Risks and Safety on the Internet: EU Kids Online Findings from Ireland

Brian O’Neill

Technological University Dublin, brian.oneill@tudublin.ie

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Risks and safety on the internet: *EU Kids Online* findings from Ireland

Brian O’Neill, Dublin Institute of Technology
Surveying ‘Europe’

- Random stratified sample: ~ 1000 9-16 year old internet users per country
- Fieldwork in spring/summer 2010
- Total: 25142 internet-users, 25 countries
- Interviews at home, face to face
- Self-completion for sensitive questions
- Indicators of vulnerability and coping
- Data from child paired with a parent
- Directly comparable across countries
- Validation via cognitive/pilot testing
- National stakeholders consulted
- International advisory panel
How do children use the internet?

Usage

Where

How

Amount

Skills

Etc.

What do children do online?

Activities

Learn

Create

Play

Meet people

Hang out

Try new things

Bully others

Etc.

What online factors shape their experience?

Opportunities / Risks

Positive content

User-generated content

Sexual content/messages

Stranger contact

Bullying

Personal data misuse

Etc.

What are the outcomes for children?

Benefits / Harms

Learning

Self-esteem

Sociality

Values

In/excluded

Coping/resilience

Bothered/upset

Abuse

Etc.
How do children use the internet?
Use at home is high

- 87% use internet in a public room at home
- 37% have internet in bedroom
- Privatised use is growing
- SES and age matter more than gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% Own bedroom at home</th>
<th>% At home but not in own bedroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10 yrs</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12 yrs</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14 yrs</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16 yrs</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low SES</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium SES</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High SES</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All children</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mobile access growing

- 23% via handheld devices
- 52% via mobile and/or handheld device
- Flexible access is growing
- Age and SES matter
- In the top league of European countries for mobile access
Internet embedded in daily life, users are getting younger

- 53% use every day or almost daily, 89% use at least weekly

- 61 minutes spent online in an average day (see graph)

- Age matters for daily use: 33% 9-10 yrs vs. 73% 15-16 yrs

- Children first go online at 9 yrs old: at 7 for 9-10 yrs, at 11 for 15-16 yrs
Uneven digital skills

Bar chart showing the percentage of people who can perform various digital tasks in different countries. The tasks include bookmarking a website, blocking messages, finding information on safety, changing privacy settings, comparing sites, deleting records, blocking spam, and setting filters. The countries are ranked based on their performance in each task, with some countries highlighted in yellow.

For example, in the task of bookmarking a website, the percentage ranges from 5.8% in FI to 21.0% in a country with a code not specified in the chart.
Watching video clips and playing games are the most popular activities.
59% have a SNS profile. 63% keep their profile private.
What are the risks?
Sexual images off/online

“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 having sex. Have you seen anything of this kind?”

- 23% have seen sexual images online or offline
- Who? More older than younger children
  Teenage boys 15-16 most likely to see sexual images online – 45%
- Where did they see this? 11% online, 14% on television/film/video, 7% in magazines
  Most often seen via accidental pop-ups
Bullying off/online

“Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months? Have you been treated in a hurtful or nasty way on the internet?”

- 23% have had someone act in this way, online or offline
- **Who?** Mostly teenagers 15-16 experience this online – 9%
- **How?** 15% face to face; 9% online, 4% by mobile phone calls/texts
- **What (11+) ?** 3% - nasty/hurtful messages, 1% - messages passed around about them, or threatened online
- 14% have bullied others
“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. Have you seen/sent/received/posted a sexual message (words, pictures or video) of any kind on the internet?”

- 11% have seen/received sexual messages online
- 3% have sent/posted sexual messages online
- **Who?** More older (21% 15-16 yrs) than younger teens
- **How?** Occurs more by ‘pop up’, IM or SNS
- **What?** 7% have been sent message online, 4% have seen sexual messages where others could see it
Other risks

- 25% exposed to potentially harmful user-generated content
- 12% experienced personal data misuse

- Ways of committing suicide
  - Talk about or share their experiences of taking drugs: 4
  - Ways of physically harming or hurting themselves: 9
  - Ways to be very thin (such as being anorexic or bulimic): 16
- Hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals: 11
- Has seen such material at all on any websites: 25

- Lost money by being cheated: 2
- Personal information used in a way I didn’t like: 4
- Password used to access information: 10
- One or more type of data misuse: 12
Parental awareness

Among those children who have encountered the particular risk online …

- **Seeing sexual images online:**
  - 49% of parents are not aware of this, 15% say they don’t know
  - 36% of parents are aware when their children have seen sexual images online

- **Being bullied online:**
  - 68% of parents are not aware of this, 3% say they don’t know
  - 29% of parents are aware this has happened

- **Receiving sexual message online:**
  - 52% of parents are not aware of this; 27% say they don’t know
  - 21% of parents are aware this has happened
Overall experiences of harm

“By bothered, we mean, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn’t have seen it”

- 67% of children aged 9-16 think that there are things on the internet that will bother children of their age.
- 11% say there are things that have bothered them personally in the past year
- 11% parents say their child has been bothered
- More girls than boys have been bothered by something online (13% vs. 9%); more older teenagers than younger children (16% vs. 9%)
More opportunities, more risks

Average for all children

% Experienced one or more risk factor

Average number of online activities
What mediates children’s online experiences?
Vast majority of parents (91%) mediate their children’s internet use in some way.

At least one of the above

Do shared activities together with you on the internet

Sit with you while you use the internet

Encourage you to explore and learn things on the internet on your own

Talk to you about what you do on the internet

Stay nearby when you use the internet
72% of parents, 68% of teachers and 28% of peers and have suggested ways to use the internet safely, according to child.
Parental restrictions

Restrictive mediation for children in Ireland (93%) is high - highest in Europe - compared to the European average (85%)
Parents’ preferred sources of information on safety

The child’s school is by far the preferred source of information about internet safety

- None, I don't get any/want more information about this
- Other sources
- From my child
- Children's welfare organisations/charities
- Manufacturers and retailers selling the products
- Family and friends
- Websites with safety information
- Internet service providers
- Government, local authorities
- Television, radio, newspapers or magazines
- Your child's school
Policy implications

- Government
- Industry
- Civil society
- Schools
- Parents
- Children
Thank you

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