the internet | | Child bothered, of those who have seen or received sexual messages |
|---|---|---|---|
| % | Child has seen or received sexual messages | Child bothered by seeing or receiving sexual messages | |
| AT | 17 | 3 | 16 |
| BE | 18 | 3 | 15 |
| BG | 14 | 3 | 18 |
| CY | 11 | 2 | 19 |
| CZ | 21 | 4 | 18 |
| DE | 16 | 4 | 27 |
| DK | 16 | 4 | 22 |
| EE | 19 | 7 | 34 |
| EL | 11 | 2 | 19 |
| ES | 9 | 2 | 24 |
| FI | 18 | 2 | 10 |
| FR | 19 | 4 | 20 |
| HU | 8 | 2 | 29 |
| IE | 11 | 2 | 18 |
| IT | 4 | 1 | 26 |
| LT | 19 | 3 | 18 |
| NL | 15 | 3 | 17 |
| NO | 20 | 4 | 19 |
| PL | 17 | 5 | 28 |
| PT | 15 | 3 | 22 |
| RO | 22 | 9 | 38 |
| SE | 18 | 4 | 21 |
| SI | 17 | 2 | 12 |
| TR | 14 | 6 | 40 |
| UK | 12 | 3 | 21 |
| ALL | 15 | 4 | 25 |

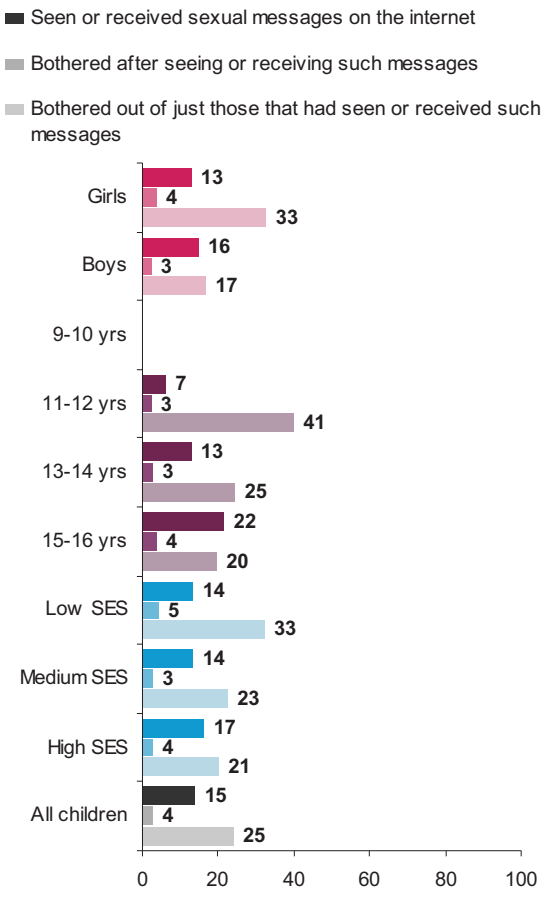
QC167: In the past 12 months have you seen or received sexual messages of any kind on the internet? This could be words, pictures or videos. QC171: Has any of the sexual messages that you have seen or received bothered you in any way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it?

Base: All children age 11-16 who use the internet. Children aged 11-16 who have seen or received sexual messages online in the past 12 months.

Note: The 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) or very high (+/- 10%) and some cell sizes are below 15 respondents. So the numbers for individual countries should be considered as indicative only.

Figure 56 shows the relation between receipt and being bothered by sexual messages, by demographics.

**Figure 56: Child has seen or received sexual messages in past 12 months and was bothered by this** (age 11+)




QC167: In the past 12 months have you seen or received sexual messages of any kind on the internet? This could be words, pictures or videos. QC171: In the last 12 months, has any sexual message that you have seen or received bothered you in any way?

Base: All children age 11-16 who use the internet. Children who have seen or received sexual messages online in the past 12 months.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 11-12 year olds are fairly high at +/- 5-10%.

- **Among those who have received sexual messages, girls are much more likely to be bothered (33%) than boys (17%).**

- **Similarly for age, 41% of 11-12 year olds who received sexual messages online were bothered by this experience, compared with 25% of 13-14 year olds and 20% of 15-16 year olds.**
- **Children from lower SES homes are more likely to be bothered by receiving sexual messages (33%) compared with those from medium (23%) or high SES homes (21%).**

In terms of the risk of harm, then, from the receipt of sexual messages, girls, younger children and less advantaged children report higher levels of subjective harm than do boys, teenagers and better off children. Although the overall level of sexual messaging is found by this survey to be substantially lower than popular media coverage would have one believe, the survey also provides a basis on which to target policy interventions so as to reach those children who appear particularly vulnerable to its ill effects.

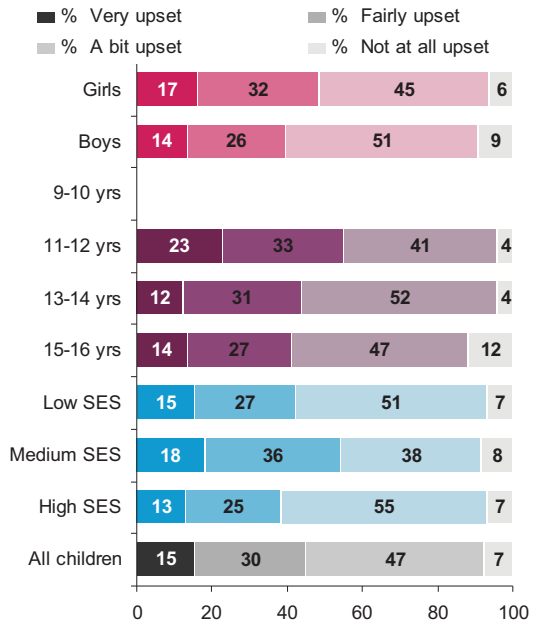
In the remainder of this section, although the sample sizes are sufficient for a breakdown by demographic variables, they are too small for further cross-country analyses.

To pursue what children meant by being bothered, two measures of subjective harm were used (in relation to the LAST TIME the child was bothered by seeing or receiving sexual messages). These measures were severity (how upset were they?), shown in Figure 57, and duration (show long did they feel like this; see Figure 58). Figure 57 shows findings for the severity of harm:

- **Nearly half (45%) of the children aged 11-16 who have been bothered by seeing or receiving sexual messages report being very or fairly upset (but remember these are low numbers overall).**
- Girls are more upset (49% vs. 40% of boys who are very or fairly upset).
- Younger children (here 11-12 year olds) are more inclined to have a stronger negative reaction (56% are very or fairly upset).
- Children from medium SES homes are slightly more inclined to be upset.

"A person asked me to show my breasts on the webcam" **(Girl, 11, Belgium)**

**Figure 57: How upset the child felt after seeing or receiving sexual messages** (children aged 11+ who have been bothered by sexual messages online)




QC172: Thinking about the last time you were bothered by [seeing or receiving sexual messages], how upset did you feel about it (if at all)?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet and have been bothered after seeing or receiving sexual messages online in the past 12 months.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the socio-demographic breaks are fairly high at +/- 5-10% and some cell sizes are below 15 respondents.

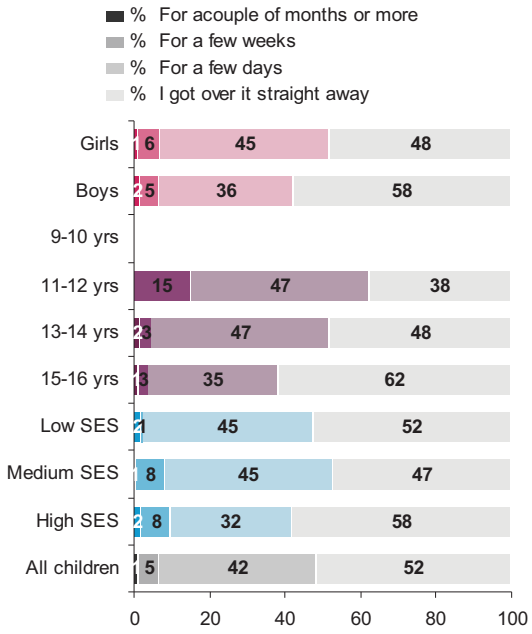
Figure 58 shows findings for children's perception of the duration of harm, again calculated only for those who have been bothered by the experience of seeing or receiving sexual messages.

- **1% claim a long-term response, with children upset for at least some months. More say they are upset for some weeks (5%). But for the majority, the reaction seems short-lived: nearly a half (52%) said they got over it straight away.**
- For girls, the negative experience lasts slightly longer than boys who are slightly more likely than girls to say they got over it straight away (58% vs. 48%).
- The younger children answering this question, 11-12 year olds, are more likely to say that they are upset

for some weeks (15%), while 'getting over it straight away' increases with age.

- The picture as regards SES is a little mixed: children from a middle SES background are more likely to say they are upset for longer.

**Figure 58: For how long the child felt like that after seeing or receiving sexual messages online** (children aged 11+ who have been bothered by sexual messages online)




QC136: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by seeing or receiving sexual messages], how long did you feel like that for?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet and have been bothered after seeing or receiving a sexual message online in the past 12 months.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the socio-demographic breaks are fairly high at +/- 5-10% and some cell sizes are below 15 respondents.

In sum, a quarter of those who have received sexual messages were bothered by this experience – and nearly half of those (i.e. one in ten of those who received sexual messages) were fairly or very upset. The proportion that was bothered by sexual messaging is higher in several countries and, further, girls, younger children, and children from low SES homes are twice as likely to have been bothered as boys, older teenagers and higher SES children. These groups all report a greater likelihood of having been upset by sexual messages, with effect also having lasted for longer.

On the other hand, most who received sexual messages were not at all bothered or upset by the experience, presumably either ignoring this or receiving such messages as part of an entertaining or intimate peer-to-peer exchange. This latter seems most likely to account for older teenagers' relative unconcern about such messaging.

## 7.4. Coping with sexual messaging online

As with pornography and bullying experiences, the next tables pursue how children respond to the experience of being bothered by online sexual messaging. Thus the children included in the remaining tables in this section were only those who had both received or seen a sexual message and been bothered by this.

**Table 31: How the child coped after being bothered by seeing or receiving sexual messages online** (age 11+)

| % | All |
|---|---|
| Try to fix the problem | 27 |
| Hope the problem would go away by itself | 22 |
| Try to get the other person to leave me alone | 12 |
| Feel a bit guilty about what went wrong | 6 |
| Try to get back at the other person | 2 |
| None of these things | 32 |

QC174: The last time this happened, did you do any of these things afterwards?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet and have been bothered by seeing or receiving sexual messages online in the past 12 months.

Note: Cell sizes showing less than 3% are below 15 respondents.

First, we consider the actions children took on being bothered by seeing or receiving a sexual message on the internet. Table 31 shows that:

- **About four in ten responded in a proactive manner, 27% trying to fix the problem and 12% trying to get the person to leave them alone.**
- **However, over a fifth (22%) just hoped the problem would go away.**


Then we considered whether these children sought social support from those around them.

**Table 32: Who the child talked to after seeing or receiving sexual messages online** (children 11+ who have been bothered by such message)

| % | All |
|---|---|
| Talked to anybody at all | 60 |
| A friend | 38 |
| My mother or father | 30 |
| My brother or sister | 9 |
| Another adult I trust | 5 |
| Some one whose job it is to help children | 3 |
| A teacher | 2 |
| Someone else | 1 |

QC175: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by seeing or receiving sexual messages], did you talk to anyone about what happened? QC176: Who did you talk to?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet and have been bothered after seeing or receiving a sexual message online in the past 12 months.

Note: Cell sizes showing less than 3% are below 15 respondents.

On the issue of seeking social support, it is clear from Table 32 that:

- **A majority (60%) talked to someone about it, the most common person talked to being either a friend (38%) or a parent (30%).**
- A few children talk to their siblings (9%) or to another adult they trust (5%).
- As with other risks, few children tell some of the other people who might be expected to support the child – teachers or other responsible adults.

Finally, Table 33 shows that some internet-based strategies appear relatively more successful than others

- **Four in ten blocked the person who sent (40%) and/or deleted the unwanted sexual messages (38%). In most cases, the child said that this action helped the situation.**
- Roughly a quarter (24%) tried to reset their filter or contact settings and all of these children say it helped to do this.
- Some stop using the internet for a while (18%) but they are less positive that this really helps. A similar picture was found for reporting the problem officially (18% try it but fewer – 11% – tried it and thought that it helped).

**Table 33: What the child did after seeing or receiving sexual messages online** (children 11+ who have been bothered by such message)

| % | Did this | Did this and it helped |
|---|---|---|
| I blocked the person who had sent it to me | 40 | 31 |
| I deleted any messages from the person who sent it to me | 38 | 29 |
| I changed my filter/ contact settings | 24 | 20 |
| I stopped using the internet for a while | 18 | 11 |
| I reported the problem (e.g. clicked on a 'report abuse' button, contact an internet advisor or 'internet service provider (ISP)') | 18 | 11 |
| None of these | 7 | 6 |
| Don't know | 26 | 20 |

QC177: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by seeing or receiving sexual messages], did you do any of these things? QC178: Which, if any, of the things you did helped you?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet and have been bothered after seeing or receiving a sexual message online in the past 12 months.

Children try a range of coping strategies, when faced with upsetting sexual messages online – using individual, social and technical solutions as available. Four in ten children did not tell anyone, however, even though they had been bothered by the experience, and only a minority of children sought a technical solution. In our future analysis, we will examine which children tried these different solutions, and how their coping strategies relate to each other and to how upset they were.

# 8. MEETING NEW PEOPLE

## 8.1. Frequency of meeting online contacts offline

Possibly the greatest public and policy concern for children's safety on the internet has focused on the risk that a child will meet someone new online who then abuses them in a subsequent face-to-face meeting. Such meetings constitute a contact risk, in the terms of our classification in Table 1.

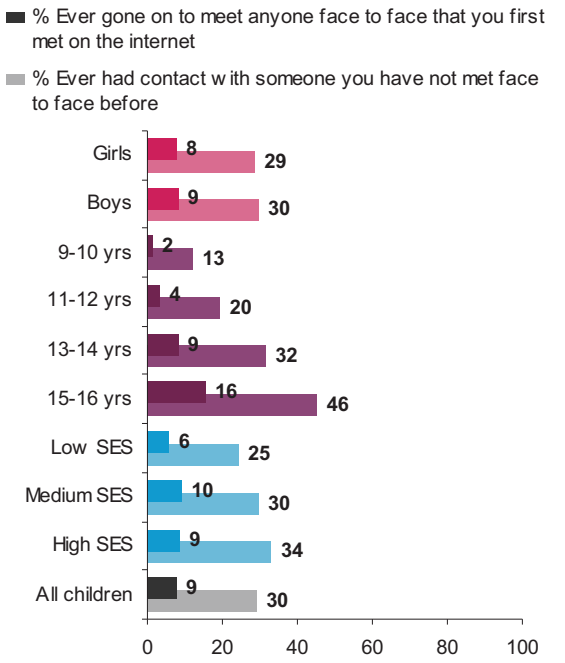
However, previous research suggests that the risk of harm from a face-to-face meeting with someone whom one first met on the internet is low, not least because children increasingly use the internet to widen their circle of friends, with very few using online communication to meet adults (whether deliberately or inadvertently).[67] Further, although it is possible for contacts with new people online to result in harm, public concern tends tp leave unclear just what harm might result (online exploitation or deception or offline abuse?).

The *EU Kids Online* questionnaire focused on the practice of making new friends online leading to meetings with such people offline and, then, whether this latter poses a significant risk of harm to children aged 9-16 years old.

The first step was to understand the pattern of children's online contact and/or face-to-face meetings with people that they have not previously met face-to-face (Figure 59).

- **Three in ten children (30%) have made contact online with someone they did not previously know offline.**
- **The older the child, the more likely they are to have made contact with new people online: 13% of 9-10 year olds vs. 46% of 15-16 year olds have made new contacts this way.**
- There is no difference between boys and girls when it comes to making contact with new people online but the likelihood increases with SES (25% of children from low SES homes have made new contacts online compared with 34% of children from high SES homes).
- **Overall, 9% of 9-16 year olds have gone to a meeting face-to-face with someone that they first met on the internet.** Since this 9% is an average of a lower percentage of younger children and a higher percentage of teenagers, this accords with our previous estimate, based on a review of national surveys, that roughly one in ten teenagers have met an online contact offline.[68]
- The demographic differences mirror those for making new contacts online, with higher SES children slightly more likely to go to such meetings.
- **The age differences are substantial: only 2% of 9-10 year olds and 4% of 11-12 year olds have met face-to-face someone that they first met online. However, 9% of 13-14 year olds and 16% (1 in 7) of 15-16 year olds have gone to such a meeting.**

**Figure 59: Child has communicated online with, or gone to an offline meeting with, someone not met face-to-face before**




QC147: Can I just check, have you ever had contact on the internet with someone you have not met face-to-face before? QC148: Have you ever gone on to meet anyone face-to-face that you first met on the internet in this way.

Base: All children who use the internet.

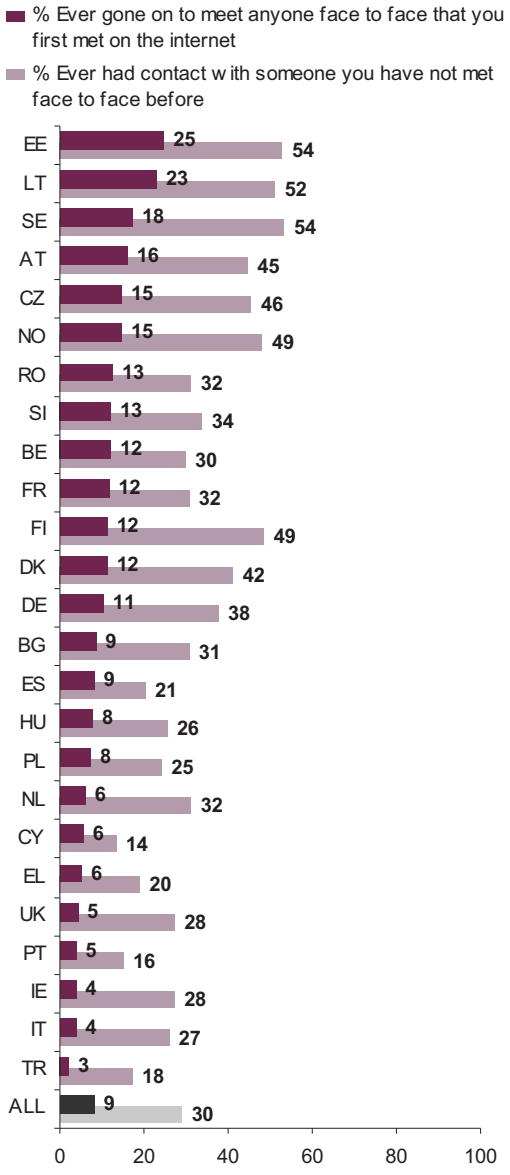
Figure 60 shows national differences in contacts and meetings with people first met online. Countries are ordered by the occurrence of face-to-face meetings:

> "Chatting to someone you do not know and telling you lies so they can get closer" **(Girl, 15, Ireland)**

- Children are most likely to have gone to an offline meeting with a contact first made online in some of the Baltic countries (25% in Estonia and 23% in Lithuania). Such offline meetings are least common in Turkey (3%), and then Italy and Ireland (each) 4%).
- It appears that in countries where making contact with new people online occurs more often, there is also a greater likelihood that children will have gone to meet such a person or people offline - notably, in Estonia, Lithuania and Sweden. However, there are quite a few exceptions: for example, children in Finland, Denmark, Slovenia and the Netherlands have quite a high likelihood of having online contacts that they have not met face-to-face but they go to relatively fewer offline meetings compared to some other countries.

In what follows, we examine the findings for meeting online contacts offline. It is not assumed that making new contacts online is necessarily harmful and it may, for many, afford positive opportunities to make new friends. If there are associated risks, this remains for future research.

**Figure 60: Child has communicated online with, or gone to an offline meeting with, someone not met face-to-face before, by country**



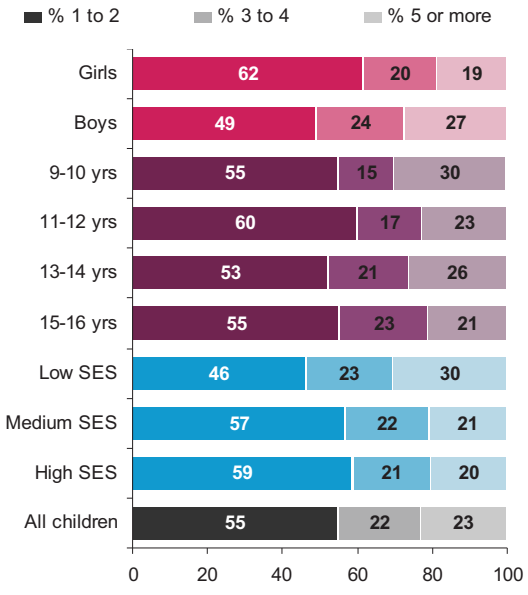

QC147: Can I just check, have you ever had contact on the internet with someone you have not met face-to-face before? QC148: Have you ever gone on to meet anyone face-to-face that you first met on the internet in this way?

Base: All children who use the internet.

Following up the experience of going to offline meetings with people first met online, we next asked only those children who had gone to such a meeting, how many people they had met in this way (see Figure 61). It should be borne in mind that these questions are thus asked of only the 9% who say they have met someone this way, a very small minority of the population of children who use the internet.

- **The majority (55%) of those who have gone to a meeting with someone they first met online say that met just one or two people this way in the past year.** 22% say that they have met three or four people, and 23% say they have met five or more people this way.
- Apart from a tendency for girls to meet fewer people than boys, the sample sizes are too small to comment on demographic differences.

**Figure 61: The number of online contacts that the child has met offline in the past 12 months** (children who have met someone offline that they first communicated with online)



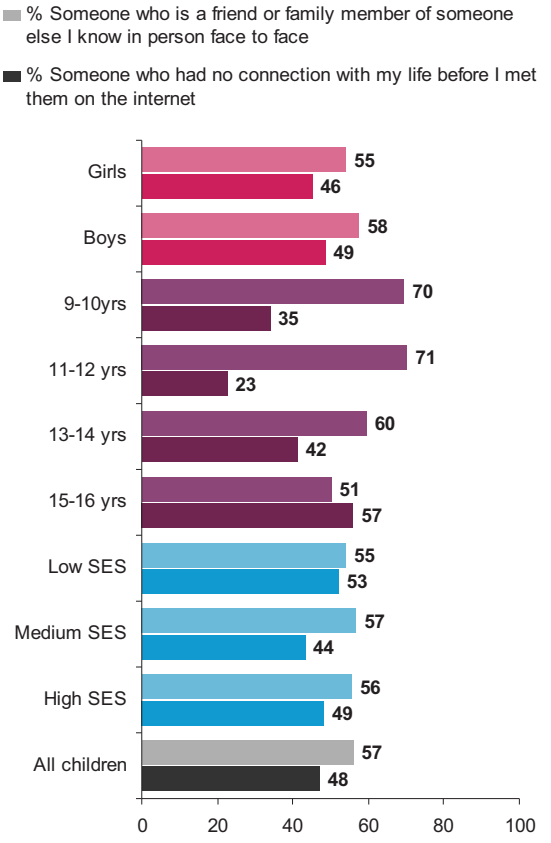

QC149: How many new people have you met in this way in the last 12 months (if any)?

Base: Children who use the internet and who have met offline someone they first met online in the past 12 months.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 9-12 year olds and low SES are fairly high at +/- 5-10% and some cell sizes are below 15 respondents.

Figure 62 compares the people children have met offline in terms of whether they are already part of their social circle (i.e. someone who is known to one of the child's friends or relatives) or whether they can really be called a 'stranger'.

**Figure 62: Who the child has met offline in the past 12 months** (children who have met someone offline that they first communicated with online)




QC150: In the last 12 months, which of these types of people have you met face-to-face that you first met on the internet? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: Children who use the internet and who have met offline someone they first met online in the past 12 months.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 9-12 year olds and low SES are fairly high at +/- 5-10%.

- **The majority (57%) say that the person (or people) they have met offline were first met online as part of their social circle – a friend or relative of someone they do know face-to-face.**
- 48% of those who have gone to a meeting say, however, that the person or people they met have no connection with their life before they met them online. This is around 3% of all children surveyed.
- Offline meetings with people met online who are unconnected with the child's social circle are not particularly more common in one demographic group than another, except that such meetings are experienced more often by teenagers than younger children.

The next stage in the analysis was to establish the way in which contact is first made with new people who the child subsequently met offline, as shown in Table 34.

**Table 34: The way in which child first contacted someone they have met offline** (children who met someone offline that they first communicated with online)

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| On a social networking site | 37 | 47 | 64 | 66 | 62 |
| By instant messaging | 42 | 38 | 44 | 41 | 42 |
| In a chat room | 12 | 15 | 14 | 17 | 16 |
| Some other way on the internet | 10 | 14 | 9 | 12 | 11 |
| In a gaming website | 27 | 15 | 10 | 8 | 10 |
| By email | 17 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 8 |
| Has ever gone to a meeting with someone first met online | 2 | 4 | 9 | 16 | 9 |

QC151: Thinking about any people you have gone on a meeting with in the last 12 months who you first met on the internet, in what ways did you first get in contact with them? QC148: Have you ever gone on to meet anyone face-to-face that you first met on the internet in this way?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **The most common way in which contact was first made, among children who then went to a meeting, is via social networking sites (62%) followed by instant messaging (42%).** This is not to say that social networking sites are intrinsically more likely to result in meetings than, say, gaming sites. Rather, because more children use social networking sites than gaming sites (62% vs. 44%, as shown earlier in Table 5), this represents a more likely route to such new contacts.
- In general, contact is more common via these routes the older the child; 15-16 year olds are also more likely than younger children to have made first contact in a chatroom.
- New contacts made online in gaming websites or by email appear very rarely to result in offline meetings.

As already noted, although nearly one third (30%) of all children made new contacts online that they have not met face-to-face, the percentage who have gone to meet that person offline is far smaller – 9% of all 9-16 year olds. The practice of making new online contacts, and going to meet them offline, is more common among teenagers than younger children. Among 15-16 year olds, 46% have made new contacts online, and 16% have subsequently met these contacts offline. Both practices are also more common in Eastern European countries (Estonia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic) and also in Sweden and Austria.

## "An adult stranger writes to me and asks personal questions"

**(Girl, 10, Germany)**

Among those who have gone to offline meetings with online contacts, over half (55%) have met just one or two people this way and a similar proportion say that although they had not met the person before face-to-face, it was someone who is part of their social circle – a friend or relative of someone they do know face-to-face (57%).

The conditions that concern policy makers most are meetings involving young children, and meetings involving new people from outside the child's existing social circle. The findings from this section show that, out of the 9% of all 9-16 year olds who have met offline with a new online contact, half (48%) of those meetings were with someone outside their existing social circle.

Regarding younger children, among the 2% of 9-10 year olds who have met an online contact offline, in 35% of these cases the person they met had no connection with their life. The absolute number of children in this group is too small for further reliable analysis.

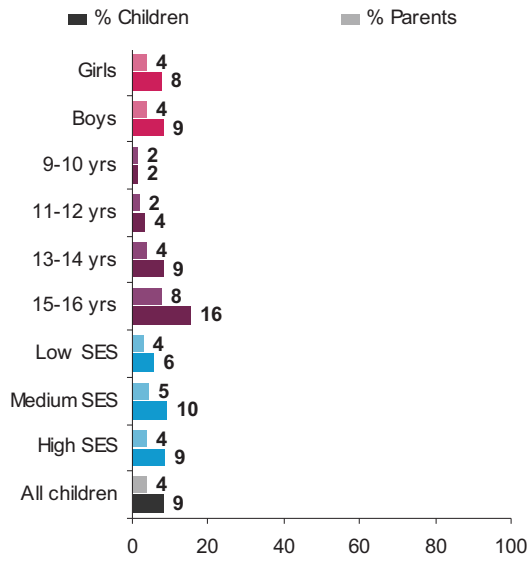
## 8.2. Children's and parents' accounts compared

To what extent are parents aware of such meetings with new contacts made online? The next stage in the analysis compared parents' with children's accounts of whether or not the child had met an online contact offline. First, we examine the overall reporting, by children and their parents, of the incidence of offline meetings with online contacts (Figure 63).

- **Overall, a similar proportion of children and parents report that the child has gone to an offline meeting with an online contact, although parents report slightly fewer such meetings – 4%, compared with the 9% of children who say they have gone to an offline meeting with someone first met online.**
- The percentages are too small to discern any noteworthy differences between children and parents accounts by gender and SES. Age differences are more noteworthy. It appears that parents of the oldest children underestimate whether meetings had taken place, if we take the child to be telling the truth (8% vs. 16% among 15-16 year olds).

"A man who would tell me shocking things about my external appearance of my breast, who could be old and give me a rendezvous without my parents knowing" **(Girl, 12, France)**

**Figure 63: Children's and parents' accounts of whether child has met an online contact offline**




QP235: [Has your child] gone to a meeting with someone face-to-face that he/she first met on the internet? QC148: Have you ever gone on to meet anyone face-to-face that you first met on the internet in this way?

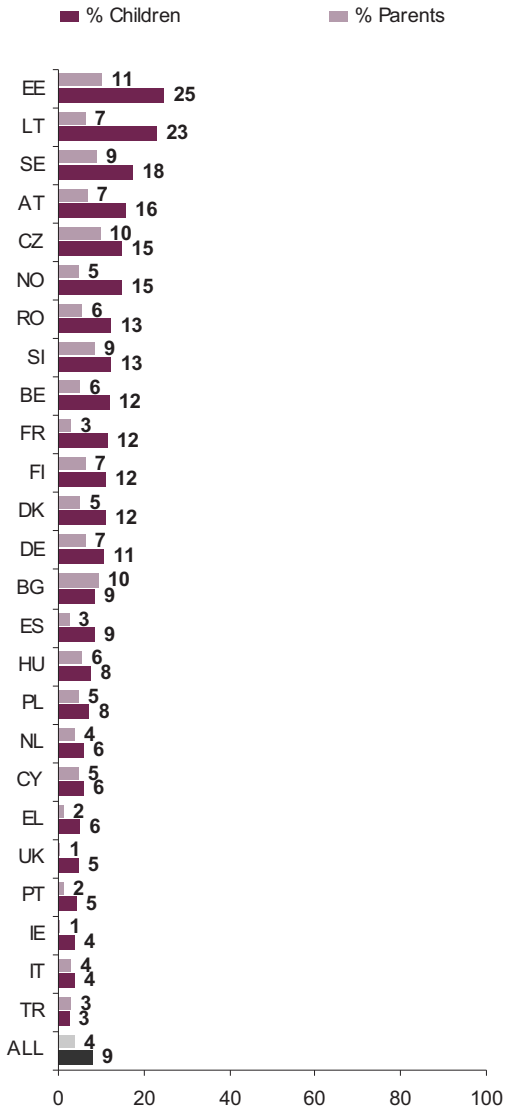
Base: All children who use the internet, and one of their parents.

Figure 64 shows the national variation:

- **Parents in most countries underestimate the incidence of offline meetings by children. The exceptions are Bulgaria and Turkey, where parents slightly overestimate.**
- The degree of underestimation varies by country. There is generally a few percentage points difference, with a more striking gap in Lithuania (7% vs. 23%) and Estonia (11% vs. 25%).

"Some adults come to suggest something improper." **(Girl, 14, Finland)**

**Figure 64: Children's and parents' accounts of whether child has met an online contact offline, by country**




QP235: [Has your child] gone to a meeting with someone face-to-face that he/she first met on the internet? QC148: Have you ever gone on to meet anyone face-to-face that you first met on the internet in this way?

Base: All children who use the internet, and one of their parents.

Focusing in on those 9% of children who say they have met offline a contact first made online, and remembering that most of these children are teenagers rather than younger children, Table 35 provides a more detailed account of what parents know about the activities of their own child. In other words, as for other sections of this report, this table does not compare overall levels of parental and child accounts of meeting online contacts offline but rather compares the parent's answer with that given by the child. The interest, also as before, lies especially in those cases where the child says yes, I have been to such a meeting. What, we explore below, do these children's parents say?

**Table 35: Comparison between children's and parents' accounts of whether child has met an online contact offline**

| Met someone face-to-face that first met on the internet? | Child's answer | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| % Parent answer: | | |
| Yes | 28 | 4 |
| No | 61 | 89 |
| Don't know | 11 | 7 |
| | 100 | 100 |

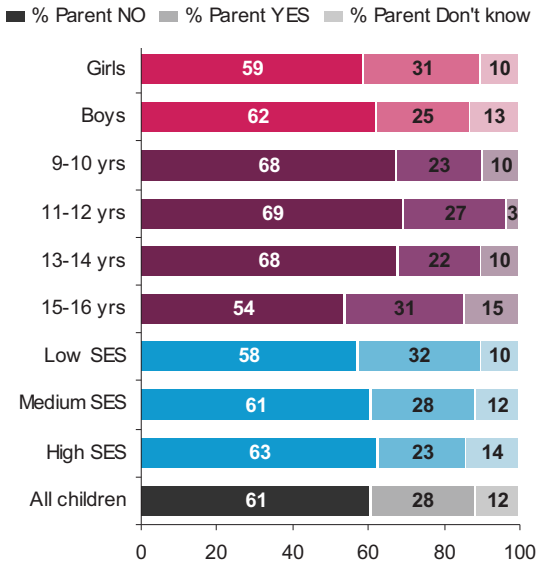
QP235: [Has your child] gone to a meeting with someone face-to-face that he/she first met on the internet? QC148: Have you ever gone on to meet anyone face-to-face that you first met on the internet in this way?

Base: All children who use the internet, and one of their parents.

- **Among children who have met someone face-to-face who they first met on the internet, 28% of their parents know that they went to such a meeting, while 61% say that their child has not been to such a meeting and 11% say they don't know if this has happened or not.**
- Among children who say they have not gone to a meeting with an online contact, most parents (89%) give the same response, but a few (4%) say that they have. Although 4% of parents is a small percentage, it is 4% of the vast majority of parents (since 91% of children fall into the group who said 'no') and, thus, it is a sizeable number of parents who overestimate such meetings.

For only those children who have met someone offline who they first met online, Figure 65 examines the answers parents give according to the demographics of their child.

**Figure 65: Parents' accounts of whether child has met an online contact offline** (children who have gone to such a meeting)



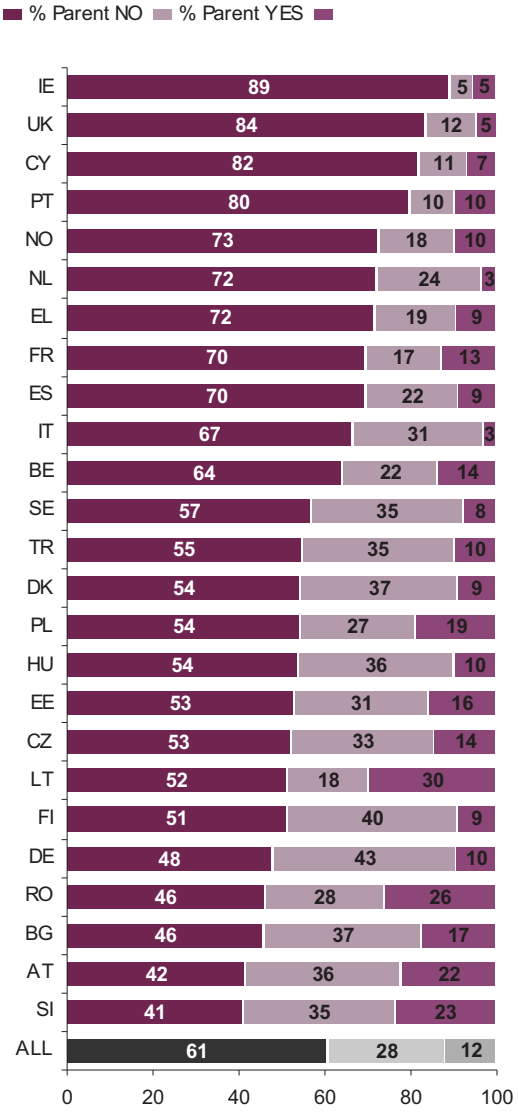

QP235: [Has your child] gone to a meeting with someone face-to-face that he/she first met on the internet?

Base: One parent of children who use the internet and who have gone on to meet anyone face-to-face that they first met online.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 9-12 year olds and low SES are fairly high at +/- 5-10% and some cell sizes are below 15 respondents.

- For one third of girls (31%) and a quarter of boys (25%), the parent also says that the child has had such a meeting. For over half (59% girls, 62% boys), it seems that parents are not aware of this.
- **Remembering that very few 9-10 year olds have had such a meeting, it is noteworthy that only one in four (23%) of their parents is aware that they have met someone in this way. The proportion of parents aware of this rises with the child's age to one in three (31%) 15-16 year olds.** From a safety point of view, this is not desirable: one would prefer that parents are more, not less, aware of such meetings in the case of the youngest children.
- Interestingly, parents seem less aware of such meetings in higher SES households (23% of parents from high SES homes compared with 32% from low SES homes). Recall that higher SES children are also more likely to go to such meetings.

**Figure 66: Parents' accounts of whether child has met an online contact offline, by country** (children who have gone to such a meeting)



As shown in Figure 66, bearing in mind the national differences in frequency of children meeting online contacts offline (as shown in Figure 64), parents vary considerably in their awareness of their own children's experiences of such meetings.

- Least aware of their children's offline meetings with online contacts are parents in Ireland (unaware of such meetings in 89% of cases), the UK (84%) and Cyprus (82%). By contrast, fewer parents from Slovenia (41%), Austria (42%) and Bulgaria (46%) are unaware of such meetings (although many in these countries are also likely to say they don't know).
- Those countries where parents are most likely to say they are aware of their child's meeting are Denmark and Bulgaria (37%) and Hungary and Austria (both at 36%).

## 8.3. Perceived harm from meeting online contacts

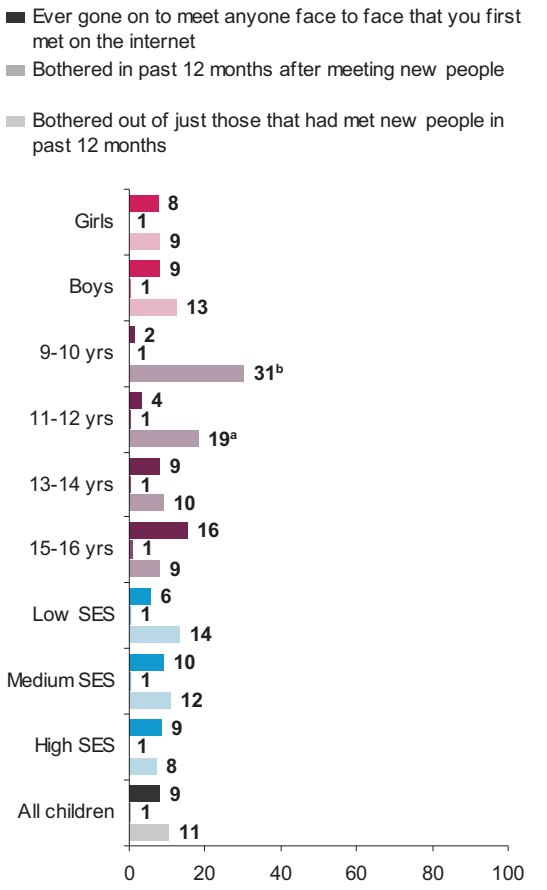
Making new contacts online and then arranging to meet these people offline is, perhaps, one of the more contested activities children may engage in. This may be a harmless means of widening a social circle. Or it may be a risky or even dangerous means of contacting an abusive stranger. As before, we prefaced questions about subjective harm with the following:

*Face-to-face meetings with people that you first met on the internet may be fine or not fine. In the LAST 12 MONTHS have you gone to a meeting with someone you met in this way that bothered you? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have been there?*

Their answers to this question are shown in Figure 67.

- **Among all children who use the internet, 9% have met an online contact offline, and 1% of children report being bothered by this. To put it another way, among just those who have been to such a meeting, one in nine (11%) were bothered by what happened.**
- Although the youngest group is the least likely to have been to meet an online contact offline, they are the most likely to have been bothered by what happened (31% of those who had been to a meeting).
- Boys and children from lower and medium SES homes are also slightly more likely to have been bothered by offline meetings when they occurred, although it is higher SES children who are more likely to go to such meetings at all.
- **Of the 1% of children who have been bothered by an offline meeting, about half said that they were very or fairly upset by what happened, while the other half said that they had either been not upset at all or only a bit.**

**Figure 67: Child has met online contact offline and was bothered by this**




QC148: Have you ever gone on to meet anyone face-to-face that you first met on the internet in this way? QC152: In the LAST 12 MONTHS have you gone to a meeting with someone you met in this way that bothered you?

Base: All children who use the internet. Only those children who have gone on to meet new people offline in the past 12 months.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for some of the breaks among 9-12 year olds are fairly high at +/- 5-10%.


The following tables examine the nature of these meetings with online contacts, focusing on just the 1% of the overall population who has been bothered or upset by such a meeting. Table 36 reports that age of the person that they child says they met the last time this happened.

**Table 36: Age of the online contact that the child met offline** (children who have been bothered by such a meeting)

| % | All |
|---|---|
| I met with someone about my age | 63 |
| I met with an older teenager (younger than 20 years old) | 22 |
| I met with an adult (aged 20 years or older) | 8 |
| I met with someone younger than me | 7 |

QC153: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by meeting an online contact offline], how old was the person you actually met?

Base: All children who use the internet and have been bothered after meeting an online contact offline in the past 12 months.

Note: Some of the 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) and cell sizes that show less than 8% are below 15 respondents.

- **Of this small group, 63% said they met with someone about their own age, 7% met with someone younger, 22% with an older teenager and 8% said they met with an adult (defined as at least 20 years old).**

Next we asked if they told anyone where they were going (Table 37).

- **Most children did tell someone when they were going to meet an online contact offline (70%), usually telling a peer. However, nearly one third did not tell anyone in advance, and only one in seven told a trusted adult.**
- **Among children who have been bothered by meeting an online contact offline, about half (53%) took someone with them to the meeting.**
- This was almost always someone of their one age – 46% of all that have been bothered by a meeting (or 89% who had been bothered and who took someone with them). It seems that very few took an older teenager or an adult they trusted with them.

**Table 37: Who the child told about going to meet an online contact offline** (children who have been bothered by such a meeting)

| % | All |
|---|---|
| Told anybody at all | 70 |
| I told someone my age | 42 |
| I told an older teenager (aged under 18) | 11 |
| I told an adult I trust (aged 18 or over) | 14 |
| I told someone else | 1 |

QC155: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by meeting an online contact offline], did you talk to anyone about where you were going? QC156: Who did you talk to?

Base: All children who use the internet and have been bothered after meeting an online contact offline in the past 12 months.

Note: Some of the 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) and cell sizes that show less than 8% are below 15 respondents.

What happened at such meetings? Table 38 reports whether children went alone or with someone else.

- **Half took someone with them, usually a peer. Nearly half, however, of those who had been bothered by a meeting with an online contact offline went alone.**

**Table 38: Whether the child took someone with them when they went to meet an online contact offline** (children who have been bothered by such a meeting)

| % | All |
|---|---|
| Took someone with me at all | 53 |
| I went with someone about my age | 46 |
| I went with an older teenager (aged under 18) | 2 |
| I went with an adult I trust (aged 18 or over) | 3 |

QC157: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by meeting an online contact offline], did you take somebody with you when you went to that meeting? QC158: Who did you take with you?

Base: All children who use the internet and have been bothered after meeting an online contact offline in the past 12 months.

Note: Some of the 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) and cell sizes that show less than 8% are below 15 respondents.

**Table 39: What happened when the child met an online contact offline** (children aged 11+ who have been bothered by such a meeting)

| % | All |
|---|---|
| The other person said hurtful things to me | 22 |
| Prefer not to say | 22 |
| The other person did something sexual to me | 11 |
| Something else bad happened | 10 |
| The other person hurt me physically | 3 |
| Don't know | 37 |

QC159: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by meeting an online contact offline], which, if any of these things happened?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet and have been bothered after meeting an online contact offline in the past 12 months.

Note: Some of the 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) and cell sizes that show less than 8% are below 15 respondents.

- **Of those children age 11-16 who had been bothered by an offline meeting, 22% of those said that the other person said hurtful things to them, 11% said the other person did something sexual to them and 10% said something else bad happened**. Finally, 3% of this group (a very small number of children) said they had been hurt physically.

All children in the survey were given sources of confidential support and advice from national child welfare and internet safety providers.

In our further analysis, we can examine whether these two groups of children differ in particular ways, and also how the variables measured interrelate (for example, was it the children who were upset who talked to someone about what happened?)

## 8.4. Coping with meeting online contacts offline

In all, the *EU Kids Online* survey identified 1% of the entire sample who had not only gone to a meeting offline with a contact made online but had also been bothered or upset by what happened. Although these children were then asked a series of further questions in the interview, the sample size is generally too small for detailed graphs to present these reliably. The following may be reported, however, as indicative.

As for other risks, the survey examined how children said they coped with online risks that bothered or upset them.

**Table 40: How the child coped after going to meet an online contact offline** (children aged 11+ who have been bothered by such a meeting)

| % | All |
|---|---|
| Hope the problem would go away by itself | 30 |
| None of these things | 30 |
| Try to fix the problem | 18 |
| Feel a bit guilty about what went wrong | 12 |
| Try to get back at the other person | 6 |
| Try to get the other person to leave me alone | 6 |

QC162: The last time this happened, did you do any of these things afterwards?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet and have been bothered after meeting an online contact offline in the past 12 months.

Note: Some of the 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) and cell sizes that show less than 8% are below 15 respondents.

- Table 40 shows that, among those aged 11+ who have been bothered by meeting on online contact offline, only a minority found an active coping strategy – mainly they hoped the problem would go away, and only one in five tried to fix things.


**Table 41: Who the child talked to after going to meet an online contact offline** (children who have been bothered by such a meeting)

| % | All |
|---|---|
| Talked to anybody at all | 62 |
| A friend | 35 |
| My mother or father | 28 |
| My brother or sister | 11 |
| Another adult I trust | 10 |
| A teacher | 6 |
| Someone else | 4 |
| Some one whose job it is to help children | 2 |

QC163: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by meeting an online contact offline], did you talk to anyone about what happened? QC164: Who did you talk to?

Base: All children who use the internet and have been bothered after meeting an online contact offline in the past 12 months.

Note: Some of the 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) and cell sizes that show less than 8% are below 15 respondents.

**Table 42: What the child did after going to meet an online contact offline** (children who have been bothered by such a meeting)

| % | Did this | Did this and it helped |
|---|---|---|
| I stopped using the internet for a while | 28 | 13 |
| I deleted any messages from the person who sent it to me | 37 | 23 |
| I changed my filter/ contact settings | 19 | 12 |
| I blocked the person who had sent it to me | 34 | 25 |
| I reported the problem (e.g. clicked on a 'report abuse' button, contact an internet advisor or 'internet service provider (ISP)') | 10 | 3 |
| None of these | 21 | 15 |
| Don't know | 18 | 14 |

QC165: Thinking about [the last time you were bothered by meeting an online contact offline], did you do any of these things? QC166: Which, if any, of the things you did helped you?

Base: All children who use the internet and have been bothered after meeting an online contact offline in the past 12 months.

Note: Some of the 95% confidence intervals for the numbers behind this graph are fairly high (+/- 5-10%) and cell sizes that show less than 8% are below 15 respondents.

- **Two thirds (62%) did tell someone where they had been, however (Table 41) – generally a friend or, a little less often, a parent.**
- **Online, common coping strategies were to delete messages or block the person sending messages, and in the majority of cases where the children did this, they found it helpful (**Table 42).
- Some simply stopped using the internet for a while, some changed their contact settings; few reported the problem to an online advisor or service provider.

In sum, 30% of children have had contact on the internet with someone they have not met face-to-face, and 9% have met someone new offline who they first met online in the past 12 months. When asked, further, if they had been bothered in some way by this meeting, 1% of all children said yes they were bothered. Of those who were bothered, most (63%) met someone their own age, half of them took someone their own age with them and most told someone their own age where they were going. This suggests that the majority of offline meetings, even if upsetting, happen with peers. However, the numbers are too low to draw final inferences and more complex analyses are needed to reveal patterns among variables.

The consequences for the children who meet online contacts offline and have been bothered or upset by this should be carefully considered. A range of policy interventions, both proactive and reactive, may be appropriate. However, most of these meetings were with other children about their own age and that although a few were with unknown adults. It seems, therefore, unlikely that the internet is responsible for a substantial increase in the likelihood of face-to-face meetings with strangers.

Any policy considerations should bear in mind that, among children who have met someone face-to-face who they first met on the internet, less than one third of their parents knew that such a meeting had occurred, while nearly two thirds said their child had not been to such a meeting. Also, although over two thirds of children going to such meetings do tell someone where they are going and half take someone with them, there are still children who take neither of these precautions.


# 9. OTHER RISK FACTORS

Pornography, bullying, sexual messaging and meeting new people online have all been explored in some depth because there is already a research literature, and an array of policy initiatives, on which to build. But there are other online experiences that, although identified as potentially harmful to children, have attracted little research as yet.

These include exposure to what one might term potentially harmful user-generated content (essentially harm associated with the content not mass produced by commercial organisations but rather generated through peer-to-peer conduct). Other little researched risk factors are associated with the misuse of personal data in various ways, these in turn potentially enabling ill-intentioned others to access children and/or their personal information.

Although both are increasingly discussed in policy circles, the likely incidence of each, as experienced by children, is largely unknown. For this reason, we decided to include measures for the incidence of these only, but not to follow up in terms of resulting harm or patterns of coping. As what follows suggests, follow up questions of this kind should now be included in future research.

## 9.1. Potentially harmful user-generated content

One of the unique features of the internet as compared to many other media is the potential for almost anyone who is connected to the internet to make all kinds of material available to a large number of people. The term user-generated content is used here to emphasise the often non-institutional, peer-to-peer nature of such material, permitting individuals or small groups to promote values, activities or knowledge that may be harmful for children. In terms of our risk classification (Table 1), this is a form of conduct risk (although it blurs the categories insofar as such content may be produced by adults and consumed by children).

As with other experiences of internet use discussed in this report it was considered difficult to ask the children whether they saw these websites on purpose. It is quite possible for children to come across websites of this kind when looking for information for example on healthy living.

Due to the sensitive nature of the nature of the websites, and given the absence of evidence that young children have ever encountered them, only children aged 11 and older were asked if they had seen the instances of potentially harmful user-generated content shown in Table 43. The question had the following introduction:

*On some websites, people discuss things that may not be good for you. Here are some questions about these kinds of things. In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen websites where people discuss…*

Table 43 shows that:

- **21% of children aged 11-16 have come across one or more of the five types of websites asked about. There is a marked age difference, rising from 12% of 11-12 year olds to 29% of 15-16 year olds.**
- **Children encounter hate messages (12%) and anorexic/bulimic sites (10%) more than they do self-harm sites (7%) or sites where drug taking is discussed (7%). Although a smaller percentage, nevertheless it is noteworthy that one in twenty encounter suicide sites (5%).**[69]
- In general, encountering such sites increases with the child's age. Thus while only one in twenty or so children aged 9-10 has encountered each type of content, one in five (18%) 15-16 year olds has encountered hate content, with 14% seeing pro-anorexic content, 10% self-harm websites, 12% drug-taking websites, and 6% seeing sites that discuss forms of suicide.

"Bloody movies at YouTube."
**(Girl, 9, Norway)**

"Videos by people beaten up or harmed" **(Boy, 12, UK)**

**Table 43: Child has seen potentially harmful user-generated content on websites in past 12 months** (age 11+)

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| Hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals | n/a | 6 | 12 | 18 | 12 |
| Ways to be very thin (such as being anorexic or bulimic) | n/a | 5 | 10 | 14 | 10 |
| Ways of physically harming or hurting themselves | n/a | 4 | 7 | 10 | 7 |
| Talk about or share their experiences of taking drugs | n/a | 2 | 6 | 12 | 7 |
| Ways of committing suicide | n/a | 3 | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Has seen any such material at all on websites | n/a | 12 | 22 | 29 | 21 |

QC142: In the past 12 months, have you seen websites where people discuss...?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

Table 44 shows the same group of questions but now broken down by both age and gender.

- **Girls, especially those aged 14-16, are much more likely than boys to see pro-anorexic or bulimic content (19% of girls aged 14-16).**
- Exposure to content relating to self-harm, suicide or drug taking is not particularly differentiated by gender.

> "When somebody says that he/she is going to commit suicide"
>
> **(Boy, 15, Germany)**

**Table 44: Child has seen potentially harmful user-generated content on websites in past 12 months, by age and gender** (age 11+)

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 11-13 | | 14-16 | | |
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| Hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals | 8 | 6 | 16 | 17 | 12 |
| Ways to be very thin (such as being anorexic or bulimic) | 5 | 8 | 7 | 19 | 10 |
| Ways of physically harming or hurting themselves | 6 | 4 | 10 | 9 | 7 |
| Talk about or share their experiences of taking drugs | 4 | 4 | 10 | 10 | 7 |
| Ways of committing suicide | 3 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Has seen such material at all on any websites | 14 | 15 | 25 | 31 | 21 |

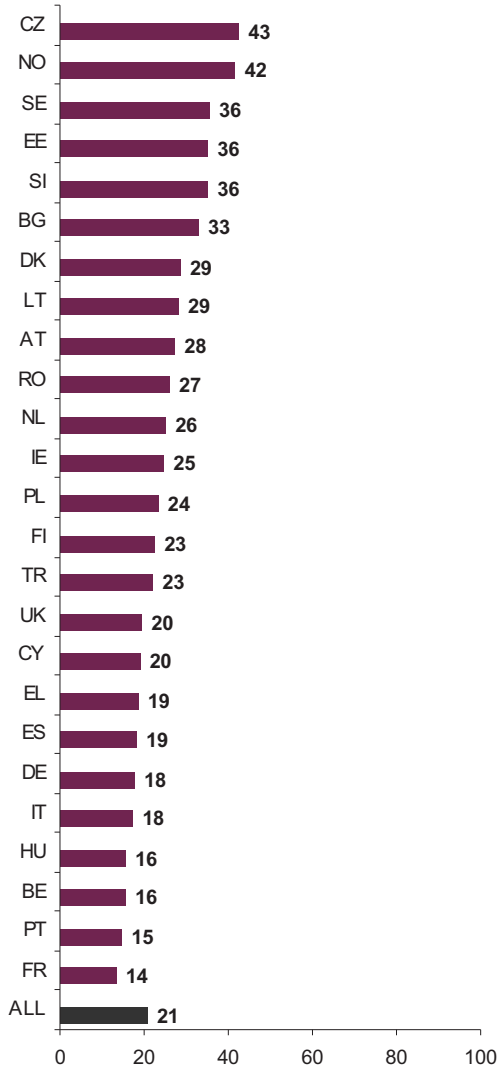
QC142: In the past 12 months, have you seen websites where people discuss...?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

Figure 68 shows these findings by country, revealing considerable cross-national variation in children's exposure to potentially harmful user-generated content.

- In the Czech Republic and in Norway, four in ten children aged 11-16 have seen potentially harmful user-generated content of one or more of the five types asked about. Thus in some countries, exposure is double the European average of 21%.
- Fewer than one in six have seen it in Portugal, France, Belgium or Hungary.

**Figure 68: Child has seen potentially harmful user-generated content on websites in past 12 months** (age 11+), **by country**




QC142: In the past 12 months, have you seen websites where people discuss...? Bars show percentage of children who have seen any such material at all on websites (i.e. bottom row of Table 43).

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

## 9.2. Personal data misuse

Who has access to personal data available online, with or without the permission or even knowledge of the internet user is gaining increasing policy attention. For the most part, those who misuse personal data without consent are likely to be adults unknown to the user, and thus we have classified it as a contact risk (Table 1).

In the survey, questions on personal data misuse were only asked of children aged 11 years and older. The main reason for not asking this of the youngest children was that they found it difficult to understand generic terms such as 'personal information' without a rather extensive explanation (- we also sought to keep the questionnaire shorter for this age group). In line with other experiences asked about in the survey the children were asked to frame this within the past 12 months and were asked the following question:

*In the PAST 12 MONTHS, has any of the following happened to you on the internet?*

Table 45 shows that:

- **9% of children aged 11-16 have experienced one or more of the three things asked about within the frame of personal data misuse. The age difference is however much less marked than can often be seen in other parts of this report, with the numbers rising only from 7% of 11-12 year olds to 11% of 15-16 year olds.**
- **The most common misuse was someone using the child's password or pretending to be them (7%), followed by someone misusing their personal information (4%). Despite some mention of being cheated in some qualitative studies, this only appears to affect a small proportion of children (1%).**[70]

**Table 45: Child has experienced misuse of personal data in past 12 months** (age 11+)

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| Somebody used my password to access my information or to pretend to be me | n/a | 6 | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| Somebody used my personal information in a way I didn't like | n/a | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| I lost money by being cheated on the internet | n/a | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Has experienced personal data misuse of any kind | n/a | 7 | 10 | 11 | 9 |

QC143: In the past 12 months, has any of the following happened to you on the internet?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

**Table 46: Child has experienced misuse of personal data in past 12 months, by age and gender** (age 11+)

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 11-13 | | 14-16 | | |
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| Somebody used my password to access my information or to pretend to be me | 6 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 7 |
| Somebody used my personal information in a way I didn't like | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| I lost money by being cheated on the internet | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Has experienced personal data misuse of any kind | 7 | 7 | 10 | 13 | 9 |

QC143: In the past 12 months, has any of the following happened to you on the internet?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

"My schoolmate broke into my profile on social networking site, wrote some vulgar things there, changed my password. My parents solved the situation." **(Boy, 14, Czech Republic)**

"Girlfriends who I thought my friends have been awful. They took my identity to have my boyfriend"

**(Girl, 15, France)**

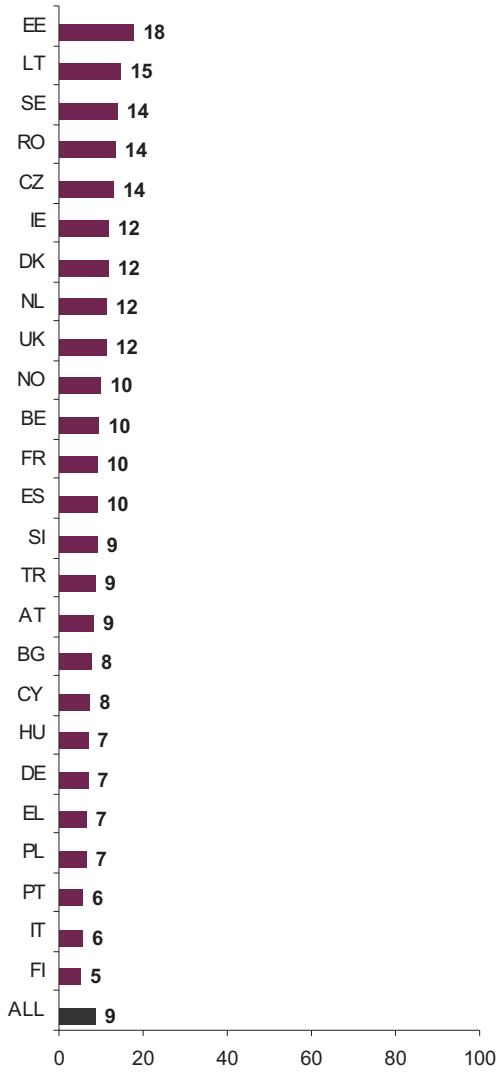
Table 46 shows the same group of questions broken down both by age and gender.

- Teenage girls are slightly more likely to have experienced misuse of personal data (13%), especially stolen passwords and misuse of information.

Figure 69 shows children's experience of misuse of personal data by country, revealing moderate cross-national differences.

- While overall, 9% of 11-16 year olds report at least one of the three types of misuse of personal data asked about, twice as many report this in Estonia, and only half as many in Finland.

**Figure 69: Child has experienced misuse of personal data in past 12 months** (age 11+), **by country**




QC143: In the past 12 months, has any of the following happened to you on the internet? Bars show percentage of children who have experienced personal data misuse of any kind (i.e. bottom row of Table 45).

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

When designing the EU Kids Online questionnaire, there had been few previous surveys to guide us on the two issues addressed in this section – potentially harmful user-generated content and personal data misuse. The first of these has, undoubtedly, gained considerable popular attention since the advent of widespread use of YouTube and similar peer-to-peer sites. The second has often been mentioned when children are themselves asked what concerns them online.[71]

It is interesting, therefore, to observe that encountering at least one of the types of potentially harmful user-generated content we asked about affects a fair minority of children – 21% of the 11-16 year olds. For those policy makers specifically concerned with online racism, encouragement for drug taking, anorexia/bulimia, self-harm or even suicide, these findings would bear closer scrutiny. There was not time in the present survey to ask children if they had been bothered or upset by such content or not, nor about what they did about it. Nor, indeed, could we ask children about whether they contributed to such content by posting messages of their own. Clearly, there are grounds for developing further research here.

As for the findings on personal data misuse, these are significant in the context of growing policy interest in matters of private and personal data management, both for the general public and for children in particular. One in eleven children report one or more types of personal data misuse, the most common being someone using their password improperly or illicitly. It is not surprising that this occurs more among older than younger children but the relatively higher incidence among teenage girls would bear further investigation.

> "The internet hackers are bothering, also the abusive use of personal accounts or the untrue information that somebody is spreading for someone else." **(Boy, 12, Bulgaria)**


# 10. MEDIATION

**Notwithstanding the popular image of the lone child in front of the computer, children live much of their lives embedded in various kinds of social interaction, some of which may mediate their use of the internet.**

Research has long examined the role of parents in relation to their children's media use, typically distinguishing (i) co-use – the parent is present, even sharing the activity with the child, (ii) active mediation – the parent talks about content (e.g. interpreting, critiquing) to guide the child, (iii) restrictive mediation – the parent sets rules that restrict the child's use (e.g. by time or activities), (iv) monitoring – the parent checks available records of the child's internet use afterwards and (v) technical restrictions – use of software to filter, restrict or monitor the child's use.[72]

**A distinctive feature of the *EU Kids Online* survey is that it asked children about several types of mediation as practised by parents, teachers and peers**. In practice, it is difficult to distinguish co-use from active mediation, since sharing an activity generally involves talking about it. Thus, in the present analysis we join these together, instead distinguishing 'active mediation' of internet use in general and active mediation of internet safety in particular. Together these reveal the main sources of support available to children. In terms of policy, this may pinpoint children's need for further support, differentiated by demographic factors and by country.

Both forms of active mediation may also be practised by teachers in school and, further, children may support each other through discussing and sharing internet use; although informal, this constitutes a potentially valuable form of peer mediation.[73]

**In sum, this section analyses eight sources of social support and mediation available to children:**

- *Active mediation of the child's internet use* - the parent is present, staying nearby, encouraging or sharing or discussing the child's online activities.
- *Active mediation of the child's internet safety* – whether before, during or after the child's online activities, the parent guides them in using the internet safely, also possibly helping or discussing what to do in case of difficulty.
- *Restrictive mediation* – the parent sets rules that restrict the child's use (of particular applications, activities, or of giving out personal information).
- *Monitoring* – the parent checks available records of the child's internet use afterwards.
- *Technical mediation of the child's internet use* – the parent uses software or parental controls to filter, restrict or monitor the child's use.
- *Teachers' mediation* – these questions included a mix of active mediation of the child's internet use and internet safety, plus a question on restrictive mediation.
- *Peer mediation of the child's internet safety* – it was assumed that children talk about their online activities in general, so here the focus was on peer mediation of safety practices in particular. These questions were asked bi-directionally – do the child's friends help them, and also do they help their friends?
- *Other sources of safety awareness* – both parents and children may benefit from a range of sources of guidance - from the media or from experts in their community. Use of such sources was also included.

*Note: in this section, we prioritise children's age, recognising that little has been known of parent's role in relation to the younger age group and also that parents particularly struggle in managing teenagers' use.*

## 10.1. Parents

**A strength of the *EU Kids Online* project was to interview the child and one of his or her parents. This section compares answers to matched questions asked of the child and the parent most involved in the child's internet use.**

Previous research has revealed a considerable generation gap, with parents reporting more mediating activities than are recognised by their children.[74] This gap has, in turn, been interpreted as a sign of the barriers to parents' taking responsibility for their children's internet safety – whether because parents and teenagers find it difficult to talk to each other, or because parents feel ill-

equipped to understand the internet, or because children fiercely guard their privacy online and so evade parental oversight.

*Note that questions about active mediation of use and safety practices are asked of all children, and all parents of these children. Questions regarding parental restriction, monitoring and use of technical tools are asked only for children who use the internet at home.*

Table 47 examines parental mediation, focusing first on broadly encouraging and supportive forms of active mediation (and co-use). These figures show the child's perception of the parent-child interaction.

**Table 47: Parent's active mediation of the child's *internet use*, according to child**

| % who say that their parents sometimes … | 9-12 years | | 13-16 years | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| Talk to you about what you do on the internet | 71 | 76 | 64 | 69 | 70 |
| Stay nearby when you use the internet | 68 | 69 | 46 | 50 | 58 |
| Encourage you to explore and learn things on the internet on your own | 50 | 53 | 45 | 43 | 47 |
| Sit with you while you use the internet | 52 | 54 | 34 | 37 | 44 |
| Do shared activities together with you on the internet | 49 | 51 | 35 | 36 | 42 |
| One or more of these | 89 | 91 | 83 | 84 | 87 |

QC327: Does your parent / do either of your parents sometimes… *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Most parents talk to their children about what they do on the internet (70%), making this the most popular way to actively mediate children's internet use.**
- **Second most popular is staying nearby (58%), with the other strategies being adopted by what is a substantial minority of parents (over four in ten).**
- Overall, it seems that there is a fair amount of general positive mediation taking place.
- Gender differences are small, if existing at all.
- More substantially, parents do considerably more active mediation of younger children's use of the internet.
- Since only 87% of parents do one or more of these things, leaving **one in eight parents (13%) who seem never to do any of these forms of mediation, according to their children**. It should be recalled that, in cases where the child has two parents, we interviewed the parent most involved in the child's internet use.

**Table 48: Parent's active mediation of the child's *internet use*, according to child and parent**

| % who say that their parents sometimes … | Child no | | Child yes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Parent no | Parent yes | Parent no | Parent yes |
| Talk to you about what you do on the internet | 12 | 19 | 7 | 63 |
| Stay nearby when you use the internet | 31 | 12 | 11 | 47 |
| Encourage you to explore and learn things on the internet on your own | 34 | 18 | 11 | 37 |
| Sit with you while you use the internet | 42 | 15 | 10 | 34 |
| Do shared activities together with you on the internet | 43 | 15 | 10 | 32 |

QC327 and QP220: Does your parent/do either of your parents sometimes [which of the following things, if any do you (or your partner/other carer) sometimes do with your child]…

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

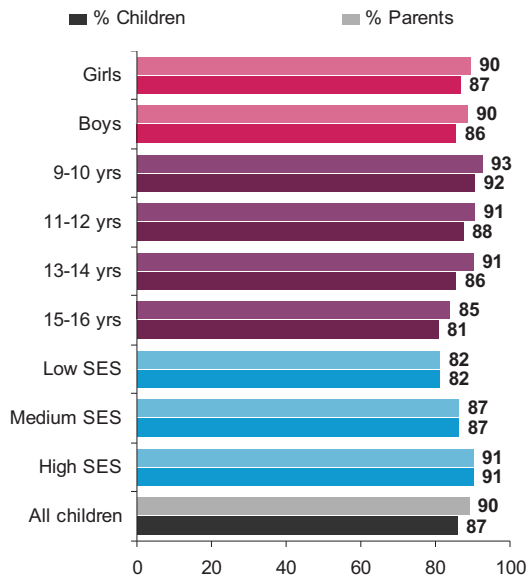
Previous research has suggested that parents more often claim that they mediate their child's internet use than the child themselves recognises. Table 48 compares the accounts of parents and children, examining the relation between the child's answers (yes or no) and those of their parent. [75]

- **It seems that the extent to which parents claim a practice that their child does not acknowledge (second column) occurs in around one in six cases, signalling generally high agreement between parent-child pairs.**
- Interestingly, in around one in ten homes, the child perceives parental mediation that the parent themselves does not report (the third column).
- There could be a social desirability effect on the part of parents who may wish to present themselves to the interviewer as 'good parents'. Or, parents may be more aware of their practices while children simply might not notice or might forget. Perhaps, too, children wish to represent their parents as doing more than they really do, or maybe, they recognise that a practice occurs when, for the parent, it is so routine as to go unnoticed.
- Adding the percentages in the second and third column suggests that **around one quarter of parents and children disagree about whether these different forms of mediation are taking place. Notably therefore, in three quarters of homes they agree.**

To show the demographic and country differences, the next two figures are based on the row, 'One of more of these' responses in Table 47 – in other words, it combines the various forms of active mediation.

- **Active mediation by parents is highest for young children and steadily reduces as children grow older:** 93% of parents do one of more of the activities shown in Table 10 in relation to their 9-10 year olds, according to the child, dropping to 85% for 15-16 year olds (see Figure 19).
- Perhaps most notable is that even for the oldest group, most parents pursue some form of active mediation with their teenagers.
- **There are few differences for sons and daughters, but there is an effect by SES**: 82% of children in lower SES homes receive active parental mediation, rising to 91% in higher SES homes, according to children.

**Figure 70: Parent's active mediation of the child's *internet use*, according to child and parent**



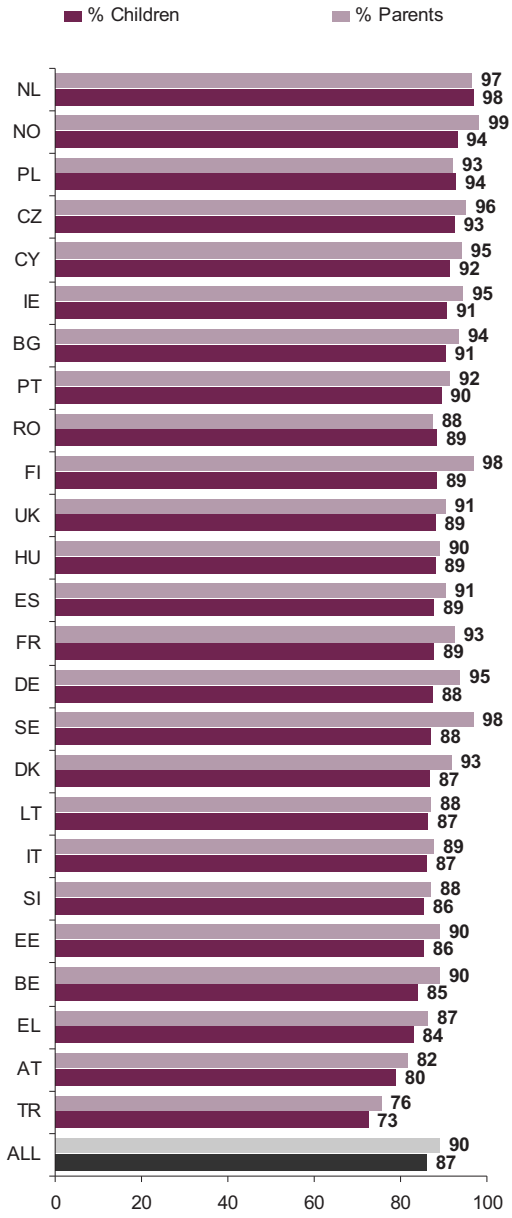

QC327 and QP220: Does your parent/do either of your parents sometimes [which of the following things, if any do you (or your partner/other carer) sometimes do with your child]…

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

What of national differences?

- Figure 71 shows they range from virtually all parents in the Netherlands (98% according to children) followed by Norway, Poland and the Czech Republic who do one or more form of active mediation, down to just 73% in Turkey.
- With the exception of Turkey, however, country differences are small, a matter of a few percentage points.
- Also interesting is that parents and children disagree about whether active parental mediation is taking place in some countries more than others: disagreement is for example relatively high in Sweden (10%) and Finland (9%).

**Figure 71: Parent's active mediation of the child's *internet use*, according to child and parent, by country**




QC327 and QP220: Does your parent / do either of your parents sometimes [which of the following things, if any do you (or your partner/other carer) sometimes do with your child]…

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

**Turning to active mediation of the child's internet safety in particular, the survey asked a series of questions about the role parents might play, with answers given by children shown in Table 49.**

**Table 49: Parent's active mediation of the child's *internet safety*, according to child**

| % who say that their parents have … | 9-12 years | | 13-16 years | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| Explained why some websites are good or bad | 71 | 73 | 62 | 64 | 68 |
| Helped you when something is difficult to do or find on the internet | 73 | 76 | 58 | 60 | 66 |
| Suggested ways to use the internet safely | 66 | 69 | 59 | 60 | 63 |
| Suggested ways to behave towards other people online | 56 | 59 | 53 | 55 | 56 |
| Talked to you about what to do if something on the internet bothered you | 53 | 57 | 47 | 53 | 52 |
| Helped you in the past when something has bothered you on the internet | 36 | 38 | 32 | 36 | 36 |
| One or more of these | 88 | 89 | 82 | 84 | 86 |

QC329 Has your parent / have either of your parents ever done the following things with you… *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Explaining why websites are good or bad (68%) and helping when something is difficult to do or find (66%) are the most common strategies, closely followed by suggesting how to use the internet safely (63%).**

- **Over half of parents also take positive steps such as suggesting how to behave towards others online (56%) and talking about things that might bother the child (52%), and third have helped their child when something arose in the past (36%).**
- Once again, gender differences are small, although older girls receive a little more support regarding things that have or might bother them online.
- Younger children, it seems, receive guidance in more critical mediation – in evaluating websites, and in managing internet use effectively.

As before, the answers given by children and parents can also be compared (see Table 50).

### Table 50: Parent's active mediation of the child's internet safety, according to child and parent

| % who say that their parents have … | Child no | | Child yes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Parent no | Parent yes | Parent no | Parent yes |
| Explained why some websites are good or bad | 18 | 15 | 9 | 59 |
| Helped you when something is difficult to do or find on the internet | 24 | 10 | 11 | 56 |
| Suggested ways to use the internet safely | 22 | 14 | 11 | 53 |
| Suggested ways to behave towards other people online | 26 | 18 | 10 | 46 |
| Talked to you about what to do if something on the internet bothered you | 29 | 18 | 10 | 43 |
| Helped you in the past when something has bothered you on the internet | 50 | 14 | 12 | 24 |

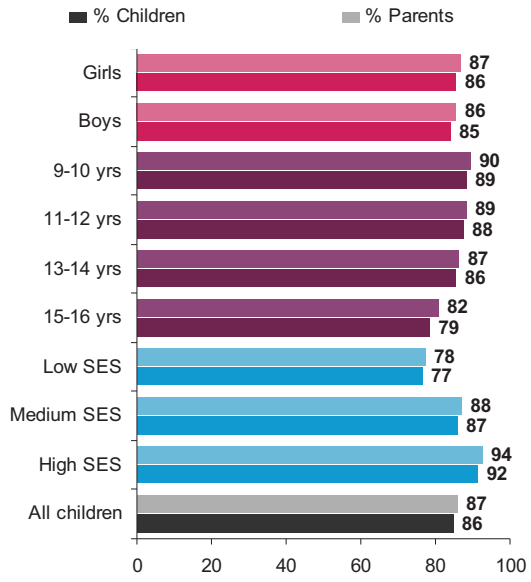
QC329 and QP222: Has your parent/either of your parents [have you] ever done any of these things with you [your child]?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- Parents and children generally agree with each other whether or not safety mediation is occurring.
- Parents and children disagree about a quarter of the time, with parents a little more likely to over-claim compared with their children (particularly in relation to suggesting ways to behave to others, or how to deal with things that bother the child).

Figure 72 shows the demographic differences in parental mediation of the child's internet safety.

### Figure 72: Parent's active mediation of the child's *internet safety*, according to child and parent

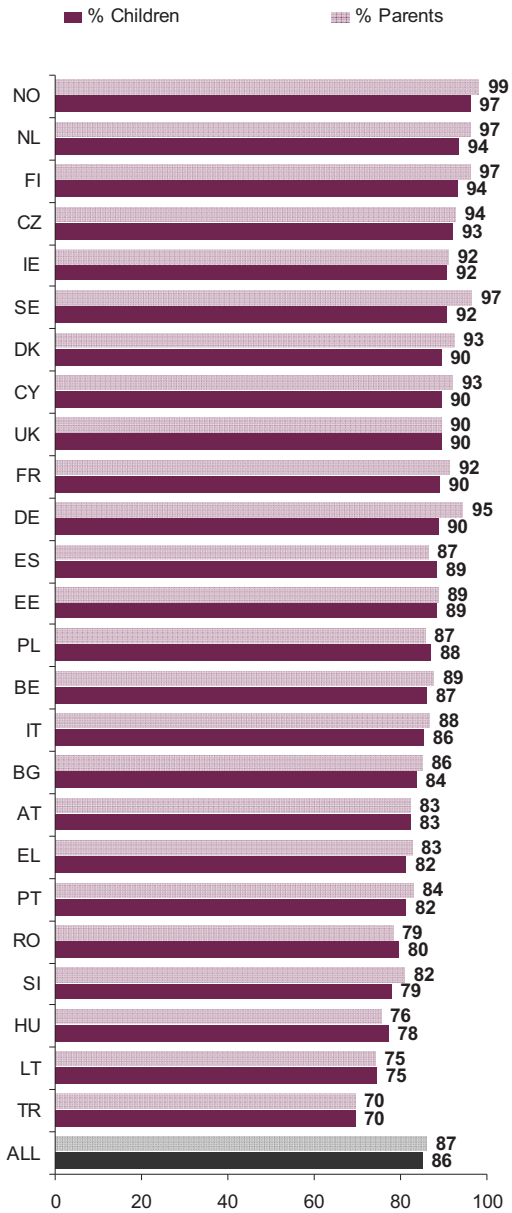



QC329 and QP222: Has your parent/either of your parents [have you] ever done any of these things with you [your child]?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- Figure 72 shows few gender differences in parental safety mediation, according to the child, and a small but steady decline in mediation with the age of the child. The difference by SES is slightly larger than in Figure 70, suggesting higher SES parents do more in this regard than those from lower SES homes.
- Figure 73, showing the national differences, reveals a wider range of responses compared to Figure 71, with Norway the highest (97% according to children) and Turkey, again and distinctively, the lowest (70%).
- National differences are slightly greater than in the case of active mediation of the internet in general, up to 20% even excluding Turkey as an outlier.
- Once again, parents and children disagree in some countries more than others – disagreeing more in Germany and Sweden (5% disagreement).

**Figure 73: Parent's active mediation of the child's *internet safety*, according to child and parent, by country**




QC329 and QP222: Has your parent/either of your parents [have you] ever done any of these things with you [your child]?

In addition to active mediation, which enables both opportunities and enhances safety, parents have long been advised to set rules or restrictions in order to manage their child's internet use. These may be simple bans – telling the child they are not permitted to undertake a particular online activity - or the child may be permitted to do that activity only with permission or under supervision. Both these were treated as measures of restrictive mediation, compared with children for whom no restrictions apply (Table 51).

**Table 51: Parents' restrictive mediation of the child's internet use, according to child**

| % who say that rules apply about whether they can… | 9-12 years | | 13-16 years | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | All |
| Give out personal information to others on the internet | 94 | 95 | 74 | 81 | 85 |
| Upload photos, videos or music to share with others | 81 | 83 | 45 | 48 | 63 |
| Download music or films on the internet | 75 | 78 | 38 | 42 | 57 |
| Have your own social networking profile | 69 | 70 | 26 | 29 | 47 |
| Watch video clips on the internet | 57 | 58 | 21 | 23 | 39 |
| Use instant messaging | 59 | 59 | 20 | 22 | 38 |
| One or more of these | 93 | 94 | 75 | 81 | 85 |

QC328: For each of these things, please tell me if your parents CURRENTLY let you do them whenever you want, or let you do them but only with your parent's permission or supervision, or NEVER let you do them.

*Note: The latter two options are combined to calculate the percentage for whom rules or restrictions apply.*

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Table 51 shows that most rules apply to disclosing personal information, where 85% say that they are either not allowed to do this or that restrictions apply.**
- **Next most regulated is uploading material (63%), although possibly this reflects rules in cases where photos or videos are of the children themselves.**

- **Downloading is also strongly regulated or restricted (57%), which is interesting given the wider discussions about copyright issues and illegal downloads.**
- Roughly half of children (47%) are restricted in their use of social networking sites, 39% experience rules as regards the second most popular online activity identified in this survey, watching video clips, and 38% .are restricted in the use of instant messaging.

Compared to the different types of active mediation, Table 51 also shows stronger gender differences in the case of 13-16 year olds, with girls being a little more restricted than boys. There are less striking, with few gender differences for 9-12 year olds, although 9-12 year olds experience for each activity far more restrictions in general than 13-16 year olds.

### Table 52: Parents' restrictive mediation of the child's internet use, according to child and parent

| % who say that rules apply about whether they can… | Child no | | Child yes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Parent no | Parent yes | Parent no | Parent yes |
| Give out personal information to others on the internet | 82 | 5 | 7 | 7 |
| Upload photos, videos or music to share with others | 57 | 6 | 11 | 25 |
| Download music or films on the internet | 51 | 6 | 10 | 33 |
| Have your own social networking profile | 41 | 6 | 9 | 43 |
| Watch video clips on the internet | 33 | 6 | 11 | 51 |
| Use instant messaging | 34 | 5 | 10 | 51 |

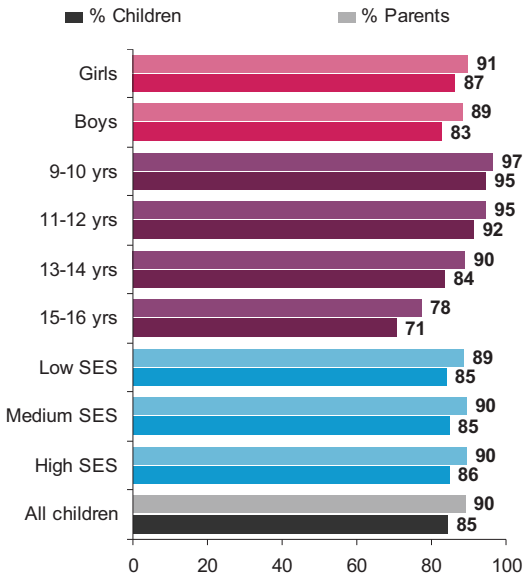
QC328 and QP221: For each of these things, please tell me if your parents CURRENTLY let you [your child is allowed to] do them whenever you want, or let you do them but only with your parent's permission or supervision, or NEVER let you do them.

*Note: The latter two options are combined to calculate the percentage for whom rules or restrictions apply.*

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- Compared to the two types of active mediation discussed early, Table 52 shows that there is more agreement between parents and children about whether rules exist - 89% (i.e. 7% + 82%) – regarding rules related to giving out personal information, dropping to 82% in the case of uploading material.

### Figure 74: Parents' restrictive mediation of the child's internet use, according to child and parent



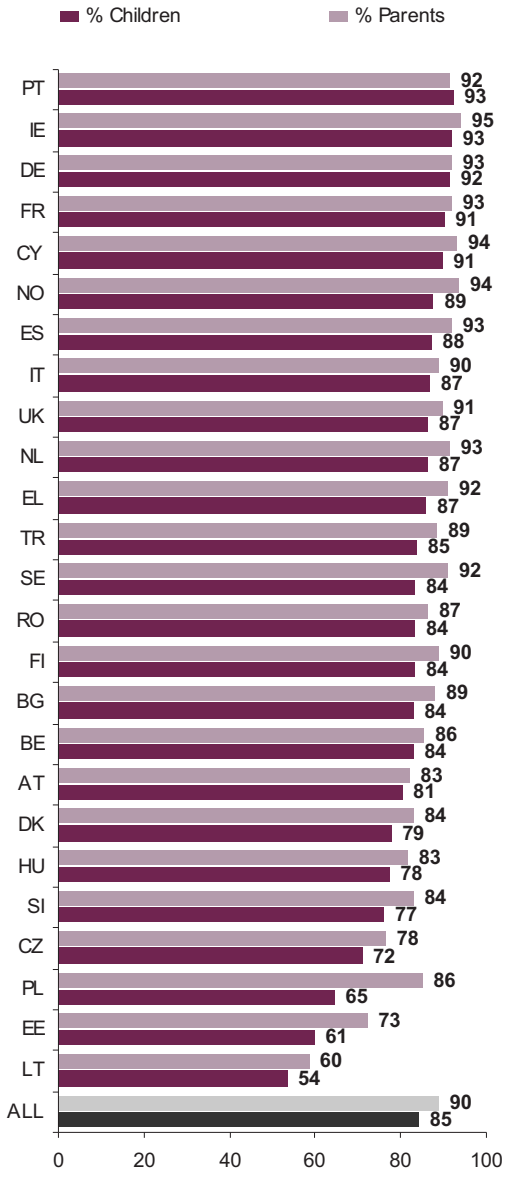

QC328 and QP221: Whether your parents let you [your child is allowed to] do this all of the time, only with permission/supervision or never allowed.

*Note: The latter two options are combined to calculate the percentage for whom rules or restrictions apply.*

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- Compared with the various forms of active mediation (shown in Figure 19), **the decline in restrictive mediation with age is more dramatic, falling from 95% for 9-10 year olds to 71% for 15-16 year olds.**
- Still, the majority of teenagers are still expected to follow rules when using the internet. Girls are slightly more restricted than boys, but the difference is only 4%. This time there is very little difference by SES.

**Figure 75: Parents' restrictive mediation of the child's internet use, according to child and parent, by country**




QC328 and QP221: Whether your parents let you [your child is allowed to] do this all of the time, only with permission/supervision or never allowed.

*Note: The latter two options are combined to calculate the percentage for whom rules or restrictions apply.*

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- Looking at national differences, Figure 75 shows the range is from a high level of restrictions in Germany (92%) and France (91%) to only 54% in Lithuania – indicating country differences in restrictive mediation are substantial.
- There are also some major differences among countries in terms of how much children and parents agree that rules exist, with disagreement between the children's and parents' answers highest in Poland (21% disagreement) and Estonia (12%).

The internet is distinctive insofar as it keeps a record of previous activity, making it possible for parents to monitor or check on their children during or, more often, after use of the internet (Table 53). While restrictive mediation can be difficult insofar as it causes arguments at home, monitoring is difficult insofar as it seems to undermine the trust relation between parent and child.

**Table 53: Parent's monitoring of the child's internet use, according to child**

| % who say parents check... | 9-12 years | | 13-16 years | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| Which websites you visited | 60 | 59 | 36 | 36 | 46 |
| Your profile on a social network or online community | 55 | 59 | 30 | 35 | 40 |
| Which friends or contacts you add to social networking profile | 50 | 54 | 27 | 29 | 36 |
| The messages in your email or instant messaging account | 42 | 40 | 17 | 19 | 25 |
| One or more of these | 58 | 57 | 43 | 45 | 50 |

QC330: Does your parent / do either of your parents sometimes check any of the following things?

Base: All children who use the internet at home.

- It seems that the **monitoring strategies are adopted by one in two parents, making this the least favoured strategy by comparison with positive support, safety guidance or making rules about internet use.**

- Checking which websites children visit is the most common form of monitoring (46%), perhaps reflecting the relative ease of doing this.
- Checking social networking profiles (40%) or the friends who are added to those profiles (36%) is less common, although still more practised than actually checking the content of children's messages.
- There are notable age differences and it seems that parents are trying to respect a teenager's privacy especially.

### Table 54: Parent's monitoring of the child's internet use, according to child and parent

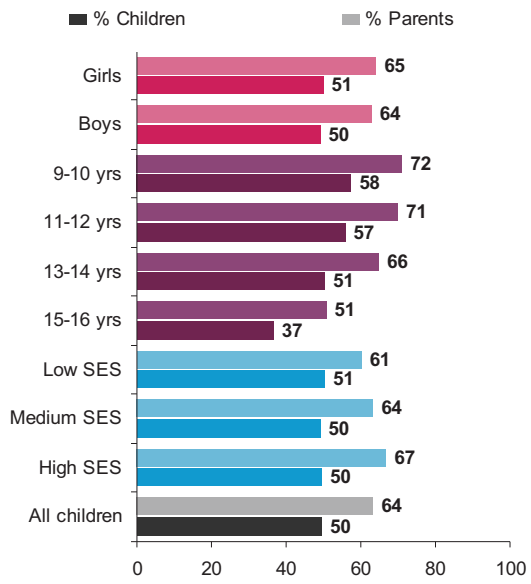
| % who say that their parents check… | Child no | | Child yes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Parent no | Parent yes | Parent no | Parent yes |
| Which websites you visited | 39 | 15 | 9 | 37 |
| Your profile on a social network or online community | 45 | 16 | 9 | 31 |
| Which friends or contacts you add to social networking profile | 48 | 16 | 9 | 27 |
| The messages in your email or instant messaging account | 62 | 13 | 8 | 18 |

QC330 and QP223: Does your parent / do either of your parents sometimes check any of the following things?

Base: All children who use the internet at home and one of their parents.

- From Table 54, it can be seen that parents and children are mostly in agreement about whether parents monitor what their children do on the internet and that this applies both to things that parents are more likely to do (such as checking on which websites the children visit) and things that parents are unlikely to do (such as checking the messages in the children's email or instant messaging account).
- For the 15% of parents who say they monitor websites when their child says they do not, it may be that children simply do not know what monitoring parents undertake.
- As with other mediation activities parents are more likely than their children to claim that they do certain things themselves rather than their children saying that their parents do something that the parents themselves claim that they do not do.

### Figure 76: Parent's monitoring of the child's internet use, according to child and parent

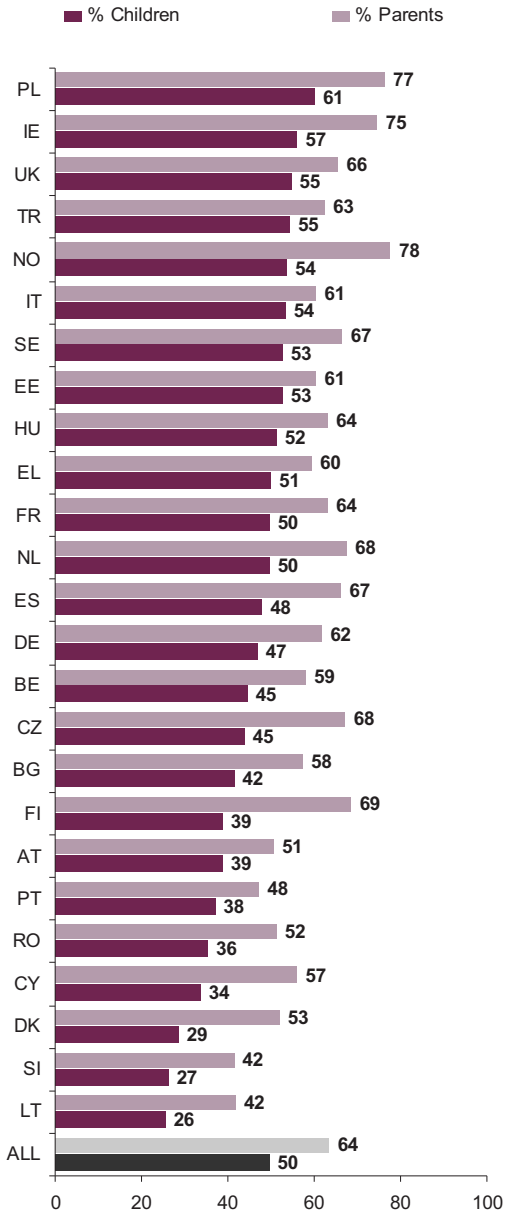



QC330 and QP223: Does your parent / do either of your parents sometimes check any of the following things?

Base: All children who use the internet at home and one of their parents.

- Figure 76 shows few gender differences but a substantial decline in monitoring as children grow older: 58% of the parents of 9-10 year olds use one or more forms of monitoring, but only 37% do so for their 15-16 year olds. There is virtually no difference by SES.
- Country differences, shown in Figure 77, are substantial, ranging from 61% of parents monitoring children's activities (according to the child) in one or more ways in Poland down to only to 26% doing this in Lithuania.
- Also substantial are the disagreements between children and parents over whether monitoring is taking place, with most disagreements in Finland (30% disagreement), Norway and Denmark (both 24%) and Cyprus (23%). Lesser, but still striking, degrees of disagreement exist in a number of other countries.

**Figure 77: Parent's monitoring of the child's internet use, according to child and parent, by country**




QC330 and QP223: Does your parent / do either of your parents sometimes check any of the following things?

Base: All children who use the internet at home and one of their parents.

For the internet in particular, 'parental tools' have been developed as technical solutions to the challenge of parental mediation. Thus, last, parents and children were asked if the parents use any technical means to monitor what the child does online (Table 55).

**Table 55: Parents' technical mediation of the child's internet use, according to child**

| % who say that their parents use... | 9-12 years | | 13-16 years | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| Software to prevent spam/junk mail or viruses | 74 | 74 | 72 | 73 | 73 |
| Parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of website | 38 | 35 | 24 | 26 | 28 |
| Parental controls or other means of keeping track of the websites you visit | 35 | 31 | 20 | 21 | 24 |
| A service or contract that limits the time you spend on the internet | 18 | 15 | 13 | 10 | 13 |
| One or more of these | 76 | 74 | 75 | 75 | 75 |

QC331: Does your parent / do either of your parents make use of the following?

Base: All children who use the internet at home.

- **The major form of technical intervention, occurring in nearly three quarters of households (73%) does not relate to safety concerns but rather to security, being used to control spam and viruses (Table 55).**
- **Beyond this, use of technical tools is relatively low, especially by comparison with other parental mediation strategies. Still, roughly a quarter of parents blocks or filters websites (28%) and/or tracks the websites visited by their children (24%).**


**Table 56: Parents' technical mediation of the child's internet use, according to child and parent**

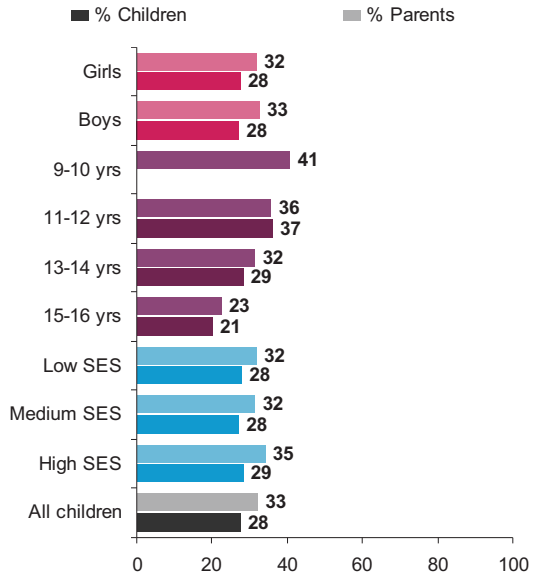
| % who say that their parents use … | Child no | | Child yes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Parent no | Parent yes | Parent no | Parent yes |
| Software to prevent spam/junk mail or viruses | 17 | 9 | 8 | 67 |
| Parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of website | 63 | 9 | 8 | 21 |
| Parental controls or other means of keeping track of the websites you visit | 67 | 9 | 8 | 15 |
| A service or contract that limits the time you spend on the internet | 83 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

QC330 and QP223: Does your parent / do either of your parents sometimes check any of the following things?

Base: All children who use the internet at home and one of their parents.

- Unlike for the use of monitoring software, it seems children and parents agree over whether parents use technical tools to mediate their children's internet use (Table 56).
- In Figure 78 parents claim to use controls to filter or block sites their child can visit just slightly more than do their children (33% vs. 28%). There is little difference by gender and SES. But filtering tools are used less, the older the child – and they are used by only a fifth (21%) of parents of 15-16 year olds .

**Figure 78: Parents' use of parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of websites**

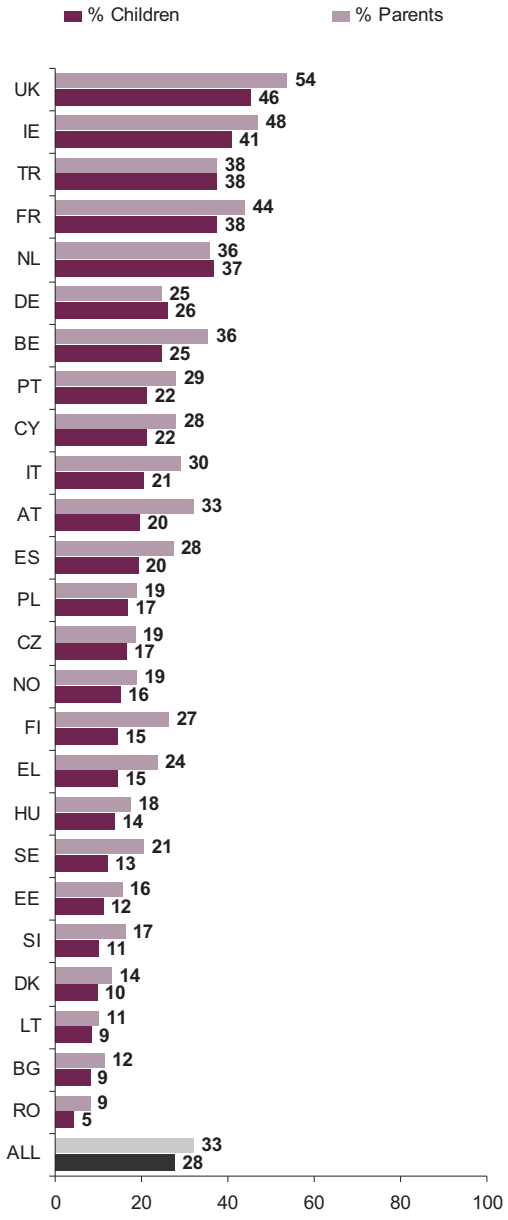



QC331: Does your parent / do either of your parents make use of the following? Use of parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of websites. QP224: Do you make use of any of the following? Parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of website

Base: All children who use the internet at home and one of their parents. Note: 9-10 year olds were not asked if their parents used blocking or filtering technology.

- Figure 79 shows very considerable variation by country in use of filtering technology, ranging from 46% in the UK, according to children, to 5% in Romania. In general, filtering is less used in Eastern European countries and most used in English-speaking countries. Apart from in Germany, the Netherlands and Turkey, parents claim to use controls more than the children say they do, markedly so in a few countries (Austria, Finland, Sweden, Belgium andGreece).

**Figure 79: Parents' use of parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of websites, by country**




QC331: Does your parent / do either of your parents make use of the following? Use of parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of websites. QP224: Do you make use of any of the following? Parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of website

Base: All children who use the internet at home and one of their parents. Note: 9-10 year olds were not asked if their parents used blocking or filtering technology.

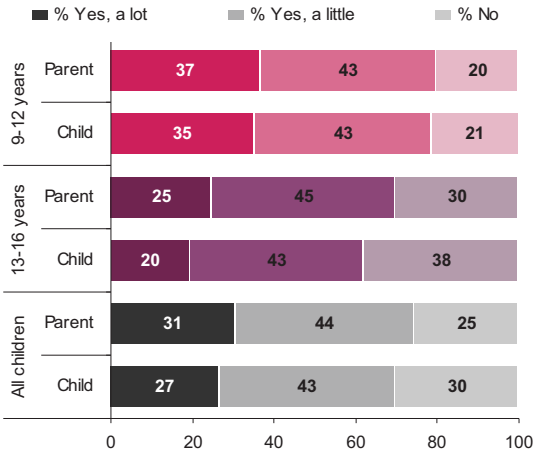
## 10.2. Judging parental mediation

Does parental mediation work? It is possible, although difficult, to determine whether parental mediation works in the sense of reducing children's exposure to online risk or experiences of harm.[76] More straightforwardly, although less objectively, one can also ask parents and children for their judgements.

The *EU Kids Online* survey asked children and parents to reflect directly on the role played by parents, to throw some light on what seems to work and, if not, why not. In future analysis, *EU Kids Online* will pursue the statistical relations among parental knowledge of the internet, parental mediation and children's experiences of harm.

Thus the survey asked children and parents whether parental mediation activities are generally helpful or not (Figure 80).

**Figure 80: Whether parental mediation is helpful, according to child and parent**



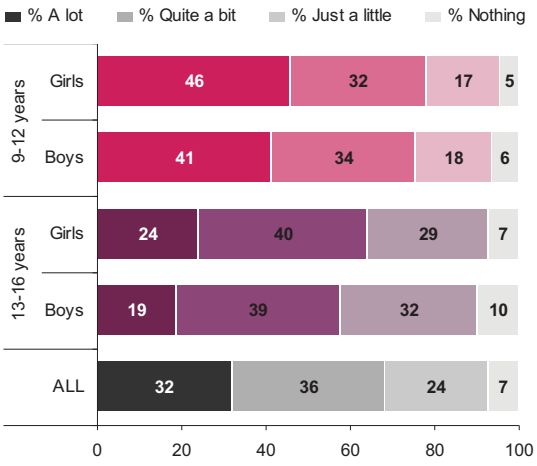

QC332: Do the things that your parent does/parents do relating to how you use the internet help to make your internet experience better, or not really? QP225: Do the things that you (and your partner/other carer) do relating to how your child uses the internet help to make his/her internet experience better, or not really?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- **Both children and parents consider parental mediation helpful to some degree, it seems. Over two thirds of children (70%) say it helps a lot or a little.**
- **9-12 year olds are more positive, perhaps reflecting their relative lack of skills; for them, parental mediation may indeed be more helpful.**
- Generally, parents and children agree in their evaluation of parental mediation, although teenagers (13-16) are a little more critical than their parents (38% say it does not help vs. 30% of parents saying this).

Why, overall, might only one quarter of children find parental mediation very helpful, over four in ten find it a little helpful, and nearly a third consider it not helpful? The *EU Kids Online* survey pursued several possibilities, including (i) whether children consider that their parents really know enough about the child's internet use, (ii) whether parental mediation is seen as more restrictive of online opportunities than beneficial, or (iii) whether parental mediation is just something that children ignore.

### Figure 81: How much parents know about their child's internet use, according to child




QC325: How much do you think your parent(s) knows about what you do on the internet?

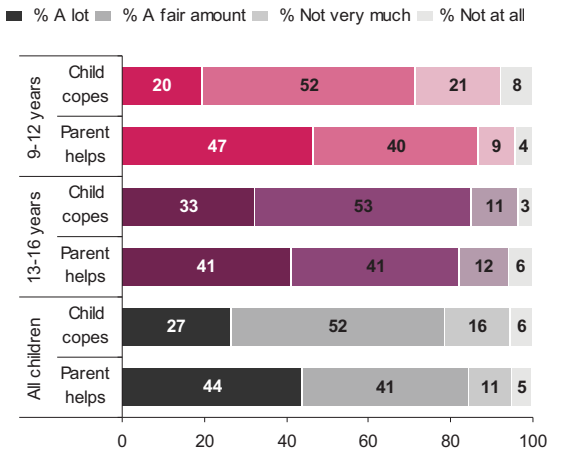
Base: All children who use the internet.

- Figure 81 shows that **two thirds of children (68%) think their parents know a lot or quite a bit about their children's internet use**, only 7% claiming that their parent knows nothing.
- Younger children are more likely to think their parents know more, in line with the finding that parents mediate their experiences more than for teenagers.
- Girls are a little more inclined than boys to think that their parents know a lot.

The balance between well-judged parental intervention in the child's internet use and trusting the child to deal with online experiences themselves is difficult for any parent.

Not all parents may feel confident that they can help their child deal with anything on the internet that bothers them. And they may feel that their child is themselves better able to cope with their own online experiences.

### Figure 82: Parents' ability to help their child and child's ability to cope, according to parent



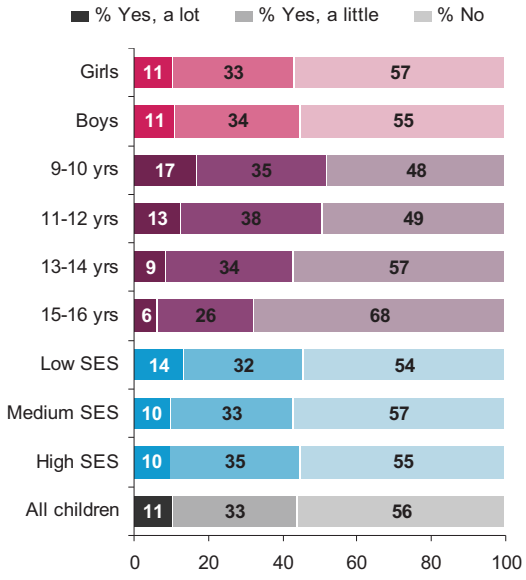

QP233: To what extent, if at all, do you feel you are able to help your child to deal with anything on the internet that bothers them?
QP234: To what extent, if at all, do you think your child is able to deal with things on the internet that bothers them?

Base: Parents whose child uses the internet.

- Figure 82 shows that **the majority of parents (85%) are confident about their role, feeling they can help their child a lot or a fair amount if their child encounters something that bothers them online.**
- Parents of younger children are somewhat more inclined to say they can help a lot.
- Parents are also confident in their child's ability to cope with things online that may bother them, with over three-quarters (79%) indicating that they have a lot or fair amount of confidence in their child – this is more the case for parents of older children.

Another source of doubt regarding the value of parental mediation is the possibility that parental mediation may limit opportunities as well as support online safety. Thus, children and parents were asked whether parental activities limit what the child can do online (Figure 83).

**Figure 83: Whether parental mediation limits the child's activities on the internet, according to child**

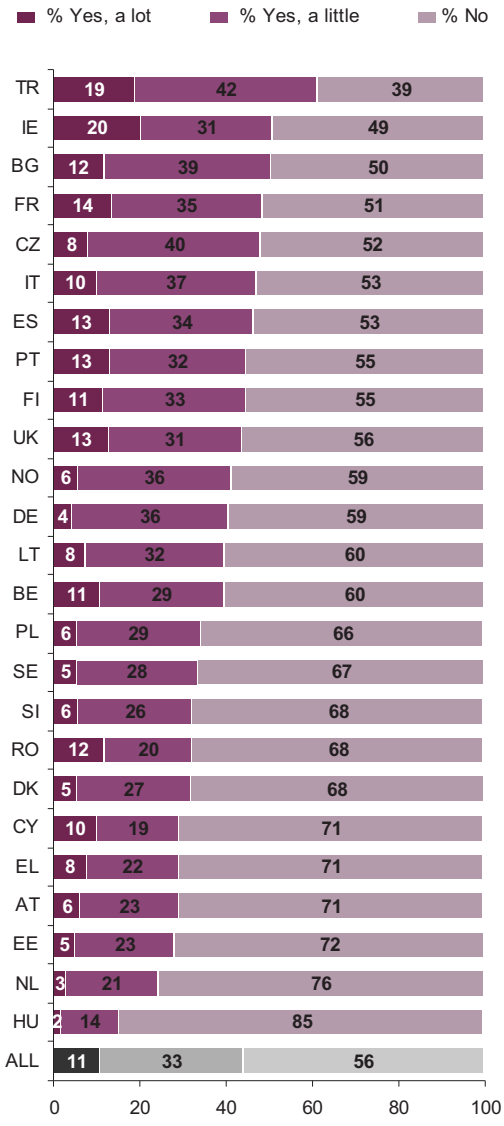



QC333: Do the things that your parent does (parents do) relating to how you use the internet limit what you can do on the internet or not really?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Just under half (44%) of children think that parental mediation limits what they do online, 11% saying it limits their activities a lot.**
- As might be expected given greater parental mediation, the younger children are somewhat more likely to say it limits them, and that it limits them a lot. It is worth noting, however, that the opposite result might have been predicted, namely that teenagers would feel more restricted by parental activities than younger children.
- Figure 83 shows that there are few gender and SES difference, although a few more children from lower SES homes who think parental mediation limits them a lot. As already noted, there are clear age differences: the older the child, the less parental mediation limits them.

**Figure 84: Whether parental mediation limits the child's activities on the internet, according to child, by country**




QC333: Do the things that your parent does (parents do) relating to how you use the internet limit what you can do on the internet or not really?

Base: All children who use the internet.

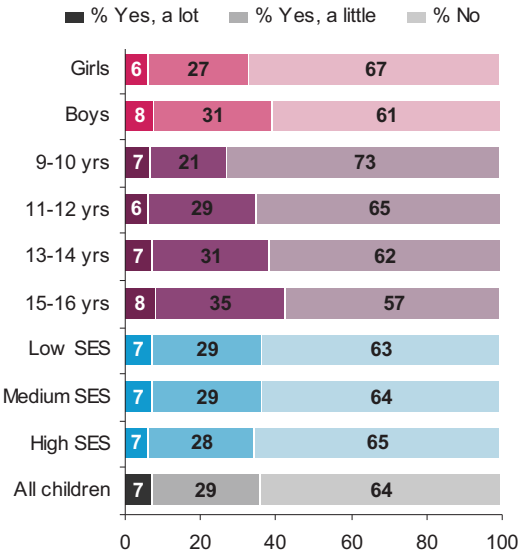
- Responses by country (shown in Figure 84) indicate that children in some countries feel rather more

restricted by parental mediation (e.g. in Turkey, Ireland and Bulgaria) than in others (e.g. Hungary, and the Netherlands).

Examining the link between parental mediation and children's sense of restriction remains for future research.

So, do children say that they simply ignore parental efforts to mediation their internet use, as is popularly supposed?

**Figure 85: Whether child ignores what parents say when they use the internet, according to child**

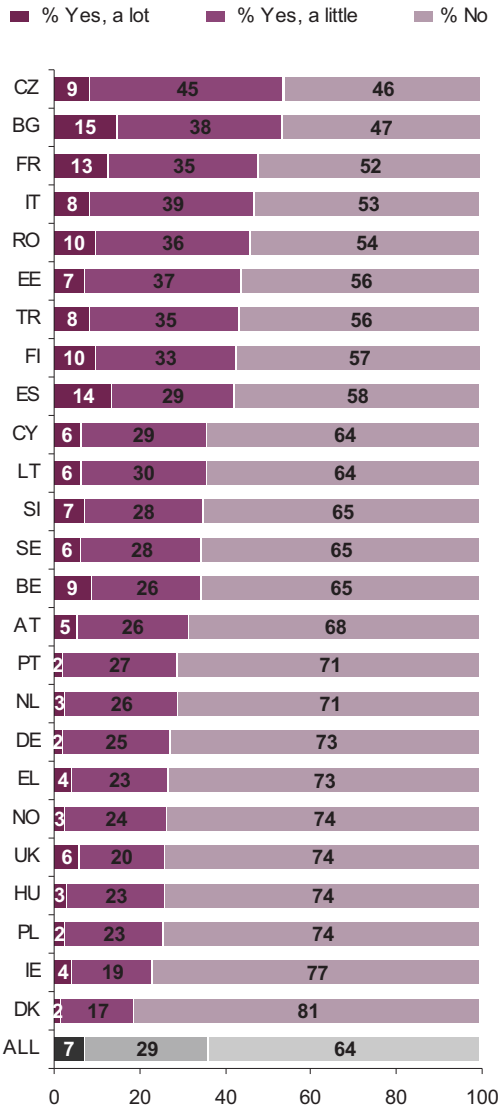



QC334: And do you ever ignore what your parent(s) tell you when use the internet, or not really?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Figure 85 shows that nearly two-thirds (64%) say they do not simply ignore their parents' efforts to mediate their internet use. **However, 29% say they ignore their parents a little and 7% of children say they ignore their parents a lot.**
- Teenagers are more likely than 9-10 year olds especially to say they ignore what their parents do or say about their internet use, although only a little.
- Boys are a little more likely to say they ignore their parents (possibly a social desirability effect).

**Figure 86: Whether child ignores what parents say when they use the internet, according to child, by country**




QC334: And do you ever ignore what your parent(s) tell you when use the internet, or not really?

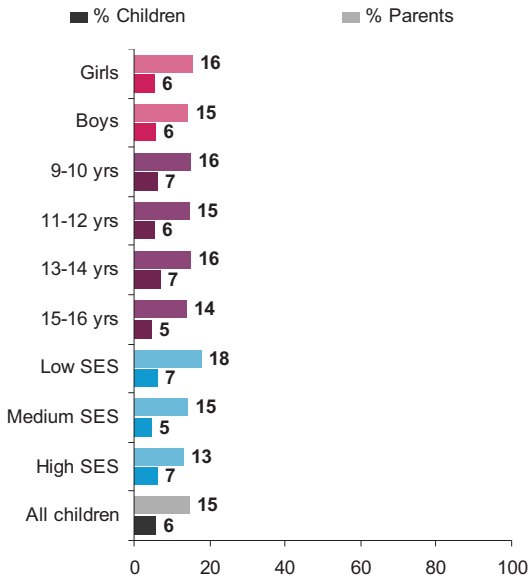
Base: All children who use the internet.

- Figure 86 reveals a substantial amount of national variation. The percentage of children saying they do not ignore parental mediation ranges from 46% in the Czech Republic to 81% in Denmark.

Whether effective or not, there is clearly a considerable amount of parental mediation of different kinds being practised in European families. In a cross-sectional survey, it is not possible to determine whether this mediation reduces the risk of harm to children online. Indeed, it may be that parents act as they do precisely because something has already upset their child.

In other words, the mediating activities may be a response to problematic experiences in the past. Or it may be that parents do what they do because they anticipate future problems, and seek to prevent them. The *EU Kids Online* survey asked children and parents about this possibility.

**Figure 87: Whether parents do anything differently because the child has been bothered by something on the internet, according to child and parent**

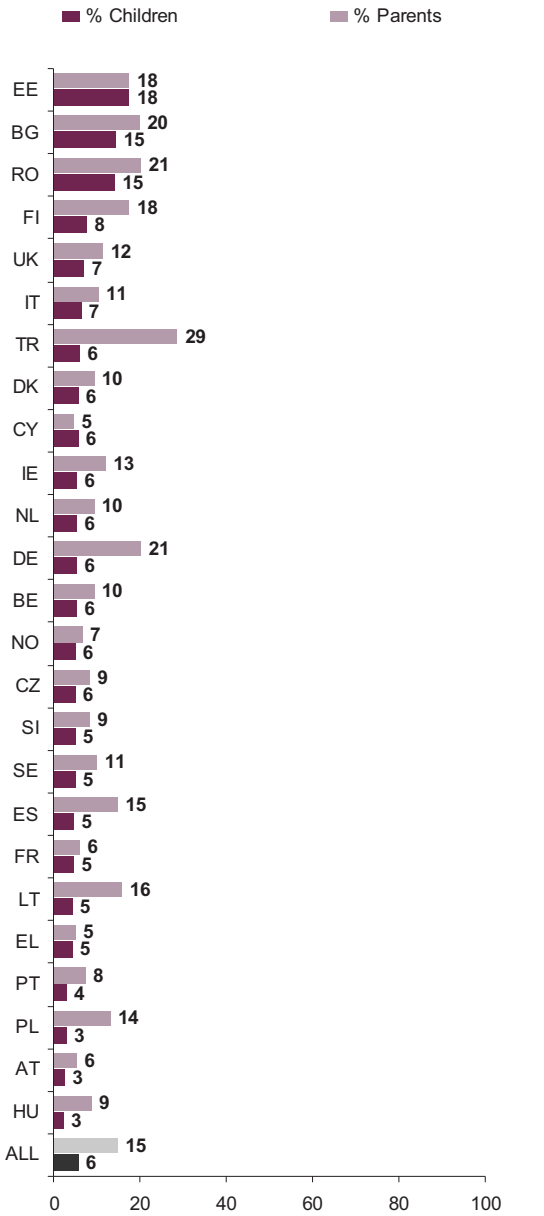



QC335: Does your parent / do your parents do anything new or different these days because you have been bothered by something on the internet in the past, or not really? QP227: Do you (or your partner/other carer) do anything different these days because your child has been bothered by something on the internet in the past or not really?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- Figure 87 shows that **15% of parents claim that they mediate differently because of something that had bothered the child in the past.** Only 6% of children give this explanation for parental mediation.

**Figure 88: Whether parents do anything differently because the child has been bothered by something on the internet, according to child and parent, by country**

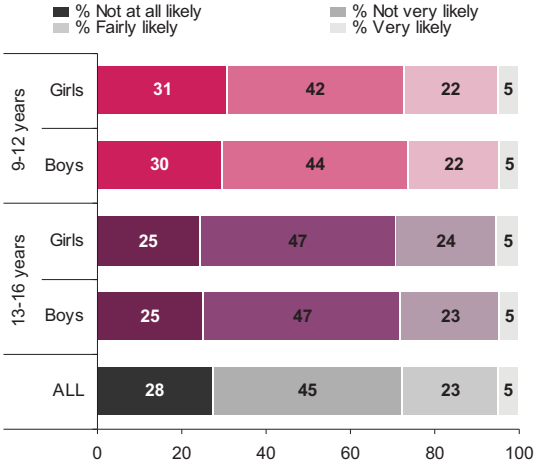



QC335: Does your parent / do your parents do anything new or different these days because you have been bothered by something on the internet in the past, or not really? QP227: Do you (or your partner/other carer) do anything different these days because your child has been bothered by something on the internet in the past or not really?

- National variation is more noteworthy (see Figure 88): 18% of children claim that their parents mediate differently because of something that upset them in Estonia, compared with just 3% in Hungary. Claims by parents reveal even greater national variation, from 29% in Turkey to 5% in Greece.

It may not be past problems but rather the anticipation of future problems that stimulates parents to mediate their children's internet use – see Figure 89 for parental anticipation of future problems encountered by their children online.

### Figure 89: Whether parent thinks their child will experience problems on the internet in the next six months




QP232: In the next six months, how likely, if at all, do you think it is that your child will experience something on the internet that will bother them?

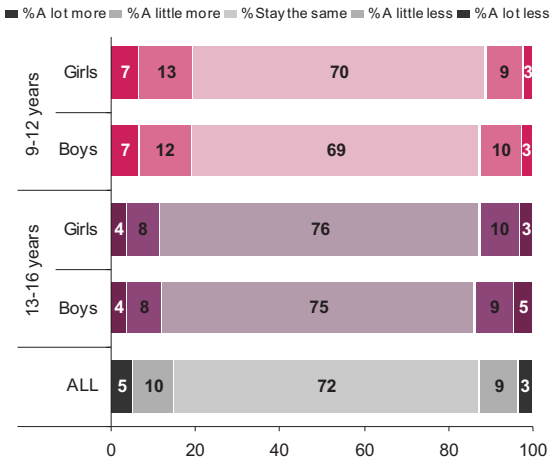
Base: Parents of children who use the internet.

- Figure 89 suggests **many parents (73%) are confident that is not very or at all likely that their child will encounter anything that bothers them in the next six months.**
- However, 28% think it fairly or very likely that their child will experience something that bothers them online in the next six months.
- There seems little variation in this regard by the age or gender of the child.

Last, it may be asked whether children and parents think the level of parental mediation they receive is about right.

We asked children if they would like their parents to take more or less interest in what they do online. And we asked parents if they think they should do more or not.

### Figure 90: Whether the child would like their parent(s) to take more or less interest in what they do online



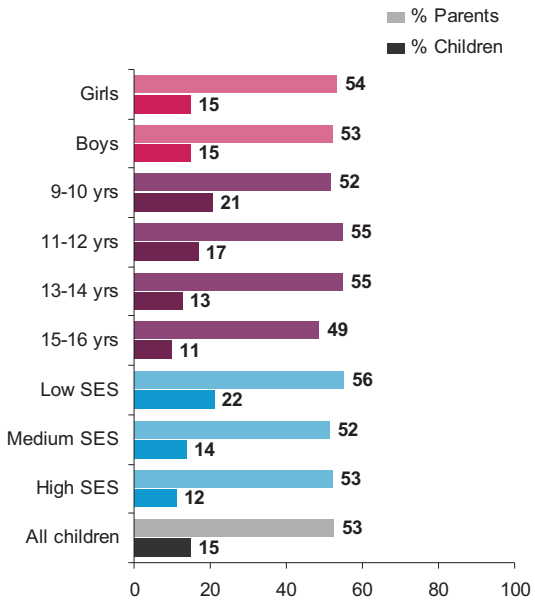

QC326: Overall, would you like your parent(s) to take more or less interest in what you do on the internet, or stay the same?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Figure 90 shows that from the perspective of most children (72%), and even more for teenagers, parents have got it about right, since these children think the level of parental interest in their online activities should stay the same.
- **15% would like their parents to do a little or a lot more, however. On the other hand, 12% would like their parents to do rather less.**

Figure 91 and Figure 92 examine more closely those children who would like their parents to take a bit or a lot more interest in their internet use, by demographics and by country. We also compare these with the proportions of parents who say that they should do a bit or a lot more.

**Figure 91: Children who would like their parent(s) to take more interest in what they do online, and parents who think they should do more**



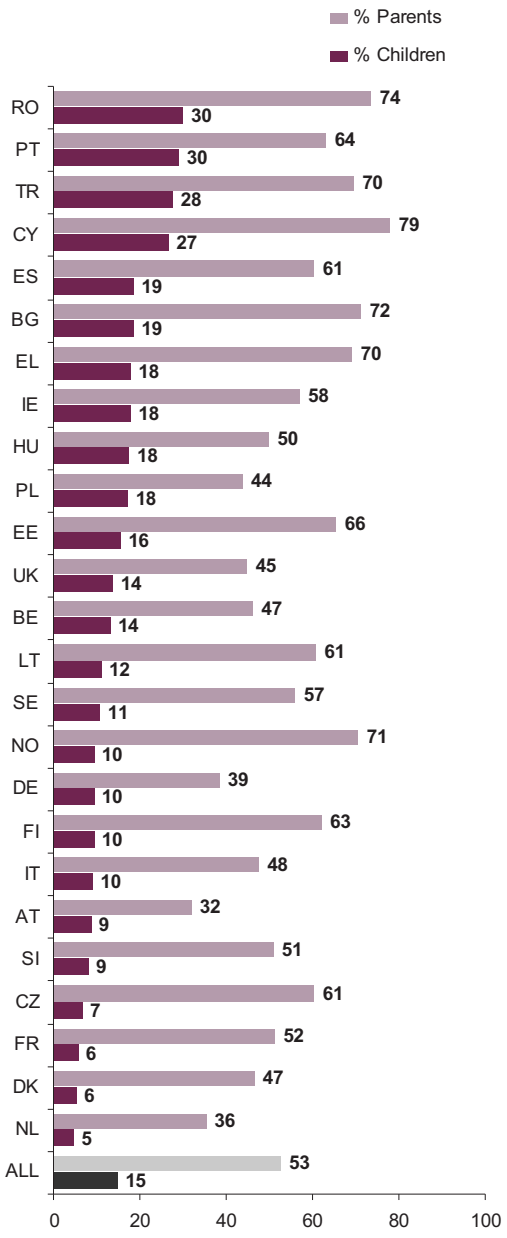

QC326: Overall, would you like your parent(s) to take more or less interest in what you do on the internet, or to stay about the same? And is that a lot/little more/less? QP226: Speaking of things you do in relation to your child's internet use, do you think you should do more, or not really?

*Note: graph shows children who say yes, a bit or a lot more, and parents who say yes, a bit or a lot more.*

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

- Of the 15% of children who would like their parents to take more of an interest in their internet use, most strikingly this call comes from younger children (21% of 9-10 year olds say this) and children from lower SES homes (also 22%). (See Figure 91).
- Older teenagers and higher SES children are least likely to wish for more parental interest, although whether this is because they find it intrusive or they already have 'enough' is hard to determine.
- Strikingly, half of parents (53%) think they should do more in relation to their children's internet use. Here it is the absence of significant differences by age or SES that is noteworthy – half of parents seem to feel generally that they should do more but this is not obviously linked to children's own sense of need.

**Figure 92: Children who would like their parent(s) to take more interest in what they do online, and parents who think they should do more, by country**




QC326: Overall, would you like your parent(s) to take more or less interest in what you do on the internet, or to stay about the same? And is that a lot/little more/less? QP226: Speaking of things you do in relation to your child's internet use, do you think you should do more, or not really? *Note: graph shows children who say yes, a bit or a lot more, and parents who say yes, a bit or a lot more.* Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.


- Country differences in children's desire for more parental input are noteworthy, with children in Eastern and Southern Europe greatly wishing that their parents would show more interest in what they do online – especially Romania, Portugal, Turkey and Cyprus (see Figure 92).
- By contrast, children in the Netherlands, Denmark and France wish for little or no further input from their parents.
- Parents in these and most other countries take a different view, and their views show little relation to children's wishes. Parents in Cyprus (79%) and Romania (74%) are most likely to think they should do more, while parents in the Austria (32%) and the Netherlands (36%) are least likely to think this.

## 11.3. Teachers

Parents are not the only adults with a responsibility to mediate children's internet use or safety. To aid comparison, **children (although not their teachers) were asked about the kinds of mediating activities undertaken by their teachers at school**.

One question asked about active mediation of internet usel ('have your teachers ever talked to you about what you do on the internet?'), another asked about restrictive mediation ('have your teachers ever made rules about what you can do on the internet at school?'),[77] and the remainder asked about active mediation of internet safety, using the items also asked about parents (Table 57).

- **Around half of children think that their teachers have engaged with their internet use in most of the ways asked about, and 73% of children say their teachers have done at least one of the forms of active mediation of internet safety asked about (and 81% have done any of the forms of mediation asked about).**
- Only one quarter (24%) say their teachers have helped when something bothered them on the internet, but doubtless this reflects the relatively few incidents that bother children.

**Table 57: Teachers' mediation of child's internet use, according to child**

| % who say that their teachers have… | 9-12 years | | 13-16 years | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| Helped you when something is difficult to do or find on the internet | 55 | 58 | 58 | 60 | 58 |
| Explained why some websites are good or bad | 55 | 56 | 60 | 60 | 58 |
| Suggested ways to use the internet safely | 53 | 56 | 60 | 62 | 58 |
| Suggested ways to behave towards other people online | 45 | 45 | 51 | 50 | 48 |
| Talked to you about what to do if something on the internet bothered you | 38 | 40 | 42 | 42 | 40 |
| Helped you in the past when something has bothered you on the internet | 24 | 26 | 24 | 23 | 24 |
| One or more forms of active mediation of internet safety | 69 | 72 | 75 | 76 | 73 |
| Made rules about what you can do on the internet at school | 57 | 60 | 66 | 66 | 62 |
| Talked to you about what you do on the internet | 52 | 54 | 52 | 54 | 53 |
| One or more of all of the above | 78 | 80 | 83 | 84 | 81 |

QC338: Have any teachers at your school ever done any of these things? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

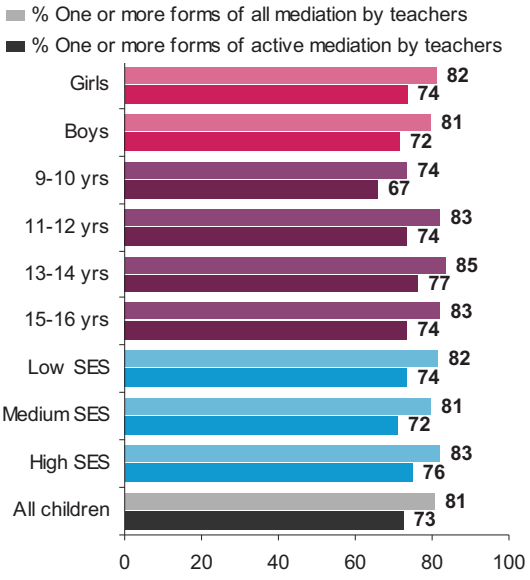
Base: All children who use the internet.

- Older children report more mediation by teachers, except there is no age difference in relation to being

bothered by something online. There are few or no significant gender differences.

- By comparison with forms of active mediation, children report slightly more mediation from teachers in terms of rule making.
- Just over half (53%) say that their teachers talk to them about what they do on the internet.
- Overall, therefore, four in five (81%) report some mediation of their online activities from their teachers.
- Still, it is noteworthy that one in five of children who use the internet report that their teachers have not engaged with them in any of these ways at all.
- Figure 93 reveals few differences by gender or SES in children's experience of mediation by teachers.

**Figure 93: Teachers' active mediation of child's internet safety, according to child**

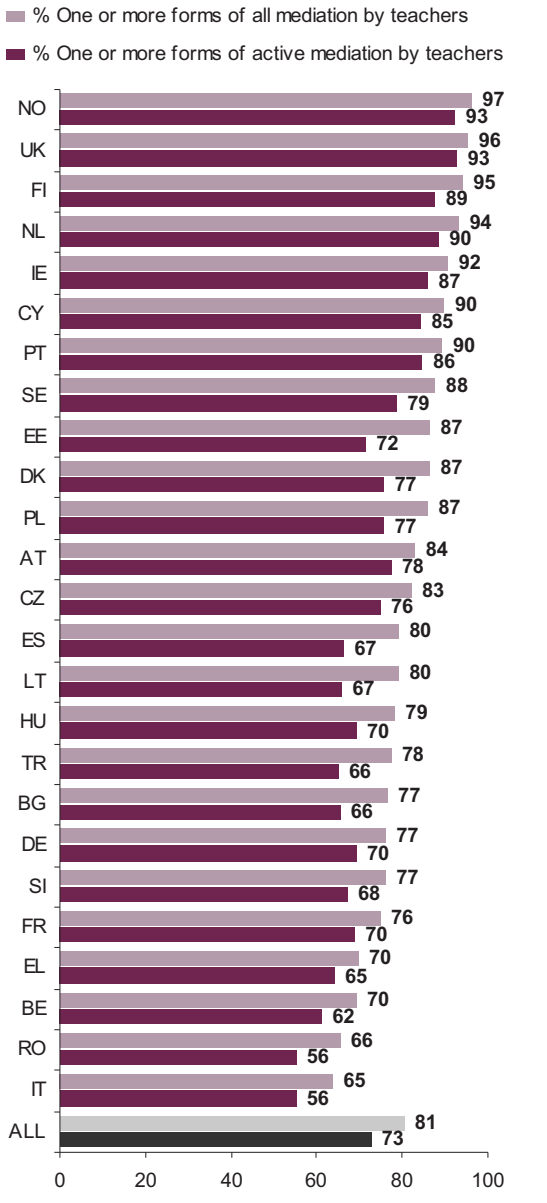



QC338: Have any teachers at your school ever done any of these things? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Age differences are noteworthy: teachers engage least with 9-10 year olds internet use.**
- Figure 94 shows national variation in the role that teachers play, from 97% of teachers in Norway engaging with children's internet use to 65% in Italy practising at least one form of mediation (and 93% of teachers in Norway down to 56% in Italy practising at least one of the forms of active mediation of internet safety asked about, according to children).

**Figure 94: Teachers' mediation of child's internet use, according to child, by country**




QC338: Have any teachers at your school ever done any of these things? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

## 11.4. Peers

Some of the same questions regarding forms of mediation can also be asked of children's friends. Previous research has often shown that children would rather turn to their friends than to an adult when something online bothers or worries them.[78] But little is known about whether or how children really support each other in terms of internet safety.

**Five of the questions on active mediation of internet safety were also asked of friends** (see Table 58).

**Table 58: Peers' active mediation of child's internet safety, according to child**

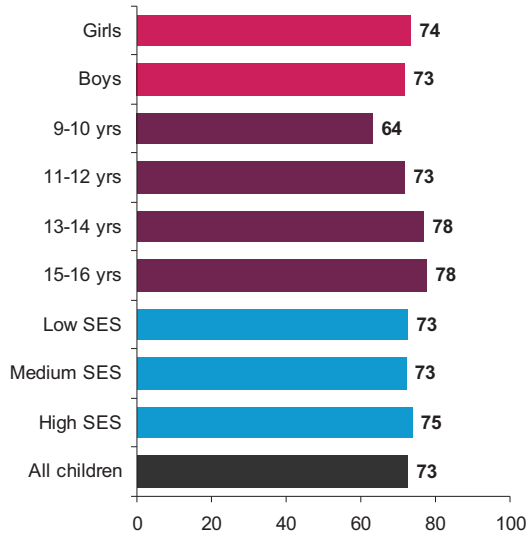
| % who say that their friends have ... | 9-12 years | | 13-16 years | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| Helped you when something is difficult to do or find on the internet | 57 | 59 | 66 | 71 | 64 |
| Suggested ways to use the internet safely | 39 | 41 | 47 | 47 | 44 |
| Explained why some websites are good or bad | 39 | 40 | 42 | 45 | 41 |
| Suggested ways to behave towards other people online | 33 | 35 | 39 | 42 | 37 |
| Helped you in the past when something has bothered you on the internet | 26 | 25 | 28 | 33 | 28 |
| One or more of the above | 68 | 69 | 77 | 79 | 73 |

QC336: Have your friends ever done any of these things? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Three quarters (73%) of children say their peers have actively helped or supported their internet safety in at least one of the five ways asked about** (Table 58).
- As with teachers, this suggests that children do consider other children quite supportive in general, more so in the case of older children.
- **Peers are much more likely to mediate in a practical way, helping each other to do or find something when there is a difficulty (64%).** Fewer say that peers help when they are bothered by something (28%), but as noted before, this may reflect the fact that few are bothered. Moreover, this finding is slightly higher than in the case of teachers (Table 57).
- **Also compared with help from teachers, it seems peers are less likely to give safety or ethical advice.**
- Generally, older children claim their peers help them more than do younger children.
- The main gender difference is found specifically with older girls claiming that their peers help them more in a variety of ways compared to boys of that age – although the gaps are just a few percentage points.

**Figure 95: Peer mediation of child's internet safety, according to child**

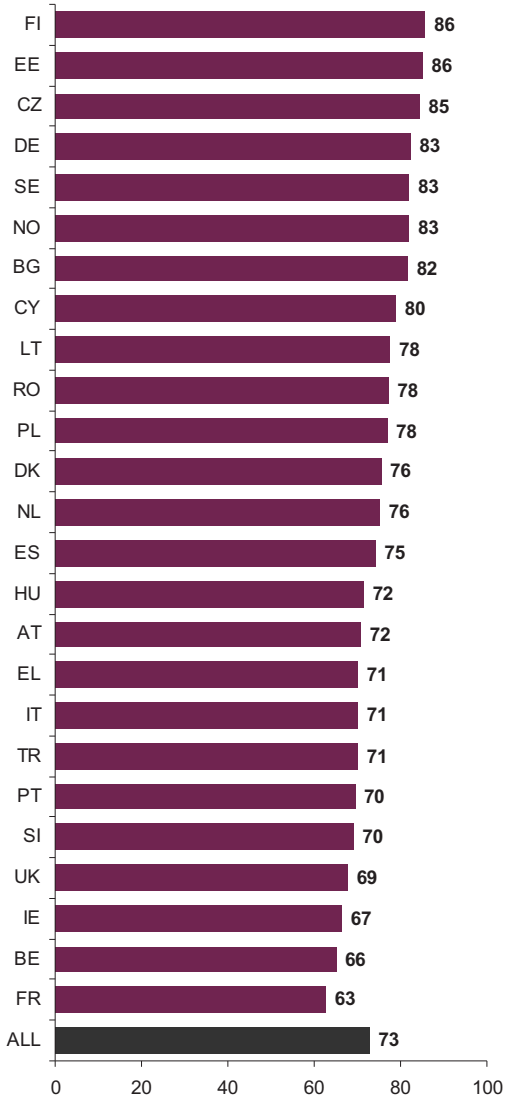



QC336: Have your friends ever done any of these things? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Figure 95 indicates few gender or SES differences in peer support, but it reaffirms the finding that older children think their peers mediate more, especially compared with the youngest group of 9-10 year olds.

**Figure 96: Peer mediation of child's internet use, according to child, by country**



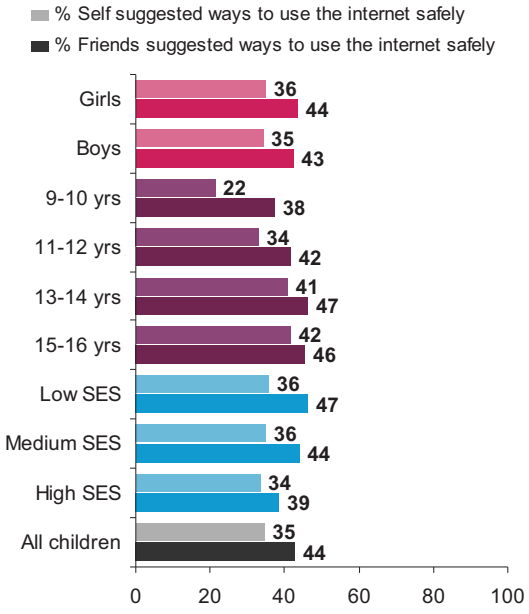

QC336: Have your friends ever done any of these things? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Figure 96 shows that country differences in peer support are, as with teachers, substantial. They range from 86% of children in Finland and Estonia receiving guidance from their peers to 63% in France.
- Interestingly, in some of the countries where parents and children were found to disagree about how much parental mediation takes place, children report more support from their peers (e.g. Finland and Sweden).

Distinctively, peer mediation can work both ways. Thus children were also asked if they advise friends online in similar ways, specifically as regards how to use the internet safely.

**Figure 97: Peer mediation of child's safe internet use, according to child**



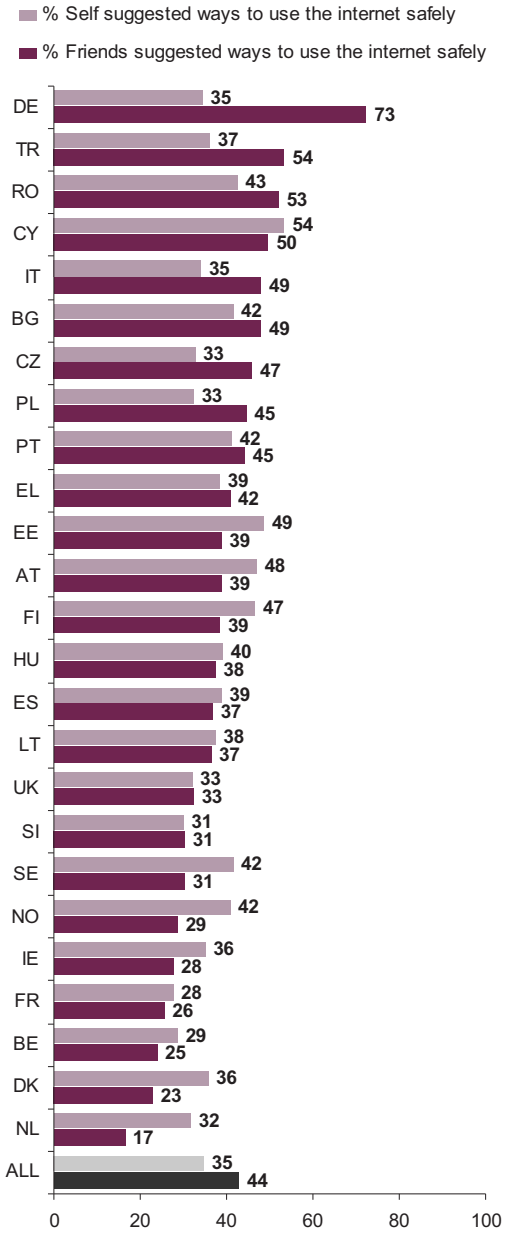

QC337: Have you ever suggested ways to use the internet safely to your friends. QC336c: Have your friends ever done any of these things – suggested ways to use the internet safely.

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Overall, 44% of children say they have received some guidance on safe internet use from their friends, and 35% say that they have also provided such advice to their friends** (Figure 97).

- Older children both help and are helped by peers in how to be safe online, suggesting a constructive peer culture among those aged 11 and over.
- For the youngest group, children say they benefit from the support of others more than they themselves provide such help.
- The lower the SES the greater the degree to which children say peers help.
- Considerable national differences are evident in the degree of peer support (Figure 98). About half report guiding their friends in Cyprus, Estonia, Austria and Finland, while less than a third claims this in Belgium and France.
- Countries are fairly evenly split as to whether more children say they give or receive advice, although in Germany it is noticeable that far more say they receive advice.

**Figure 98: Peer advice on how to use the internet safely, according to child, by country**




QC337: Have you ever suggested ways to use the internet safely to your friends. QC336c: Have your friends ever done any of these things – suggested ways to use the internet safely.

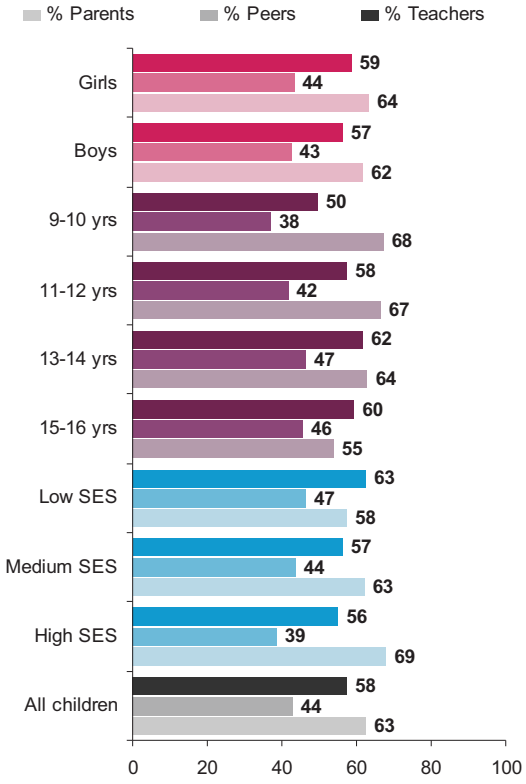
Base: All children who use the internet.

## 11.5. Parent, teacher and peer mediation compared

In designing the questionnaire, for reasons of both interview length and question repetition (which is useful for making comparisons but boring for the child respondent), not all questions were asked of all forms of mediation. However, one question was repeated across all the contexts discussed above: have your parents/teachers/friends 'suggested ways to use the internet safely?'

**Figure 99 compares children's receipt of internet safety advice from parents, teachers and peers.**

**Figure 99: Whether parents, peers or teachers have ever suggested ways to use the internet safely, according to child**

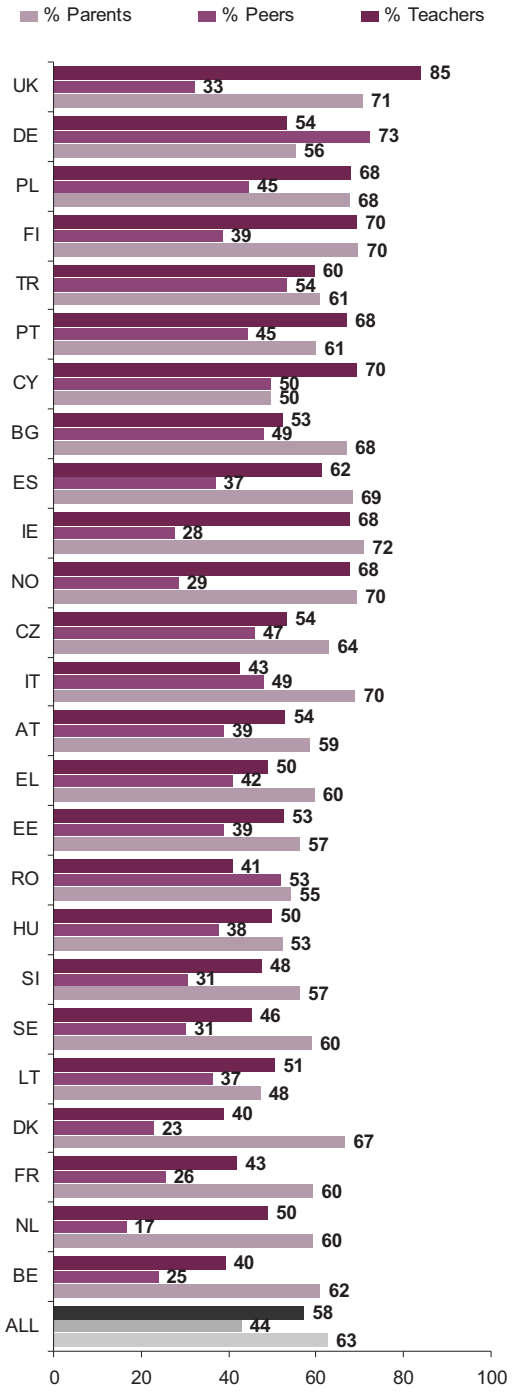



QC329c: Have your parents ever suggested ways to use the internet safely? QC336c: Have your friends ever suggested ways to use the internet safely? QC338d: Have your teachers ever suggested ways to use the internet safely?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **It seems that internet safety advice is received first from parents (63%), then teachers (58%), then peers (44%).**
- Interestingly, the rank order varies by demographics. So, for most groupings, the order is as for children overall (most from parents, then teachers, then peers). **But for the older teenagers and for children from lower SES homes, advice from teachers overtakes that of parents.**
- In the case of older teenagers, this appears to be because parents have reduced their guidance, while teachers maintain their guidance across the age range.
- In the case of children from lower SES homes, this appears to be because their parents provide rather less guidance than do those of higher SES parents.
- However, the picture is more varied when we look at different countries (Figure 100). While in most countries the order is the same, in Portugal teachers give more safety advice, in Italy and Romania peers (after parents) give more advice than teachers, and in Germany it is peers who noticeably give the most advice.


**Figure 100: Whether parents, peers or teachers have ever suggested ways to use the internet safely, according to child, by country**




QC329c: Have your parents ever suggested ways to use the internet safely? QC336c: Have your friends ever suggested ways to use the internet safely? QC338d: Have your teachers ever suggested ways to use the internet safely?

Base: All children who use the internet.

## 11.6. Sources of safety awareness

Parents, teachers and peers are clearly important, but there are also additional sources of information available to children regarding how to use the internet safely. How important are these? Use of a range of further sources is reported in Table 59.

*Note that the response options in these tables did not include parents, teachers or friends, as these are reported above.*

**Table 59: Children's sources of advice on internet safety (other than parents, teachers or friends)**

| | 9-12 years | | 13-16 years | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | All |
| Other relative | 44 | 50 | 45 | 47 | 47 |
| Television, radio, newspapers or magazines | 15 | 16 | 22 | 25 | 20 |
| Websites | 8 | 6 | 19 | 15 | 12 |
| Someone whose job is to give advice over the internet | 7 | 6 | 11 | 12 | 9 |
| Internet service provider | 4 | 3 | 11 | 7 | 6 |
| Youth or church or social worker | 5 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| Librarian | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| I haven't received advice from any of these | 39 | 37 | 31 | 31 | 34 |

QC339: Have you EVER received advice about how to use the internet safely from any of these people or places? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: All children who use the internet.

- **Other relatives (47%), interestingly, are generally as important as peers in providing advice to children on how to use the internet safely.**
- **Information received via the traditional mass media (20%) are less used, with online sources even less frequently used (12% have gained safety advice from websites).**
- Few reports turning to other adults for guidance, although some get advice from online advisors, youth workers, their internet service provider or a librarian.
- Older children get more advice from more other sources, with the exception of relatives. There are few gender differences, although it seems girls get more advice from the media.
- Most significant in Table 59 is that **around one third of children (34%) report that they have not received safety guidance from any of these sources, and that younger children report receiving less advice than do teenagers.**

Similar questions were also asked of parents, although a somewhat different list of advice sources was provided (Table 60). Additionally the *EU Kids Online* survey asked parents where they would like to get information and advice about internet safety from in the future, so as to focus further awareness-raising activities (Table 61).

- Table 60 indicates that **parents get internet safety advice first and foremost from family and friends (48%), then traditional media (32%), the child's school (27%), internet service providers (22%) and websites (21%).**
- Those with younger children (9-12 years) are a little more likely to get advice from their child's school.
- Interestingly, 13% say they have received safety information from their own child.
- One in seven parents (13%) reports getting no advice from any of these sources.

**Table 60: Parents' actual sources of information on internet safety, by age of child**

| % | Age of child | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| Family and friends | 50 | 49 | 49 | 44 | 48 |
| Television, radio, newspapers or magazines | 31 | 32 | 33 | 33 | 32 |
| Your child's school | 28 | 31 | 25 | 24 | 27 |
| Internet service providers | 23 | 22 | 22 | 20 | 22 |
| Websites with safety information | 21 | 19 | 22 | 20 | 21 |
| From my child | 8 | 11 | 14 | 16 | 13 |
| Manufacturers and retailers selling the products | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 |
| Other sources | 9 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| Government, local authorities | 7 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| Children's welfare organisations/charities | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| None, I don't get any information about this | 13 | 12 | 13 | 16 | 13 |

QP238: In general where do you get information and advice on safety tools and safe use of the internet from? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: Parents whose child uses the internet.

**When asked where they want advice from (Table 61):**

- **The child's school is the most popular choice for parents at 43%, while friends and family drop to third place at 29%.**
- **Only around 9% of parents say that they don't want further information on internet safety.**
- Online sources are not unpopular – about one quarter (26%) would like to receive safety information from their internet service provider or from websites, and one in five (20%) would like such information from the government or local authorities.

### Table 61: Parents' desired sources of information on internet safety, by age of child

| % | Age of child | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| Your child's school | 47 | 47 | 42 | 36 | 43 |
| Television, radio, newspapers or magazines | 31 | 31 | 33 | 31 | 32 |
| Family and friends | 30 | 29 | 29 | 27 | 29 |
| Internet service providers | 28 | 27 | 25 | 24 | 26 |
| Websites with safety information | 25 | 25 | 24 | 23 | 24 |
| Government, local authorities | 21 | 20 | 19 | 18 | 20 |
| Manufacturers and retailers selling the products | 17 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| Children's welfare organisations/ charities | 13 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 12 |
| From my child | 9 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 12 |
| Other sources | 6 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 6 |
| None, I don't want more information about this | 8 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 9 |

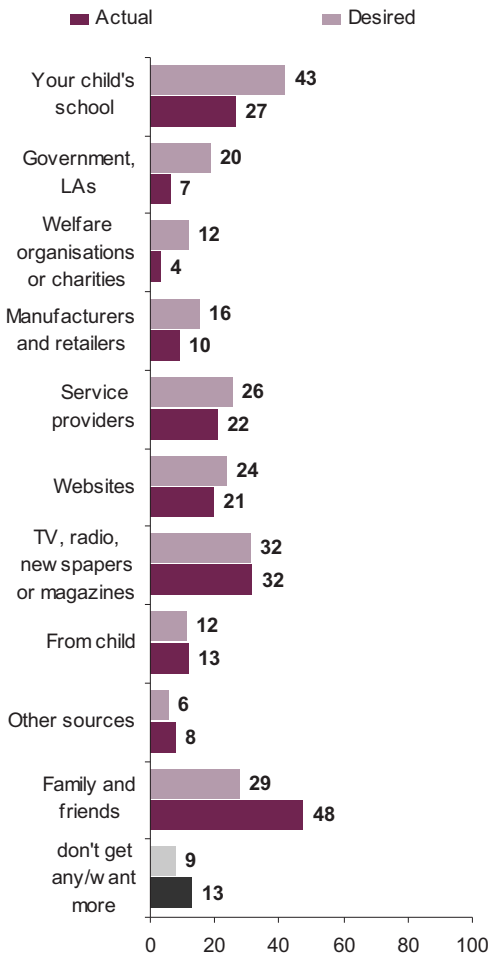
QP239: In general where would you like to get information and advice on safety tools and safe use of the internet from in the future? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: Parents whose child uses the internet.

Figure 101 shows in a more striking way the gap between the sources that parents actually get information from compared to the sources they would like to get this information from.

- **Many parents want far less information from, the child's school (16% gap), from Government and local authorities (13% gap), Welfare organisations and charities (8% gap) and, to a lesser extent, from manufacturers and retailers (6% gap).**

### Figure 101: Parents' actual and desired sources of information on internet safety, all children




QP238: In general where do you get information and advice on safety tools and safe use of the internet from? QP239: In general where would you like to get information and advice on safety tools and safe use of the internet from in the future? *(Multiple responses allowed)*

Base: Parents whose child uses the internet.


# 11. CONCLUSIONS

This report employs a comparative design to reveal:

(i) children's experiences of the internet across locations and devices;

(ii) similarities and differences by children's age, gender and SES;

(iii) a range of risks experienced by children online

(iv) children's perception of the subjective harm associated with these risks;

(v) children's roles as 'victim' and as 'perpetrator' of risks;

(vi) accounts of risks and safety practices reported by children and their parents;

(vii) data across countries for analysis of national similarities and differences.

These points provide the structure for our conclusions and an opportunity to indicate what further analysis will be undertaken in our future reports.

## 11.1. Ways of going online are diversifying

**Location**. What are the implications of diversification in children's place of internet access? **The finding that most (87%) internet-using children going online at home has obvious implications for policy, suggesting that in most cases parents are best positioned to mediate their children's internet usage.** Clearly, this will be managed differently by different parents, in different countries and, especially, for different age groups.[79] **However, the fact that teenagers especially go online at home in the privacy of their own bedroom - albeit with national variation - poses specific challenges to parents.** In households with teenagers, provision of skills to parents and children, and the maintenance of a constructive dialogue within the family, together with some rules to provide guidelines for behaviour, are all crucial if parents are to be neither over- nor under-protective.

**Since school is the second most common location at which children use the internet (63%), teachers have an important role to play when it comes to educating children about the safe and responsible use of the internet.** Only schools have the capability to educate all children on this issue, and their resourcing should support this crucial role. It must not be forgotten, however, that the remaining one third of 9-16 year old users will not be reached by such a policy.

Most children go online in at least one further place, the overall average being three locations of use. Little is known about whether and how use may change in different contexts. In terms of safety policy, therefore, there is a wider range of adults whose potential for guidance and supervision has been little addressed yet – parents of friends, other relatives, librarians, internet café managers, and so forth.

**Devices**. A key recent and ongoing change is the growth in children's access to the internet via mobile phones or other handheld devices. The different conditions under which these different devices are used, and how these may shape children's online use and exposure to risk of harm, are as yet unknown. What this report makes clear is that, **although the personal computer is still the most common means of accessing the internet, on average children in Europe go online using two devices, and a substantial minority now uses a portable device of one kind or another.** As noted earlier, this leaves two strategies for policy makers to promote – the contribution of educators in teaching children digital literacy and self-protective skills, and the role of self-regulatory and/or co-regulatory management of the online technologies and services.

It is beyond the scope of this report to examine children's exposure to risk of harm as a function of the location of use or device by which they go online. This will be a key feature of our future analysis.

## 11.2. Differences by age, gender and SES

Age, gender and SES differences summarised here are examined only on a pan-European level: in subsequent

reports, *EU Kids Online* will consider whether these are differentiated by country.

**Age.** One of the innovations of the survey is that it included children as young as nine, considerably younger than many other surveys. Its detailed findings indicate, further, that over and again it is the age differences in this report that are most striking, showing a considerable variation in experience ranging from the 9-10 year olds up to the 15-16 year olds surveyed.

The differences begin with access and use, since for younger children use is generally in a public place while for older teenagers, use is often private (in their bedroom or on a mobile device). **Although teenagers go online for much longer per day (this tipping over into what some acknowledge as being excessive use) younger children seem to be going online ever earlier in their lives**, having first used the internet at the age of seven, whereas the oldest group went online only by the age of eleven.

**Nonetheless, the youngest group is notably less confident that they know a lot using the internet compared with their parents and even among 11-12 year olds, fewer than half say they have the basic skills needed for online safety –** on average they report having just one of the eight skills we asked about. Whether this is the cause or effect of their narrower range of online activities is hard to say: certainly teenagers engage in a wider array of online activities than younger children. Since young children are now going online, it seems timely to increase the effort to increase their digital literacy – both through education and by encouraging more diverse internet use. In this context, the notable dissatisfaction of the 9-10 year olds with online provision for their age group also invites policy attention.

Going online early, in advance of adequate skills or online provision, may in itself be risky for the youngest children we surveyed. Some of their activities online should be considered in this context – while it is unsurprising that three-quarters of teenagers use social networking, it is less expected, especially given the degree of under-age use this may imply, that one quarter of 9-10 year olds do also, especially as these children are no more likely to keep their profile private than any other age group. While their lack of technical and critical skills may pose risks for younger children, for teenagers it is their orientation to online communication that may pose risks as much as they open up opportunities: as they grow older, children become more likely to see the internet as a means to 'being oneself' or talking about private or intimate matters. Older teenagers are also more likely to communicate online with people they only know online, even though for all age groups, most communication is with people also known face-to-face.

**Older teenagers are four times more likely than the youngest children to have seen pornography, online and offline, and online the sexual images they have seen are more explicit. However, among those who have seen sexual images online, the younger children are more likely to be bothered or upset by this than older teenagers – and they are more likely to be upset by online bullying.** Interestingly, older children are slightly more likely to be bullied on the internet but not face-to-face, where bullying is almost as common among 9-10 year olds as among 15-16 year olds. These older teenagers are, however, more likely than 9-10 year olds to say that they have bullied others, on or offline. We did not ask the youngest group about exchanging sexual messages, a decision that seems justified given the finding that very few of those aged 11-12, the next youngest age group, have seen or received such message, this practice being more common (although still only for minority), and also more explicit in terms of content, among teenagers. Finally, we note that children are more likely to encounter potentially harmful user-generated content (such as hate and suicide sites) and, less strongly, personal data misuse as they get older. **Overall, it may be concluded that older children encounter more online risks but are, at the same time, better equipped to deal with them.** Older teenagers should be the focus of safety measures, therefore, because their risk of harm is higher in terms of incidence; younger children should be the focus of safety measures because the potential severity – their subjective perception of harm – tends to be greater, and because they are less well equipped to manage risks themselves.

**Gender**. In the early days of domestic computing, men and boys had far greater access than women and girls. **In today's homes, the differences in girls' and boy's access to the internet are visible but minor.** Since boys have slightly better access, this may explain their slightly greater use of the internet, even sometimes using it to excess, and their tendency to claim a few more digital skills than girls, but, again, these differences are minor.


What girls and boys do online is generally diverse, but gender differences are small except that boys play more games, both alone and with others. **Interestingly, boys are a little more likely to value the internet for offering an alternative or private mode of communication compared with face-to-face interaction.** Whether for this reason or because they play more games or, indeed, because they are more likely to keep their social network profile public, boys are also more likely to communicate online with people they do not know offline.

**Overall, girls and boys differ little in their reporting of overall experiences online that have bothered them personally in some way. However, girls are generally more likely to be upset by the risks they do experience**, and this may explain why they are also a little more likely to think that the internet can bother other children their age. It might be noted, however, that social desirability factors might discourage boys – and, arguably, older children – from reporting that they are upset even when they are. It seems less likely that a reporting bias would work the other way around (i.e. that girls – and younger children - would report distress that they do not feel).

However, boys, especially teenagers, are more exposed to pornography online, while teenage girls are slightly more likely to be bullied online. In relation to other conduct and contact risks – exchanging sexual messages, making new contacts online and meeting them offline – there are few gender differences. Girls are, however, more likely to see pro-anorexic or bulimic content and more likely to have their personal data misused, while boys are slightly more exposed to hate sites.

**Socioeconomic status (SES)**. Possible SES differences were examined throughout this report partly because digital dis/advantage tends to mirror social dis/advantage, as revealed by previous research on the so-called 'digital divide'.[80] They were also examined because SES could provide an indicator of risk that could help focus policy interventions. One possibility was that greater internet access afforded by higher SES homes would enable more use and therefore might lead to more risk. An alternative possibility was that the greater difficulties and pressures faced in lower SES homes might leave children less well empowered to deal with them. The survey findings showed that, as expected, SES makes a considerable difference to the quality and range of children's access to the internet, especially at home, in their bedroom, and via handheld or mobile devices. In this context it is interesting that SES does not shape the number of years children have used the internet for, nor the time they spend online on an average day, although it does affect the likelihood that they will use it daily.

Children from high SES homes are more likely to have a wider, more diverse circle of contacts online, including more people they do not know offline. Does this translate into greater risk? Certainly in their overall assessment of things online that have bothered them, children differ little by SES. However, children from higher SES homes are more likely to see online sexual images and to receive more sexual messages online, but, repeating a pattern already observed in relation to age and gender, subjective harm follows a different pattern from that of risk. Thus **it is children from lower SES homes who are more likely to be bothered or upset by online sexual or pornographic content. They are also more likely to be upset by receiving nasty or hurtful messages online and by seeing or receiving sexual messages.**

## 11.3. Comparing types of risk

An important feature of the *EU Kids Online* survey is that it encompasses a range of ways in which the internet might lead to children encountering risk of harm. In our future reports, we will examine the relations between these risks, asking whether some children's online experiences are characterised by multiple types of risk or whether there are particular relations among risks (e.g. being bullied is associated with receiving sexual messages). Also important is the question of how risks translate into harm for different children – not only according to demographic factors but also according to factors in their lives that might help protect them or make them more vulnerable.

For this purpose of summarising and comparing findings already discussed in this report, Table 62 reviews the incidence of risk online by age (since this is the major source of differentiation among children) for each of the risks included in the *EU Kids Online* survey. For the exact questions asked, see the previous tables and figures.

**Table 62: Summary of online risk factors shaping children's probability of experiencing harm**

| % | Age | | | | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9-10 | 11-12 | 13-14 | 15-16 | |
| Seen sexual images on websites in past 12 months | 5 | 8 | 16 | 25 | 14 |
| Have been sent nasty or hurtful messages on the internet in past 12 months | 3 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 6 |
| Seen or received sexual messages on the internet in past 12 months | n/a | 7 | 13 | 22 | 15 |
| Ever had contact on the internet with someone not met face-to-face before | 13 | 20 | 32 | 46 | 30 |
| Ever gone on to meet anyone face-to-face that first met on the internet | 2 | 4 | 9 | 16 | 9 |
| Have come across one or more types of potentially harmful user-generated content in past 12 months | n/a | 12 | 22 | 29 | 21 |
| Have experienced one or more types of misuse of personal data in past 12 months | n/a | 7 | 10 | 11 | 9 |
| Encountered one or more of the above | 14 | 33 | 49 | 63 | 41 |
| Acted in a nasty or hurtful way towards others on the internet in the past 12 months | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| Sent or posted a sexual message of any kind on the internet in the past 12 months | n/a | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Done either of these | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 4 |

Note: for the exact questions asked of children, see earlier sections of this report (indicated in the text next to this table).

Base: All children who use the internet.

**The most common risk of children's internet use in Europe is associated with communicating online with someone the child has not met face-to-face before – characteristic of 30% of 9-16 year olds (see Figure 59).** It will be noted that such communication is, also, an opportunity, for whether the child is thereby making a new friend or being contacted by a stranger is not easy to determine in a survey. Thus this finding should be treated with caution.

**Almost as common is exposure to one or more of the types of potentially harmful user-generated content asked about (concerned with hate, pro-anorexia, self-harm, drug-taking or suicide) – this was experienced by 21% of 11-16 year olds (see Table 43).**

**Rather less common is children's exposure to sexual images online (14% of 9-16 year olds – see Table 9) or to sexual messages (15% of 11-16 year olds – see Figure 50).**

**Less common still is the misuse of personal data (misuse of the child's password, information or money) – 9% of 11-16 year olds (see Table 45).**

**This is followed by going to meetings offline with people first met online (9% of 9-16 year olds – see Figure 59).**

**Last, and least common is 'cyberbullying' – being sent nasty or hurtful messages online is reported by 6% of 9-16 year olds – see Table 18).**

All risks are increased by age, as also shown in Table 62. Thus looking across all the risks asked about in the *EU Kids Online* survey, 14% of 9-10 year olds have encountered one or more of these. This percentage rises sharply to 33% of 11-12 year olds and rises again to 49% for the 13-14 year olds. Among the 15-16 year olds 63% report encountering one or more of the risks asked about in the survey, the average across all 9-16 year olds being 41%.

This list includes risks that may be judged intrinsically harmful to a greater or lesser degree (bullying, misuse of personal information). It also includes risks that, as shown earlier, often do not result in harm (pornography, 'sexting', new contacts, offline meetings), although on the minority of occasions when they do, children are indeed upset.

It will be recalled that an important part of the framework for this project has been to emphasise that risk does not necessarily result in harm – rather, risk refers to the probability of harm, whether that probability is high or low, and to the severity of harm, as judged by the child.

For the most common risk – communicating online with people the child has not met face-to-face, the survey did not include a direct assessment of harm, for the most likely harms were already covered by other parts of the


survey (i.e. that the contact would result in a harmful offline meeting, or that the communication would involve sexual or bullying messages). It has not been shown by the survey that the quarter of children who communicate with new contacts online are significantly at risk.

For the next most common risk – exposure to potentially harmful user-generated content, the survey did not pursue the likelihood or severity of any resulting harm. The same applies to the incidence of misuse of personal data, and both these risks therefore await further research.

In the case of exposure to online pornography, the survey did follow up on the relation between risk and harm, as it did for sexual messaging, meetings with contacts made online and bullying. The findings can be summarised thus:

- **Of the 9-16 year olds who had been exposed to online sexual images, one in three were bothered by the experience and, of those, half (i.e. one sixth of those exposed to sexual images online) were either fairly or very upset by what they saw.**
- **Of the 9-16 year olds who had received nasty or hurtful messages online, while the survey did not ask if they had been bothered by this experience, it did find that between half and two thirds had been fairly or very upset.**
- **Of the 11-16 year olds who had seen or received a sexual message online, nearly a quarter had been bothered by this, and nearly half (i.e. one eighth of those who received such messages) were fairly or very upset.**
- **Of those 9-16 year olds who had met an online contact offline, one in six were bothered by what happened and about half of those (i.e. approximately 1 in 12 of those who had gone to a meeting) said that they were very or fairly upset by what happened.**

While Table 62 provides a rank ordering of risk, an admittedly simplified rank ordering of harm, then, reveals a rather different picture. It seems that being bullied online – the least common risk – carries the greatest likelihood of harm to the child who experiences it. Sexual risks – seeing sexual or pornographic content and receiving sexual messages – are more commonly encountered but experienced as much less harmful by children, with little or no harm reported in the majority of cases. Meeting online contacts offline is a risk encountered by very few children and, further, is the least likely to result in a harmful experience.

Understanding when and why some risks result in harm for some children bears further investigation, as does the far more common finding that, first, most children do not encounter as many risks online as popularly feared and, second, when they do, they appear able to cope with them.

## 11.4. Children's roles – victims and perpetrators

Conduct risks are shaped by the peer culture – but for policy makers it is difficult to disentangle and intervene in the resulting practices that occur among children. If one child bullies another, research on bullying needs to understand both the circumstances and consequences of being bullied and also the act of bullying. The same may be said for sending sexual messages, sexual harassment, and other forms of peer activity, whether or not this is problematic. The perspectives of perpetrator and victim may be very different – a bit of fun on the part of one, perhaps, and an upsetting incident for the other; or a malicious act on the part of one, yet ignored by the other.

**The EU Kids Online survey has found that, overall, 19% of European 9-16 year olds have been bullied, online or offline, and 12% have bullied someone else, in the previous year. Examining online bullying only, 6% have been sent bullying messages while 3% have sent such messages.**

**A parallel summary may be given for seeing/receiving sexual messages versus posting/sending. The survey found that, for 11-16 year olds only, 15% have seen or received, and 3% have posted or sent a sexual message online in the previous year. Note, however, that while hurtful and nasty messaging is always negative (although not always harmful), sexual messaging may be for purposes of entertainment or intimacy and so not necessarily negative in either intent or effect.**

Each of these practices – bullying and being bullied online, sending and receiving sexual messages – becomes more common with age. In all, 4% of children aged 9-16 have done one or both of these practices (see Table 62). It remains for our further reports to examine the characteristics of perpetrators and victims more closely. Note, in this context, that the categories of perpetrator and victim have been treated as distinct in this report. But research is increasingly examining the connections between them[81] – are children who are bullied those who, later, may become bullies? Is sending unwelcome sexual

messages sometimes retaliation for having received such a message?

In the next stages of our analysis, we explore the relations between the role of victim and perpetrator, linking these roles to subjective evaluations of harm and, further, to the indicators included in the survey of psychological and social vulnerability and/or support.

## 11.5. Children's and parents' perspectives on risk

It will be recalled that for each child interviewed, we also asked questions of one of the child's parents or carers. In the case of a two parent family, the parent who was most involved with the child's internet use was selected.

Broadly, the survey asked parents three kinds of question – first about their family, themselves and their internet use, second about their assessment of their child's experience of risk relating to internet use, and third about their domestic practices in supporting or protecting their child. Analysis of the first and third kinds of question must await further analysis.

As regards parental views on the risks experienced by their children, the results of this survey present a more complex picture than found for previous studies, largely because those studies generally cannot match a particular parent and child. By contrast with past research that has found an overall generational gap in perceptions of risk – with children reporting much more exposure to online risk than parents, this survey has found that, at the level of overall findings (i.e. for 'all parents' and 'all children'), perceptions are fairly close. Exceptions have been noted throughout, but broadly, parents only underestimate to a moderate degree the risks associated with children's online activities, although this varies by country. It may be surmised that parents are becoming more aware of the experiences their child may have online, even that awareness-raising activities are proving successful. **However, this high level of agreement is largely because both parents and children can agree that children have not encountered the risks asked about in the survey.**

**When the focus is just on those children who have experienced a particular risk, a different picture emerges, showing relatively low levels of parental awareness of their children's experiences and also a fair degree of uncertainty on the parents' part. Specifically, parents appear less aware when their younger children have seen sexual images online than for their teenagers, and they also underestimate bullying for both the youngest and oldest children.**

Parents are also more likely not to recognise when their daughter has seen sexual or pornographic images online, which matters because girls report being bothered or upset by such images more than boys (they are also more upset by online bullying and 'sexting'). On the other hand, parents are less likely to recognise when their son has been bullied online, and when they meet online contacts offline. Given the gendered pattern of risk noted earlier,, it may be hypothesised that parents are more aware of gender normative risks to their child (i.e. that boys would see pornography, that girls may bully and may be at risk from strangers) than they are aware of the reverse.

**In general, in those cases of children who have seen pornography or sexual messaging, by contrast with their experiences of bullying and meeting online contacts offline, parents are particularly likely to say they don't know if this has happened to their child. It seems that sexual matters remain difficult for parents to discuss with their children.**

Parents from lower SES homes are generally likely to underestimate their children's experiences of harm, and they are particularly likely to underestimate harm (from pornography) or say they don't know about it (in the case of sexual messaging) in the case of children who have encountered these risks. However, parents from higher SES homes are less likely to recognise when their child has met an online contact offline, something that children from higher SES homes are more likely than others to do.

Since the internet is most used by children at home, one clear policy priority is to increase levels of parental awareness in the case of those children who do encounter risks through their online activities. Directing awareness raising activities to fill the gaps noted above – to less advantaged parents, to parents of younger children, to raise awareness of risks that don't fit gender expectations – should therefore be high on the policy agenda.

## 11.6. Varieties of safety mediation

Just what parents could and should do once they are aware of the risks that face child internet users is a further matter. The *EU Kids Online* survey included a series of matched question asked of both children and one of their


www.eukidsonline.net

The *EU Kids Online* survey asked parents and children to reflect on the effectiveness of parental mediation, with some interesting findings. Younger children especially are positive that their parents help with their internet use. Nonetheless, across the age range, only a quarter of children say their parents are very helpful, and nearly a third say that parental efforts are not helpful. Two thirds of children think their parents know a fair amount about their internet use – again, a significant change from research findings of just a few years ago. Further, the majority of parents are confident that they can help their child if something upsetting is encountered although, as often claimed too, parents are also confident that their child can cope by themselves in such situations. Still, over one quarter of parents expects that something will occur online in the coming six months that will bother or upset their child, a far from satisfactory situation.

There are, it seems, some grounds for resistance, with nearly half of children thinking that parental mediation is restrictive in terms of their online activities. Moreover, and possibly relatedly, nearly a third of children say they ignore their parents to some degree in terms of online advice or rules. Younger children are, interestingly, both the most likely to feel restricted by parental mediation but also the most likely to wish for more parental engagement with their internet use.

In looking beyond parents to encompass additional sources of support and safety guidance for children, the *EU Kids Online* survey sought to examine the range of support available to children. Three quarters of children have received some form of mediation of their internet use from their teachers, although this varies considerably by country. Since this is somewhat less evident among the younger internet users, it seems clear that, as younger children become internet users their teachers should offer internet advice and guidance. Peers can be another source of guidance and, indeed, a similar proportion of peers are claimed by children as supportive – around three quarters, although such support is often rather practically focused on managing to do something the child finds difficult and rather less on safety or critical skills.

In terms of safety in particular, the findings show that internet safety advice is received first from parents, then from teachers and from then peers and other relatives. However, for older teenagers and for children from lower SES homes, advice from teachers overtakes that of parents. This suggests that the importance of teachers in compensating for parental support, where this latter is absent, should be recognised especially for these groups, as well as in certain countries. One in five European children say they get safety advice from the mass media, interestingly almost twice as many as get such advice from online sources.

Parents, similarly, get safety guidance from a range of sources, although their preferred source is their child's school. Although only one quarter of parents say they have received information on internet safety from the school, while almost twice as many have relied on family and friends and, even, the mass media, nearly half would prefer to receive such guidance from the school. Online sources are less popular, but still, a quarter wish for guidance from their internet service provider or from websites, and one in six wish for such information from manufacturers and retailers. Few say they have all the information they need already.

## 11.7. Comparing countries

Throughout this report we have compared findings for the 25 countries included in the survey. In the months following, one *EU Kids Online* work package will be devoted to seeking meaningful patterns that compare findings across countries, so as to interpret the often considerable variation observed throughout the present report. In addition to seeking meaningful patterns, we will also consider how best to explain these patterns. To that end, a series of external indicators relevant to children's use of the internet will be brought into the analysis. As shown in Figure 4, these include cross-national variation in socio-economic stratification, regulatory framework, technological infrastructure, education system and cultural values.

It is, therefore, beyond the scope of this report to interpret the variations observed in the foregoing tables and figures. However, in this section we can bring together the observed variation in a series of scatter plots that provide a visual summary of the findings regarding country comparisons.

Having reviewed the findings of some 400 studies conducted in Europe over the past decade, most of them focused on teenagers, *EU Kids Online* had proposed a country classification that crossed the proportion of child internet users in a country with the observed incidence of risk associated with that online use.[82] We had observed a broad correlation, on a country level, between the

proportion of internet users and the incidence of risk – defined as the percentage of children who had encountered online pornography, bullying, harassment, contacts that resulted in offline meetings, and so forth. Note that this review had included no measures of actual harm, these being largely unavailable.

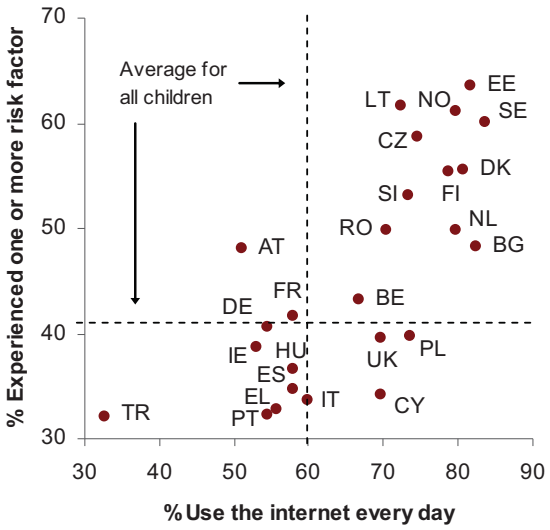
In addition to the implication that, as more children go online, the risk of harm will also rise, we had also noted that children in some countries encounter more risks because internet use is so embedded in their culture (labelled 'high use, high risk) while children in other countries encounter more risks because the internet is so new that it has reached children in advance of an infrastructure of safety practices and regulation (labelled 'new use, new risk'). Further, we noted that for an equivalent degree of use, children in some countries encountered more risks than in others.

A similar set of conclusions may be tentatively drawn from the present findings. Since the present survey included only internet-using children, the measure of use employed here is the percentage of children who use the internet every day. In Figure 102 countries are plotted according to the percentage of internet-using children in that country. The second variable by which countries are compared is the percentage of children in each country who have encountered one or more of the seven online risk factors listed in Table 62.[83] It must be borne in mind that the risks thereby referred to may be larger or, often, very small in terms of the associated probability of harm.

The horizontal line shows the average percentage of children in all countries that have experienced one or more of the risk factors. The vertical line shows the average percentage of children in all countries that use the internet on a daily basis.

**The overall finding is that the more children in a country use the internet daily, the more children in that country have encountered one or more of the risks. The same is true on the individual level, that children who use the internet on a daily basis are more likely than those who do not to have experienced one or more of the risk factors**.[84]

**Figure 102: Children who have encountered one or more online risk factors by children who use the internet daily, by country**




In sum, more use of the internet seems to go hand in hand with a higher likelihood of being exposed to one or more of the risk factors. **In Estonia, the Czech Republic, Sweden and several other countries, frequent use is associated with relatively high incidence of risk online. The group of countries in the top right of the figure may be classified still as a combination of 'higher use, higher risk' and 'new use, new risk'**, although which countries fall into these categories differ somewhat from that in *EU Kids Online*'s previous classification. This may reflect changing practices of internet use among children and/or changing awareness and regulatory strategies among industry, government and policy makers in those countries.

A second group of countries may be termed 'medium use, medium risk', shown towards the left of the vertical line (average use) and around or below the horizontal line (average risk). Whether these are heading for a future in the top right – more risk as use increases – cannot be determined and there is, arguably, an opportunity to implement policy interventions in advance of further embedding of the internet in children's daily lives.

The small group of countries characterised by high use, medium risk (Belgium, Poland and the UK) are intriguing, and will form the subject of our further investigation, as

will the tendency of Austria, German and France to experience more risk than other countries (below them in the figure) where children use the internet to a similar degree. Finally, it should be noted that Turkey is an outlier in this figure – far lower than other countries included in the survey in terms of both risk and use.

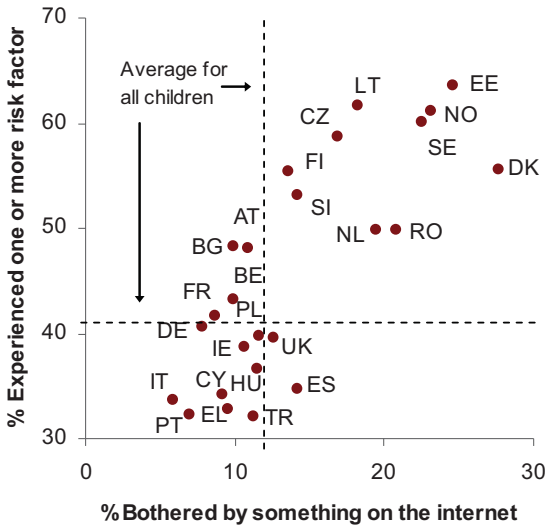
We have been at pains to observe, in the framing of the *EU Kids Online* project, that there is no simple solution to children's exposure to risk of harm on the internet. This framing is substantially supported by the finding, hypothesised from the outset, that **many encounters with risk factors of one kind or another do not, for most children, result in a substantial increase in their experience of actual harm. The risk of harm is, according to present findings, relatively small, although this is not to diminish the distress of the minority who experiences harm associated with internet use.**

The distinction between risk and harm is illustrated in Figure 103. **Although overall levels of harm reported by children are substantially lower than the levels of risk (which, in turn, characterise a minority of children), the correlation between the two is positive**.[85] Thus the bottom right segment shows countries where both risk and harm are below the country average. The top right segment shows countries where both risk and harm are above the country average. What is interesting is the patterning of countries beyond this broad trend.

In Finland, Austria and Bulgaria, it appears that reports of harm (i.e. being bothered or upset by something on the internet) are distinctively lower than in other countries where children report a similar level of risk (compare with the Netherlands, Romania and Slovenia). Similarly, in Spain, Turkey, Hungary and the UK, children report somewhat more harm than other countries where exposure to risk is similar (compare with Italy, Portugal, France and Germany).

Looking at the graph a different way, it seems that a similar proportion of children in the Netherlands and Sweden have been bothered by something online although children in Sweden have been exposed to more risks. Or, again, it seems that children in Denmark are more bothered by risks they encounter than, say, children in the Czech Republic: is this because they experience more subjective harm, or because they are more used to expressing their concerns publically? Disentangling why these patterns should occur, and identifying the external factors that account for this, is a task for our future research.

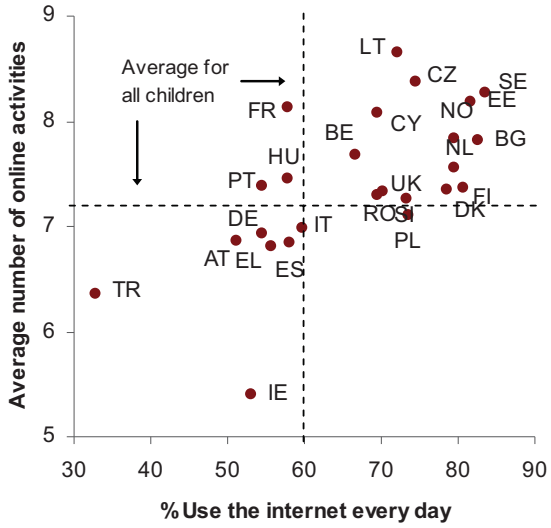
**Figure 103: Children who have encountered one or more online risk factors by children who have been bothered by something online, by country**




As we also emphasised in the framing of the project, risk reduction achieved by reducing internet use should not be the overarching goal for policy because internet use is also associated with many benefits for many children. A more nuanced approach to harm reduction must, therefore, be sought.

The positive association between internet use and online opportunities – and, ultimately, actual benefits – is shown in Figure 104. Using the same measure of use (the percentage of children in each country who use the internet daily), we now compare countries in terms of online activities. The measure used is the average number of online activities undertaken by children in a country (out of the 17 as defined in Table 5).

**Figure 104: Children's average number of online activities by children's daily use of the internet, by country**

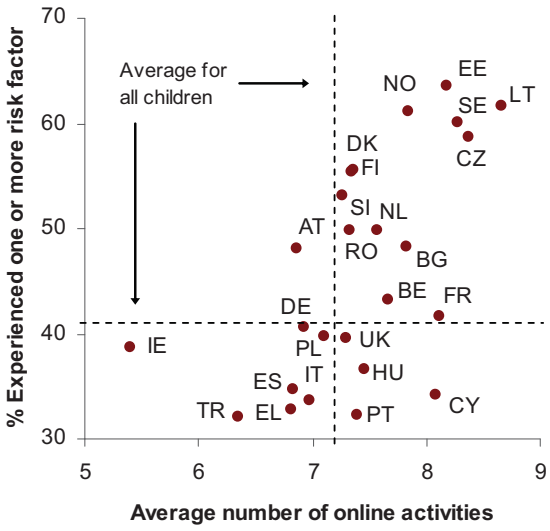



Here we see that, for the most part, **the more children use the internet, the more opportunities they enjoy. A similar correlation is also present at the individual level.**[86] In the top right are shown the countries where children make the most of the internet in every sense. Just below them in the bottom right segment are countries where children use the internet as much but their range of activities is a bit narrower. In the top left are countries where children do a wider range of activities than one might expect given their frequency of use. And in the bottom left are those countries where, in educational or civic spheres, efforts might be appropriately devoted to increasing the range of children's online activities. In this segment, two outliers exist – Turkey, noted earlier to be distinctly low in terms of use and, it seems, in terms of the range of online activities; and Ireland, where children have a narrower range of activities than children in other countries for an equivalent degree of usage.

So, if more children in a country use the internet daily, this is, broadly speaking, associated with both more risk and more opportunities. Since beneficial uses of the internet will surely develop digital skills and build competence and resilience to manage online risks, this poses a conundrum to policy makers.

To bring the present analysis to a close, Figure 105 plots countries in terms of the percentage of children who have encountered one or more risks and, additionally, the average number of online opportunities enjoyed by children in that country.

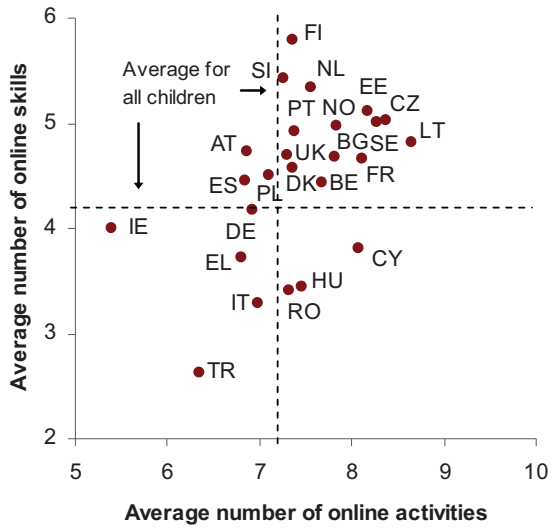
**Figure 105: Children who have encountered one or more online risk factors by children's average number of online activities, by country**




**More than any particular country groupings, what stands out from Figure 105 is the broad positive association between risks and opportunities, as experienced by children on a country level.**[87] The more of one, the more of the other, it appears – a simple finding but one that demands a complex explanation, to be pursued in future reports from *EU Kids Online*.

In this context, it will be interesting to understand not only in which countries a high proportion of children has experienced one or more of the risk factors but also, in which countries is this percentage higher or lower than would be expected given the range of online activities of children in that country – and why. For example, the low number of children in Ireland who have experienced one or more of the online risks seem to come at the cost of their range of online activities. In Portugal, by contrast, low levels of risk do not appear to be at the expense of the range of activities. Similarly, in Estonia and Lithuania children enjoy a wide range of online activities but, the same time, they also encounter higher levels of risk.

**Figure 106: Children's average number of online skills by children's average number of online activities, by country**

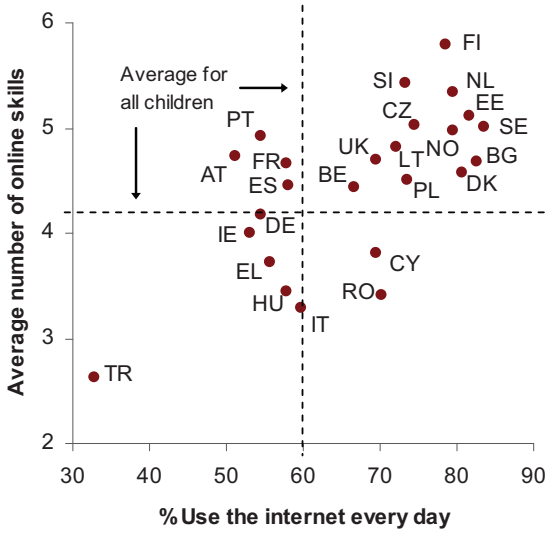



A positive association across countries is also evident from Figure 106.[88] This shows that **in countries where children do a wider range of activities online they also have more digital skills**. However, the association is less strong, with countries somewhat bunched in the top right quadrant.

Moreover, there are some thought-provoking contrasts shown in the table – for example, in Finland and Hungary, children claim a similar number of online activities, but Finnish children are considerably more skilled. In countries where children do a fair amount online but claim fewer skills (e.g. Cyprus, Hungary and Romania), further educational support to develop digital skills would seem vital.

This point is underlined also by the country scatterplot shown in Figure 107.[89] **This suggests that, for the most part, as children use the internet more frequently, they gain more skills**. But, in some countries, frequent use is not associated with such high levels of skills – notably, Cyprus, Romania and Italy. Some investigation, and consequently action, regarding why use does not result in greater skill would seem warranted in these countries in particular.

**Figure 107: Children's average number of online skills by children's daily use of the internet, by country**




In our final country scatterplot, we compare children's overall assessment of the internet in terms of the positive opportunities it offers them and the negative or upsetting experiences it poses children of their age (Figure 108). Here the correlation is still statistically significant, if weaker than the foregoing, showing a fair spread of national experiences.[90]

**Broadly speaking, children's experiences of online opportunities and risks go hand in hand – the more of one tends to mean the more of the other**. This correlation holds both across countries and across individuals. However, the countries may be meaningfully divided into four groups:

(i) countries where children report lots of good things and where most do not think there are things to bother children of their age online (e.g. Bulgaria, UK and Austria);

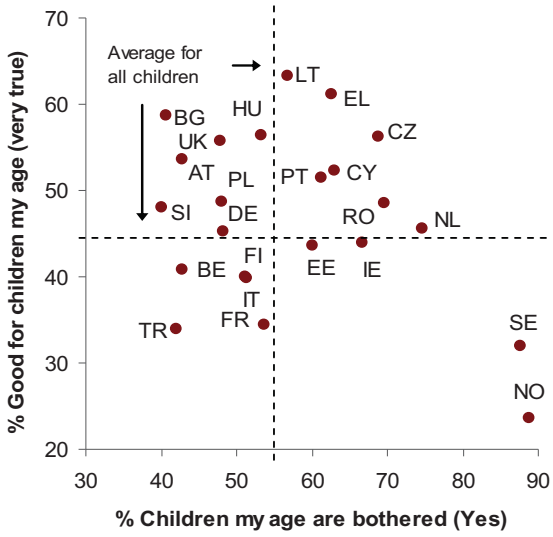
(ii) countries where children report lots of good things to do online but also a fair proportion think there are things online that bother people their age (e.g. Greece and the Czech Republic);

(iii) countries where children think there are quite a few things to bother children their age online, and are less positive about the internet's benefits (e.g. Norway, Sweden, Ireland and Estonia).

(iv) Countries where children perceive relatively fewer benefits or risks of internet use (e.g. Turkey, Belgium, France).

The explanation for such country groupings is likely to prove complex, and will be a focus of the upcoming analysis by the *EU Kids Online* network.

**Figure 108: Children who say that there are a lot of good things on the internet by children who have been bothered by something online, by country**




## 11.8. Keeping risks in perspective

For a careful account of children's risk of harm associated with internet use, and so as to enable proportionate policy initiatives and interventions, several means of keeping risks in perspective can be attempted. First, throughout this report we have kept our conclusions closely based on the actual questions asked to children and the percentage of children overall who reported particular risks, in order to avoid vague statements that could lead to over-generalised conclusions. The second is to retain a focus on the relation, albeit difficult to investigate empirically, between risk (the probability of harm) and measures of harm itself (here, examined using measures of subjective harm).

A third is to compare risk of harm associated with internet use by comparison with the other risks faced by children in their daily lives. We attempted two such comparisons in this report. For pornography, it was found that, overall, 23% of children have seen sexual images in one way or another, and 14% have seen them on the internet. Thus the internet has become, just, the most common way children see sexual images followed by 12% on television, films or videos, then 7% on magazines or books and 3% on their mobile phone. A second comparison of offline and online was undertaken in relation to bullying – this found that overall, 19% of children have been bullied in one way or another. The most common form of bullying is (still) in person face-to-face (13%), compared with 6% on the internet and 3% by mobile phone calls or messages.

A further comparison will be the focus of a future analysis, drawing on questions in the survey about other areas of children's (offline) lives and the risks they may encounter there.

Also in the coming months, *EU Kids Online* will compare the findings presented here with those of other surveys. This will require careful comparisons in terms of both question wording and sampling (especially by age). It may be immediately seen, however, that a number of the present findings are rather similar to those obtained in other surveys:

- For example, in terms of peer practices, the 15% of European 11-16 year olds found to have received sexual messages on the internet matches the 15% of US 12-17 year olds found by Pew Internet to have received sexual messages on their mobile phone.[91]
- In terms of overall subjective harm, the 12% of 9-16 year olds who have encountered something on the internet that bothered or upset them is similar to the British finding that 16 per cent of 8-15 year olds claim to have come across something 'nasty, worrying or frightening' online.[92]

For some of the risks discussed in this report – exposure to pornography especially, and possibly the incidence of bullying - the findings resulting from the *EU Kids Online* survey may seem low compared to some other surveys. In this context, several points should be noted.

- A random rather than convenience or self selected or quota sample was used. Surveys based on telephone interviewing miss the many households that lack a land line. Surveys conducted in school may not achieve random probability samples. We are confident that the present survey permitted a random sample of children to give careful, private answers.
- The findings for 'all children' (including those presented by demographics) are based on the

particular combination of 25 countries included in the EU Kids Online project, including some countries relatively new to the internet (e.g. Turkey) that may have dampened overall averages.

- Children were asked to report the incidence of risk in the past year (to aid the accuracy of their memory) rather than, as is common in surveys, whether they have 'ever' experienced a risk. So, for example, if a child had a phase of looking at pornography but has stopped some time ago, they will not be included in these estimates.
- Children were asked to complete sensitive questions in a private, self-completion mode (either with the computer screen turned to face them alone or in a pen and paper questionnaire, with a sealed envelope). Surveys conducted at school may be influenced by the presence of the peer group (likely to increase reporting of risk/harm events). Surveys conducted at home may be influenced by the presence of parents (likely to reduce reporting) although informally, yet systematically, every effort was made to give the child privacy and keep the parent out of the room.
- Surveys are often conducted with teenagers. The age trends in the present findings are generally strong, and thus the inclusion in overall findings of 9-12 year olds (half the sample) generally reduces the averages (hence the systematic presentation of findings broken down by age).
- Intriguingly, one answer may be time: in recent years, the considerable increase in awareness raising, investment in and improvement of safety tools, and sheer familiarity with the internet among families may be resulting in safer use. Comparisons with surveys conducted earlier may thus reflect a genuine improvement in the context within which children engage with the internet. The tendency for countries newer to safety initiatives (e.g. in Eastern Europe) often to have higher findings for risk of harm to children supports this tentative hypothesis.

A last means of keeping risks in perspective, as argued for when framing the project and illustrated in the previous section, is to keep in mind the vital interdependencies between internet use, online benefits and online risks. In short, our approach has recognised that, although the internet and online technologies afford an array of interlinked opportunities and risks, there is no necessary mapping of opportunities onto benefits or risks onto harms as experienced by children. Instead, what the internet makes available to children interacts with a range of individual and contextual factors to determine outcomes. These may be positive or negative in ways yet to be fully understood.

**Table 63: Online affordances for children**

| | Opportunities on the internet | Risks on the internet |
|---|---|---|
| Negative outcomes for children | If not realised (i.e. digital exclusion) | Upset (subjective)<br>Harm (objective) |
| Positive outcomes for children | Benefits of internet use | Learning to cope (resilience) |

As shown in Table 63 (see left-hand column), online opportunities may or may not produce beneficial outcomes. Notably, while gaining access to online opportunities is wonderful for many children, increasing the opportunities on offer will exacerbate the problem that disadvantaged children will miss out. Moreover (right-hand column), while some risks result in harm (since a risk can be defined as the probability of harm[93]), not all risks necessarily result in harm for all children. In relation to the internet, the probability that online risk results in harm to a child is often low. Further, under certain circumstances children learn to cope, becoming resilient precisely because of their exposure to a degree of risk.


# 12. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

***This section provides a summary of EU Kids Online Report D7.1: Recommendations on Safety Initiatives, by Brian O'Neill and Sharon McLaughlin. The full report is available at www.eukidsonline.net.***

## 12.1. Main policy priorities

Five main policy priorities arise from the findings of the EU Kids Online survey and which suggest new areas of interest and policy focus for the multiple stakeholders involved in policy making and implementation.

***1. Parental awareness***

One important overall finding from the EU Kids Online survey concerns the lack of awareness that many parents have regarding risks children face online. 40% of parents, for instance, were unaware of their children's exposure to sexual images online; 56% did not know that their child had been bullied; 52% were unaware that their children had received sexual messages; and 61% had no knowledge of offline meetings their children had with online contacts. A significant challenge arises for policy makers however in addressing the gaps in understanding between parents and children about young people's experience online. At the same time, given that the household remains the most prominent location for internet use (87%), parents are best positioned to offer mediation and support for children online.

**Parental awareness of risks and safety online needs to be enhanced. The priority for awareness raising for parents should be on alerting parents to the nature of the risks their children may encounter online while encouraging dialogue and greater understanding between parents and children in relation to young people's online activities. Parents need to be alerted to the risks involved while avoiding an alarmist or sensationalist approach. Increasing parental understanding of the risks has to be a key focus for awareness-raising, particularly in those countries where awareness of children's risk experience is lowest.**

At the same time, the role of parents in providing internet safety support is central, reinforced by the fact that the majority of internet use is at home and hence parents are the potential first point of contact when children experience difficulties online. **In order to assist them in this respect, emphasis should be given to the preeminent role parents occupy in supporting safer internet use for children.**

Parents' preferred sources of information on internet safety are firstly the child's school, followed by traditional media, other family and friends, internet service providers (ISPs) and other online sources. The fact that the use of industry tools (safety information, abuse buttons etc.) is low implies a lack of awareness and/or trust on the public's part. **Such awareness and trust is something that industry should seek to raise in order to improve take up of industry solutions by parents. Industry can also work closely with Awareness Centres to develop resources aimed at parents providing up-to-date advice on the latest technologies, risks and safety advice. Relevant stakeholders might also strengthen home-school initiatives such as training programmes, workshops and information dissemination.**

***2. Focus on younger users***

Children are going online at ever younger ages. Across Europe, one third of the 9-10 year olds using the internet go online daily. The average age of first internet use in some Northern European countries is seven. Younger children also lack skills and confidence in areas of internet use that are especially important for safety. **Accordingly, there needs to be a new policy focus on promoting awareness-raising and support measures designed to suit the needs of much younger internet users.** This means that not just secondary schools where the traditional focus has been but **primary schools need to develop new ways of reaching younger children as users of the internet providing age-appropriate training and advice.** Online resources aimed at younger children, for instance, must not assume reading competence. Teacher training also needs to equip

teachers, particularly within the primary sector where it is relatively new, with the skills to support younger children.

***3. Industry support for internet safety***

The essential role of industry is consistently emphasised in European internet safety policy and expressed through self-regulatory codes developed to promote good practice in safer internet safety use. Based on the findings of EU Kids Online, there are a number of areas in which such industry efforts should be improved. **In keeping with existing industry voluntary codes, internet service companies, especially social networking providers, should provide the maximum amount of security and highest level of privacy by default for children using their services.** Children are not always able to use existing technical features and the number of children, for instance, who are able to change their privacy settings is less than the number with a social networking profile. There is also little evidence of availability of online information regarding internet safety: only 15% of children have received such information from online sources, and just 4% from ISPs. Nearly four in ten overall did not receive advice from any of these sources. There is a clear need for reliable and accessible online information and **industry should ensure that authoritative internet safety resources are prominently displayed and accessible. Information about safety features, for instance, should be available to all users and their parents before signing up to a service. Parental controls as well as technical tools to support blocking, reporting and filtering should also be a cornerstone of industry child protection policy with a need to increase awareness of such mechanisms and to improve their accessibility and usability to aid better take-up by parents and children.**

***4. Digital citizenship***

Children and young people are increasingly going online independently of adult supervision. While the majority of internet use takes place at home (87%), 49% of young people go online in their own room. Moreover, 31% access the internet on a mobile phone and 24% on their own laptop. The widely promoted internet safety message of locating the PC used by children in a public space within the home remains important but is being overtaken by alternative means of internet access which are less amenable to adult supervision. Given the increasing trend towards more privatised use of the internet, the increasing prominence of mobile access, as well the ever younger age of children's first internet use, awareness raisers are consequently urged to focus efforts on developing self-protection and self-responsibility among children. **It is important, therefore, to encourage children to be responsible for their own safety as much as possible rather than rely on restrictive or adult forms of mediation. The focus of internet safety messaging should be on empowerment rather than restriction of children's usage, emphasising responsible behaviour and digital citizenship. Similarly, the development of policy, child safety practices and positive online content should also focus on children as a competent, participatory group.**

Digital citizenship can also be supported through a focus on developing children's digital skills. While most children have a basic level of internet skills, more creative aspects of online activity are actually not as common as some more enthusiastic visions of children's online expertise. Only 16% of children spend time in a virtual world, and just 11% have experience of writing a blog. **Digital skills training should, therefore, also focus attention on broadening the range of activities undertaken specifically, more creative aspects including content development, to ensure children avail of all the opportunities for learning and communicating online.**

***5. Positive content***

Less than one half (44%) of 9-16 year olds are very satisfied with levels of online provision available to them. Younger children are the least satisfied with the perceived quality of online provision – only 34% of 9-10 year olds say there are lots of good things for children of their age to do online. Teenagers, by contrast, are the most satisfied, presumably because they share in wider public provision.

At the same time, over half of European children aged 9-16 think that there are things on the internet that will bother children of their age. One in eight children say that they themselves have been bothered by something on the internet in the past year, a fact not recognised by all parents interviewed. On balance, while it may be said that children see the internet positively (90% think it true that 'there are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age'), the overall perception of negative aspects of the internet requires attention from policy makers.


**There is a responsibility, therefore, on all policy actors to ensure greater availability of age-appropriate positive content for children**. National initiatives, given the multi-lingual context of the internet across Europe are particularly important in this regard. Responses from children in several large language communities (France and Spain) were less than positive about the availability of high quality online opportunities suitable for their age. Locally produced content of relevance and accessible to children in their own language is an interest and concern of children and merits a strong response from regulatory and industry groups.

## 12.2. Action at regulatory and government level

Findings of the EU Kids Online survey highlight areas of action appropriate at the highest European and governmental policy levels, including the policy priorities of the EC's Safer Internet Programme'. At a general policy level, it is recommended that

- **Cooperative arrangements with industry should be continued and strengthened to bring about more effective safer online practices, and to continue to monitor their implementation on an independent basis.** Specifically, based on the findings of this survey in the sections that follow, we identify opportunities for industry to develop greater positive content for younger children, greater support for implementing safety features in social networking sites used by children, as well as the role of industry in developing resources for digital safety education. At a policy level, evaluation of the effectiveness of self-regulatory approaches for industry needs to be maintained and implemented on an on-going basis.
- **Digital divides based on inequalities of access, usage and knowledge need to be further understood and addressed through policy action.** Children from high SES homes enjoy a wider range of access to the internet, especially at home, in their bedroom, and via handheld or mobile devices. Children from lower SES homes are more likely to be bothered or upset by online sexual or pornographic content, as well as more upset by receiving nasty or hurtful messages online and by seeing or receiving sexual messages.
- A digital divide is more pronounced in Southern and Eastern European countries where children are less likely to have the level of access enjoyed by children in other parts of Europe. Research has shown that parents' level of internet use is catching up with that of children in most European countries. However, children's use exceeds that of parents, conforming to the 'digital natives' model, in the Eastern European countries of Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Lithuania and Turkey. **As such, targeted initiatives need to be undertaken, particularly in those predominantly Eastern Europe countries where parental use of the internet lags significantly behind that of children.**
- 21% of children have encountered websites containing potentially harmful user generated content such as sites containing hate messages, anorexic/bulimic sites, sites promoting self-harm or which discuss drug taking. Approximately 10% of children have experienced some form of personal data misuse. **Little is known about the effects of such experiences. The experience of mental health practitioners and allied professionals in this field may be valuable in addressing how such potentially negative features of children's online experience should be addressed through policy.**

At the national level, governments are responsible for legislative and regulatory controls, especially in relation to illegal content but also in relation to issues of protection of minors, data protection, ensuring freedom of expression and information, privacy, industry regulatory arrangements and educational policy and they are responsible for supporting internet safety initiatives at governmental level.

Many of the policy issues identified in this report as relevant at the European level apply also at national level.

- **Governments and regulators, for instance, can encourage the development of positive online content through production funding programmes and incentive schemes.**
- **While the density of information and communications technology (ICT) regulation at national level varies across Europe, the available degree of oversight or control that national governments have in relation to internet safety should be utilised to ensure effective regulation and evaluation of industry compliance with agreed codes of practice and national self-regulatory schemes.**
- The need for more extensive digital skills training and internet safety education arises directly from findings in relation to skills gaps, particularly among younger children, where on average children say they have just three of the eight skills asked about. **National**

**governments should therefore ensure that digital skills and internet safety are prioritised within the national educational curriculum particularly in countries such as Turkey, Romania, Italy and Hungary where a skills deficit is particularly pronounced.**

## 12.3. Actions from industry

Industry – whether this refers to Internet Service Providers (ISPs), content developers, service developers, or representative industry associations – all have a crucial role to play in facilitating and promoting online safety. Industry also has a strong interest in ensuring children have positive experiences online. As participants in co-regulatory agreements and codes of practice, SNS providers, and mobile communications operators undertake to support internet safety through information dissemination, through technical supports and child protection policies.

- In the EU Kids Online survey, only 56% of children are able to change their privacy settings, as a core digital skill. **In keeping with co-regulatory agreements and codes, therefore, operators should provide the maximum amount of security and highest level of privacy by default for children using their services.**
- Given that one quarter (26%) of children aged 9-10 report having their own social networking profile, and with the likelihood that many of these are 'underage' for the services they use, **special attention needs to be given by SNS providers to the data protection and privacy issues surrounding the large number of younger children using SNS.**
- It is also clear, given the increasingly privatised use of the internet found in this survey, that children and young people will not always have adult supervision available. **Industry can assist in this regard by ensuring that prominent internet safety advice and user-friendly internet tools that encourage children to be self-governing should be promoted by all service providers.**
- In response to the finding that just 44% of young people are satisfied with the provision of online content, **industry, including both public and private sector companies, is encouraged to develop more positive online content, especially for younger users. Awareness Centres and NGOs can assist in fostering partnerships with industry groups in developing dedicated content for younger children.**
- Despite the major policy emphasis on the use of parental controls or filters as a means of monitoring children's internet use, just one third of parents actually use them. **Industry developers can support greater uptake of such tools by developing more innovative approaches to the development of parental controls that are effective and meet the needs of parents and children.**

## 12.4. Actions related to awareness-raising

Awareness-raising is a central element of European internet safety policy and Insafe's extensive network of Awareness Centres is the principal platform by which internet safety is promulgated. Many of the issues arising from findings in the EU Kids Online survey unsurprisingly relate to awareness-raising activities, relating variously to the form and content of internet safety messaging, priority target groups and areas of risk that require particular attention.

A general theme arising from the survey's findings is that empowerment rather than restriction of children's usage and activities online is likely to be a more effective focus of internet safety messaging. Given the increasing trend towards more independent and privatised uses of the internet through increasing mobile access, as well as the ever younger age of children's first internet use, Awareness Centres may need to focus efforts on fostering a sense of self-responsibility among children while targeting. Specific safety messages with regard to mobile devices and other platforms are required as is a special focus on younger children as internet users and with appropriate resources tailored to their needs.

The following emerging trends regarding internet usage also imply new areas of focus for awareness-raising:

- Nearly one quarter of children report one or more experiences associated with excessive internet use rising to over a third of 11-16 year olds in countries such as Estonia and Portugal. **Greater awareness, therefore, of the potential dangers of excessive internet use should be incorporated into internet safety awareness-raising initiatives.**
- About 12% of children access the internet in cybercafés or other public locations. This is particularly important in countries with less home access. **As such internet safety advice should also be available in those public locations for**


**internet access used by young people (internet café, public libraries etc.) and safety messages should be prominently displayed for internet users. A case may be made for regulation of venues offering public internet access with responsibility for provision of internet safety provision placed on owners and service providers.**

In relation to the content of internet safety messages and awareness-raising campaigns, specific issues arising from the findings of the EU Kids Online survey include the following:

- In recognition of the children who have been bothered by something on the internet in the past year (12% of all children), schools and parents should reinforce the importance of reporting abuse while also encouraging children and young people to speak to an adult when they come across upsetting content.
- The most common way in which children come across sexual images online is through images that pop up accidentally (7% of all children; 12% of 15-16 year olds). **In order to avoid such accidental exposure to any unwanted content online, safety awareness messages need to give greater emphasis to the filter and safety settings of browsers and websites (including search engines and video hosting sites), informing parents and children about how to block such content.**
- The easy availability of pornography online causes much public debate and anxiety with respect to children's use of the internet. The finding that the internet is now the most common way for children to see sexual images (14%), marginally more than on television, films or videos (12%), may fuel further concern in this regard. The only observable gender difference is that teenage boys are more likely than girls to see pornography on websites, suggesting that when it comes to teenage boys, there is at least some degree of deliberate exposure, at least for a minority (24%). **The principal implication arising is that safety messaging should be measured in approach, avoiding implications of harm and seeking to empower parents and children to talk about the subject of sexual images online.**

With regard to wide concern about cyberbullying, a number of specific implications arise for awareness-raising policy. Social networking and instant messaging are the most common online channels in which children are the targets of nasty or hurtful messages. As such, awareness-raising should focus on SNS sites and IM. Given that 12% of children also report that they have bullied others, education programmes should address the child as both victim and perpetrator.

- **Given that face-to-face bullying was found to be more common than cyberbullying, anti-bullying messages should avoid over-sensationalising online features.**
- **Awareness raising in countries where bullying is more prominent should prioritise this as one of the key risks of children online.**

Of the 6% who have been bullied online, this is fairly upsetting or very upsetting for over half (54%), more so for younger children for whom the effect was longer lasting and for children from lower SES homes. Bullying is rarely trivial, in other words, and more vulnerable children need targeted support to enable them to cope more effectively. With regard to internet-specific responses to cyberbullying, deleting the hurtful messages and blocking the person who sent the hurtful messages was seen by children as being effective. Blocking unwanted contacts is clearly beneficial and should be encouraged. However, children require the knowledge and confidence to do this. The small proportion that changed their filter settings (18%) or reported the problem online (9%) suggests that such technical features require greater promotion on the part of service providers as well as better training in digital skills programmes. In summary:

- **Internet safety awareness dealing with cyberbullying should include responses and coping strategies targeted at children of different ages, enabling them to cope with situations that may arise in online communication and social networking.**
- **Awareness Centres and educational authorities should provide teachers with resources enabling them to be alert to, and be able to respond to, incidents of cyberbullying.**

With respect to some of the targeted messages that may be needed:

- A quarter (25%) of the children who have received sexual messages were bothered by this. Girls, younger children and children from lower SES homes appear to be more affected and it is these groups who should be the main target of policy interventions. **Internet safety for older children should also foster an understanding of privacy and the harm, inadvertent or otherwise, that can be caused by sexual messaging.**

- **Since instant messaging and social networking sites are the most common platforms for encountering sexual messages online, educational and awareness-raising initiatives should focus on these.**
- There is an overall under-utilisation of parental controls, with just under a third (28%) of parents preferring to use these. **Awareness Centres are well positioned to disseminate information about parental controls and to ensure that information for parents about available technologies and services is available in an accessible and user-friendly form.**

## 12.5. Education and schools

Schools are uniquely placed to address all children on internet safety and are regarded by parents as the most trusted source of information about internet safety information. Schools, as the second most common location for going online after the home, also provide children with important access opportunities. The pivotal role of schools in supporting ICT education and internet safety as such needs to be adequately resourced. Teachers and other educators are charged with considerable responsibility for digital skills and e-safety education and need to be supported to carry out this role. Actions relevant to the educational system include:

- With the age of first internet use as low as seven, **schools need to develop new ways of reaching younger children as users of the internet providing age-appropriate training and advice.** Teacher training needs to equip teachers, particularly within the primary sector where it is relatively new, with the skills to support younger children.
- Schools should provide special programmes aimed at educating and including those who do not have Internet access outside schools, making sure they do not miss out on peer-group opportunities and have sufficient skills.
- While most children have a basic range of skills relating to safe practices online, there are clear gaps particularly in relation to skills concerning privacy settings, the focus of extensive awareness-raising campaigns. **Digital skills training for young people needs to be emphasised on an ongoing basis, to include both internet safety skills as well as more creative aspects of internet use, to ensure that all children reach a minimum basic standard.**
- The significant proportion of children (26%) reporting that their social networking profile is public so that anyone can see it raises a number of public concerns. More restrictive privacy settings may, from the child's point of view, be associated with inhibiting the expansion of one's list of contacts. Therefore, advice regarding privacy settings must carefully balance children and young people's desires to socialise and interact online while prioritising keeping safe. **Education should pay particular attention to the child's self-management of online content and behaviour, enabling young people to become more critically aware of the benefits and risks associated with posting content online.**
- **Significant potential for peer-to-peer education and intervention programmes in appropriate settings including schools has been identified in this survey.** For instance, of those children aged 9-16 who had been bothered by seeing sexual images online, it was more likely that they would tell a friend about the last time it happened (33%). An even greater number (37%) confide in a friend if bothered by sexual messages they had received.
- With reference to cyberbullying, the low proportion of children who had been bullied who told a teacher (7%) raises questions as to why the educational environment is not conducive to dialogue. **Teachers need to be alert to the risks of bullying online and to be able to respond when incidents arise.**
- Parents express a clear preference for schools as the best source of safety information (43% over and above other sources of information). **In order to support and develop the effectiveness of parental mediation, schools should strengthen home-school initiatives such as training programmes, workshops and information dissemination.**

## 12.6. Issues and advice for parents

The need for greater levels of parental awareness of risks faced by children online is referred to above. A priority for awareness-raising for parents should be on alerting parents to the nature of the risks their children may encounter online while encouraging dialogue and greater understanding between parents and children in relation to young people's online activities.

Specific advice for parents includes:

- **As they are not always available or able to supervise their children's online activities,**


**parents should seek to promote self-management skills for their children.**

- **Parents should discuss issues of excessive internet use with their children and agree limits of screen time and internet use at home.**
- With a significant proportion of children (26%) reporting that their social networking profile is public, **parents should discuss privacy settings with their children, being respectful of their children's privacy while being alert to the risks involved.**
- Face-to-face meetings with online contacts has been a matter of policy concern. In the EU Kids Online survey, 11% of children who had gone on to meet new people offline were bothered by the experience. Significantly, 31% of 9-10 year old children were bothered or upset by some aspect of it. **This suggests that, despite the relatively low occurrence of such meetings, contact risks should remain a priority in child safety strategies and parents, teachers and other responsible adults should be made alert to the risks involved.**
- Parents should encourage their children to experience positive content online and to develop digital skills through participation.


www.eukidsonline.net

# LIST OF TABLES

# ANNEX 1: EU KIDS ONLINE

## Overview

*EU Kids Online II: Enhancing Knowledge Regarding European Children's Use, Risk and Safety Online* is funded from 2009-2011 by the EC's Safer Internet Programme.[94]

The project aims to enhance knowledge of European children's and parents' experiences and practices regarding risky and safer use of the internet and new online technologies, in order to inform the promotion of a safer online environment for children among national and international stakeholders.

Adopting an approach that is child-centred, comparative, critical and contextual, *EU Kids Online* has conducted a major survey of children's experiences (and their parents' perceptions) of online risk in 25 European countries. The findings will be disseminated through a series of reports and presentations during 2010-12.

## Objectives

- To design a robust survey instrument appropriate for identifying the nature of children's online access, use, risk, coping and safety awareness.
- To design a robust survey instrument appropriate for identifying parental experiences, practices and concerns regarding their child's internet use.
- To administer the survey in a reliable and ethically-sensitive manner to national samples of internet users aged 9-16 and their parents in Europe.
- To analyse the results systematically to identify core findings and more complex patterns among findings on a national and comparative basis.
- To disseminate the findings in a timely manner to a wide range of relevant stakeholders nationally, across Europe, and internationally.
- To identify and disseminate key recommendations relevant to the development of safety awareness initiatives in Europe.
- To identify remaining knowledge gaps and methodological guidance to inform future projects on the safer use of online technologies.

## Work packages

WP1: Project Management and Evaluation: ensure effective conduct and evaluation of work packages.

WP2: Project Design: design a robust survey instrument and sampling frame for children and parents.

WP3: Data Collection: tender, select and work with the subcontractor appointed to conduct the fieldwork.

WP4: Data Reporting: cross-tabulation, presentation and report of core findings.

WP5: Statistical Analysis of Hypotheses: analysis and hypothesis testing of relations among variables.

WP6: Cross-National Comparisons: interpretation of similarities and differences across countries.

WP7: Recommendations: guide awareness and safety initiatives and future projects in this field.

WP8: Dissemination of Project Results: dissemination to diverse stakeholders and the wider public.

## International Advisory Panel

- María José Cantarino, Corporate Responsibility Manager, Telefonica, Spain.
- Dieter Carstensen, Save the Children Denmark, European NGO Alliance on Child Safety Online.
- Professors David Finkelhor and Janis Wolak, Crimes against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire, USA.
- Will Gardner, CEO of Childnet International, UK.
- Dr Ellen Helsper, Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics, UK.
- Amanda Lenhart, Pew Internet & American Life Project.
- Prof Eileen Munro, Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics, UK.
- Annie Mullins, Global Head of Content Standards, Vodafone, UK.
- Kjartan Ólafsson, University of Akureyri, Iceland.
- Janice Richardson, project manager at European Schoolnet, coordinator of Insafe, Brussels, Belgium.
- Agnieszka Wrzesień, Project Coordinator, Polish Safer Internet Node, Nobody's Children Foundation.


# ANNEX 2: THE NETWORK

| Country | National Contact Information | Team Members | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Austria (AT) | Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink ingrid.paus-hasebrink@sbg.ac.at<br>Department of Audiovisual Communication, University of Salzburg, Rudolfskai 42, A-5020 Salzburg, Austria | Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink<br>Andrea Dürager | |
| Belgium (BE) | Leen D'Haenens Leen.DHaenens@soc.kuleuven.be<br>Centrum voor Mediacultuur en Communicatietechnologie (OE), OE Centr. Mediacult.& Comm.technologie,<br>Parkstraat 45 – bus 3603, 3000 Leuven, Belgium | Leen d'Haenens<br>Verónica Donoso<br>Sofie Vandoninck<br>Joke Bauwens | Katia Segers |
| Bulgaria (BG) | Jivka Marinova gert@mbox.contact.bg<br>Gender Education, Research and Technologies foundation, P.O.B. 963, Sofia 1000, Bulgaria | Jivka Marinova<br>Diana Boteva | |
| Cyprus (CY) | Yiannis Laouris laouris@cnti.org.cy<br>Cyprus Neuroscience & Technology Institute<br>Science Unit of the Future Worlds Center<br>5 Promitheos, 1065 Lefkosia, Cyprus | Yiannis Laouris<br>Tatjana Taraszow<br>Elena Aristodemou<br>Aysu Arsoy | |
| Czech Republic (CZ) | David Šmahel smahel@fss.muni.cz<br>Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University<br>Joštova 10, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic | David Šmahel<br>Štepán Konečný<br>Lukáš Blinka | Anna Ševčíková<br>Petra Vondráčková<br>Alena Černá |
| Denmark (DK) | Gitte Stald stald@itu.dk<br>IT University of Copenhagen,<br>Ruud Langgaards Vej 7, 2300 Copenhagen, Denmark | Gitte Stald | |
| Estonia (EE) | Veronika Kalmus Veronika.Kalmus@ut.ee<br>Institute of Journalism and Communication, University of Tartu, 18 Ülikooli St., 50090 Tartu, Estonia | Veronika Kalmus<br>Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt<br>Pille Runnel | Andra Siibak<br>Kadri Ugur<br>Lennart Komp |
| Finland (FI) | Reijo Kupiainen reijo.kupiainen@uta.fi<br>Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Tampere, 33014 Finland | Reijo Kupiainen<br>Kaarina Nikunen<br>Annikka Suoninen | Riitta Kauppinen |
| France (FR) | Dominique Pasquier Dominique.Pasquier@ehess.fr<br>Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications<br>46 rue Barrault, 75013 Paris, France | Dominique Pasquier<br>Sylvie Octobre | Elodie Kredens<br>Pauline Reboul |
| Germany (DE) (Management Group) | Uwe Hasebrink u.hasebrink@hans-bredow-institut.de<br>Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research<br>Warburgstr. 8-10, D - 20354 Hamburg, Germany | Uwe Hasebrink<br>Claudia Lampert | |
| Greece (EL) | Liza Tsaliki etsaliki@media.uoa.gr<br>Department of Mass Media and Communications<br>National and Kapodistrian University of Athens<br>5 Stadiou Street, Athens 105 62, Greece | Liza Tsaliki<br>Despina Chronaki<br>Eleni-Revekka Staiou | Kalpaki Kornilia<br>Konstantina Michalopoulou |
| Hungary (HU) | Bence Ságvári bence.sagvari@ithaka.hu<br>Information Society and Network Research Center – ITHAKA, Perc u. 8, Budapest, 1036 Hungary | Anna Galácz<br>Bence Ságvári<br>Erik Gerhradt | Zsófia Rét |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ireland (IE)<br>(Management Group) | Brian O'Neill brian.oneill@dit.ie<br>College of Arts and Tourism, Dublin Institute of Technology, Rathmines Road, Dublin 6, Ireland | Brian O'Neill<br>Nóirín Hayes<br>Simon Grehan | Sharon McLaughlin |
| Italy (IT) | Giovanna Mascheroni giovanna.mascheroni@unicatt.it<br>OssCom, Università Cattolica del S. Cuore<br>Largo Gemelli, 1, 20123 Milano, Italy | Fausto Colombo<br>Piermarco Aroldi<br>Barbara Scifo | Giovanna Mascheroni<br>Maria Francesca Murru |
| Lithuania (LT) | Alfredas Laurinavičius allaur@mruni.eu<br>Department of Psychology, Mykolas Romeris University, Ateities st. 20, LT-08303 Vilnius, Lithuania | Alfredas Laurinavičius<br>Laura Ustinavičūtė<br>Rita Žukauskiene | |
| Netherlands (NL) | Jos de Haan j.de.haan@scp.nl<br>Netherlands Institute for Social Research \| SCP<br>P.O. Box 16164, 2500 BD Den Haag, The Netherlands | Jos de Haan<br>Patti M. Valkenburg<br>Marion Duimel<br>Els Kuiper | Linda Adrichem<br>Jochen Peter<br>Maria Koutamanis<br>Nathalie Sonck |
| Norway (NO) | Elisabeth Staksrud elisabeth.staksrud@media.uio.no<br>Dept. of Media and Communication, University of Oslo<br>Boks 1093 Blindern, 0317 Oslo, Norway | Elisabeth Staksrud<br>Ingunn Hagen<br>Jørgen Kirksæther | |
| Poland (PL) | Lucyna Kirwil lucyna.kirwil@swps.edu.pl<br>Department of Psychology<br>Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities<br>ul. Chodakowska 19/31, 03-815 Warsaw, Poland | Lucyna Kirwil<br>Aldona Zdrodowska | |
| Portugal (PT)<br>(Management Group) | Cristina Ponte cristina.ponte@fcsh.unl.pt<br>Departamento de Ciências da Comunicação<br>Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas,<br>Universidade Nova de Lisboa (UNL)<br>Av. de Berna, 26-C, 1069-061 Lisboa, Portugal | Cristina Ponte<br>José Alberto Simões<br>Daniel Cardoso<br>Ana Jorge | |
| Romania (RO) | Monica Barbovschi moni.barbovski@gmail.com<br>Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, 21 Decembrie 1989 st. no.128-130, Cluj-Napoca, Romania | Monica Barbovschi<br>Maria Diaconescu<br>Eva Laszlo | George Roman<br>Valentina Marinescu<br>Anca Velicu |
| Slovenia (SL)<br>(Management Group) | Bojana Lobe bojana.lobe@fdv.uni-lj.si<br>Centre for Methodology and Informatics<br>Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana<br>Kardeljeva pl. 5, Ljubljana, Slovenia | Bojana Lobe<br>Sandra Muha | |
| Spain (ES) | Maialen Garmendia maialen.garmendia@ehu.es<br>Depto. de Sociología, Universidad del País Vasco,<br>Apartado 644, 48.080 Bilbao, Spain | Carmelo Garitaonandia<br>Maialen Garmendia<br>Miguel Angel Casado | Gemma Martínez<br>Fernández |
| Sweden (SE) | Cecilia von Feilitzen cecilia.von.feilitzen@sh.se<br>The International Clearinghouse on Children,<br>Youth and Media, Nordicom, Goteborg University,<br>Box 713, 405 30 Goteborg, Sweden | Cecilia von Feilitzen<br>Elza Dunkels<br>Olle Findahl | |
| Turkey (TR) | Kursat Cagiltay kursat@metu.edu.tr<br>Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technology, Faculty of Education, Middle East Technical University, 06531, Ankara, Turkey | Kursat Cagiltay<br>Engin Kursun<br>Duygu Nazire Kasikci | Christine Ogan<br>Turkan Karakus |
| United Kingdom (UK)<br>(Coordinator,<br>Management Group) | Leslie Haddon leshaddon@aol.com<br>Department of Media and Communications<br>London School of Economics and Political Science<br>Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK | Sonia Livingstone<br>Leslie Haddon<br>Anke Görzig<br>Daniel Kardefelt-Winther | |


# ANNEX 3: SURVEY DETAILS

## Sampling

- For each country, samples were stratified by region and level of urbanisation.
- Sampling points were selected from official and complete registers of geographical/administrative units.
- Addresses were selected randomly by using Random Walk procedures in most countries. In a few countries we used an alternative approach to recruitment which fitted better with local standard practice, keeping to the principle of random selection.
- At each address that agreed to interview we randomly selected one child from all eligible children in the household (i.e. all those aged 9-16 who use the internet) on the basis of whichever eligible child had the most recent birthday. If a household contained more than one parent/carer, we selected the one who knew most about the child and their internet use.

## Fieldwork

Fieldwork was carried out between April and August 2010. A parent interview was conducted for every child interviewed.

The child interview was conducted face-to-face, with a self-completion component for the sensitive questions on online risks as well as the interviewer-administered one. Incentives were used to encourage participation in some countries.

The questionnaires were developed by *EU Kids Online* with guidance from Ipsos MORI. They were tested and refined by a two-phase process of cognitive interviewing and pilot testing.

- Phase one cognitive testing involved 20 cognitive interviews (14 with children and six with parents) in England using an English language questionnaire. Several refinements were then made to the questionnaires.
- The amended master questionnaires were then translated and cognitively tested via four interviews in each of 16 other countries, to ensure testing in all main languages. A small number of parent interviews were also conducted in some cases. Again, amendments to the questionnaires were made for the final versions.
- Before the main fieldwork, a pilot survey was conducted to test all aspects of the survey including sampling, recruitment and the interview process. A total of 102 pilot interviews were carried out across five countries: Germany, Slovenia, Ireland, Portugal and the UK.

## Data processing

- The questionnaires, with all response options and full interviewer instructions, are online at www.eukidsonline.net.
- Weighting: three forms of weighting have been applied to the data – (i) design weights which adjust for unequal probabilities of selection; (ii) non-response weights which correct for bias caused by differing levels of response across different groups of the population and (iii) a European level weight which adjusts for country level contribution to the overall results according to population size. As there are no available data on the population of children aged 9-16 who use the internet by country, these percentages were estimated using data from Eurobarometer and Eurostat.
- Socio-economic status (SES): information relating to the head of household's (designated as the chief income earner) level of education and occupation was collected during the screening process. Responses to level of education and employment were then grouped and cross-referenced with each other to calculate one of three levels of SES: low, middle and high. Note that, as is often the case with European research, a uniform approach was taken to the calculation of SES across all 25 countries; thus SES is not relative to the differences between the socio-demographic make-up of each country.

## Accuracy of the findings

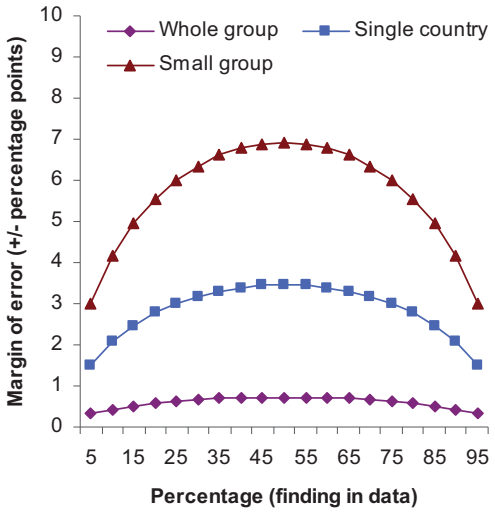
To judge the accuracy of numbers in studies like the one carried out in the EU Kids Online project it is first necessary to distinguish between two types of error: random error and systematic error (or bias). All numbers presented in this report are to some extent affected by these and are thus essentially estimates of some true (but unknown) values.

Systematic error (or bias) occurs when the estimates provided in the study are systematically higher or lower than the true value. This can for example be the result of sampling procedures or measurements (e.g. question wording). The EU Kids Online survey has been carefully designed to avoid such error. The cognitive testing of the survey instruments is an example of efforts taken to minimise systematic bias.

Random error occurs because not all children in all of the 25 countries were interviewed: the results from the samples of 1,000 children in each country will invariably depart slightly from the findings that would have been obtained had it been possible to interview all children. This difference is small and gets smaller the more children there are in the sample. However, the smaller the group being analysed, the greater the random error. Further, very small (or very large) percentages (e.g. when few children have experienced a particular risk) are more accurate than percentages closer to 50%.

Figure 109 shows how the random error behaves for three typical groups. The lowest line approximates how the margin of error varies for estimates based on the whole data set (all children in all countries). The middle line shows how the margin of error varies for estimates based on data from all children in a single country. The top line shows how the margin of error varies for analysis based on small groups (e.g., just children who have experienced a certain kind of risk and been bothered).

**Figure 109: Estimated margin of error for analysis based on groups of different size in the EU Kids Online study**




To give an example of how this works it is possible to look at the number of children who have seen sexual images on any website which is estimated at 14% in the report. This estimate is based on answers from over 25,000 respondents and thus has a very small margin of error (only around ± 0.4 percentage points). In Turkey approximately the same number of children (13%) say that they have seen sexual images on any website but as this estimate is based on answers from about 1,000nd respondents in Turkey the margin of error becomes larger (around ± 2.4 percentage points). The margin of error is then lower for Germany (5% ± 1.6 percentage points) but higher for Estonia (30% ± 3.4 percentage points) where the same number of respondents has participated in the survey in each country but where the lower percentage (5%) has a lower margin of error than the higher percentage (30%).

When working with the overall findings from all children in all countries or for all children within each country the random error is in most cases very small. For some parts of the dataset, the groups being examined are small and thus due care has been taken not to exceed the analytical possibilities of the data. Readers of the report should take care not to over generalise from findings based on small subsets of the data.

Confidence intervals for the percentages in this report are reported as follows. For most numbers, the confidence interval is below +/-5%. Where the confidence interval is between 5-10%, this is marked, meaning that there is a 95% certainty that the interval of +/- 5-10% around the marked number contains the true percentage in the population. For a few numbers, the confidence interval exceeds 10% and these are also marked, meaning that there is a 95% certainty that the interval of +/- 10+% around this number contains the true percentage in the population). Such percentages are included as an indicative approximation of the population value not ensuring accuracy.

## Research materials

Materials and resources associated with the research process summarised above are available at www.eukidsonline.net.

- Technical report on the fieldwork process
- Original questionnaires (for children, for parents)
- Letters to parents and safety leaflets for children
- Research ethics procedures
- Cross tabulations of core findings

These are freely available to interested researchers and research users, provided the following credit is included:

> This [article/chapter/report/presentation/project] draws on the work of the 'EU Kids Online' network funded by the EC (DG Information Society) Safer Internet Programme (project code SIP-KEP-321803); see www.eukidsonline.net.

If outputs result from the use of these resources, we request that an email is sent to inform us of this use, to Eukidsonline@lse.ac.uk. The dataset will be made public in late 2011.


## Details of main fieldwork, by country

| Country | Children in population 9-16 years[95] | Estimated children online[96] | Number of interviews | Interview methodology | Method of address selection | Fieldwork dates 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria (AT) | 739,722 | 86% | 1,000 | PAPI | Random Walk | 24 April-25 July |
| Belgium (BE) | 974,461 | 78% | 1,006 | PAPI | Random Walk | 6 May-14 July |
| Bulgaria (BG) | 554,032 | 91% | 1,088 | PAPI | Random Walk | 6 May-24 June |
| Cyprus (CY) | 82,059 | 68% | 806 | PAPI | Random Walk | 17 May-20 Sept |
| Czech Republic (CZ) | 809,443 | 90% | 1,009 | PAPI | Pre-selected households - telephone recruitment | 21 May-2 July |
| Denmark (DE) | 558,236 | 97% | 1,001 | CAPI | Pre-selected households - telephone recruitment | 30 April-14 June |
| Estonia (EE) | 105,460 | 96% | 1,005 | CAPI | Random Walk | 10 May-14 July |
| Finland (FI) | 501,387 | 98% | 1,017 | CAPI | Random Walk | 28 April-2 July |
| France (FR) | 6,005,850 | 87% | 1,000 | PAPI | Random Walk | 6 May-3 July |
| Germany (DE) | 6,419,300 | 86% | 1,023 | CAPI | Random Walk | 20 May-7 July |
| Greece (EL) | 862,481 | 59% | 1,000 | PAPI | Random Walk | 10 May-2 July |
| Hungary (HU) | 854,406 | 93% | 1,000 | PAPI | Pre-selected households with children aged 9-16 | 10 May-15 June |
| Italy (IT) | 4,516,646 | 55% | 1,021 | CAPI | Random Walk | 28 April-3 July |
| Ireland (IE) | 458,260 | 93% | 990 | CAPI | Random Walk | 5 May-24 July |
| Lithuania (LT) | 320,821 | 96% | 1,004 | PAPI | Random Walk | 23 April-6 July |
| Netherlands (NL) | 1,582,903 | 96% | 1,004 | PAPI | Pre-selected households - telephone recruitment | 3 May-5 August |
| Norway (NO) | 503,160 | 98% | 1,019 | CAPI | Pre-selected households - telephone recruitment | 21 May-19 Oct |
| Poland (PL) | 3,490,271 | 97% | 1,034 | PAPI | Pre-selected households | 6 May-26 July |
| Portugal (PT) | 871,444 | 78% | 1,000 | PAPI | Random Walk | 29 April-30 July |
| Romania (RO) | 1,821,471 | 78% | 1,041 | PAPI | Random Walk | 16 May-25 June |
| Slovenia (SI) | 154,063 | 95% | 1,000 | CAPI | Random Walk and pre-selected households with children aged 9- | 3 May-27 August |
| Spain (ES) | 3,401,338 | 80% | 1,024 | CAPI | Random Walk | 10 May-15 July |
| Sweden (SE) | 861,183 | 98% | 1,000 | CAPI | Pre-selected households with children 9-16 - telephone | 27 May-20 Sept |
| Turkey (TR) | 10,297,791 | 65% | 1,018 | CAPI | Random Walk | 3 May-17 June |
| United Kingdom (UK) | 5,861,598 | 98% | 1,032 | PAPI | Random Walk | 1 May-21 June |

# ENDNOTES

[1] See Livingstone, S., & Haddon, L. (2009) *EU Kids Online: Final Report*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24372/ See also Livingstone, S., & Haddon, L. (2009a). *Kids online: Opportunities and risks for children*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

[2] Optem (2007) *Safer Internet for Children: Qualitative Study in 29 European Countries*. Luxembourg: EC.

[3] Livingstone, S. & Helsper, E. (2010) Balancing opportunities and risks in teenagers' use of the internet. *New Media & Society*, 12(2): 309-329.

[4] Helsper, E., & Eynon, R. (2010) Digital natives: where is the evidence? *British Educational Research Journal, 36*(3), 502-520.

[5] Livingstone, S. (2009) *Children and the Internet: Great Expectations, Challenging Realities*. Cambridge: Polity.

[6] Finnish participation was separately funded by the Finnish Ministries of Education and Culture and of Transport and Communications.

[7] Lupton, D. (Ed.). (1999) *Risk*. London: Routledge.

[8] Schoon, I. (2006) *Risk and resilience*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[9] Coleman, J., & Hagell, A. (Eds.). (2007) *Adolescence, risk and resilience*. Chichester: Wiley.

[10] Hasebrink, U., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., & Olafsson, K. (2009) *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. 2nd ed. At http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24368/ . Note: not all cells in the table were included in the EU Kids Online survey, just those in bold face.

[11] Bakardjieva, M. (2005) Conceptualizing user agency. In *Internet Society: The Internet in Everyday Life* (pp. 9-36). London: Sage.

[12]Hasebrink, U., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., & Olafsson, K. (2009) *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. 2nd ed. At http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24368/ .

[13] Livingstone, S. (2010) 'e-Youth: (Future) Policy Implications: Risk, harm and vulnerability online.' Keynote at *e-Youth: balancing between opportunities and risks*, University of Antwerp, May 2010. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/27849/

[14] The term originated in relation to mobile phone practices and was later applied to online messages. See Sacco, D. T., Argudin, R., Maguire, J., & Tallon, K. (2010) *Sexting: Youth Practices and Legal Implications*. Cambridge, MA: Berkman.

[15] Note that the EU Kids Online survey included a range of questions concerned with children's psychological strength/vulnerability (self-efficacy, emotional problems, peer conduct problems, sensation-seeking, and so on) which will, in future analysis, be examined as possible predictors of online risk and harm.

[16] Note that since levels of education also vary across countries, the measure of SES used throughout this report, which is an absolute not a relative measure, varies by country. In short, what appear as country differences may also or instead reflect SES differences and vice versa. For a fuller account, see the Technical Report at www.eukidsonline.net.

[17] European Commission. (2009) *Key data on education in Europe 2009*. Brussels.

[18] For all tables and figures, the exact question number on the questionnaire is reported. Where younger and older children's questionnaires use different numbers, that for the older children is reported (questionnaires may be found at www.eukidsonline.net).

[19] As already noted, there is an association between the SES classification and countries, since an absolute measure of SES was used. Thus throughout this report, SES differences may reflect country differences also.

[20] European Commission. (2010) *A digital agenda for Europe*. Brussels.

[21] Note that in Table 3, the percentage for 'mobile phone' may overlap with handheld device as multiple responses were permitted. In Figure 7, these have been recalculated as mutually exclusive.

[22] Since children may go online via a handheld and also a mobile phone, or since their handheld device may also be a mobile phone, pulling these categories apart is tricky, especially in an interview with a child. So, 31% go online via a mobile, 12% go online via a handheld device, and 33% go online via either or both of a mobile and handheld device. By implication, 9% go online via a mobile and another handheld device.

[23] Livingstone, S. & Helsper, E. (2010) Balancing opportunities and risks in teenagers' use of the internet. *New Media & Society*, 12(2): 309-329.

[24] Hargittai, E., & Shafer, S. (2006) Differences in actual and perceived online skills. *Social Science Quarterly, 87*(2), 432-448.

[25] Hargittai, E., & Shafer, S. (2006) Differences in actual and perceived online skills. *Social Science Quarterly, 87*(2), 432-448.


[26] Widyanto, L., & Griffiths, M. (2007) Internet Addiction. In J. Gackenbach (Ed.), *Psychology and the internet* (2nd ed., pp. 127-149). Amsterdam: Elsevier/Academic Press.

[27] Šmahel, D., Ševčíková, A., Blinka, L., & Veselá, M. (2009) Addiction and Internet Applications. In B. Stetina & I. Kryspin-Exner (Eds.), *Gesundheit und Neue Medien* (pp. 235-260). Berlin: Springer.

[28] Livingstone, S. & Helsper, E. (2010) Balancing opportunities and risks in teenagers' use of the internet. *New Media & Society*, 12(2): 309-329.

[29] This approach contrasts those who have not grown up with the internet (immigrants) to those who have (natives). See Prensky, M. 2001. Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon, 9* (5): 1-2. . For a critique, see Helsper, E.J. and Eynon, R. (2010) 'Digital natives: where is the evidence?' *British Educational Research Journal*, *36*(3): 502-20.

[30] See Eurobarometer. (2008) *Towards a Safer Use of the Internet for Children in the EU: A Parents' Perspective*. Luxembourg: European Commission. Analysis comparing parents and children is reported in Hasebrink, U., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., & Olafsson, K. (2009) *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. 2nd ed. At http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24368/ .

[31] Hasebrink, U., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., & Olafsson, K. (2009) *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. 2nd ed. At http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24368/ .

[32] See Hasebrink, U., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., & Olafsson, K. (2009) *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. 2nd ed. At http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24368/ for an analysis of the Eurobarometer findings.

[33] Hasebrink, U., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., & Olafsson, K. (2009) *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. 2nd ed. At http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24368/ .

[34] Tsatsou, P., Pruulmann-Vengefeldt, P. and Murru, M.F. Digital divides. In In S. Livingstone and L. Haddon, *Kids online: Opportunities and risks for children*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

[35] Jenkins, H. (2006) *An Occasional Paper on Digital Media and Learning.*Chicago: The John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation.

[36] McQuillan, H. And D'Haenens, L. Young people online: gender and age influences. In S. Livingstone and L. Haddon, *Kids online: Opportunities and risks for children*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

[37] Livingstone, S., and Helsper, E. J. (2007) Gradations in digital inclusion: Children, young people and the digital divide. *New Media & Society*, 9(4): 671-696. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/2768

[38] To be sure that children understood these questions, most options included national examples. For instance, in the UK questionnaire, option 14 was phrased: "Used file sharing sites (peer-to-peer) (e.g. Limewire, Kazaa)."

[39] See paragraph 10, DECISION No 1351/2008/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL (16 December 2008).http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:348:0118:0127:EN:PDF

[40] Ybarra, M. L., & Mitchell, K. J. (2008) How Risky Are Social Networking Sites? A Comparison of Places Online Where Youth Sexual Solicitation and Harassment Occurs. *Pediatrics, 121*(2), e350-e357.

[41] See Safer Social Networking Principles for the EU (2009), at http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/social_networking/docs/sn_principles.pdf

[42] Livingstone, S. (2008) Taking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: teenagers' use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy and self-expression. *New Media & Society,* 10(3): 393-411. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/27072

[43] Livingstone, S. (2008) 'Taking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: teenagers' use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy and self-expression.' *New Media & Society*, *10*(3): 393-411 (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/27072).

[44] Peter, J., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2006) Adolescents' Exposure to Sexually Explicit Material on the Internet. *Communication Research, 33*(2), 178-204.

[45] Finkelhor, D. (2008) *Childhood victimization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[46] In countries, shown in Annex 3, where survey administration was computer assisted (CAPI), the computer was turned to face the child for sensitive questions. In other countries, the child completed a private pen-and-page questionnaire, putting this into a sealed envelope.

[47] Hansson, S. O. (2010) Risk: objective or subjective, facts or values. *Journal of Risk Research, 13*(2), 231-238.

[48] Particular thanks are due to Karl Hopwood and Janice Richardson for working with us on this. The leaflets were printed in full colour, using child-friendly language, and checked by the *EU Kids Online* network. They are available at www.eukidsonline.net

[49] In the findings reported here, the response options, "don't know" and "prefer not to say" have been treated as missing and therefore taken out of the base for calculating percentages. For example, in relation to children's reports of exposure to sexual images online, 4% said that they don't know and 2% preferred not to say, suggesting that only for a few was this too uncomfortable a question to answer. There is no clear age or country difference in the percentage of children that choose the "don't know" and the "prefer not to say" options. Don't know answers have been included (and shown in the graphs/tables) when there was a theoretical rationale for reporting them as a distinct category of response option. For example, in the parent/child comparisons, parental "don't know" answers have been included in the base, since they reflect significant uncertainty on parents' part that is worthy of interpretation.

[50] For a review of research methodology, see Lobe, B., Livingstone, S., Olafsson, K., & Simoes, J. A. (2008) *Best Practice Research*

*Guide: How to research children and online technologies in comparative perspective.* LSE, London: EU Kids Online.

[51] As noted at the outset, children were asked about "the sorts of things on the internet that you feel might bother people about your age". They were then provided with a pen and paper, and a self-sealed envelope for their answer.

[52] Davison, W. P. (1983) The third-person effect in communication. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 47*(1), 1-15.

[53] Livingstone, S., and Bober, M. (2006) Regulating the internet at home: Contrasting the perspectives of children and parents. In D. Buckingham and R. Willett (Eds.), *Digital Generations* (93-113). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/9013/

[54] We are aware that there could be some slippage of meaning between pornographic and other kinds of sexual images (e.g. biological, health-related), but in a survey of this kind, there is little way of pursuing this distinction with children. In interpreting the findings, a degree of caution is appropriate. When it comes to parents, it is easier to be clear that parents understood that the question referred to pornography, though other issues arise in relation to where adults draw the line between what they do or do not call pornographic.

[55] As media converge, clear distinctions become difficult, especially in a survey to children. The possibility that the videos referred to here were watched online by children cannot be ruled out.

[56] When reviewed in Hasebrink, U. et al. (2009) *op cit.*, the average exposure to pornography *on the internet* among *teenagers* was around four in ten. Clearly the inclusion of younger children in the *EU Kids Online* survey has reduced the average overall.

[57] [57] See Livingstone, S. and Bober, M. (2006) 'Regulating the internet at home: contrasting the perspectives of children and parents.' In D. Buckingham and R. Willett (eds) *Digital generations* (pp 93-113). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/9013/). Also Staksrud, E. (2005) *SAFT Project final report*: *Safety, awareness, facts and tools*.

[58] See Livingstone, S. (2010) 'e-Youth: (future) policy implications: risk, harm and vulnerability online.' Keynote at *e-Youth: Balancing between opportunities and risks*. University of Antwerp, May (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/27849/).

[59] Although the proportion of children who have seen sexual images is fairly small, and the proportion bothered by this is even smaller, the latter group is still some one thousand children in the overall database. The large sample size means first of all that the overall estimate of how many children have been bothered after seeing sexual images on the internet is fairly accurate (the margin of error for this point estimate is around ± 0,25 percentage points). A similar point may be made regarding risk estimates reported elsewhere in this report.

[60] See Coleman, J. and Hagell, A. (eds) (2007) *Adolescence, risk and resilience*. Chichester: Wiley. Also Schoon, I. (2006) *Risk and resilience*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[61] See Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., & Carvalho, M. (2008) Cyberbullying: its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 49*(4), 376-385. Also see http://www.olweus.org/public/bullying.page

[62] For 9-10 year olds, the texts introducing each section were shorter than for 11-16 year olds and just for the younger children, the interviewer ensured the child understood the topic before the child completed those questions privately.

[63] Shariff, S., & Churchill, A. (Eds.). (2010) *Truths and Myths of Cyber-bullying*. New York: Peter Lang.

[64] See Livingstone, S. and Bober, M. (2006) 'Regulating the internet at home: contrasting the perspectives of children and parents.' In D. Buckingham and R. Willett (eds) *Digital generations* (pp 93-113). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/9013/).

[65] Examples include Teenangels in the US (http://teenangels.org/) and Cybermentors in the UK (*cybermentors.org.uk)*

[66] Lenhart, A. (2009) Teens and Sexting: How and why minor teens are sending sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images via text messaging. Washington, D.C.: Pew Internet & American Life Project. Also see Sacco, D.T., Argudin, R., Maguire, J. and Tallon, K. (2010) *Sexting: Youth practices and legal implications*. Cambridge, MA: Berkman.

[67] Wolak, J., Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K., & Ybarra, M. (2008). Online 'predators' and their victims. *American Psychologist, 63*(2), 111-128.

[68] Hasebrink, U., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., & Olafsson, K. (2009) *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. 2nd ed. At http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24368/ .

[69] It is recognised that distinguishing pro-health sites that discuss drugs or anorexia from those which promote such activities in an unhealthy, self-destructive or even illegal way is neither easy to determine nor easy to put to teenagers. While the sense of the question was partially signalled by the framing of the question, further research is needed to ask more subtle questions.

[70] Optem (2007) *Safer Internet for Children: Qualitative Study in 29 European Countries*. Luxembourg: EC.

[71] Optem (2007) *Safer Internet for Children: Qualitative Study in 29 European Countries*. Luxembourg: EC.

[72] See Livingstone, S., & Helsper, E. J. (2008). Parental mediation of children's internet use. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 52*(4), 581-599. Nathanson, A. I. (2001). Parent and child perspectives on the presence and meaning of parental television mediation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 45*(2), 201-220. Valkenburg, P. M., Krcmar, M., Peeters, A. L., & Marseille, N. M. (1999). Developing a scale to assess three different styles of television mediation: 'Instructive mediation', 'restrictive mediation', and 'social coviewing'. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 43*(1), 52-66.

[73] In practical terms, it was not possible also to ask teachers or friends matched questions; nor was it appropriate to ask children about restrictive, monitoring or technical forms of mediation for teachers or friends.

[74] Livingstone, S., & Bober, M. (2006). Regulating the internet at home: Contrasting the perspectives of children and parents. In D. Buckingham & R. Willett (Eds.), *Digital Generations* (pp. 93-113). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

[75] Note that four possibilities exist – the child perceives that a particular practice occurs (e.g. that the parent talks to them about what they do on the internet) and the parent also perceives this; neither the child nor the parent perceive this practice to occur; the child perceives it


but the parent does not; the parent perceives it but the child does not. In the first two of these four situations, child and parent are in agreement, in the second two they disagree.

[76] Kirwil, L. (2009). Parental mediation of children's internet use in different European countries. *Journal of Children and Media, 3*(4), 394-409.

[77] Note that, to be consistent with the following items on active mediation of internet safety, these two summary questions were asked in the form, *have your teachers ever …* They are, therefore, not exactly equivalent to the earlier questions to parents, which took the form, *do your parents…*

[78] Livingstone, S. (2009). *Children and the Internet: Great Expectations, Challenging Realities*. Cambridge: Polity. Nathanson, A. I. (2001). Parents versus peers: Exploring the significance of peer mediation of antisocial television. *Communication Research, 28*(3), 251-274.

[79] Kirwil, L., Garmendia, M., Garitonandia, C., and Fernandez, G. Parental mediation. In S. Livingstone and L. Haddon, *Kids online: Opportunities and risks for children*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

[80] Livingstone, S. and Helsper, E.J. (2007) 'Gradations in digital inclusion: children, young people and the digital divide.' *New Media & Society*, *9*(4): 671-96 (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/2768).

[81] Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J. (2009) *Bullying beyond the schoolyard*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

[82] Hasebrink, U., Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., & Olafsson, K. (2009) *Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online. 2nd ed. At http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24368/ .

[83] In other words, the measure is the percentage of children in each country who have encountered one or more of online pornography, bullying, receipt of sexual messages, contact with those not known face-to-face, offline meetings with online contacts, potentially harmful user-generated content, personal data misuse. In effect, this is to treat the seven factors as a risk index, though it must be acknowledged that the decision about which risks are included in this index may affect the results.

[84] Correlation on a country level, r=0,74 and on an individual level, r=0,30; both are statistically significant, p<0,001.

[85] Correlation on a country level, r=0,79 and on an individual level, r= 0,28; both are statistically significant, p<0,001.

[86] Correlation on a country level, r=0,64 and on an individual level, r= 0,49; both are statistically significant, p<0,001.

[87] Correlation on a country level, r=0,59 and on an individual level, r= 0,44; both are statistically significant, p<0,001.

[88] Correlation on a country level, r=0,49 and on an individual level, r= 0,55; both are statistically significant, p<0,001.

[89] Correlation on a country level, r=0,66 and on an individual level, r= 0,42; both are statistically significant, p<0,001.

[90] Correlation on a country level, r=-0,30, statistically significant at p<0,001 and on an individual level, r= 0,02; statistically significant at p=0,002.

[91] Lenhart, A. (2009) Teens and Sexting: How and why minor teens are sending sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images via text messaging. Washington, D.C.: Pew Internet & American Life Project.

[92] Ofcom (2006) *Media Literacy Audit: Report on Children's Media Literacy*. London: Office of Communications.

[93] Klinke, A., & Renn, O. (2001) Precautionary principle and discursive strategies: classifying and managing risks. *Journal of Risk Research, 4*(2), 159-174. See also Livingstone, S. (2010) 'e-Youth: (future) policy implications: risk, harm and vulnerability online.' Keynote at *e-Youth: Balancing between opportunities and risks*. University of Antwerp, May (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/27849/).

[94] As noted above, Finnish participation was funded by Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and of Transport and Communications.

[95] Population figures taken from Eurostat.

[96] Figures for internet penetration are estimated from a combination of data from the Eurobarometer (percentage of children using the internet in 2008) and Eurostat (change in internet penetration, as measured among 16-24 year olds in 2008-09). Internet penetration for 2010 was estimated by taking the actual penetration in 2008 and extrapolating the rate of growth in internet use measured by Eurostat across 2009-10. As 2009 data were unavailable for the UK and Belgium, estimates for the UK and Belgium are based on 2008 data, scaled up by the average population change across the countries where 2009 data are available. Eurostat gives figures for the changing proportion of 16-24 year olds who have used the internet in the past year, and those who have ever used the internet. The change in internet penetration was estimated at being between these two figures. Where data on the change in internet penetration among 16-24 year olds were unavailable, the average rate of change of two percentage points was assumed. Generally figures were rounded up rather than down, since the change in internet use among 9-16 year olds was assumed to be higher than among 16-24 year olds. Note that figures for Norway were unavailable and so were estimated based on the data for Sweden. Figures for Turkey were estimated from two local sources: the Ministry of Social and Family Research, whose data showed 67.2% of children aged 13-18 use the internet, and results from the 'ICT Usage in Households, 2004-2010' from the Turkish Statistical Institute (2010), which showed 62.9% of 16-24 year olds had used the internet in the last three months. An average of these two figures was taken and used as the internet penetration rate for 9-16 year olds.


www.eukidsonline.net
EU Kids Online

Co-funded by the European Union


## Contact details

Professor Sonia Livingstone and Dr Leslie Haddon
Department of Media and Communications
The London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK
f +44 (0) 20 7955 7248
s.livingstone@lse.ac.uk / leshaddon@aol.com

The EU Kids Online network has received funding from the European Community's Safer Internet Programme. The authors are solely responsible for the contents of this report. It does not represent the opinion of the Community and nor is the Community responsible for any use that might be made of information contained in it.

www.eukidsonline.net

# EU KIDS ONLINE

SEPTEMBER 2011

Sonia Livingstone, Leslie Haddon, Anke Görzig
and Kjartan Ólafsson, with members of the
EU Kids Online Network

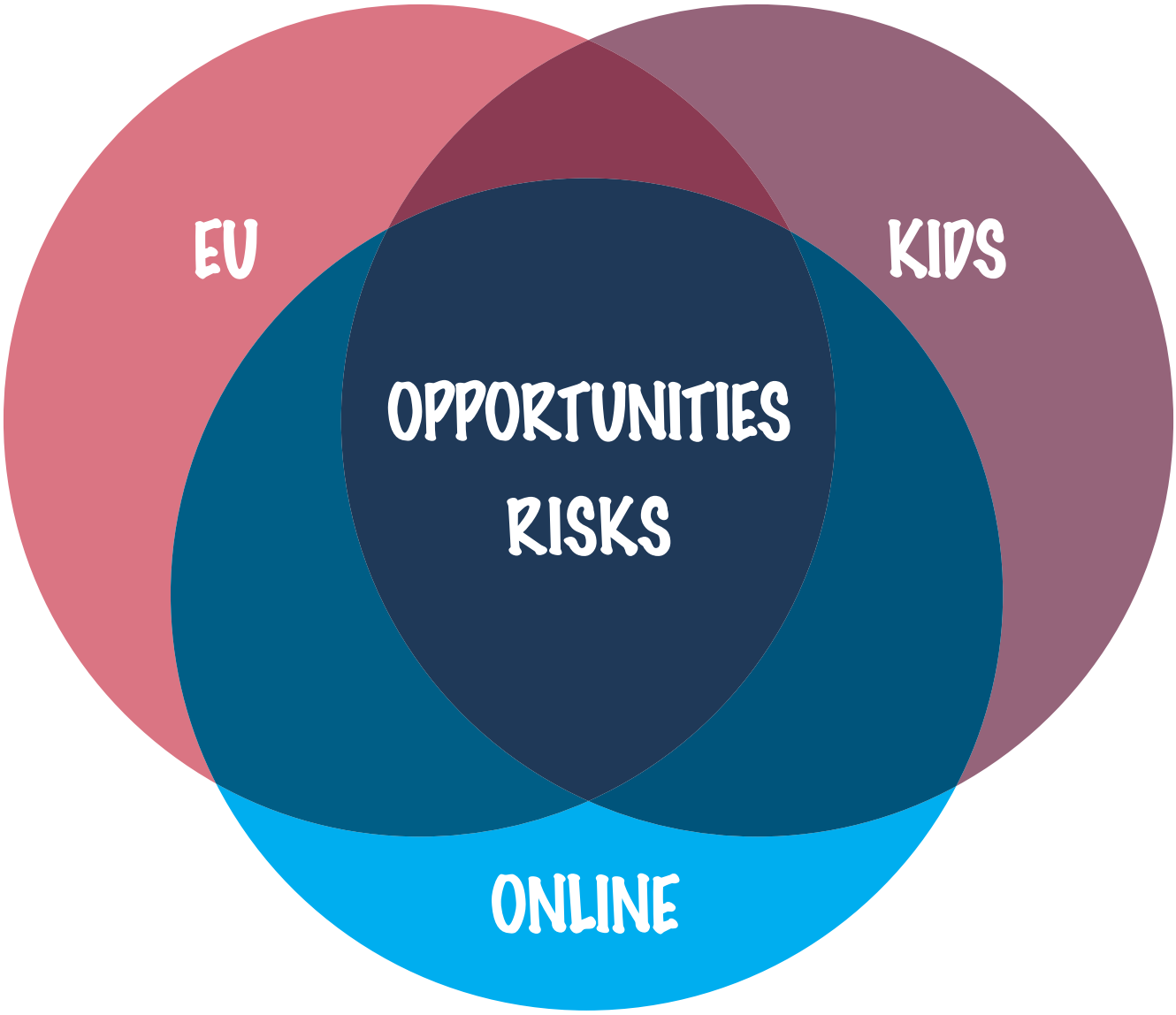
**EU Kids Online** aims to enhance knowledge of the experiences and practices of European children and parents regarding risky and safer use of the internet and new online technologies, in order to inform the promotion of a safer online environment for children.

# CONTENTS

# KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENT

## From 2009-11 we designed a detailed survey to interview 25,000 European children and their parents in 25 countries.

Building on our 2006-09 review of existing methods and findings, this past year has brought a focus on survey analysis and dissemination. From 2011-14, we will extend our work with researchers and stakeholders to maximise the value of and insights from the available evidence.




## RIGOROUS METHODS UNDERPIN OUR RESEARCH

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The EU Kids Online survey

- The EU Kids Online network has conducted a unique, detailed, face-to-face survey in homes with 9-16 year old internet users from 25 countries; 25,142 children and their parents were interviewed during 2010.
- The purpose was to provide a rigorous evidence base to support stakeholders in their efforts to maximise online opportunities while minimising the risk of harm associated with internet use.

## Going online is thoroughly embedded in children's lives

- Internet use is increasingly individualised, privatised and mobile: 9-16 year old internet users spend 88 minutes per day online, on average.
- 49 per cent go online in their bedroom, 33 per cent go online via a mobile phone or handheld device, and most use the internet at home (87 per cent) and school (63 per cent).

## Opportunities and risks online go hand in hand

- Efforts to increase opportunities may also increase risks, while efforts to reduce risks may restrict children's opportunities. A careful balancing act, which recognises children's online experiences "in the round", is vital.
- Risky opportunities allow children to experiment online with relationships, intimacy and identity. This is vital for growing up if children are to learn to cope with the adult world.
- But risky opportunities are linked to vulnerability as well as resilience, depending on both the design of the online environment, and on the child and their circumstances.
- Social networking sites (SNSs) enable children to communicate and have fun with their friends, but not everyone has the digital skills to manage privacy and personal disclosure and many 9-12 year olds use SNSs underage, including 20 per cent on Facebook and 38 per cent using SNSs overall.

## Not all gain all the benefits

- Children vary in which activities they take up earliest and they vary in the combination of activities they practise, resulting in a ladder of opportunities in which only a quarter, and few younger children, reach the most advanced and creative step.
- 44 per cent of 9-16 year olds say it is 'very true' that 'there are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age', though younger children are less satisfied with online provision: only 34 per cent of 9-10 year olds say this.
- Inequalities in digital skills persist in terms of SES, age and, to a lesser degree, gender, so efforts to overcome these are needed; part of the solution lies in the improved design of end-user tools and interfaces.

## Parental mediation can help

- Parents recognise that it is valuable for them to engage with their child's internet use, and they employ a wide range of strategies, depending partly on the age of the child. But some parents do not do very much, even for young children, and there are some children who do not want their parents to take more interest.
- Children are generally positive about their parents' actions, although a third says they sometimes ignore what their parents say about using the internet. Parents who practise more restrictive regulation have children who encounter fewer risks and less harm – but also fewer online opportunities.

## Children encounter a range of online risks

- 12 per cent of European 9-16 year olds say that they have been bothered or upset by something on the internet – but most children do not report being bothered or upset by going online.
- Exposure to sexual images occurs offline as well as online, but for some children and in some countries it is spreading online; more children who go online via a personal device have seen sexual images or received sexual messages.
- Half of online bullies say they have also bullied people face-to-face, and half of online bullying victims have been bullied face-to-face; also, among those who have bullied others online, nearly half have themselves been bullied online.
- 50 per cent of 11-16 year olds "find it easier to be myself on the internet", helping to explain why 30 per cent have contact online with someone they haven't met face-to-face. But only 9 per cent have met an online contact offline, and very few found this a problematic experience.
- Public anxiety often focuses on pornography, "sexting", bullying and meeting strangers, especially for young children. But there are other risks that worry children, including many teenagers, especially those associated with user-generated content.

## Countries can be grouped into four categories

- "Lower use, lower risk" countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Hungary).
- "Lower use, some risk" countries (Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey).
- "Higher use, some risk" countries (Cyprus, Finland, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, the UK).
- "Higher use, higher risk" countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Norway, Romania, Sweden), where the Eastern European countries are better called, "New use, new risk".
- A country's socio-economic stratification, regulatory framework, technological infrastructure and educational system all shape children's online risks.
- High internet use in a country is rarely associated with low risk; and high risk is rarely associated with low use; rather, across countries, the more use, the more risk.

## Risk must be distinguished from harm

- Children who are older, higher in self-efficacy and sensation seeking, who do more online activities (ie, are higher on the ladder of opportunities) and who have more psychological problems encounter more risks of all kinds online.
- But children who are younger, lower in self-efficacy and sensation seeking, who do fewer online activities, have fewer skills, and who have more psychological problems find online risks more harmful and upsetting.
- It is important to support children's capacity to cope themselves, thereby building resilience for digital citizens. Children often tell a friend, followed by a parent, when something online upsets them, and they try a range of pro-active strategies online, though these don't always work and some children are more fatalistic in their responses to online harm.

## Conclusions

- The report concludes by debunking the top 10 myths of children and online risk.
- It then offers a series of evidence-based recommendations to governments, industry, parents, educators, awareness-raisers, civil society bodies, child welfare organisations and children themselves.

## More information

EU Kids Online reports, all questionnaires and technical survey information, and the dataset (cross-tabulations, raw data files) are available from **www.eukidsonline.net**

# PROJECT DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

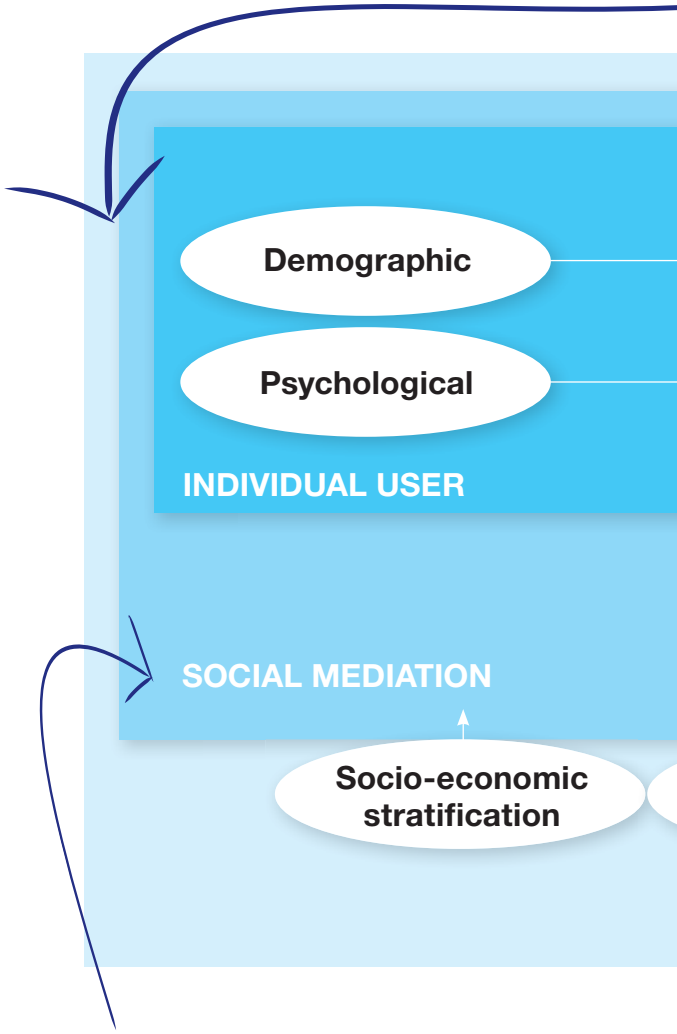
Families live complex and diverse lives. The EU Kids Online model includes multiple factors that, together, shape children's experience of the internet.

## Context

- The rapidity with which children and young people are gaining access to online, convergent, mobile and networked media is unprecedented in the history of technological innovation.
- Parents, teachers and children are acquiring, learning to use and finding a purpose for the internet in their daily lives.
- Stakeholders – governments, schools, industry, child welfare, civil society and families – aim to maximise online opportunities while minimising the risk of harm associated with internet use.
- To inform this effort, a rigorous evidence base is vital.

## The EU Kids Online model

- Our approach is comparative, child-centred and contextualised.
- It recognises that, since not all children encounter risk, and since not all risks result in harm, research must identify the protective factors (eg, coping) which reduce the probability of harm and the risk factors which increase it.
- Our research traces the path of children's online experiences from internet use (amount, devices, location) through online activities (opportunities, skills, risky practices) to the risks encountered online and then the outcomes experienced (whether harmful or not, how children cope).




At the social level, parents, school and peers all play a role in mediating children's internet risk and safety

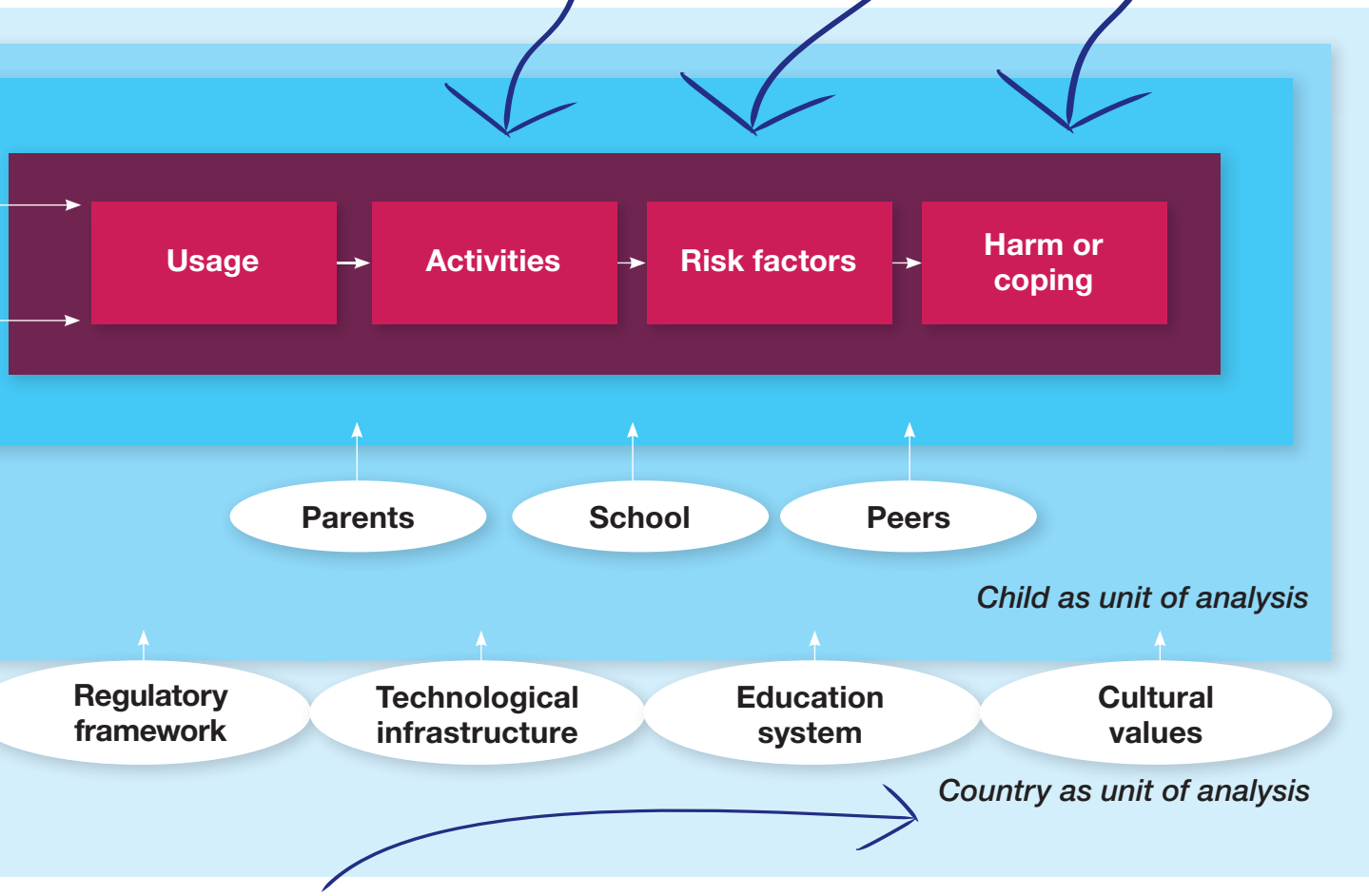
We recognise the many opportunities the internet affords children even when examining the risks

As individuals, children vary in age, gender, socio-economic status and according to their psychological strengths and vulnerabilities

We focus on four main risks: seeing sexual images, receiving sexual messages, being bullied, meeting online contacts offline

Harm is assessed by the child's self-report of how bothered or upset they felt, and coping is assessed by asking the child what they did, on encountering a particular risk

Some activites are beneficial and some are harmful but often it depends on the child and his/her context




At the country level, children's online experiences are shaped by a range of factors, and each contributes to interpreting the comparison of findings across 25 countries

**Professor Sonia Livingstone**
The London School of Economics and Political Science

## BUILDING AN EVIDENCE BASE FOR POLICY

# THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S SAFER INTERNET PROGRAMME

"The European Commission is strongly committed to making the Internet a place where children of all ages can exploit all the opportunities the technologies offer – safely. Through the Safer Internet Programme, for example, we fund Safer Internet Centres in 30 countries, support the annual Safer Internet Day and Safer Internet Forum and bring together stakeholders like NGOs, industry and law enforcement.

We also recognise that actions to support the empowerment of children and develop a safe online environment depend on robust knowledge about children and how they use online services. EU Kids Online has over the past years provided the European Commission and the Safer Internet Programme with information that gives essential insights into new trends in the use of online technologies and their consequences for children's lives. The knowledge we gain from the research carried out by EU Kids Online and other projects is critical for discussions on upcoming challenges and new initiatives."

**Pat Manson**
Head of Unit, EC Safer Internet Programme

The EC Safer Internet Programme was the core funder for the project. Additionally, Finnish participation was funded by the Finnish Ministries of Education and Culture and of Transport and Communications, and several national teams received additional funding from a range of sources.

The European Commission is strongly committed to making the Internet a place where children of all ages can exploit all the opportunities the technologies offer – safely

EU Kids Online has been delighted to work with many other partners, colleagues and stakeholders around Europe and beyond. We thank the several hundred stakeholders who responded to our consultations during the EU Kids Online project, guiding its design and the use of its findings.

"Awareness-raising is a complex process, dependent on the quality of research data available. For this reason, the Insafe network of safer internet awareness raising centres works closely with the EU Kids Online project. Their survey findings have refined our knowledge of what young people are doing online, their parents' perception of this, and the skills they lack in dealing with the risks they encounter. Through the project we have gained insight into the cultural differences between the countries we are dealing with, and how these impact on online risk-handling.

Without a project such as EU Kids Online, the awareness raisers in the Insafe network could not target their audience as accurately or measure the potential impact of their campaigns. EU Kids Online has proven an invaluable partner over the past years, a partnership we hope will continue for the years to come."

**Janice Richardson**
Insafe and European Schoolnet

# EU KIDS ONLINE NEWS

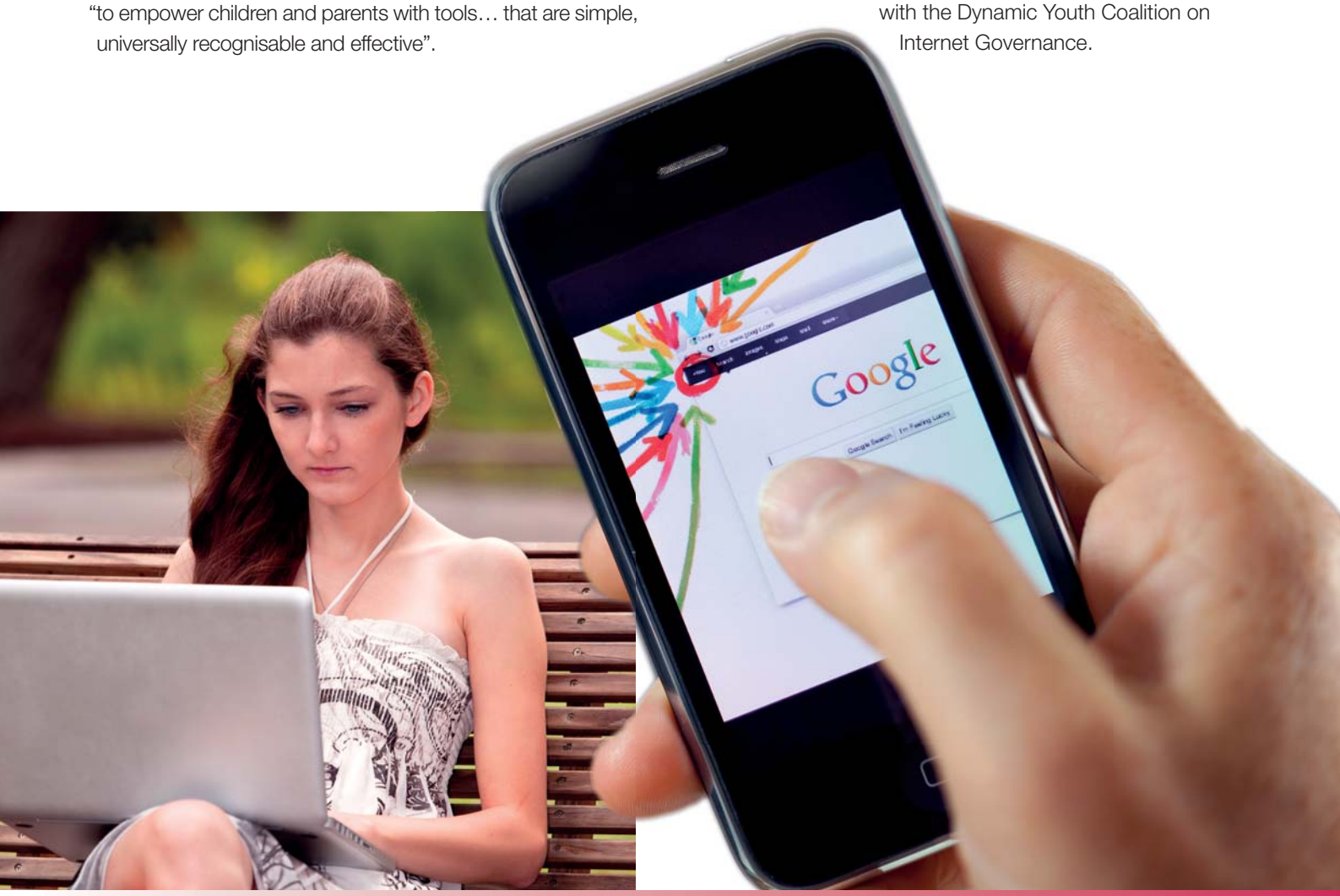
Before we take a closer look at our project findings, here's some recent highlights from the network.

## 01 Our research cited by the EC Vice President

"Research shows that children are going online younger and younger, and that age restrictions on social networking sites are often ignored. Younger children may not be aware of the risks they face, nor of how they can change their privacy settings," said Neelie Kroes, Vice President of the European Commission and European Digital Agenda Commissioner, in her keynote to the 2011 Digital Agenda Assembly. Given this, she argued for industry self-regulation as part of a comprehensive framework "to empower children and parents with tools… that are simple, universally recognisable and effective".

## 02 Internet Governance Forum

In "A grand coalition on child internet safety", a pre-meeting organised by the European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online, eNACSO, at the IGF 2010 Forum in Vilnius, Sonia Livingstone chaired a lively discussion about the evidence base to support international efforts to further child internet safety. At the 2011 Forum in Nairobi, Brian O'Neill and Gitte Stald from EU Kids Online will present in the panel, "Challenging myths about young people and the internet", with the Dynamic Youth Coalition on Internet Governance.



All our reports, materials and data are online at **www.eukidsonline.net**

## 03 European Award for Best Children's Online Content

Increasing online opportunities is a great way to minimise encounters with risk, EU Kids Online has argued, especially in countries where there is little dedicated positive content for children. Thus we were delighted when Sonia Livingstone was invited to chair the European Jury for this award. She announced the prizes at the 2011 Digital Agenda Assembly in Brussels, which were presented by Commissioner Neelie Kroes on 17 June.

## 04 Contacts, presentations and media coverage

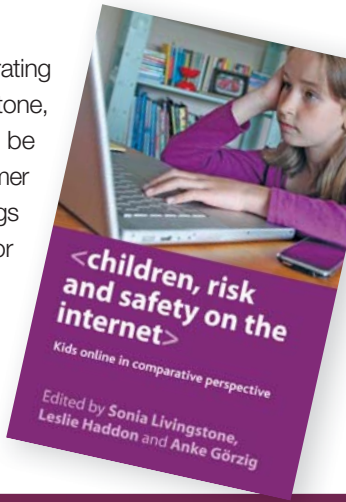
In the past two years, the EU Kids Online network has made 142 public/stakeholder presentations, 218 research presentations and has published 138 articles and chapters. Our mailing list includes some 1,545 people from many countries worldwide. We've had 42,688 unique website visitors in the past year. And our research has been mentioned in 740 media reports so far.

## 05 International conference

Over 40 papers will be presented by researchers from 20+ countries at the September 2011 EU Kids Online conference held at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Entitled "Children, risk and safety online: Research and policy challenges in comparative perspective", the conference materials are posted at **www.eukidsonline.net**

## 06 New book: *Children, risk and safety online*

The EU Kids Online network is collaborating on a new book, edited by Sonia Livingstone, Leslie Haddon and Anke Görzig, to be published by Policy Press (Bristol) in summer 2012. With a discussion of all the findings and lots of new analysis, it is intended for researchers and policy makers.




INFORMING, NETWORKING, ENGAGING

# EUROPE AND BEYOND

The "Europe" of EU Kids Online is not the EU27. The map shows our 25 participating countries, encompassing Europe's diversity. In the next phase of work we will include Croatia, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Russia, Slovakia and Switzerland.

**To gain a wider perspective, and to see Europe from the outside as well as from within, we collaborate with researchers from:**

## USA

We work with The Pew Research Center's *Internet and American Life Project* and *The Crimes Against Children Research Center*, University of New Hampshire to keep in touch with their parallel projects.

"The Pew Research Center has looked to the EU Kids Online safety work for rigorously tested questions for us to repeat in our surveys to assess the American experience. We look forward to comparing the trends in the US and European contexts in online safety experiences and behaviors. EU Kids Online is an enormously valuable resource, to its European constituents and to those of us concerned with rigorously researching kids safety in other countries as well."

**Amanda Lenhart**
Senior Research Specialist, Pew

"The EU Kids Online study is an impressive example of cross-national comparative research, conducted in a very collaborative but methodologically sound and sophisticated way. It will serve as a model for future social science. The fruits of this effort are only just beginning to be harvested, and there will be much more coming out of it in the future."

**Professor David Finkelhor**
Crimes against Children Research Center,
University of New Hampshire

## Russia

The EU Kids Online survey has been applied by colleagues from the Moscow State University; see page 48 for findings.

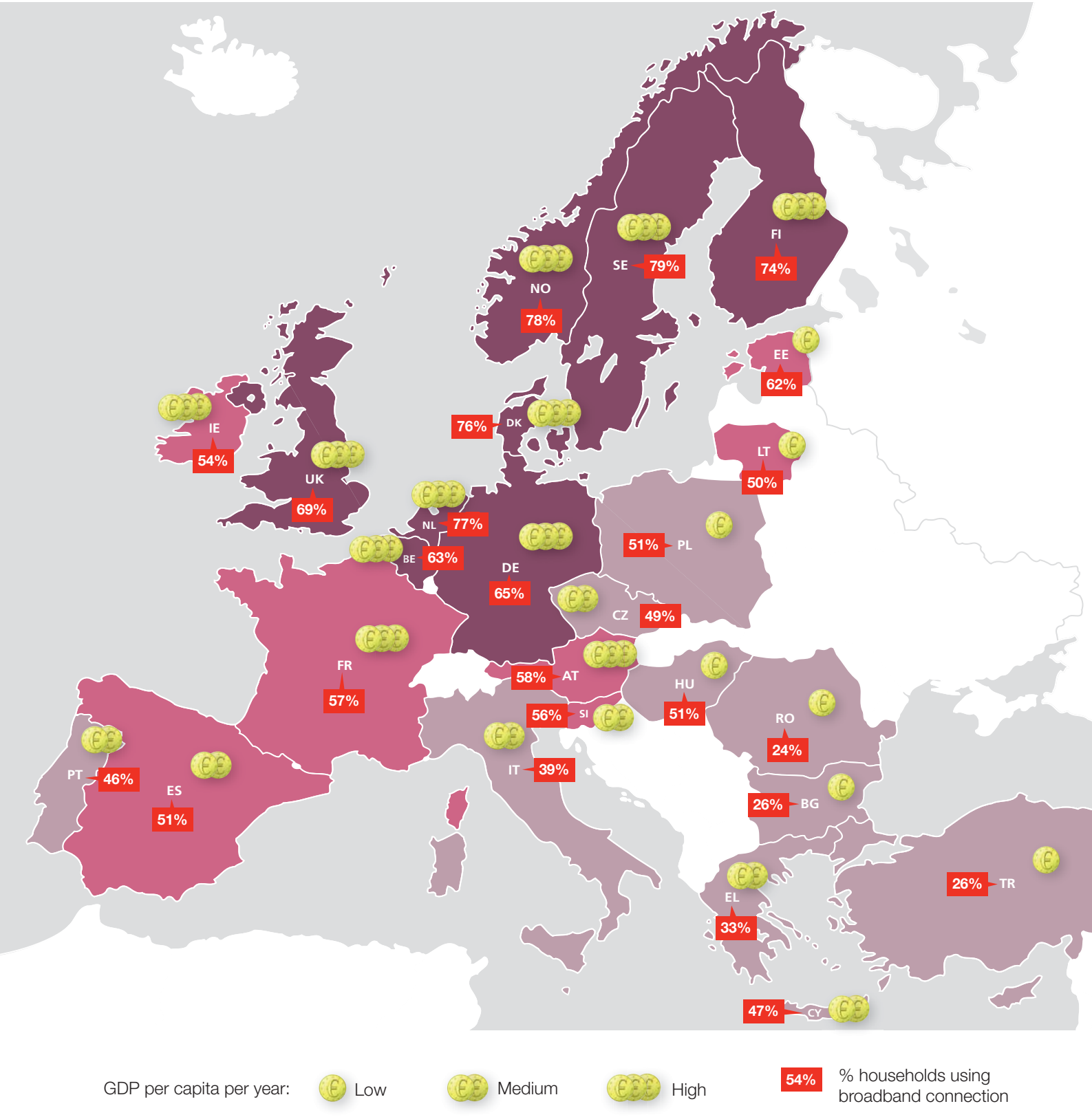
## Australia

The EU Kids Online survey has been applied by colleagues from the Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation; see page 48 for findings.

## Brazil

We are working with the Brazilian Network Information Center to pilot the possibility of conducting the EU Kids Online survey.

In comparative research, it is important to recognise similarities across countries as well as differences within countries




# COMMONALITY AND DIVERSITY WITHIN EUROPE

# HOW CHILDREN GO ONLINE

## Going online is now thoroughly embedded in children's daily lives.

**88** **the average minutes online per day for 9-16 year olds.**

**15-16 year olds spend 118 minutes online per day, twice as long as 9-10 year olds (58 minutes).**

**7** **the average age of first internet use in Denmark and Sweden, rising to eight in other Northern European countries and nine for Europe overall.**

**49** **the percentage who go online in their bedroom.**

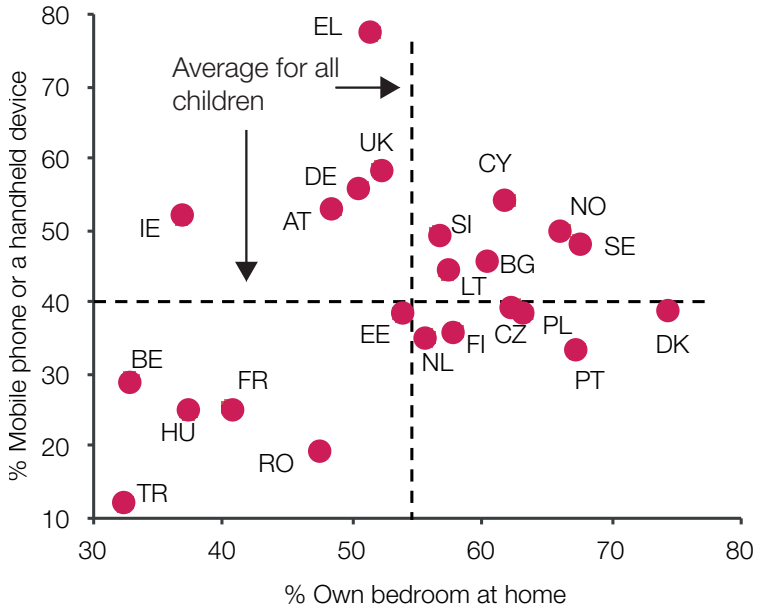
**33 per cent go online via a mobile phone or handheld device, and most use the internet at home (87 per cent) then at school (63 per cent).**

Going online is increasingly privatised. The graph below shows the percentage of children who access the internet either via a mobile or handheld device or via access in the child's bedroom. Depending on country circumstances, different contexts for privatised use are found across Europe.

Almost as many parents as children in a country use the internet daily (see graph opposite), suggesting they are gaining online experience along with their children; the more this happens, the more effectively parents can mediate their children's internet use.

- 60 per cent of 9-16 year old internet users in Europe go online daily, and a further 33 per cent go online at least weekly.
- Fewer parents use the internet daily – 49 per cent – and 24 per cent don't use it at all.
- In countries where parents are more likely to use the internet daily, children are also more likely to do so – and vice versa.
- Usage is highest in the Nordic countries, and lowest in Southern Europe.
- The more a parent uses the internet, the more likely is their child to use it often, thus gaining the digital skills and benefits associated with going online.

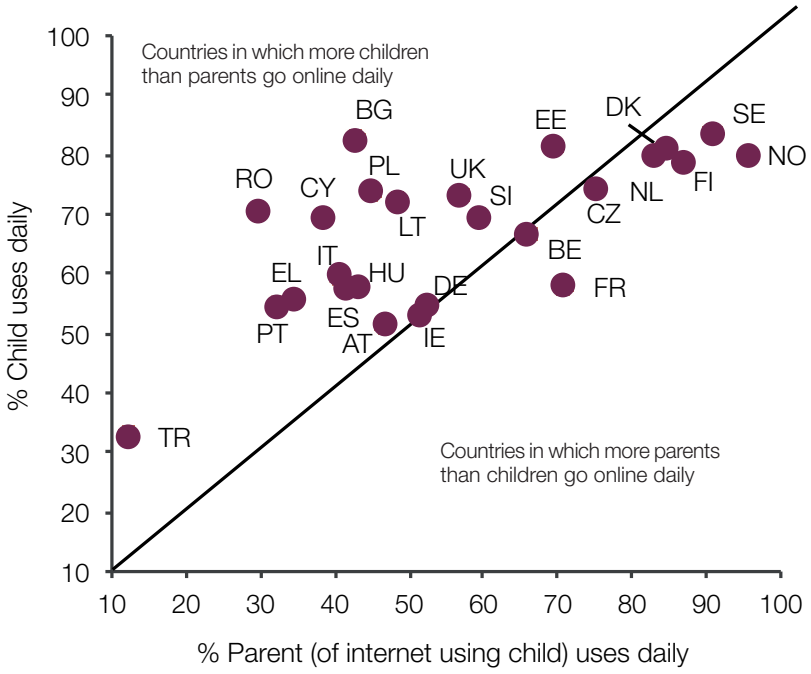
**The rise of private/mobile internet use**

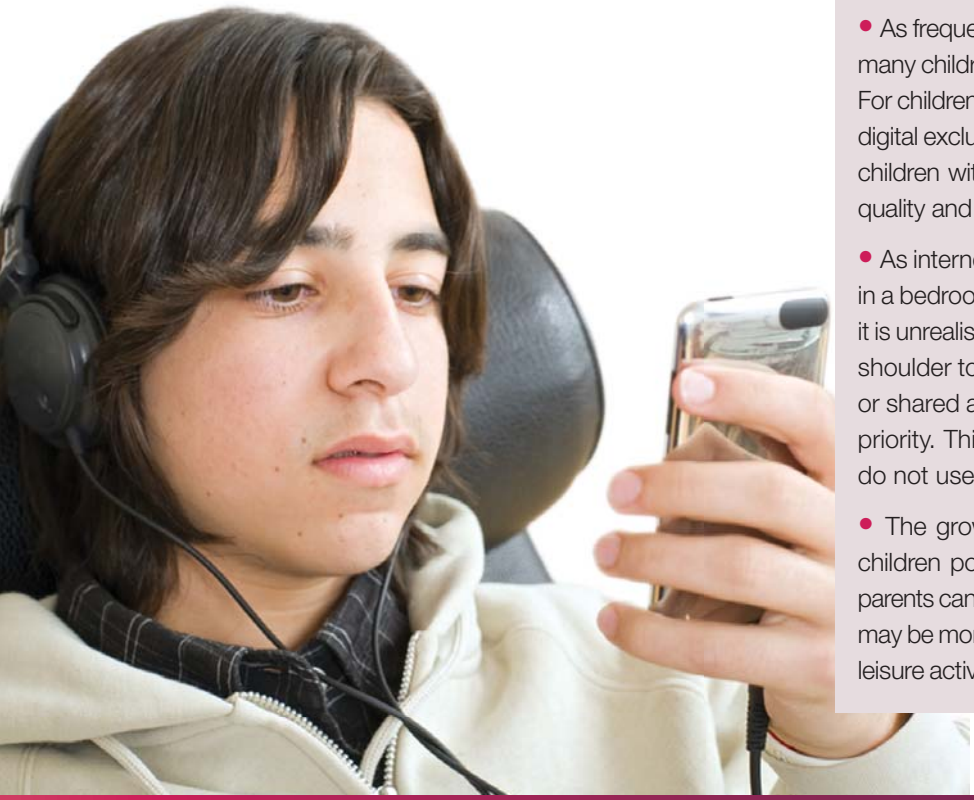



Parents are (almost) keeping pace with their children. The more they go online, the more effectively parents can mediate their children's internet use

30 per cent of 11-16 year olds – especially those with some psychological problems – report one or more experiences linked to excessive internet use "fairly" or "very often" (eg, neglecting friends, schoolwork or sleep to go online)

**The relation between children's and parent's daily internet use**



## Policy implications

- As frequent internet use has become commonplace for many children in Europe, the policy priorities are changed. For children who still lack access, efforts are vital to ensure digital exclusion does not compound social exclusion. For children with access, efforts are required to ensure their quality and breadth of use is sufficient and fair.
- As internet use becomes increasingly privatised – used in a bedroom, other private rooms or via a mobile device, it is unrealistic to expect parents to watch over their child's shoulder to keep them safe. Instead, conversation and/or shared activities between child and parent must take priority. This will be aided if the remaining parents who do not use the internet are encouraged to go online.
- The growth in excessive internet use among some children poses a new challenge to stakeholders. While parents can seek to restrict the time children spend online, it may be more effective to support the diversity of alternative leisure activities available to children at home and outside.

## INDIVIDUALISED, PRIVATISED, MOBILE

# WHAT CHILDREN DO ONLINE

The EU Kids Online survey asked children which online activities they engage in, to understand the opportunities they enjoy and to contextualise online risks

A quarter of children overall reach this last, most advanced and creative step. It includes visiting chatrooms, file-sharing, blogging and spending time in a virtual world. Less than one fifth of 9-12 year olds and only a third of even 15-16 year olds do several of these activities. Across all ages, around a third of children reach this step in Sweden, Cyprus, Hungary and Slovenia.

**23% OF CHILDREN**

Step 4 includes playing with others online, downloading films and music and sharing content peer-to-peer (eg, via webcam or message boards). Across Europe, over half of 9-16 year old internet users reach this point, although only one third of 9-10 year olds and less than half of 11-12 year olds do so. Children in Sweden, Lithuania, Cyprus, Belgium and Norway are most likely to reach this step.

**56% OF CHILDREN**

**75% OF CHILDREN**

Most children use the internet interactively for communication (social networking, instant messaging, email) and reading/watching the news. This captures the activities of two thirds of 9-10 year olds but just a quarter of 15-16 year olds. Only half of children in Austria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Turkey reach this step.

**86% OF CHILDREN**

In addition to schoolwork and games, this step adds watching video clips online (eg, YouTube). These are all ways of using the internet as a mass medium – for information and entertainment. Half of 9-10 year olds only get this far, along with a third of 11-12 year olds.

When children begin to use the internet, the first things they do are schoolwork and playing games alone or against the computer. Fourteen per cent don't get further than this, including nearly a third of 9-10 year olds and a sixth of 11-12 year olds. Also in Turkey, these popular internet uses capture the activities of a quarter of children.

**100% OF CHILDREN**

While this ladder of opportunities is schematic – since children vary in which activities they take up earliest and they vary in the combination of activities they practise – it captures the general trend across all children. How can children be enabled to climb further up the ladder of opportunities? One way is to provide more own-language, age-appropriate positive content – whether creative, educational, expressive, participatory or just fun!

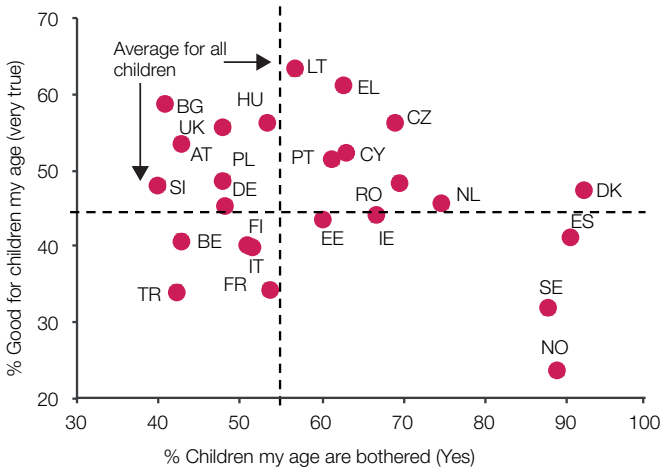
# Enabling a "ladder of opportunities"

**Identifying what's good about the internet can be tricky, so we asked children what they think. 44 per cent of 9-16 year olds said it is "very true" that "there are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age".**

- Younger children are much less satisfied than older children. Only 34 per cent of 9-10 year olds say there are lots of good things for children of their age to do online, while 55 per cent of teenagers say this – probably because they more easily share in wider public provision.
- In some countries there is more for children to do online that they enjoy – often because of differential investment and/or because national markets vary in size, wealth and investment in or prioritisation of the internet.
- Opportunities and risks go hand in hand, as shown by the statistically significant country correlation between children's perceptions of opportunities and risks.
- However, country variation means that four groups can be discerned:

1. In some countries, children report lots of good things and relatively few problems (eg, Bulgaria, the UK and Austria).
2. In other countries, children report lots of good things to do online but also quite a few problems (eg, Greece and the Czech Republic).
3. Then there are countries where children think there are a fair few problems and not so many benefits (eg, Norway, Sweden, Ireland and Estonia).
4. Last are the countries where children perceive relatively fewer benefits or risks of internet use (eg, Turkey, Belgium, France).

**Balance between "good" and "bad" things online**




## Policy implications

- In countries where children do not "progress" very far up the ladder of opportunities, educational and digital literacy initiatives should be prioritised.
- Provision for younger children online should be a priority, especially in small language communities. The "European Award for Best Children's Online Content" is a valuable step in this direction, but such provision could also be supported by high profile national initiatives.
- Since opportunities and risks online go hand in hand, efforts to increase opportunities may also increase risks, while efforts to reduce risks may restrict children's opportunities. A careful balancing act, which recognises children's online experiences "in the round", is vital.

Online risks are also hard to investigate. We asked, "do you think there are things on the internet that people about your age will be bothered by in any way?". This time 55 per cent said "yes"

# RISKY OPPORTUNITIES

Most activities children do online can be beneficial or harmful, depending on the circumstances. Some are ambiguous – "risky opportunities" allow children to experiment online with relationships, intimacy and identity. This is vital for growing up if children are to learn to cope with the adult world. But risky opportunities are linked to vulnerability as well as resilience.

***Among 9-16 year old internet users in Europe, in the past year:***

**40%** have "looked for new friends on the internet"

**34%** have "added people to my friends list or address book that I have never met face-to-face"

**16%** have "pretended to be a different kind of person on the internet from what I really am"

**15%** have "sent personal information to someone that I have never met face-to-face"

**14%** have "sent a photo or video of myself to someone that I have never met face-to-face"

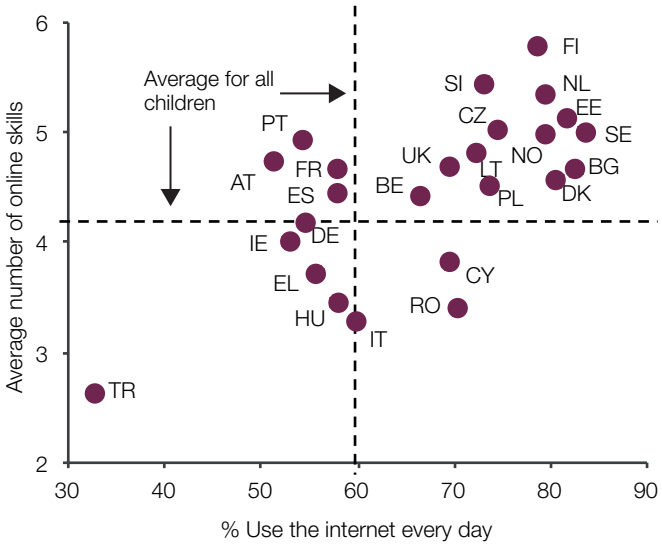
## Which children do these risky online activities?

- Older children, boys, and children higher in self-efficacy and sensation seeking.
- Those who use the internet in more places, for longer, and for more activities, as predicted by the *usage hypothesis*.
- Children who encounter more offline risks (eg, say "yes" to: "Had so much alcohol that I got really drunk", "Missed school lessons without my parents knowing", "Had sexual intercourse", "Been in trouble with my teachers for bad behaviour", "Been in trouble with the police"), as predicted by the *risk migration hypothesis*.
- Children with more psychological difficulties, as predicted by the *vulnerability hypothesis*.
- Children who say it is "very true" that "I find it easier to be myself on the internet", as predicted by the *social compensation hypothesis*.
- Children with more digital literacy and safety skills, suggesting that online experimentation can enhance skills, though greater skill is also linked to more (not fewer) online risky activities.

**The survey examined digital literacy and safety skills among the 11-16 year olds in more detail, finding that children have on average about half the skills asked about.**

| | 11-13 year old | | 14-16 year old | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **% who say they can…** | **Boys** | **Girls** | **Boys** | **Girls** | **All** |
| **Instrumental/safety skills** | | | | | |
| Bookmark a website | 56 | 52 | 73 | 72 | 64 |
| Block messages from someone you don't want to hear from | 51 | 53 | 75 | 74 | 64 |
| Change privacy settings on a social networking profile | 41 | 44 | 69 | 69 | 56 |
| Delete the record of which sites you have visited | 42 | 37 | 67 | 61 | 52 |
| Block unwanted adverts or junk mail/spam | 41 | 39 | 65 | 57 | 51 |
| Change filter preferences | 19 | 16 | 46 | 31 | 28 |
| **Informational skills** | | | | | |
| Find information on how to use the internet safely | 54 | 51 | 74 | 70 | 63 |
| Compare different websites to decide if information is true | 47 | 44 | 67 | 63 | 56 |
| **Average number of skills** | **3.4** | **3.2** | **5.2** | **4.8** | **4.2** |

**Relation between frequency and skills in internet use**




- **Most 11-16 year olds can bookmark a website (64 per cent)**, block messages from someone they do not wish to be in contact with (64 per cent) or find safety information online (63 per cent).

- **Half can change privacy settings on a social networking profile (56 per cent)**, compare websites to judge the quality of information (56 per cent), delete their history (52 per cent) or block junk mail and spam (51 per cent).

- **Those who use the internet more have more skills** – this holds for individuals and also at the country level, as shown in the graph.

- **These various skills go hand in hand** – the eight skills are intercorrelated, meaning that, for example, those who can judge the veracity of websites are also those who can find safety information, those who can bookmark a site can also block unwanted messages, and so on. It also means that those who struggle with one skill are likely to struggle with others.

- **Younger children lack significant skills**, boys claim to be slightly more skilled than girls, and children from higher socioeconomic status (SES) homes say they can do more than those from lower ones.

## Policy implications

- Encouraging children to do more online will improve their digital skill set.

- Teaching safety skills is likely to improve other skills, while teaching instrumental and informational skills will also improve safety skills.

- Inequalities in digital skills persist – in terms of SES, age and, to a lesser degree, gender. So efforts to overcome these are needed.

- Low skills among younger children are a priority for teachers and parents, as ever younger children go online.

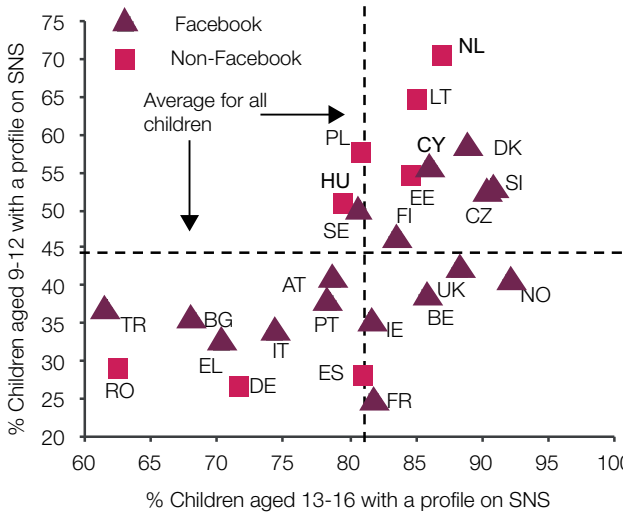
# SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking sites (SNSs) enable children to communicate and have fun with their friends, but not everyone has the digital skills to manage privacy and personal disclosure.

## Many sites set lower age restrictions around 13 years but clearly these are not working

- 38 per cent 9-12 year olds and 77 per cent 13-16 year olds have a profile on a social networking site.
- 20 per cent 9-12 year olds and 46 per cent 13-16 year olds use Facebook as their main SNS.
- In countries where the dominant SNS has no age restrictions, younger children seem more likely to use SNSs.
- 27 per cent of 9-12 year olds display an incorrect age on their SNS profile.

**Balance between younger and older children using SNSs**

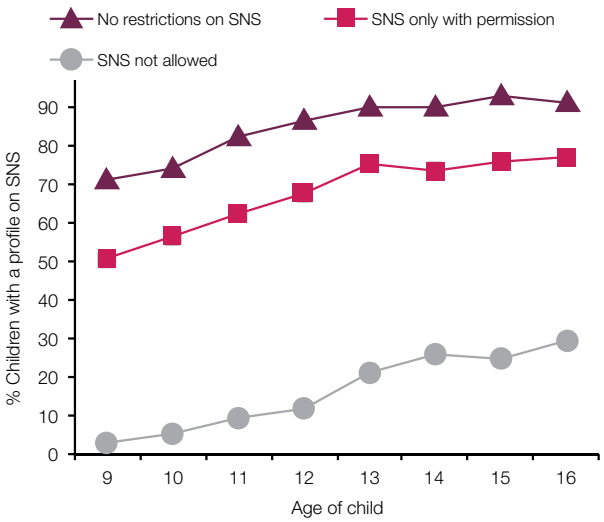



*Note: "Facebook countries" – those where Facebook is the main SNS.*
*Base: All children who use the internet.*

## Parental mediation is fairly effective, despite the belief that children ignore parental rules

- Among children whose parents impose no restrictions or who let them use SNSs with permission, most children have an SNS profile, even among the youngest.
- Among the one in three children whose parents ban their use of SNSs, younger children appear to respect parental regulation. Although from 13 years old they take less notice of their parents, still, a majority comply.

**Relation between child's SNS use and parental rules by age**




*Base: children who use the internet.*

## Does it matter if young children use SNSs?

Children surely have the right to use services where many social activities – for governmental, artistic, citizen groups, news, educational offerings and more – take place. But to enable these opportunities, some risks should be further mitigated.

- 29 per cent of 9-12 year olds and 27 per cent of 13-16 year olds have their profile "public", though this varies according to the country and the SNS used.
- A quarter of SNS users communicate online with people unconnected to their daily lives, including one fifth of 9-12 year olds.
- One fifth of children whose profile is public display their address and/or phone number, twice as many as for those with private profiles.
- One in six 9-12 year olds and one in three 13-16 year olds have more than 100 contacts on their SNS profile.
- Compared with those who do not use SNSs, SNS users are significantly more likely to report seeing sexual images, receiving sexual or bullying messages or meeting online contacts offline – though for each risk, the overall incidence is fairly low.

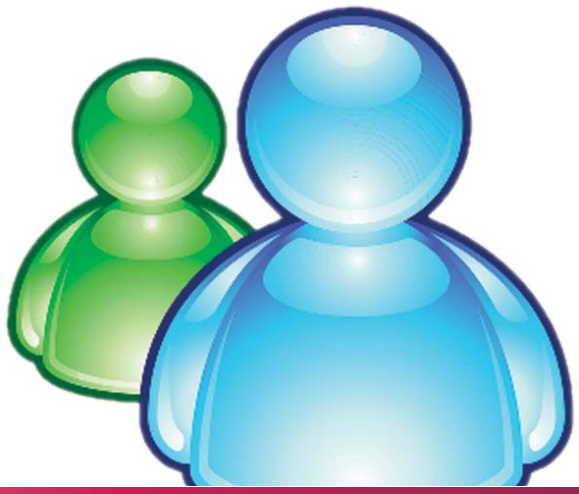
## Aren't children internet-savvy enough to manage their SNS settings?

- Features designed to protect children from other users if needed are not easily understood by everyone, especially by younger children.
- A large minority don't know how to manage their privacy settings, and four in ten younger children don't know how to block someone sending them unwelcome messages.
- Most children, however, are confident SNS users who are gaining the skills to use these services safely and greatly enjoy doing so.

**Which of these things do you know how to do on the internet?**

| | Change privacy settings | | | Block another user | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SNS** | **% 11-12** | **% 13-14** | **% 15-16** | **% 11-12** | **% 13-14** | **% 15-16** |
| Facebook | 55 | 70 | 78 | 61 | 76 | 80 |
| Nasza-Klasa | 64 | 80 | 85 | 56 | 71 | 83 |
| schülerVZ | 61 | 73 | 81 | 62 | 72 | 78 |
| Tuenti | 53 | 72 | 82 | 67 | 84 | 91 |
| Hyves | 68 | 77 | 89 | 79 | 88 | 94 |
| Hi5 | 42 | 63 | 56 | 51 | 65 | 73 |
| All SNSs | 56 | 71 | 78 | 61 | 75 | 81 |

*Base: All children aged 11-16 with a profile on the named SNS*.



## Policy implications

- If SNS age restrictions cannot be made effective, the de facto use of SNS by young children should be addressed so as to ensure age-appropriate protection.
- Privacy/safety settings and reporting mechanisms should be far more user-friendly. If they remain difficult to use, privacy/safety settings should be enabled by default.
- Digital skills to protect privacy and personal data should be strongly supported among children of all ages.
- It should also be recognised that one in three parents (51 per cent of parents of 9-12 year olds, 15 per cent of parents of 13-16 year olds) do not want their child to use SNSs.

# WHAT UPSETS CHILDREN ONLINE

## We asked children to tell us in their own words, "what things on the internet would bother people about your age?".

### A note on method

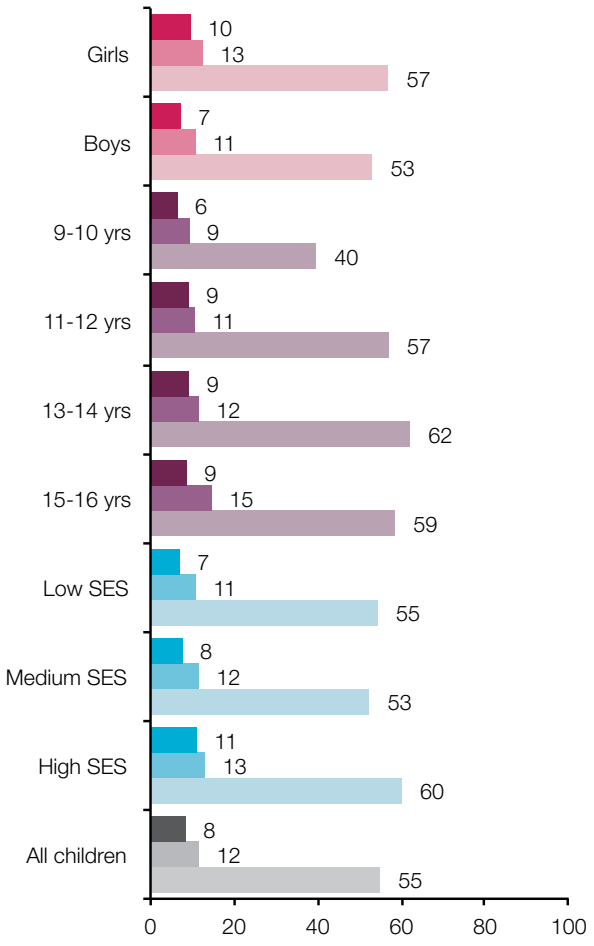
It is not easy to ask children about sensitive issues associated with online risks. Our approach was to interview children at home, face-to-face, so the child would be relaxed and the interviewer could check the child's understanding of questions asked. For the sensitive questions, children completed the survey in privacy – either answering on a computer screen turned to face them, or by pen and paper before putting their answers in a sealed envelope. We defined terms carefully and neutrally, avoiding emotive or value-laden terms (eg, "bully", "stranger"). The focus was on children's reports of what had actually happened to them within a set time period rather than on general opinions. Cognitive testing ensured children understood the questionnaire, and we took great care in translating this into 26 languages. For example, to ask children about the possible harms associated with specific risks (and instead of assuming that harm was inevitable), we asked children if a particular experience had "bothered" them, defining this as something that "made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it." We asked this first, before mentioning any kinds of risk at all, to see children's own views. A leaflet of helpful advice and sources of further support and guidance was provided for every child who participated in the survey, and we thank Insafe for compiling this – in 25 country versions!

- 55 per cent of all children consider that there are things on the internet that will bother children about their own age.
- 12 per cent of European 9-16 year olds say that they have been bothered or upset by something on the internet.

However, most children do not report being bothered or upset by going online.

- 8 per cent of parents think their child has been bothered by something online – parents of girls, and parents from higher SES homes, are a little more likely to think this.
- This means both that parents are a little more likely to underestimate harmful children's experiences overall, and also that in over half of the cases (59 per cent) where children have been bothered, their parents are unaware that something has happened.

**What upsets children online**



*"When I am playing games with my older sister on the internet, naked people pop up and it is very bad"* (girl, 15, Turkey)

*"Lies that are being spread. Cyberpesting, it happens more and more"* (girl, 14, Belgium)

*"If someone says that someone will do something on the internet like ruin your character that you have in a game"* (boy, 10, Sweden)

*"Hacker; spying; cheating; strangers who contact you online and you do not really know what they want from you"* (boy, 11, Austria)

*"When human beings are killed; when human beings are hurt while other people are watching"* (girl, 10, Germany)

*"If people put your secrets on the internet. If people take pictures or videos of you and put them on the internet when you don't want them to"* (girl, 9, Ireland)

*"To tell something nasty about a girl friend and then tell it to everyone"* (girl, 12, France)

*"All kinds of bullies, who can hurt person with words"* (girl, 14, Estonia)

*"Obscene scenes with naked people, men with men or men with women, saying rude words, hitting, whipping"* (boy, 12, France)

*"Kids bullying each other and being cruel and nasty. Sending nasty rumours about them to other people"* (girl, 16, UK)

## Policy implications

- Children are concerned about a wide range of online risks. Efforts to manage these risks, and to support children in coping with them, should maintain a broad and updated view of these risks.
- As 9 per cent of 9-10 year olds have been bothered or upset by something on the internet in the past year. it is important to promote awareness-raising and other safety practices for ever younger children.
- Awareness-raising among teenagers (and their parents and teachers) remains a priority since upsetting experiences rise with age and the array of risks keeps changing.

# UNWELCOME OR UPSETTING EXPERIENCES

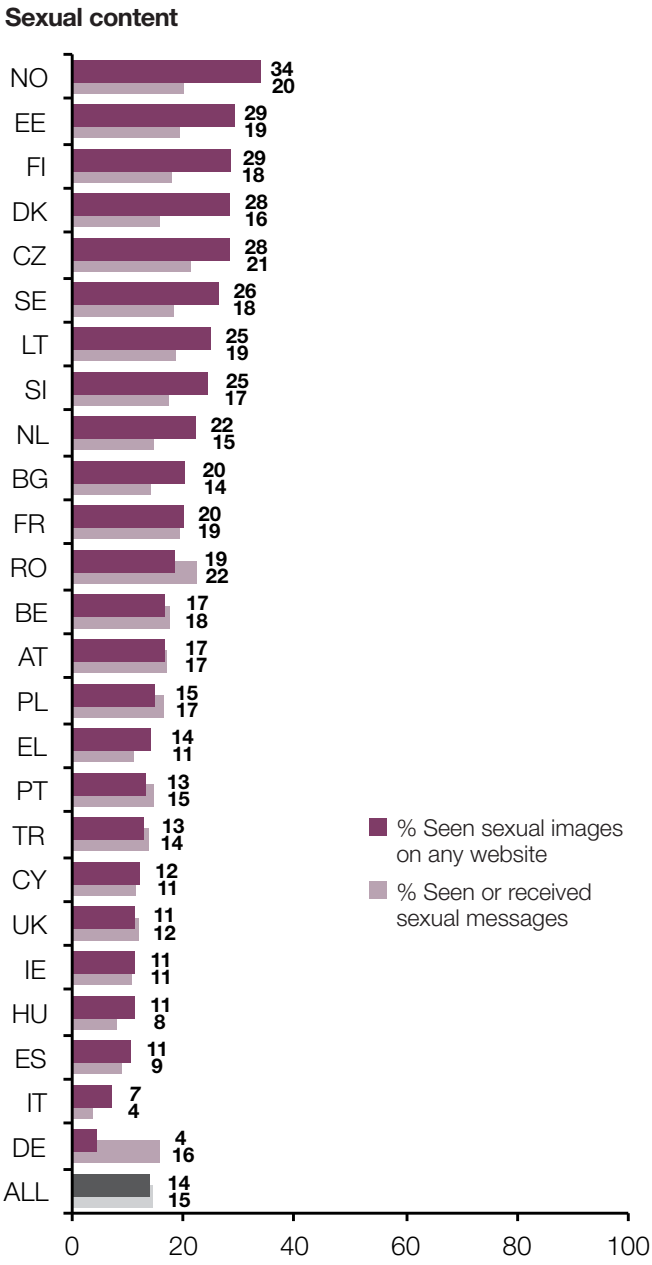
# SEXUAL CONTENT

Society has long worried about children's exposure to sexual content of one kind or another. The survey shows that exposure still occurs offline as well as online, with online pornography spreading for some children and in some countries.

## Key findings

- Children encounter pornography online and offline – 14 per cent of 9-16 year olds have seen sexual images online, and 4 per cent (about 25 per cent of those who had seen sexual images online) were upset by this; 23 per cent have seen sexual images altogether (including on websites but also television or videos/DVDs – 12 per cent, in magazines or books – 7 per cent).
- A minority of online content is sexually explicit – among 11-16 year olds, 11 per cent have seen nudity, 8 per cent have seen someone having sex, 8 per cent of seen genitals, and 2 per cent have seen violent sex. Also, 2 per cent have been asked to talk about sexual acts with someone online and 2 per cent have been asked for an image of their genitals.
- Sexual content is not just found on websites but is now also circulated via electronic devices among peers – 15 per cent of 11-16 year olds in Europe have received sexual messages, and 4 per cent (about 25 per cent of those who had received a message) said they had been upset by this. Also, 3 per cent say they have sent sexual messages to someone.
- Age and gender make a difference – more older than younger children report exposure to sexual content, and more boys than girls have seen sexual images; a third of teenage boys say they have seen these, a quarter online.
- Risks migrate – those who have encountered a range of risks offline are more likely to encounter sexual content online.

Children's exposure to sexual content online appears to be highest in Nordic countries and some Eastern European countries; children report lesser exposure in Southern Europe and predominantly Catholic countries




- Vulnerability matters – those who report more psychological difficulties are also more likely to have seen sexual images or received sexual messages online, and they are more often upset by the experience.
- Risk and harm are not the same – older children and boys encounter more sexual content, but younger children and girls are more upset when they do encounter this. Also, "sensation seekers" encounter more content and yet are less upset about it – possibly the very act of seeking and finding new content builds resilience for some.
- Parents are insufficiently aware – among children who have seen sexual images online, 40 per cent of their parents are unaware of this, rising to half of parents of girls and younger children; the groups more upset by what they see. Among those who have received sexual messages, 52 per cent of their parents are unaware of this and again this is more common among parents of girls and younger children.

## Policy implications

- Although public concern over online sexual content is justified, the extent of children's exposure should not be exaggerated, and nor should it be assumed that all children are upset or harmed by such exposure – the present findings do not support some of the moral panics surrounding this issue.
- Although the internet makes sexual content more readily available to all, with many children reporting exposure via accidental pop-ups, the regulation of more established media (television, video, magazines, etc) remains important.
- Private access also matters – children who go online via their own laptop, mobile phone or, especially, a handheld device are more likely to have seen sexual images and/or received sexual messages. Similarly, those who go online in their bedroom, at a friend's house or "out and about" are more likely to see sexual content online. The early advice that parents should put the computer in a public room must be revised, and new safety tools are needed.
- It seems that popular discourses centred on teenage boys' deliberate exposure to sexual content makes it harder for parents and others to recognise the distress that inadvertent exposure may cause girls, younger children and those facing psychological difficulties in their lives.

## MOST NOT BOTHERED BY SEXUAL CONTENT ONLINE BUT...

# ONLINE BULLYING

## We asked children if they had been treated, or had treated other people, in a hurtful or nasty way on the internet, whether as a single, repeated or persistent occurrence.

- Across Europe, 6 per cent of 9 to 16-year-old internet users report having been bullied online, and 3 per cent confess to having bullied others.
- Far more have been bullied offline, however, with 19 per cent saying they have been bullied at all – and 12 per cent have bullied someone else. In some countries, bullying is much more common than in others.

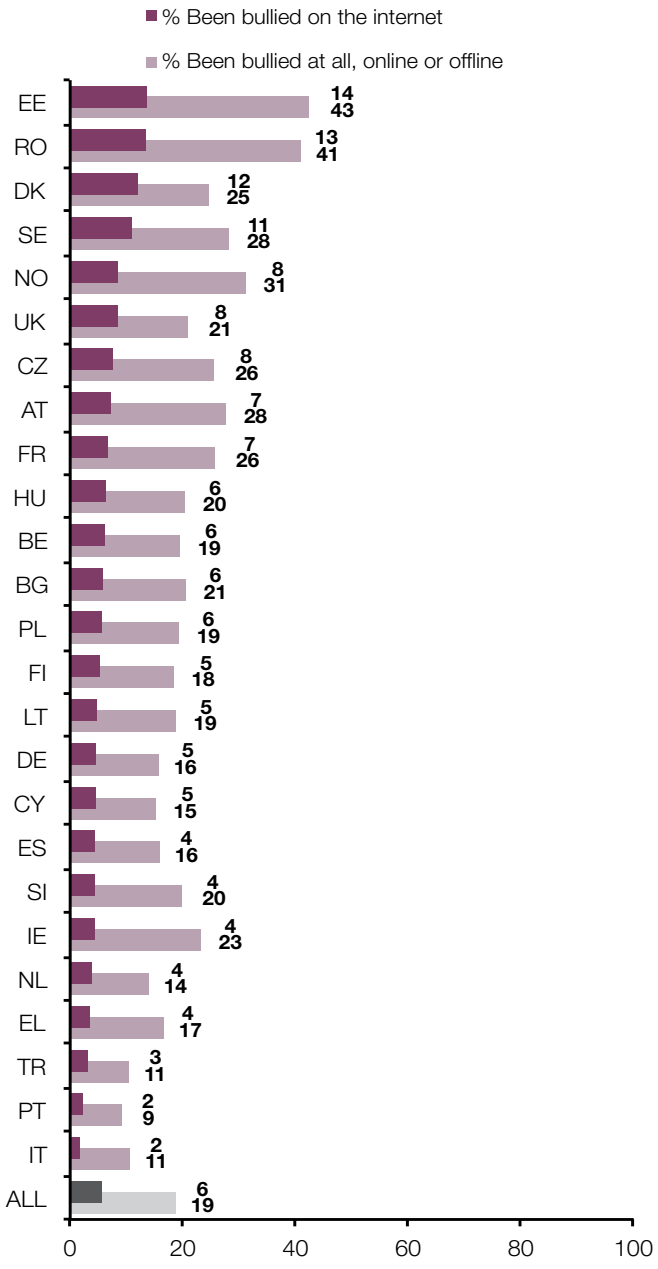
**Online bullying has rightly attracted a lot of policy attention. But it is not a wholly new problem. And nor are the children who do it simply "bad". What does the EU Kids Online survey tell us?**

- How does online bullying relate to offline bullying? Half (56 per cent) of online bullies said they had also bullied people face-to-face, and half (55 per cent) of online victims said they have also been bullied face-to-face. So it is not that bullying takes place either online or offline but that instead bullying migrates from one to the other, making it hard for the victim to escape.
- What is the link between children who bully and children who are bullied? It seems that bullying and being bullied tend to go together. Among those who do not bully others, being bullied is relatively rare – 8 per cent offline only, and 4 per cent online. But, among those who have bullied others offline, nearly half (47 per cent) have also been bullied offline (and fewer online). On the other hand, among those who have bullied others online, nearly half (40 per cent) have been bullied online (and fewer offline).

**Whether a child is victim of bullying , by whether the child bullies others**

## Although relatively few children report being bullied, this is the risk that upsets them most, more than sexual images, sexual messages, or meeting online contacts offline

**Whether child has been bullied online or at all**




- Which children bully or are bullied? Children who bully and who are bullied online report rather more psychological difficulties than children with no experience of bullying online. Also, those who bully tend to be higher in sensation seeking, while those who are bullied are more often ostracised by their peers.
- Are children who are bullied harmed by this? The 6 per cent of children who have been bullied online divide fairly evenly into those who were very upset (31 per cent), fairly upset (24 per cent), a bit upset (30 per cent) and, the smallest category, not at all upset (15 per cent). Girls are more upset than boys (37 per cent vs. 23 per cent "very upset").
- How do children who are bullied online cope with this? Children cope fairly well with being bullied online – a third (36 per cent) try to fix the problem, most tell someone (77 per cent, usually a friend but often a parent), and nearly half (46 per cent) block the person sending the hurtful messages.

### Policy implications

- In countries where there is more bullying, there tends to be more bullying online. This suggests that as internet use increases, so will bullying online. Thus anti-bullying initiatives should accompany efforts to promote internet use.
- Online and offline bullying should be seen as connected, part of a vicious cycle in which perpetrators reach their victims through diverse means and victims find it hard to escape.
- Yet, those who bully may also be vulnerable, and they are often victims themselves, so sensitive treatment is required.
- Although children have a range of coping responses, this risk does upset them, and more support is needed – fewer than half tell a parent or other adult, and fewer than half know how to block the person or delete their messages, so further awareness-raising is vital.

## BULLIES MAY ALSO BE BULLIED

# MEETING NEW CONTACTS ONLINE

## 50 per cent of children 11-16 say "I find it easier to be myself on the internet than when I am with people face-to-face".

Communicating, making new friends, developing intimacy – all this is fraught with difficulties and embarrassment for young people. The internet, it seems, offers a space for privacy, control over communication and experimentation. It also lets children easily get to know many new people, whether they are like them or quite different.

Traditionally, it has been clear who children are in touch with because, first, the child can see who they are talking to, also the parent can oversee who the child is talking to and, last, because the child's own identity is not in doubt. But on the internet, none of this can be assumed. Online, no-one knows, famously, if you yourself are a dog – or a child. It is not clear if you are talking to a child or an adult, including an adult pretending to be a child. Nor can parents oversee their children's friends – they are no longer present in the house or street, only on the computer, often inaccessible even to curious or concerned parents.

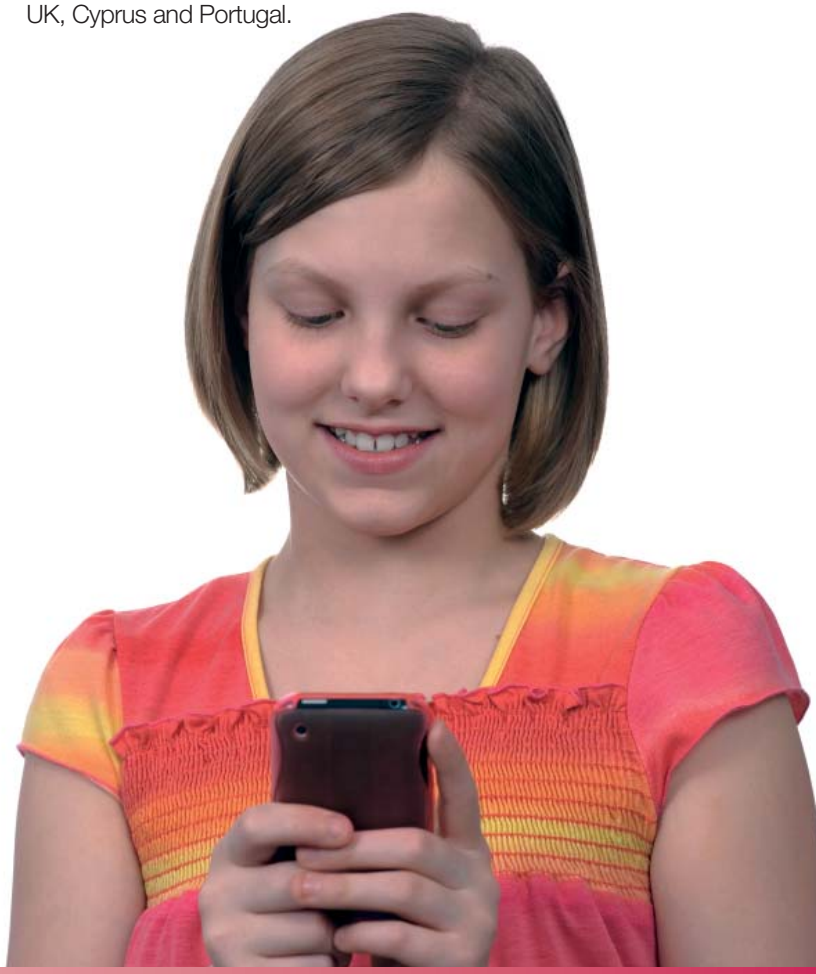
Nowhere has the public anxiety been greater than over the tension between "meeting strangers" (as many adults see it) and "making new friends" (as children may see it). Meeting strangers is a risk. Making new friends is an opportunity. Distinguishing between the two may depend on the child and the circumstances. Avoiding the emotive terms "stranger" and "friend", we asked children in the survey about the people they are in touch with online and whether they also know them offline.

- 87 per cent of 11-16 year olds say that online they are in touch with people they first met face-to-face. But 39 per cent are in touch with people they met on the internet who are friends or family of people they know. And 25 per cent are in touch with people they met online who have no connection with their existing social circle.

- 30 per cent of European 9-16 year olds have had contact online with someone they haven't met face to face, but only 9 per cent have gone to an offline meeting with such a person. On a country level, there is no obvious relation between making contacts online and meeting them offline.

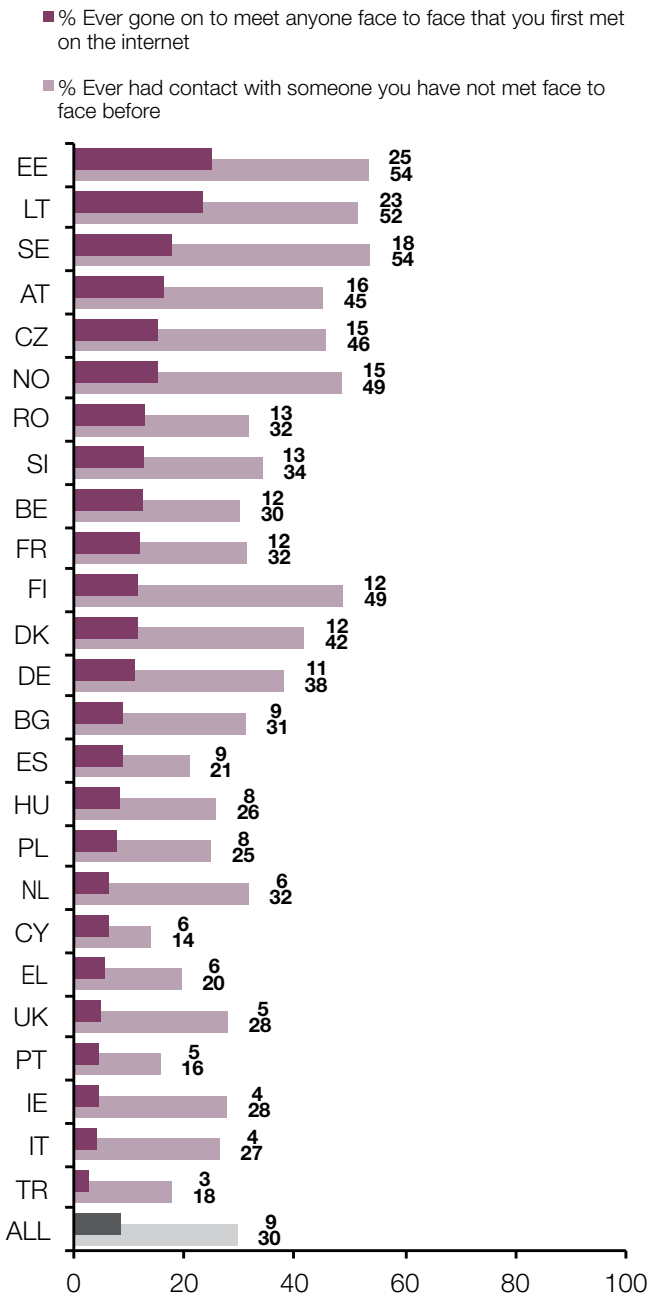
- Among those who have met online contacts offline, half have met one or two people in the past year, half have met more. Also, 57 per cent met a friend of a friend (someone in their social circle) while 48 per cent met someone unconnected with their life before meeting them online.

- Among those children who did meet an online contact offline, 61 per cent of their parents were not aware of this, rising to 68 per cent among the younger children. Parents were least aware of such meetings in Ireland, the UK, Cyprus and Portugal.



## Meeting new people online is commonplace for European children. Only in a small minority of cases is there cause for serious concern

**Whether child has met new people online and then met them offline**




### What else do we know about who makes new contacts online?

- Those who make contacts online tend to be higher in self-efficacy and/or sensation seekers who use the internet more, who engage in risky online and offline activities and whose parents place fewer restrictions on their internet use.
- Interestingly, those who go to meet new contacts offline show a similar pattern except they are also more likely to have psychological difficulties; so children's vulnerability is part of what makes some go to face-to-face meetings with 'new friends'.
- 11 per cent of those who went to such meetings (ie, 1 per cent of all children surveyed) were bothered or upset by what happened. Since the vast majority were not upset by such meetings, what makes the difference? We didn't ask much about what happened, though we know that two thirds of those upset met someone about their own age, and that a fifth said something hurtful was said and a few said something sexual happened.
- But we do know that those who were upset were more likely to be younger, low in self-efficacy and higher in psychological difficulties – in short, they tend to be the more vulnerable children.

### Policy implications

- It is important to distinguish making new contacts online – a common occurrence – from going to meet new online contacts offline. It is equally important to recognise that for the most part, meeting online contacts offline is harmless, probably even fun.
- But for a minority of children, meeting online contacts offline are harmful, and these children tend already to be the more vulnerable.
- Since their parents are often unaware of what has happened, awareness raising efforts should be increased so that parents of younger and/or more vulnerable children recognise the risk, but without this undermining the chance for most children to have fun making new friends.

# NEWER RISKS

Public anxiety often focuses on pornography, "sexting", bullying and meeting strangers, especially for young children. But there are other risks that worry children, including many teenagers.

## Survey findings showed that negative user-generated content is not uncommon:

- **Hate sites** – 12 per cent of European 11-16 year olds have seen these in the past year, rising to one in five 15-16 year olds.
- **Pro-anorexic sites** – 10 per cent have seen these, rising to one in five teenage girls (14-16 years old).
- **Self-harm sites** – 7 per cent have seen these, again more older than younger children.
- **Drug forums** – 7 per cent have seen these too, rising to 12 per cent of 15-16 year olds.
- **Suicide sites** – 5 per cent have seen these.
- **Overall** – 21 per cent of 11-16 year olds have seen at least one of these types of user-generated content; this varies by country, as shown in the graph.

## Varieties of personal data misuse also occur:

- **Identity theft** – 7 per cent of 11-16 year olds say that in the past year somebody used their password to access their information or pretend to be them.
- **Personal information abuse** – 4 per cent say that somebody used their personal information in a way they didn't like.
- **Financial cheating** – just 1 per cent say that they lost money by being cheated on the internet.
- **Overall** – 9 per cent say that they have experienced at least one of these three forms of personal data misuse, and this too varies by country.

*"Be made a ridicule by having personal stuff written about you and then made public"* (boy, 11, Greece)

*"Somebody that would 'crack' my password, I mean to access my account, to impersonate me and to make people in my contact list believe that I'm lying to them etc"* (girl, 12, Romania)

*"Pictures of naked people and of people who want to lose weight very quickly"* (girl, 10, Portugal)

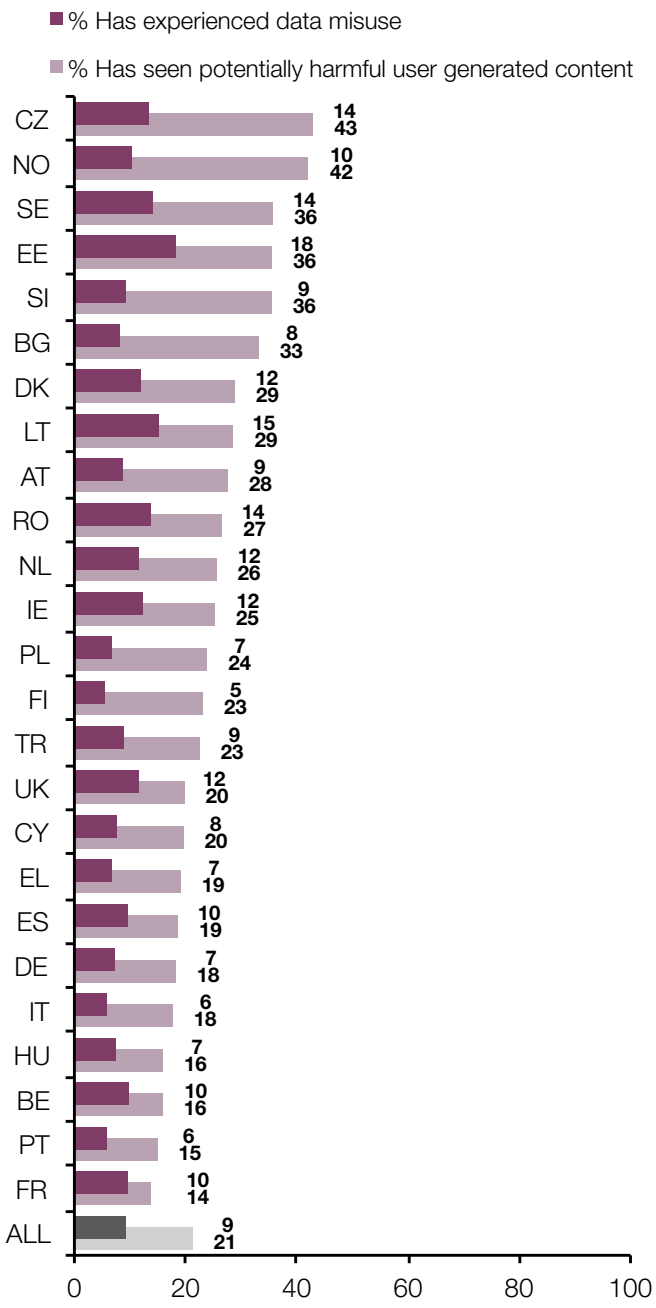
*"Violence (scenes), shocking news"* (girl, 14, Slovenia)

*"Being hacked by other children online (like: they find out what for instance your password is on an online community)"* (girl, 9, Norway)

*"Bloodthirsty websites that show how someone is beating himself bloody or how someone is scratching himself"* (girl, 15, Austria)

*"Lack of sleep, you don't do your homework if you are too much on the computer and can't concentrate on study"* (boy, 14, Finland)

**Child (11-16) has encountered negative user-generated content or data misuse**




## Policy implications

- As well as conducting surveys, qualitative work based on listening to children is vital to learn what new risks they are experiencing.
- Addressing risks associated with peer-to-peer conduct (user-generated content and personal data misuse) poses a critical challenge to policy makers.
- While younger children have fewer resources to cope with online risk, they are also more willing to turn to parents for help; meanwhile, teenagers face particular risks that worry them and that they may struggle with alone, so they need particular coping strategies and support.

*"Torturing ourselves, attempts to suicide, using drugs"* (boy, 15, Hungary)

*"Violent video filmed at school or when somebody is harmed"* (girl, 10, Lithuania)

*"Showing sexual practices, offering drugs and weapons, religious groups"* (boy, 15, Czech Republic)

*"When somebody says that he/she is going to commit suicide"* (boy, 15, Germany)

*"To do with being skinny, talking about weight loss and what you can do to lose weight"* (girl, 15, UK)

*"Girlfriends who I thought my friends have been awful. They took my identity to have my boyfriend"* (girl, 15, France)

*"The influence of bad websites such as things like diet to lose weight so you could be known as the pretty one. Like vomiting things"* (girl, 15, Ireland)

*"The internet hackers are bothering, also the abusive use of personal accounts or the untrue information tht somebody is spreading for someone else"* (boy, 12, Bulgaria)

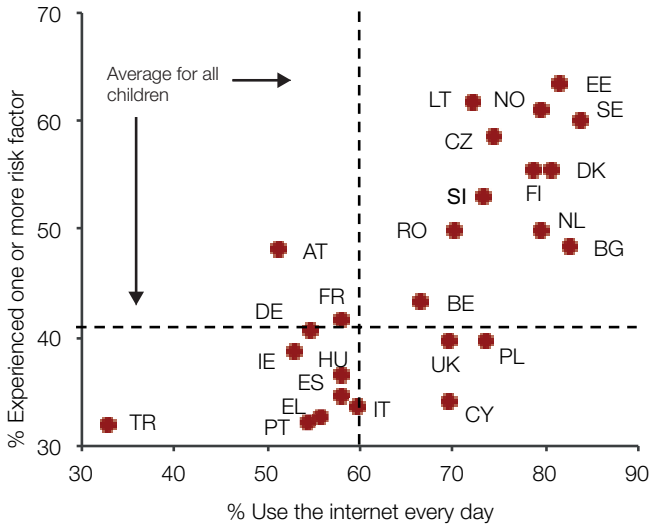
# THE RISKS THAT CONCERN CHILDREN KEEP CHANGING

# COMPARING RISK AND HARM

## 4 in 10 children encountered one or more forms of online risk in the past year

- 14 per cent of European 9-16 year olds have seen sexual images online.
- 6 per cent of 9-16 year olds have been sent nasty or hurtful messages/been bullied online.
- 30 per cent of 9-16 year olds have had contact online with someone they have not met face to face.
- 9 per cent of 9-16 year olds have been to an offline meeting with a contact first met online.
- 15 per cent of 11-16 year olds have seen or received sexual messages online.
- 21 per cent of 11-16 year olds have come across one or more types of potentially harmful user-generated content.
- 9 per cent have experienced one or more types of personal data misuse.
- As use of the internet increases – at the level of individuals and countries – so too does risk.

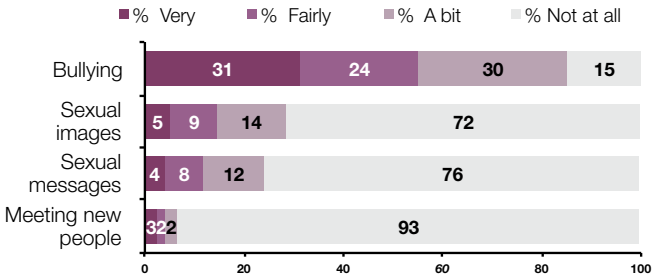
**Encountering online risks by frequency of internet use**




## Fewer children report being harmed by online risks

- Being bullied online is the risk that upsets children the most, even though it is among the least common.
- Meeting new people offline – the risk that the public worries about the most – very rarely upsets children, although when it does upset them the consequences can be very serious.
- While society may judge, on moral grounds, that children should not be exposed to sexual content, children are only upset by such exposure in a few circumstances, while in others such exposure may be pleasurable.
- Among the minority upset by sexual content, children are most upset by being asked to talk about sexual acts with someone or being asked for an image of their genitals (by comparison, for example, with sexual messages or images of intercourse).

**How upset the child felt after encountering the risk online**




## Risk refers to the probabillity not the inevitability of harm

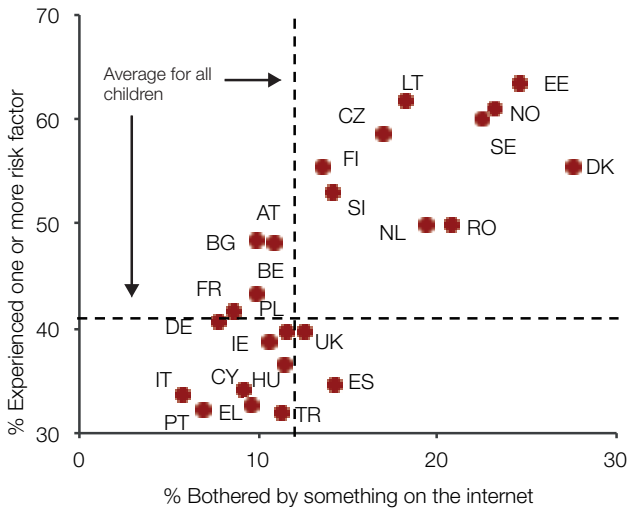
Generally, children who are older, higher in self-efficacy and sensation seeking, who do more online activities (ie, are higher on the ladder of opportunities) and who have more psychological problems encounter more risks of all kinds online.

In contrast, children who are younger, lower in self-efficacy and sensation seeking, who do fewer online activities, have fewer skills, and who have more psychological problems find online risks more harmful and upsetting.


## In some countries, a similar level of risk is less upsetting than in others

- Broadly, in countries where more children encounter online risk, children also report more bothering or upsetting experiences – and vice versa.
- But some country comparisons are thought-provoking. For example, children in Finland and Denmark report similar levels of risk, but Danish children are more often upset. At a lower level of risk, the same holds for Spanish and Italian children.

**Encountering online risks by whether bothered or upset by internet use**




## Policy implications

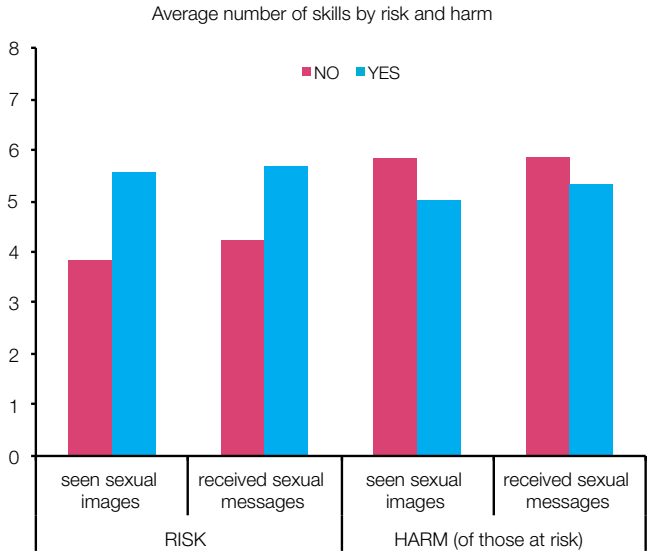
- Since risk increases as use increases, it might seem simple to call for restrictions on children's use of the internet. But online opportunities and digital literacy also increase with use, so there is no simple solution. Rather, ways must be found to manage risk without unduly restricting opportunities.
- As with riding a bike or crossing the road, everyday activities online carry a risk of harm, but this harm is far from inevitable – indeed, it is fairly rare. The EU Kids Online survey provides clear empirical support for policy efforts both to manage children's encounters online so as to reduce harm (though not necessarily to reduce risk). This should be achieved both by designing the online environment to build in safety considerations and to increase children's digital skills, coping and resilience.
- In some countries, the need for such efforts is already pressing. In others, it may be anticipated that as use rises, so to will the need for greater policy efforts regarding children's safety, empowerment and well-being.

# HOW CHILDREN COPE WITH HARM

Society has a responsibility to provide guidance and support for children facing online risks. But it is also important to support children's capacity to cope themselves, thereby building resilience for digital citizens.

- It might be thought that increasing children's digital skills would reduce their encounters with online risk. But as EU Kids Online findings show, increased skills are associated with a wider and deeper use of the internet, bringing both more opportunities and more risks.
- This may not be problematic: developmental psychologists argue that children must encounter some degree of risk – though not risk which exceeds their capacity to cope – for them to become resilient. The kind of risk that a child can cope with varies with individual circumstances – some children experience risks as harmful while others do not.
- Some online experiences are so extreme or upsetting that children should not be exposed to them in the first place – for these, self- or state-regulation of the online environment is required. But for many everyday encounters, 'end-user' solutions are preferable. These may be provided by parents, teachers or even peers – see the next section. However, children themselves are part of the solution, and empowering them to cope with harm is vital.
- As the graph shows, children with more skills are more likely to have seen sexual images or received sexual messages. But those who are upset (ie, self-reported harm) have fewer skills than those not harmed.

**More skilled children encounter more risk but experience less harm**



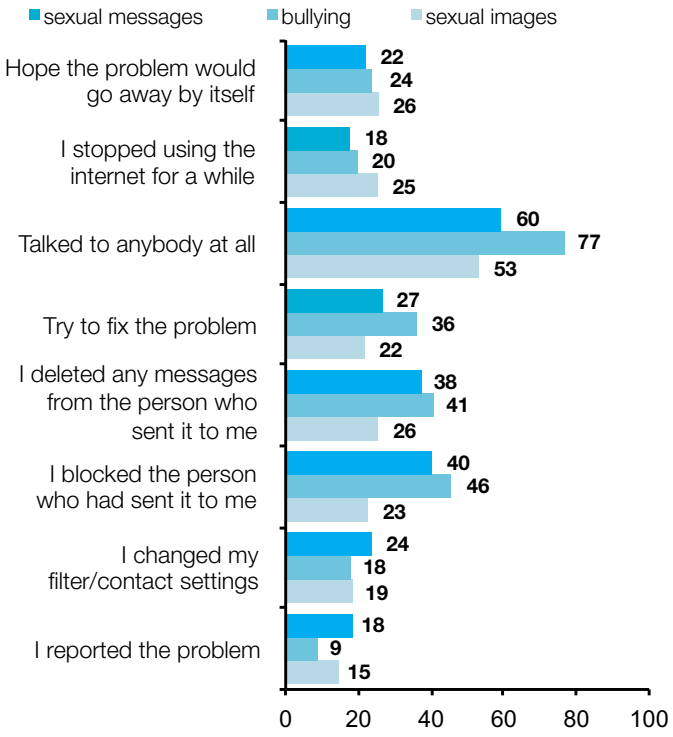

## What can children do, when faced with an online risk that upsets them?

In the EU Kids Online survey, we asked children if they did any of the following:

- Fatalistic responses – hope the problem will go away, stop using the internet for a while.
- Communicative responses – talk to someone about what happened.
- Pro-active strategies – try to fix the problem, delete a problematic message, block an unwelcome person.

Communicative coping relies on having people around you that you trust, while pro-active strategies require available, user-friendly technical tools and the digital skills to employ them and a fatalistic response suggests the approach of someone lacking social, technical or skilful forms of support.

**What children do when upset by online risks**




## We found that, among those upset by a particular risk, 11-16 year olds cope in different ways: (see graph)

- Younger children are more likely to make fatalistic responses, and they are also less likely than older children to tell someone if they are upset by sexual images. Older teens are more likely to block unwelcome people.
- Boys, compared with girls, are more likely to hope upsetting sexual messages will go away. Girls are more likely to talk to somebody about online harms. Interestingly, girls are also more likely to adopt proactive strategies to online harm.
- Children lower in self-efficacy favour fatalistic responses, while children higher in self-efficacy try to fix the problem. Self-efficacy makes no difference to either communicative or technical responses, however.
- Children lower on the ladder of opportunities (who do fewer online activities) adopt more fatalistic responses while those higher on the ladder are more proactive.
- Children with more psychological difficulties tend to adopt fatalistic responses, especially stopping using the internet, and they are less likely to talk to someone if they are upset when bullied though some do block the bully.

**Efforts to promote children's digital citizenship – in terms of online safety and good practice – are bearing some fruit, and should be extended**

## Policy implications

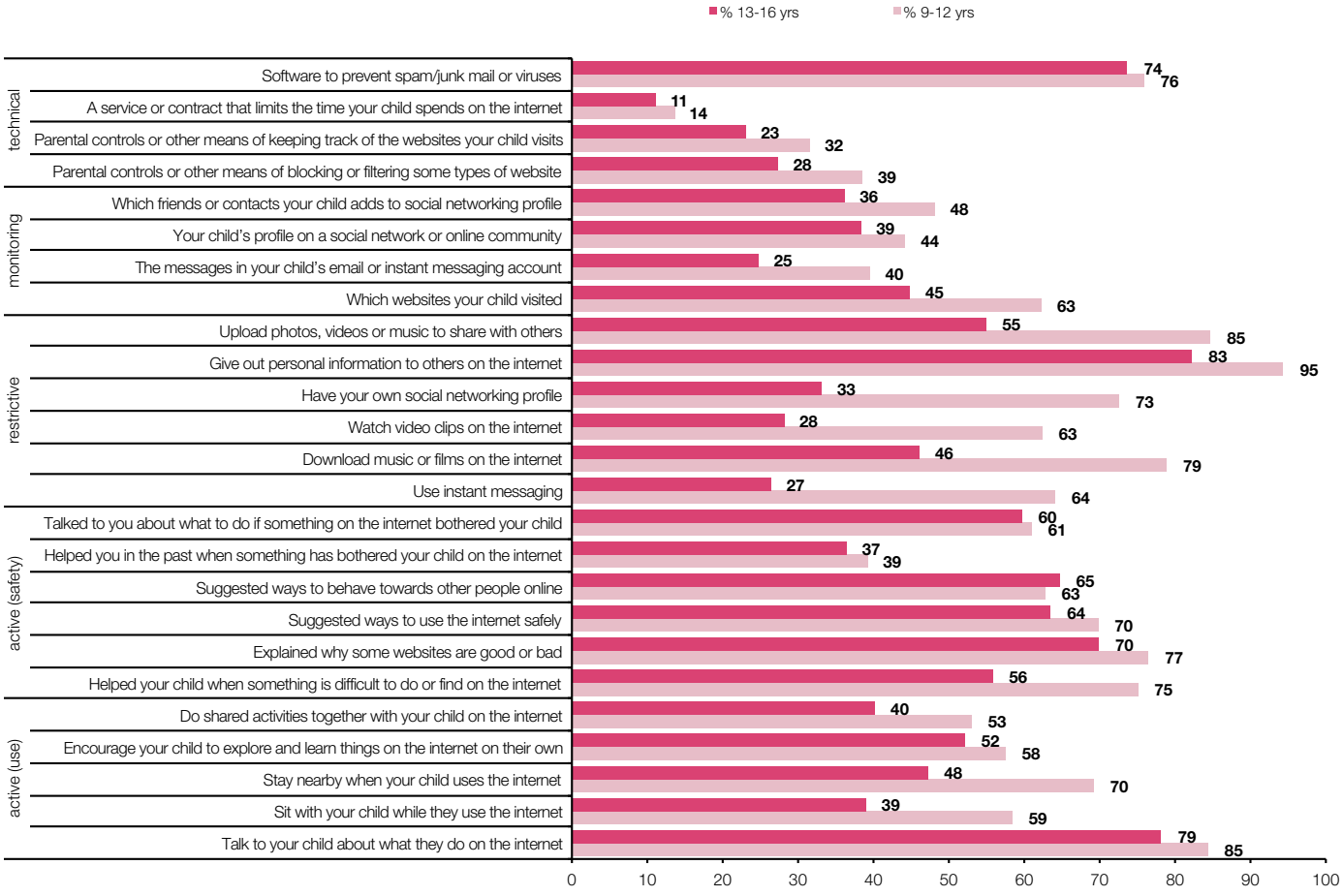
- Policy makers have long advised children to tell someone if they've been upset online, and it seems such messages have been heard.
- Children try some proactive strategies more than others and few are fatalistic: this suggests a desire to cope as best they can and a readiness to adopt new technical tools if these are accessible.
- When asked which strategies really helped the problem, children told us that reporting the problem to an ISP was effective with sexual images but less so for sexual or bullying messages: this suggests that better solutions are needed for peer-to-peer risks.
- Mostly, children said the approach they chose helped in up to two thirds of cases, but this leaves room for provision of better support and/or tools.
- There may be many reasons why the solutions children try, when upset, do not help the situation, but one possibility is that the technical tools are flawed or difficult to use, and another is that adults – professional or personal – are unprepared or unable to help children.
- The "knowledge gap" phenomenon – in which the information-rich learn from available advice and guidance more rapidly than the information-poor – means that efforts to promote digital citizenship will disproportionately benefit the already-advantaged. Targeting less privileged or more vulnerable children is a priority.
- Overwhelmingly, children tell a friend, followed by a parent, when something online upsets them. Rarely do they tell a teacher or any other adult in a position of responsibility. Their apparent lack of trust in those who may have more expert solutions is a concern.

# WHAT PARENTS DO WHEN CHILDREN GO ONLINE

## Parents play a vital role in keeping children safe on the internet and they can also empower their child to gain digital skills.

Yet parents face some dilemmas. Should they be more restrictive or more enabling? Do they understand the internet well enough to guide their child? Should they treat the internet like television or other media, or is it different? What are the technical options available to them? The EU Kids Online survey asked about five parental strategies – and we asked both parents and children what really happened at home.

**What parents say they do when their child goes online**




- 88 per cent parents impose rules about whether their child can give out personal information online
- 81 per cent talk to their children – especially their daughters – about what they do on the internet
- 58 per cent stay nearby when their child is online
- Monitoring what the child does online later is less popular, since it may imply less trust
- While three quarters use software to prevent spam/viruses, less than a third uses a filter for safety reasons

## Most parents have got the message that it is worthwhile engaging with their child's internet use – but a few could do more

- Around one in ten parents does few or none of the forms of mediation we asked about.
- Parents reduce their amount of mediation – especially restrictions – as children get older, though interestingly they are equally likely to advise on safety whatever the child's age.
- Parents from higher vs. lower SES homes do more active/safety mediation though no more restrictive or technical mediation.
- Parents who are internet users do more of all forms of mediation than parents who are not.
- Interestingly, only 15 per cent of parents say they have changed their approach to internet safety because of something that upset their child online, although one in five parents say this in Estonia, Bulgaria and Romania where, possibly, they are undergoing a process of rapid adjustment to widespread internet access.
- Overall, four fifths of parents (especially those with younger children) are confident that they can help their child deal with anything online that bothers them, and they are also fairly confident in their child's ability to cope.
- Still, one quarter of parents think it is "fairly" (23 per cent) or "very" (5 per cent) likely that their child will experience problems online in the next six months, and half think they should take more interest in their child's online activities.

- Parents who practise more restrictive regulation have children who encounter fewer risks and also less harm – but also fewer online opportunities (these children do fewer online activities, and have fewer digital skills).
- Parents who practise more active safety mediation or monitoring have children who encounter more risks (especially younger children) and more harm (especially teenagers) – probably, parental mediation is a response to, rather than a condition for, problematic online experiences (and these children do more online activities and have more skills).

### What do children say about this?

- Children report similar levels of parental activity to parents, though they underestimate parental levels of monitoring and filtering.
- They are generally positive about their parents' actions – over two thirds say it is helpful (27 per cent "very", 43 per cent "a bit") – teens largely agree with younger children about this.
- Contrary to the view that parents know little of what their children do online, two thirds of children say their parents know a lot (32 per cent) or quite a lot (36 per cent) about what they do.
- However, nearly half think what their parents do limits their online activities (11 per cent "a lot", 33 per cent "a little"), and 9-10 year olds feel the most restricted.
- And, as often suspected, a third of children say they sometimes ignore what their parents say about using the internet (7 per cent "a lot", 29 per cent "a little").
- Some would like their parents to take "a lot" (5 per cent) or "a little" (10 per cent) more interest in what they do online, especially among the 9-12 year olds; most would not, though.

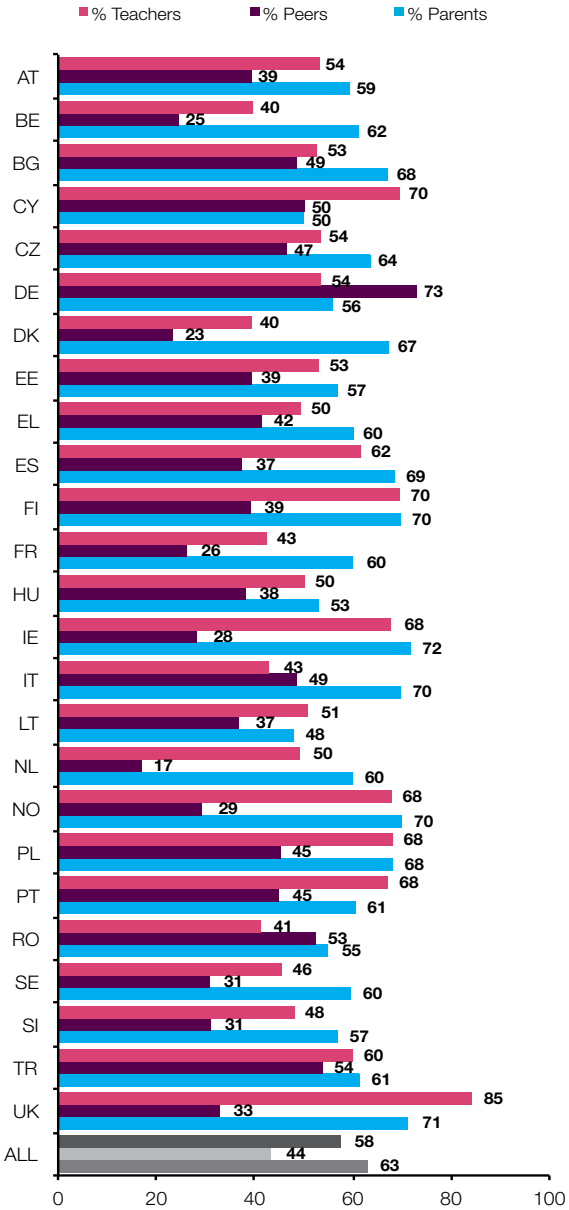
### Policy implications

- Parents employ a wide range of strategies, depending partly on the age of the child. But there are some parents who do not do very much, even for young children, and there are some children would like their parents to take more interest. Targeting these parents with awareness raising messages and resources is thus a priority.
- Cynicism that what parents do is not valued, or that children will evade parental guidance, is ungrounded: the evidence reveals a more positive picture in which children welcome parental interest and mediating activities while parents express confidence in their children's abilities. It is important to maintain this situation as the internet becomes more complex and more embedded in everyday life.
- Parental restrictions carry a significant cost in terms of children's online opportunities and skills, but they may be appropriate if children are vulnerable to harm. Parental efforts to empower children online seem to enhance their opportunities and skills, though there is little evidence that they reduce risk or harm. There are no easy answers, therefore, so parents should be supported in judging what best suits their child.

# WHO SUPPORTS CHILDREN – PARENTS, TEACHERS AND PEERS

Parents are not the only people responsible for children. Teachers also have a vital role to play, and for many children, their peers too are a valuable resource: 63 per cent of European 9-16 year olds have received internet safety advice from parents, 58 per cent from teachers and 44 per cent from peers.

**Whether parents, peers or teachers have ever suggested ways to use the internet safely**




Beyond advising on using the internet safely, teachers and peers help children with tricky online activities and judgements:

- 58 per cent of 9-16 year olds say their teachers have helped them when something is difficult to do or find on the internet, and the same percentage have explained why some websites are good or bad. Half have talked to them generally about what they do online or have suggested ways to behave towards other people only and 40 per cent have talked to them about what to do if something bothers them online. More, however, have made rules about what children can and can't do on the internet at school (62 per cent).
- 64 per cent of 9-16 year olds say their friends have helped them when something is difficult to do or find on the internet, and over a third have explained why some website are good or bad and have suggested ways to behave towards others online.

When something bothered them online, 36 per cent said a parent helped them, 28 per cent a friend and 24 per cent a teacher. Ideally, every child would have at least one person to turn to

- Three quarters of 15-16 year olds have received safety advice from friends, compared with two thirds of 9-10 year olds. It is also more common among children from lower SES homes.
- Fewer children – especially among the 9-10 year olds – say they have suggested to their friends how to use the internet safely, but still over one third say they have done this.
- The more teachers and friends mediate children's internet use, the greater the children's digital literacy and safety skills – this association is stronger the younger the child. Or, since we cannot determine the direction of causality, it may be that more skilled children are able more effectively to gain the help of teachers and peers (supporting the knowledge gap hypothesis).

## Policy implications

- Levels of teacher mediation are high but could be higher, as a large minority of children are not reached by teacher guidance. Since schools have the resources to reach all children, they should take the biggest share of the task of reaching the "hard to reach".
- The youngest children (9-10 years) report the least mediation from teachers: as this age group now uses the internet widely, primary schools should increase critical and safety guidance for pupils.
- The benefits of supporting peer mediation are easily neglected but could be constructively harnessed, especially as children are most likely to tell a friend if something bothers them online. Peer mentioning schemes have a valuable role to play.
- When something has bothered them on the internet, 36 per cent of children said a parent helped them, 28 per cent a friend and 24 per cent a teacher. Ideally, every child would have at least one person to turn to, but, as noted already in relation to coping, a minority of children has no-one to tell when something upsets them.

# INEQUALITIES IN RISK AND RESOURCES TO COPE

Some minority groupings, among all internet-using children in Europe, face particular challenges online. Children may be disadvantaged by lack of economic or cultural capital or they may be disadvantaged through social or psychological vulnerability. We used several proxy measures to identify these groups. The differences below are generally small yet indicative.

## Economic or cultural capital

### 27 per cent of children have parents with lower secondary education or less

These children report fewer online risks than the European average, but are more upset when they encounter risk. They also claim fewer digital literacy and safety skills than the average. This relatively inexperienced group in terms of internet risks has parents who feel less confident in supporting their children online, who receive less safety information from a range of sources, and who are less likely to wish for more such information than the average.

### 25 per cent of children have parents who do not use the internet

These children also report fewer online risks than the European average and they are also more upset when they encounter risk. Their digital skills are even lower than the above group, probably because fewer have the internet at home. Their parents are less confident also that they can support their child online, though they think they should do more. These parents are less likely than most to get safety information from their friends or family, and they especially wish their child's school would provide more such information.

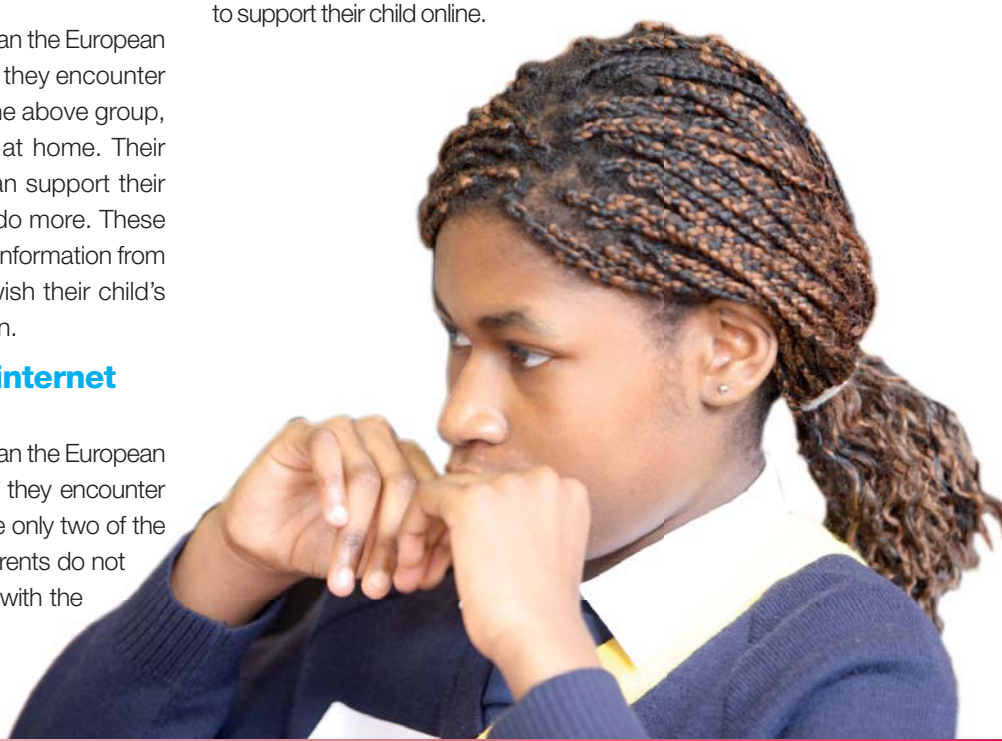
### 7 per cent of children use the internet less than once per week

These children also report fewer online risks than the European average and they are also more upset when they encounter risk. Their digital skills are very low – they have only two of the eight skills we asked about. Although their parents do not consider their children well prepared to cope with the internet, they do not plan to do more themselves than the average parent, nor do they desire more safety information than others.

## Social or psychological vulnerability

### 41 per cent of children have parents who say they are very worried about their safety online

Interestingly, these children are no more likely than average to have encountered online risks, nor are they more upset by them and their digital skills are average. However, their parents are a little less confident that their child can cope with online risks, and they think they should do more to support their child online.



They are also in receipt of slightly more safety information than the average, and they wish to receive more still, from most sources.

### 34 per cent of children reported more psychological difficulties than most

These children report more online risks than the average, and they are more upset when they occur. Their digital skills are just below average and their parents lack confidence in their ability to help their child online, though they are more likely to have adjusted their approach after something upset their child online. These parents neither receive nor wish for more safety information than the average parent.

### 12 per cent of children have experienced something upsetting on the internet

These children report many more risk and harm experiences than the average, as often recognised also by their parents. Their digital skills are above average, suggesting a readiness to learn to manage the internet better after an upsetting experience. Their parents, too, have changed their approach after their child was upset online, and they are fairly confident in both their and their child's ability to cope in future, compared with the average. Among those parents aware of their child's experience, there is a desire for more safety information from all sources.

### 6 per cent of children have a mental, physical or other disability

These children report raised risk levels, especially in relation to contact risks. They find these more upsetting in relation to meeting new online contacts offline, though not otherwise. Their digital skills are also a little higher than average, though their parents are less confident that their child can cope with what they find online. These parents receive slightly more safety information and, particularly, would like to receive more from ISPs and websites than would most.

### 4 per cent of children belong to a discriminated-against group

These children report more online risk, though only slightly more harm from these risks. Their digital skills are above average, though their parents tend to lack confidence in their ability to support and their children's ability in terms of coping with online problems, and they are more likely to have adjusted their approach in response to such problems. They are more likely to be aware of safety information from the government, and would like yet more, but get less support from their friends and family.

### 4 per cent of children speak a minority language at home

Risks encountered by these children are about average though they report being more upset from bullying and 'sexting'. Their digital skills are average, but their parents lack confidence in their children's ability to cope, and they think they should do more to support their child online. They receive less safety information from all sources than the average. Though they mostly prefer to receive such information from the child's school, from TV or friends and family, they wish for less not more than does the average parent.

## Policy implications

- For children whose parents lack economic or cultural/educational resources, the challenge is to build digital skills and resilience given a relative lack of experience of the internet at home. It is important to increase the confidence of these parents, and to raise awareness that more safety knowledge would be beneficial. The child's school has a key role here as a trusted source.
- For children with social, familial or psychological vulnerabilities, the challenge is rather different. These children may already be experiencing more risk of harm from internet use, though parental worries are a poor indicator of such experiences. Some vulnerable children have increased digital skills already, so the policy priority is less to raise their skills further than to consider other ways of reducing harm. This could include helping those parents who think they should do more to support their child, providing "just in time" guidance for those coping with an upsetting experience, and ensuring a wider range of sources of safety information (eg, online sources for parents of disabled children, government sources for parents of discriminated-against children.

# SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN ONLINE EXPERIENCES

## Comparing children's experiences in 25 countries is like comparing apples and oranges – there are many variables to consider, most of them difficult to measure.

Differences are easily overstated, so our first task was to note how European children's experiences of the internet are similar wherever they live. Our second task was to recognise differences among children depending on their country and, if possible, to explain these differences.

In general, the more children do one kind of activity online, the more they do of another – this applies for opportunities and risks. So we grouped the children in the survey according to how they use the internet, and found six "user types", with different relations to online risk.

### Children are not all the same

**Low use/learning oriented**

This group includes many younger children, and averages 11.4 years old. They use the internet rather little, focusing mainly on schoolwork, watching video clips and reading/watching the news. Few have an SNS profile and they do few risky online activities. Although they encounter few online risks, when they do, they tend to be upset.

**Low use/social networking site oriented**

Also relatively young (average 11.5 years), this group is less likely to use the internet for schoolwork or news and more likely to use SNSs. They also encounter online risks though they tend not to find these upsetting.

**Diverse opportunities and risks**

Averaging 13.4 years old, these children spend almost two hours a day online and do the widest range of activities, including some more advanced and creative activities on the ladder of opportunities. They also do more risky online activities. Although not the oldest group, they encounter the most risk online but are the least likely to be upset.

**Moderate use**

A bit older than the first two groups at 13.1 years on average, these children spend more time online and have a much wider range of activities. They are, too, more likely to encounter online risks.

**High use/entertainment oriented**

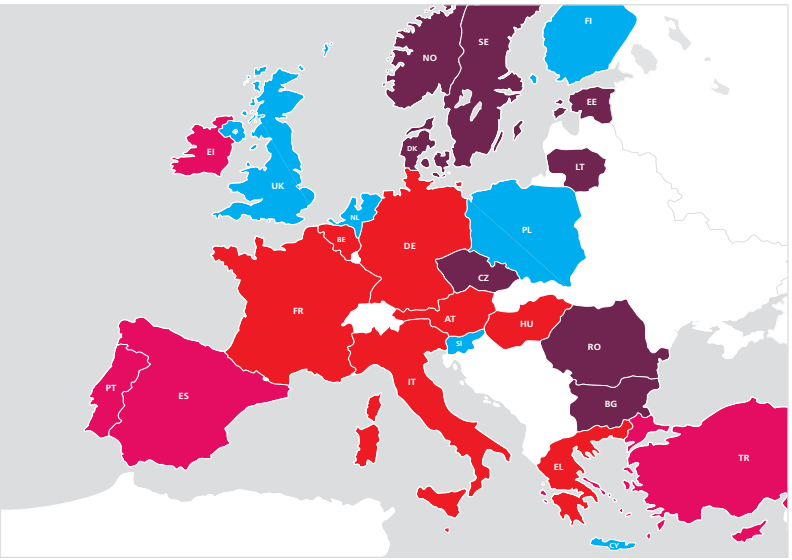
These children are older (average 14 years) and more often boys. They are online for most minutes per day (201 minutes on average) and do a fairly wide range of activities. They like playing games against the computer and watching video clips, and they do relatively little schoolwork, news or creative activities. Their exposure to risk is quite high, and some use the internet excessively.

**Focused social web use**

This is the oldest group (average 14.2 years), with more girls than boys, and they use the internet for longer, doing more activities, than the average. They are unlikely to play games online, but are the most likely to use SNSs. They also read/watch news, use instant messaging, post photos or music and write blogs. Their online risk encounters are similar to groups four and five but they report slightly higher levels of upset.

Countries can be characterised as "lower use, lower risk", "lower use, some risk", "higher use, some risk" and "higher use, higher risk"

**Country classification based on children's online use and risk (from EU Kids Online survey)**




Although in reality countries are subtly graded in terms of amounts and types of use and risk, we here group them for ease into four categories. Overall, it is striking that high internet use is rarely associated with low risk; and high risk is rarely associated with low use. Rather, the more use, the more risk though high use is not necessarily associated with high risk.

**"Lower use, lower risk" countries** – here children make the lowest use of the internet, and they are below average on all risks apart from meeting online contacts – online and offline; still, it may be expected that as levels of use rise in these countries, so too will risk.

**"Lower use, some risk" countries** have the lowest internet usage, although there is some excessive use of the internet and some problems with user-generated content.

**"Higher use, some risk" countries** make high use of the internet but are high only on some risks, possibly because of effective awareness-raising campaigns, regulatory strategies or strategies of parental mediation of children's internet use.

**"Higher use, higher risk" countries** include both wealthy Nordic countries and Eastern European countries (better called, "New use, new risk").

**A country's socio-economic stratification, regulatory framework, technological infrastructure and educational system all shape children's online risks.**

## Policy implications

- Children in wealthier countries (measured by GDP) encounter more online risk but, arguably, these countries are also well placed to provide more accessible and user-friendly safety resources for children and parents. Also, countries with more press freedom, such as Nordic and Baltic countries, are more likely to have children who encounter online risk – this may be because of lower internet regulation and strategies that ensure safety without introducing censorship are thus needed.
- At the country level, there is no systematic relation between level of parental filtering in a country and children's risk experiences, although there is a small relationship at the individual level – children whose parents use a filter are less likely to have encountered sexual content, suggesting filters can play a useful role.
- Degree of broadband penetration, and length of time in which most people have had internet access, are associated with greater online risks, but not greater online activities among children – this suggests that, while children are motivated to use the internet everywhere in Europe, higher quality access is bringing more risks than are adequately dealt with by policymakers (whether industry, state or education).
- In countries with 15+ years of schooling on average, children are more likely to have better digital skills, as are children from countries where more schools use computers in the classroom. Education clearly has a positive role to play in supporting digital skills, literacies and citizenship, and should be supported across all countries.

# TOP 10 MYTHS ABOUT CHILDREN'S ONLINE RISKS

## 1 Digital natives know it all

Children knowing more than their parents has been exaggerated – only 36 per cent of 9-16-year olds say it is very true that "I know more about the internet than my parents" – 31 per cent say "a bit true", and two in three 9-10 year olds say "not true". Talk of digital natives obscures children's need for support in developing digital skills.

## 2 Everyone is creating their own content now

In the past month, only one in five used a file-sharing site or created a pet/avatar and half that number wrote a blog. Creative activities are rarest among younger children. While social networking makes it easier to upload content, most children use the internet for ready-made, mass produced content.

## 3 Under 13s can't use social networking sites so no worries

With 38 per cent 9-12 year olds having an SNS profile, it is clear that age limits don't work. Since many "under-age" users registered with a false age, even if the provider did tailor privacy and safety settings to suit young children, they couldn't identify them. Some young social networkers have public profiles which display personal information, and some contact people they haven't met. Should providers strengthen their protections? Or get rid of age limits altogether?

## 4 Everyone is watching porn online

Estimates for exposure to pornography online are lower than many anticipated – a quarter saw sexual images in the past year online or offline, and one in seven saw them online, rising to a quarter of older teens. Even assuming some under-reporting, it seems that media hype over pornography is based on unrepresentative samples or just supposition.

## 5 Bullies are baddies

Most (60 per cent) of those who bully – online or offline – have themselves been bullied by others, and 40 per cent of those who bully online have been bullied online. Both those who bully and who are bullied online tend to be more psychologically vulnerable, suggesting a vicious cycle of behaviour that damages both victim and perpetrator.

## 6 People you meet on the internet are strangers

Most (87 per cent) 11-16 year olds are in touch online with people they know face-to-face. Four in ten have online contacts that they met online but who are connected with their friends or family. A quarter are in touch with people unconnected with their social circle, and 9 per cent met offline someone they first met online. Few went unaccompanied or met someone older and only 1 per cent had a negative experience. The challenge is to protect children from rare but harmful occurrences without limiting the opportunities of the majority.

## 7 Offline risks migrate online

Well, in part, the evidence supports this and it is important – children who report more offline risks of various kinds are more likely to report more risk encounters online and, significantly, more likely to report harm from online experiences. But, offline risk does not predict all online risk encounters, so it should not be assumed that children not already identified as at risk offline are not at risk online. We still don't know all the factors that account for online harm, and it is important to see both online and offline risks in context.

## Myths about internet safety tend to exaggerate or over simplify, and they are often out of date

### 8 Putting the PC in the living room will help

53 per cent go online at a friends' house, 49 per cent go online in their bedroom and 33 per cent go online via a mobile phone or handheld device. So this advice is out of date. It would be better to advise parents to talk to their child about the internet or share an online activity with them.

### 9 Teaching digital skills will reduce online risk

More skills are associated with more, not less, risk – because more use leads to more skills, more skills lead to more opportunities, and opportunities are linked to risk. One reason that opportunities and risks are linked is because children must explore and encounter some risk to learn and gain resilience. Another is that exploring for information or fun leads to unexpected risks because the online environment is not designed with children's interests in mind (too many pop-ups, for instance). But more skills could reduce the harm that some children experience from online risk.

### 10 Children can get around safety software

In fact, only 28 per cent of 11-16 year olds say they can change filter preferences. And most say what their parents do in relation to their internet use is helpful (27 per cent a lot, 43 per cent a little). However, it is true that nearly half think their parents' actions limit their online activities while a third say they ignore their parents (7 per cent a lot, 29 per cent a little).

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Government

- For children who lack convenient broadband access, governments should ensure that digital exclusion does not compound social exclusion.
- It is important that while all should benefit from public information resources, special efforts are made to ensure these reach the disadvantaged or information-poor.
- Especially in countries where children do not 'progress' far up the ladder of opportunities, initiatives to support effective access, broad-ranging use and digital literacy are vital.
- If industry self-regulation is to meet the needs of children and families, it requires a firm steer from government to ensure that it is inclusive, effective and accountable.
- If schools, youth and child welfare services are to raise awareness, provide information and guidance and effectively support children and parents, they require strong encouragement, resources and recognition, especially in some countries.
- In many countries, there is already evidence that stakeholder efforts are bearing fruit; the imperative now is to maintain and extend such efforts to address future challenges.

## Industry

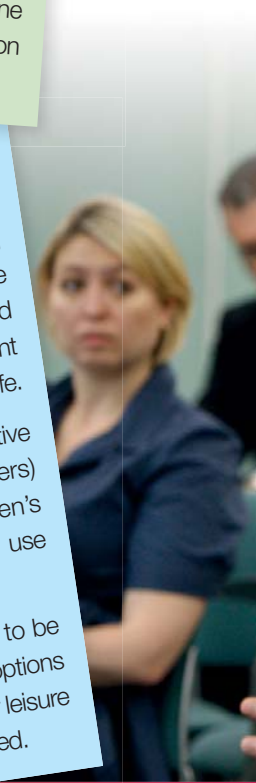
- To reduce user confusion and impractical skill burdens, privacy settings, parental controls, safety tools and reporting mechanisms should be age-appropriate if for children and far more usable (whether for children or parents) than at present and/or enabled by default.
- To increase user trust, the management of safety, identity and privacy underpinning services used by children should be transparent, accountable and independently evaluated; while 'safety (or privacy) by design' may obviate the need for user-friendly tools, it makes the need for transparency and redress even more pressing.
- As children gain internet access (and, it seems, increased access to sexual/inappropriate content) via more diverse and personal platforms, ensuring consistent and easy-to-use safety mechanisms on all devices is vital.
- Especially in "new use, new risk" countries, children are exposed to pornography or other inappropriate content and contact by accident (eg, popups, inadequate online search processes or weak safety measures) – protection for children needs strengthening.

## Awareness-raising

- It is vital to keep listening to children to recognise the changing array of risks they face, to address children's own worries and to support children's ability to cope, whether this involves avoiding, resolving or reporting problems.
- Messages should be matched to different groups – teens may worry about pro-anorexia content, young children can be upset by pornography, those who bully may also be bullied. Reaching the 'hard to reach', while difficult, is a priority given that vulnerable children are particularly susceptible to online harm.
- There is little warrant for exaggerated or panicky fears about children's safety online – what's important is to empower all children while addressing the needs of the minority at significant risk of harm

## Children

- Children generally grasp the ethical codes of courtesy, consideration and care that guide social interaction offline, but they have more to learn – or to be taught – about the importance of such codes online; becoming empowered and responsible digital citizens will be increasingly important as the internet becomes ever more embedded into daily life.
- Children can be creative, experimental and imaginative online in ways that adults (parents, teachers, others) insufficiently value – wider recognition for children's experiences would support more sophistication in use and build self-efficacy more generally.
- Contrary to popular belief, children do not wish to be always online, but often lack sufficient alternative options – for play, travel, interaction or exploration – in their leisure hours; these too, should be enabled and resourced.



## Parents

- As internet use is increasingly private and/or mobile, putting the computer in a public room is no longer inappropriate; rather, parents should get online themselves, talk to their child about the internet and even share an online activity with them.
- Those who encounter risk are not necessarily those who experience more harm, so parents should be encouraged to worry less about the former than the latter, where possible guiding their children so that harms are avoided or managed.
- Without undermining parents' trust in their children, parents should be more aware of and more empowered to respond constructively to children's (including teens') rare but sometimes upsetting experiences of harm.
- Parents should be encouraged to make more use of the array of parental controls, though this will require greater availability of easy-to-use, carefully tailored, affordable tools.

## Child welfare

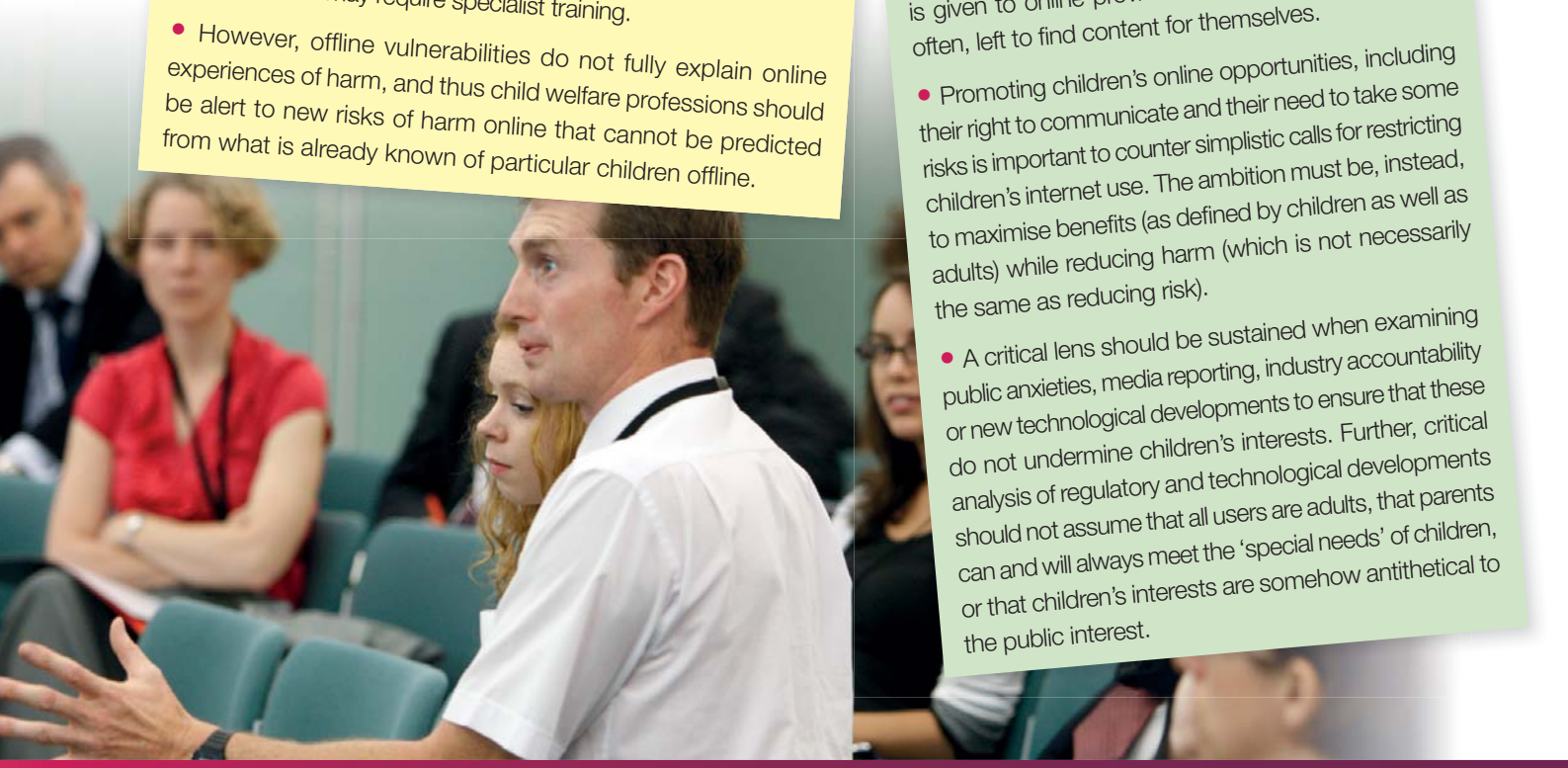
- Now that the internet has entered into the array of long-established sources of risk in childhood (including other media, risks in the home or community), online risk should be included in risk assessment processes, recognising that increasingly online and offline are intertwined in a potentially vicious circle.
- Children who are vulnerable offline are especially vulnerable online, as EU Kids Online evidence shows; for some children, psychological difficulties or social problems may result in the migration of risk from offline to online settings; this should be recognised by child welfare professionals, youth workers, law enforcement, clinicians etc, and these may require specialist training.
- However, offline vulnerabilities do not fully explain online experiences of harm, and thus child welfare professions should be alert to new risks of harm online that cannot be predicted from what is already known of particular children offline.

## Educators

- Since schools are uniquely positioned to reach all children, in a calm learning environment, with up to date technology and resources, they should take a major responsibility for supporting children and their parents in gaining digital literacy and safety skills.
- Such efforts should become established as a core dimension of the curriculum, and initiatives developed at secondary school level should now be extended to primary and even nursery schools.
- Encouraging children to a wider diversity of online activities while teaching critical literacy and safety skills enhances online benefits, digital citizenship and resilience to harm, and so should be encouraged; particular efforts are needed for less privileged and younger children.
- Since children tell a friend followed by a parent but rarely a teacher or other responsible adult when something online upsets them, teachers' relations with children should enable more trust, and they could also harness the potential of peer mentoring.

## Civil society

- Much more great (diverse, stimulating, high quality) online content of all kinds is needed, especially for young children and in small language communities; while children's books, films and television programmes are publicly celebrated and supported, far less attention is given to online provision for children who are, too often, left to find content for themselves.
- Promoting children's online opportunities, including their right to communicate and their need to take some risks is important to counter simplistic calls for restricting children's internet use. The ambition must be, instead, to maximise benefits (as defined by children as well as adults) while reducing harm (which is not necessarily the same as reducing risk).
- A critical lens should be sustained when examining public anxieties, media reporting, industry accountability or new technological developments to ensure that these do not undermine children's interests. Further, critical analysis of regulatory and technological developments should not assume that all users are adults, that parents can and will always meet the 'special needs' of children, or that children's interests are somehow antithetical to the public interest.



# STAKEHOLDERS SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY

# THE SURVEY

EU Kids Online findings are based on unique and detailed survey conducted in home, face to face, with 9-16 year olds children from 25 countries.

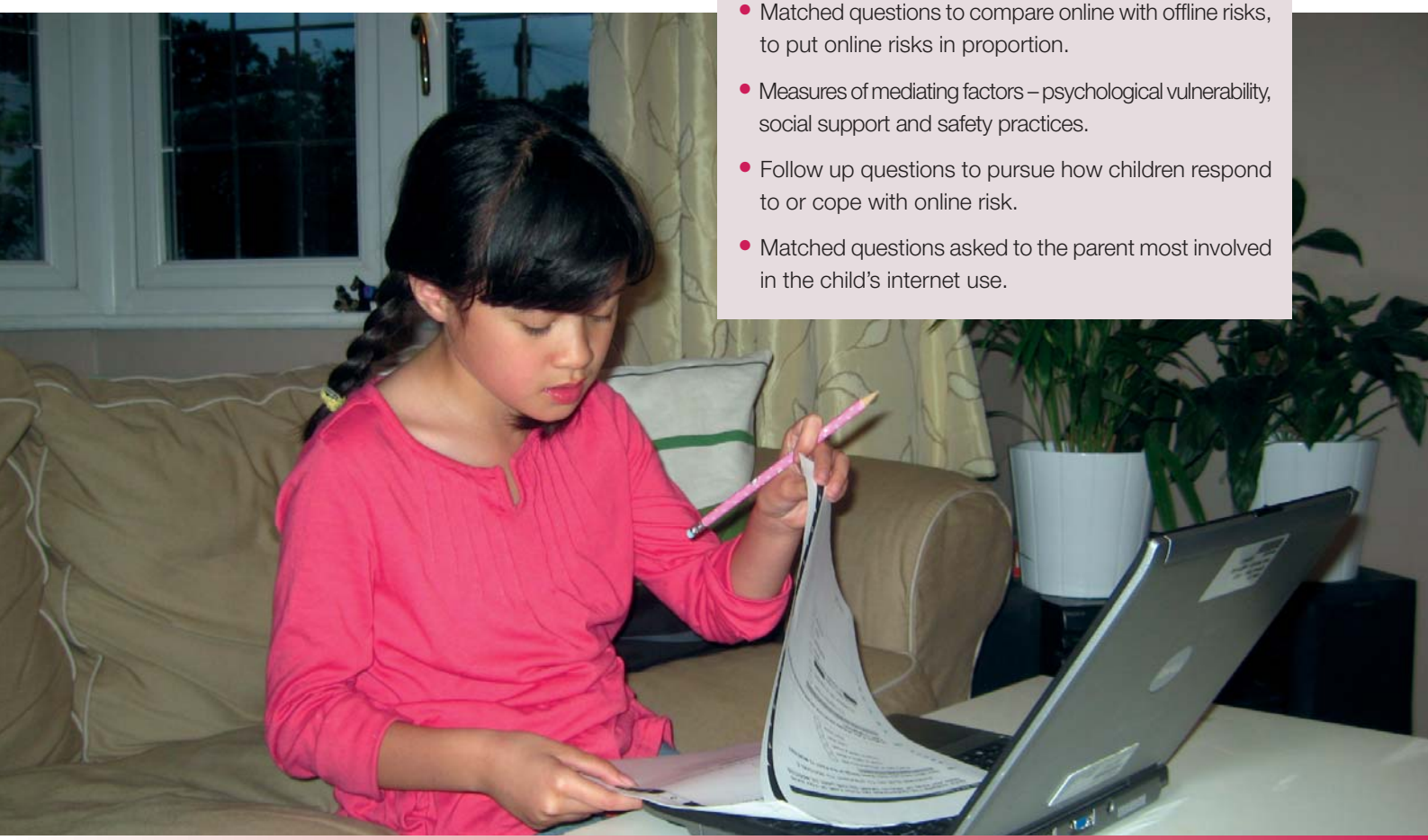
## Ipsos MORI

"Ipsos MORI was delighted to work alongside the LSE on this ground-breaking pan-European study. Conducting 25,000 in-home interviews with parents and children on sensitive topics is a methodological challenge and the outcome is very rewarding with a rich and robust evidence base for Europe's policy-makers."

**Andrew Johnson, Director**, Ipsos Europe

### Design features

- High standards applied throughout the design, conduct and analysis of the research process and findings.
- Random stratified survey sampling of 1000 children (9-16 years old) per country who use the internet.
- Survey administration to children at home, face to face, with a self-completion section for sensitive questions.
- Careful consideration given to the ethical issues involved in the research process.
- Equivalent questions asked of each type of risk to compare across risks.
- Matched questions to compare online with offline risks, to put online risks in proportion.
- Measures of mediating factors – psychological vulnerability, social support and safety practices.
- Follow up questions to pursue how children respond to or cope with online risk.
- Matched questions asked to the parent most involved in the child's internet use.



25,142 children interviewed during Spring and Summer 2010

## Survey administration

The survey was commissioned through a public tender process. It was conducted by Ipsos MORI, working with national agencies in each country. The EU Kids Online team designed the sample and questionnaire, and worked closely with Ipsos MORI throughout pre-testing (cognitive testing, piloting), translation, interviewer briefings, and the fieldwork process.

## Technical report and questionnaires

These can be freely downloaded from the project website. Researchers may use the questionnaires, provided they inform the Coordinator (LSE), and acknowledge the project as follows: "This [article/chapter/report/presentation/project] draws on the work of the 'EU Kids Online' network funded by the EC (DG Information Society) Safer Internet Programme (project code SIP-KEP-321803); see **www.eukidsonline.net**"

## The dataset

All coding and analysis of the dataset has been conducted by the EU Kids Online network. Crosstabulations of key findings are available at **www.eukidsonline.net**. The full dataset (SPSS raw file, with data dictionary and all technical materials) is being deposited in the UK Data Archive for public use. **www.data-archive.ac.uk/**

## The design allows comparisons of children's online experiences...

- Across locations and devices.
- By child's age, gender and SES.
- Of pornography, bullying, sexual messaging, meeting strangers.
- In terms of children's roles as 'victim' and 'perpetrator'.
- Of encounters with risk versus perceptions of harm.
- Of online and offline risks.
- Of risk and safety as reported by children and by their parents.
- Across 25 countries.

# RIGOROUS METHODS UNDERPIN OUR RESEARCH

# PARTNERS IN RUSSIA AND AUSTRALIA

Our partner projects followed our methodology, enabling direct comparisons with the 25 country averages for EU Kids Online.

## RUSSIA

**1025 children aged 9-16, and a parent for each, were surveyed in home interviews across seven federal districts of the Russian Federation.**

### Going online

- Over four fifths use the internet in private (in their bedroom and/or via a mobile phone). However, one third go online at school, half the European number. Parental use of the internet varies hugely by region (from one fifth to over four fifths).
- Four in five use the internet for education and social networking sites (SNSs), and two thirds for downloading music and films. On SNSs, one third have their profile public and most provide personal information online.

### Risk and harm

- Russian children report being bullied (online and offline) at a similar rate to other Europeans – around one in five. But they report being bullied online more often than in Europe – indeed, they receive nasty or hurtful messages as often online as offline. Distinctively too, these messages are especially received on SNSs. Twice as many Russian (one quarter) as European children report bullying others, online or offline.
- Seeing sexual images online is also more common in Russia – a bit more common via television/film/DVD and over twice as common on the internet. Most of this exposure is via accidental pop-ups.
- Meeting online contacts offline is also more common in Russia – around one in five children, compared with half that number in Europe.
- Parents tend to be aware of their child's exposure to sexual images, since they are also affected by pop-ups, but they understimate both bullying and meetings.

As rather few parents use filtering software, check sites visited or discuss internet use with their children, there is much work to be done to promote awareness-raising and other forms of protection and empowerment for Russian children and parents.

**Russian School Children: Challenges and Risks of Online Socialisation**

Galina Soldatova, PhD, Professor

Moscow State University

Foundation for Internet Development

## AUSTRALIA

**400 children aged 9-16, and a parent for each, were surveyed in home interviews across Australia.**

- Three quarters go online daily.
- Twice as many as in Europe (one in three) say they have been bothered by something online.
- More than four in ten have seen sexual images, online or offline, and twice as many as in Europe have seen these online (nearly a quarter).
- In relation to online bullying, 29 per cent of AU children (19 per cent across Europe) say they have been bullied, and 13 per cent say this occurred on the internet. This is more than the average for the 25 other nations (6 per cent).

It would seem that in spite of considerable efforts put into raising awareness and improving safety online for Australian children in recent years, a comparatively high proportion are bothered by some things they experience online, predominantly related to online bullying and seeing sexual images. Australian children experience a high degree of access and use, but also a high degree of risk. AU parents are very active in pursuing positive mediation strategies, however, as are Australian teachers.

### Australian Kids Online

Lelia Green, Catharine Lumby, John Hartley, Danielle Brady

Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI)

# EXTENDING TO OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

# THE NETWORK

## The coordinating team

At the Department of Media and Communications, the London School of Economics and Political Science, **Professor Sonia Livingstone** directs the network, together with **Dr Leslie Haddon**, senior research fellow, and **Dr Anke Görzig**, survey research officer. Daniel Kardefelt-Winther is our research assistant, and **Kjartan Ólafsson** from our International Advisory Panel has visited on several occasions to lend his valuable expertise in survey management.

The coordinating team led on the first four work packages, working with the management group, international advisory panel, and the wider EU Kids Online network – comprising research teams, in contact with national stakeholders, in each of the 25 countries.

## The management group

This includes the coordinating team, and **Professor Dr Uwe Hasebrink**, Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research in Hamburg, **Dr Bojana Lobe**, University of Ljubljana, **Dr Brian O'Neill**, Dublin Institute of Technology, and **Professor Cristina Ponte**, New University of Lisbon – who are responsible for work packages 5-8 respectively.

## Project management

WP1: Project management and evaluation: ensure effective conduct and evaluation of work packages.

WP2: Project design: design a robust survey instrument and sampling frame for children and parents.

WP3: Data collection: tender, select and work with the subcontractor appointed to conduct the fieldwork.

WP4: Data reporting: cross-tabulation, presentation and report of core findings.

WP5: Statistical analysis of hypotheses: analysis and hypothesis testing of relations among variables.

WP6: Cross-national comparisons: interpretation of similarities and differences across countries.

WP7: Recommendations: guide awareness and safety initiatives and future projects in this field.

WP8: Dissemination of project results: dissemination to diverse stakeholders and the wider public.

## The international advisory panel

We have benefited considerably from the generous guidance received from:

- María José Cantarino, Corporate Responsibility Manager, Telefónica
- David Finkelhor and Janis Wolak, Crimes against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire, USA
- Will Gardner, Chief Executive Officer of Childnet International
- Ellen Helsper, Department of Media and Communications, LSE
- Amanda Lenhart, Pew Internet and American Life Project
- Eileen Munro, Department of Social Policy, LSE
- Annie Mullins, Global Head of Content Standards, Vodafone
- Kjartan Ólafsson, University of Akureyri, Iceland
- Janice Richardson, European Schoolnet and Insafe
- Kuno Sørensen, Save the Children Denmark, European NGO Alliance on Child Safety Online
- Agnieszka Wrzesie, Project Coordinator, Polish Safer Internet Node, Nobody's Children Foundation


# A MULTINATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION

# Network members

**Austria**
Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink; Andrea Dürager, University of Salzburg

**Belgium**
Leen d'Haenens; Verónica Donoso; Sofie Vandoninck; Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; Joke Bauwens; Katia Segers, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

**Bulgaria**
Jivka Marinova; Diana Boteva, GERT

**Cyprus**
Yiannis Laouris; Tatjana Taraszow; Elena Aristodemou
Melis Eroglu; Georgina Siitta-Achilleos
Cyprus Neuroscience and Technology Inst.

**Czech Republic**
David Smahel; Štepán Konečný; Václav Štětka; Lukáš Blinka; Anna Ševčíková; Petra Vondráčková; Hana Macháčková; Alena Černá, Masaryk University

**Denmark**
Gitte Stald, IT University of Copenhagen

**Estonia**
Veronika Kalmus; Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt; Pille Runnel Andra Siibak; Kadri Ugur; Lennart Komp; Kersti Karu, University of Tartu

**Finland**
Reijo Kupiainen; Aalto University; Kaarina Nikunen; Annikka Suoninen; Riitta Kauppinen, University of Tampere
Mari Laiho, Save the Children Finland
Annikka Suoninen, University of Jyväskylä

**France**
Dominique Pasquier; Sylvie Octobre; Elodie Kredens; Pauline Rebou, ENST

**Germany**
Uwe Hasebrink; Claudia Lampert, The Hans Bredow Institute

**Greece**
Liza Tsaliki; Despina Chronaki; Eleni-Revekka Staiou; Kalpaki Kornilia; Konstantina Michalopoulou' University of Athens

**Hungary**
Anna Galácz; Bence Ságvári, ITHAKA

**Ireland**
Brian O'Neill; Nóirín Hayes; Sharon McLaughlin; Simon Grehan, Dublin Institute of Technology, Nat. Centre for Technology in Education

**Italy**
Fausto Colombo; Piermarco Aroldi; Barbara Scifo; Giovanna Mascheroni; Maria Francesca Murru, Università Cattolica del S. Cuore

**Lithuania**
Alfredas Laurinavicius; Laura Ustinaviciute; Rita Zukauskiene, Mykolas Romeris University

**Netherlands**
Jos de Haan; Patti M. Valkenburg; Marion Duimel; Linda Adrichem; Jochen Peter; Maria Koutamanis; Nathalie Sonck; Els Kuiper, Netherlands Institute for Social Research, U. Amsterdam, Erasmus U. Rotterdam

**Norway**
Elisabeth Staksrud; Ingunn Hagen; Jørgen Kirksæther, University of Oslo, NTNU

**Poland**
Lucyna Kirwil; Aldona Zdrowska, Warsaw School of Social Psychology

**Portugal**
Cristina Ponte; José Alberto Simões; Daniel Cardoso; Ana Jorge, New University of Lisbon

**Romania**
Monica Barbovschi; Delia Cristina Balaban; Maria Diaconescu; Eva Laszlo; George Roman; Valentina Marinescu; Anca Velicu, Babes-Bolyai University

**Slovenia**
Bojana Lobe; Sandra Muha; Hana Vodeb, University of Ljubljana

**Spain**
Carmelo Garitaonandia; Maialen Garmendia; Gemma Martínez Fernández; Miguel Angel Casado, Universidad del País Vasco

**Sweden**
Cecilia von Feilitzen; Elza Dunkels ; University of Gothenburg; Olle Findahl, World Internet Institute

**Turkey**
Kursat Cagiltay; Engin Kursun; Turkan Karakus; Duygu Nazire Kasikci; Middle East Technical University; Christine Ogan, City University of Hong Kong

**United Kingdom**
Sonia Livingstone; Leslie Haddon; Anke Görzig; Daniel Kardefelt-Winther, the London School of Economics and Political Science

## For a closer look at our recent findings and reports, see:


- O'Neill, B, Livingstone, S and McLaughlin, S (2011). Final Recommendations. Policy Implications, Methodological Lessons and Further Research Recommendations.
- Livingstone, S, Haddon, L, Görzig, A and Ólafsson, K (2011) Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children. Full findings.
- Hasebrink, U, Görzig, A, Haddon, L, Kalmus, V and Livingstone, S (2011) Patterns of risk and safety online. In-depth analyses from the EU Kids Online survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents in 25 countries.
- Lobe, B, Livingstone, S, Ólafsson, K and Vodeb, H (2011) Cross-national comparison of risks and safety on the internet: Initial analysis from the EU Kids Online survey of European children.
- Görzig, A (2011) Who bullies and who is bullied online? A study of 9-16 year old internet users in 25 European countries.
- Garmendia, M, Garitaonandia, C, Martínez, G and Casado, M A (2011) Riesgos y seguridad en internet. The Spanish report.
- Livingstone, S, Ólafsson, K and Staksrud, E (2011) Social networking, age and privacy.
- Sonck, N, Livingstone, S, Kuiper, E and de Haan, J (2011) Digital literacy and safety skills.
- Livingstone, S and Ólafsson, K (2011) Risky communication online.
- O'Neill, B, Grehan, S and Ólafsson, K (2011) Risks and safety on the internet: The Ireland report.
- Livingstone, S, Haddon, L, Görzig, A and Ólafsson, K (2011) Risks and safety on the internet: The UK report.
- O'Neill, B and McLaughlin, S (2010). Recommendations on safety initiatives.
- de Haan, J and Livingstone, S (2009) Policy and research recommendations.
- Hasebrink, U, Livingstone, S, Haddon, L and Ólafsson, K (eds) (2009) Comparing children's online opportunities and risks across Europe: Cross-national comparisons for EU Kids Online (2nd edn).
- Lobe, B, Livingstone, S and Haddon, L with others (2007) Researching children's experiences online across countries: Issues and problems in methodology.
- Lobe, B, Livingstone, S, Ólafsson, K and Simões, J A (eds) (2008) Best practice research guide: How to research children and online technologies in comparative perspective.
- Staksrud, E, Livingstone, S, Haddon, L and Ólafsson, K (2009) What do we know about children's use of online technologies? A report on data availability and research gaps in Europe (2nd edn).
- Stald, G and Haddon, L (eds) (2008) Cross-cultural contexts of research: Factors influencing the study of children and the internet in Europe (national reports also available at www.eukidsonline.net).


All can be freely downloaded from **www.eukidsonline.net**

See also our recent book: Livingstone, S and Haddon, L (eds) (2009) Kids online: Opportunities and risks for children, Bristol: The Policy Press. This will be followed by our forthcoming book: Livingstone, S, Haddon, L, and Görzig, A (in press), Children, risk and safety online, Bristol: The Policy Press.


**Contact details**
Professor Sonia Livingstone and Dr Leslie Haddon
Department of Media and Communications
The London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK
f +44 (0) 20 7955 7248
s.livingstone@lse.ac.uk/leshaddon@aol.com

Final Report, EU Kids Online II
Deliverable 8.3 for the EC Safer Internet Programme

ISSN 2045-256X

The EU Kids Online network has received funding from the European Community's Safer Internet Programme. The authors are solely responsible for the contents of this report. It does not represent the opinion of the Community and nor is the Community responsible for any use that might be made of information contained in it.

Co-funded by the European Union


www.eukidsonline.net