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

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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
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Project scope</th>
<th>Project focus</th>
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<th>What do children do online?</th>
<th>What online factors shape their experience?</th>
<th>What are the outcomes for children?</th>
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<td>Opportunities / Risks</td>
<td>Benefits / Harms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learn</td>
<td>Positive content</td>
<td>Learning</td>
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<td>How</td>
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<td>Create</td>
<td>User-generated content</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
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<td>Amount</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Sexual content / messages</td>
<td>Sociality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
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<td>Meet people</td>
<td>Stranger contact</td>
<td>Values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Hang out</td>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>In/excluded</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Try new things</td>
<td>Personal data misuse</td>
<td>Coping/resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bully others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bothered/upset</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Etc.</td>
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<td>Abuse</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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>
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<tr>
<td>13-14 yrs</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51</td>
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<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>
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<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

- % Handheld device
- % Mobile phone but no other handheld device

- Girls
  - 24%
  - 29%

- Boys
  - 22%
  - 29%

- 9-10 yrs
  - 13%
  - 18%

- 11-12 yrs
  - 17%
  - 31%

- 13-14 yrs
  - 23%
  - 32%

- 15-16 yrs
  - 38%
  - 35%

- Low SES
  - 18%
  - 38%

- Medium SES
  - 23%
  - 27%

- High SES
  - 28%
  - 22%

- All children
  - 23%
  - 29%
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

Minutes per day online
Uneven digital skills

- Bookmark a website: 66
- Block messages: 64
- Find info on safety: 64
- Change privacy settings: 58
- Compare sites: 42
- Delete records: 43
- Block spam: 49
- Set filter: 21

Countries: FI, SI, NL, EE, CZ, SE, NO, PT, LT, AT, UK, BG, FR, DK, PL, ES, BE, DE, IE, CY, EL, HU, RO, IT, TR, ALL
Multiple opportunities

Watching video clips and playing games are the most popular activities

- Watch video clips: 76
- Games (alone): 76
- Visit SNS: 58
- Schoolwork: 58
- Use IM: 41
- E-mail: 41
- Share photos/music/videos: 31
- Post messages: 31
- Play games (with others): 30
- Download music/film: 27
- Create character/avatar: 25
- Virtual world: 17
- Watch/read news: 14
- Use webcam: 14
- File-sharing: 9
- Chatroom: 9
59% have a SNS profile. 63% keep their profile private.
What are the risks?
“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

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### Sexual images off/online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% Seen sexual images online or offline</th>
<th>% Seen sexual images at all, online or offline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>FI</td>
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<td>DK</td>
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<td>CZ</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>SI</td>
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<td>NL</td>
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<td>BG</td>
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<td>FR</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>RO</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>AT</td>
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<td>PL</td>
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<tr>
<td>EL</td>
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<tr>
<td>PT</td>
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<tr>
<td>TR</td>
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<td>CY</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<td>ES</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
Sending/receiving sexual messages online (11+yrs)

“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: 9
- Ways of physically harming or hurting themselves: 9
- Ways to be very thin (such as being anorexic or bulimic): 11
- Hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals: 16
- Has seen such material at all on any websites: 25

Lost money by being cheated
- 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%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>% My child has been bothered by something online (parent)</th>
<th>% I have been bothered by something online (child)</th>
<th>% There are things online that bother children my age (child)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10 yrs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-12 yrs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-14 yrs</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-16 yrs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low SES</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High SES</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All children</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More opportunities, more risks

Average number of online activities

% Experienced one or more risk factor

Average for all children

30 40 50 60 70

5 6 7 8 9

IE AT DE EL TR CY PT HU UK FR BE BG RO SI NL LT NO EE SE DK FI CZ
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.
Restrictive mediation for children in Ireland (93%) is high - highest in Europe - compared to the European average (85%)
The child's school is by far the preferred source of information about internet safety.
Policy implications

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

More at [www.eukidsonline.net](http://www.eukidsonline.net)  
[www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)