What is Research telling us?

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What is research telling us?

INSAFE Regional meeting 5-6 July 2010, Dublin
Presentation by Brian O’Neill, Dublin Institute of Technology
EU Kids Online

- Thematic network examining European research on cultural, contextual and risk issues in children's safe use of the internet, funded by Safer Internet Programme (2006-9)
- Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
- Aims to compare recent and ongoing empirical research across Europe:
  - To identify and evaluate available data on children’s use of online technologies
  - To inform the research agenda, noting gaps in the evidence base
  - To compare findings across Europe, contextualising similarities and differences
  - To produce a best practice guide for methodological issues and challenges
  - To develop policy recommendations for awareness-raising and media literacy
EU Kids Online

Access/use
Opportunities
Risks
Regulation
Mediation
Literacy
Safety

Under 18
Children
Youth
Parents
Home
Teachers
School

Offline world

Online ...
(mainly) Internet
Mobile, Games, etc

EU ...
Comparative

Kids ...

National International

Adult society
## Classifying opportunities & risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>Content: Child as recipient</th>
<th>Contact: child as participant</th>
<th>Conduct: child as actor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education learning and digital literacy</td>
<td>Educational resources</td>
<td>Contact with others who share one’s interests</td>
<td>Self-initiated or collaborative learning</td>
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<td>Participation and civic engagement</td>
<td>Global information</td>
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<td>Identity and social connection</td>
<td>Advice (personal/health/sexual etc)</td>
<td>Social networking, shared experiences with others</td>
<td>Expression of identity</td>
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<td>Commercial</td>
<td>Advertising, spam, sponsorship</td>
<td>Tracking/ harvesting personal info</td>
<td>Gambling, illegal downloads, hacking</td>
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<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Violent/ gruesome/ hateful content</td>
<td>Being bullied, harassed or stalked</td>
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<td>Sexual</td>
<td>Pornographic/harmful sexual content</td>
<td>Meeting strangers, being groomed</td>
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<td>Values</td>
<td>Racist, biased info/ advice (e.g. drugs)</td>
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</table>
What research?

Nearly 400 studies (single/multi-country)
Online Database at www.eukidsonline.net
Children online 6-17 years
(Source: Eurobarometer)

![Bar chart showing the percentage of children online in various countries for 2005 and 2008.](chart_image)
Key trends

- Ever younger children getting online (6-17 yrs, EB)
Computer Use, Over Time

Among all 8- to 18-year-olds, average amount of time spent using a computer in a typical day, over time:

Home Internet Access, Over Time

Among all 8- to 18-year-olds, percent with Internet access at home, over time:

- 1999: 47%
- 2004: 74%
- 2009: 84%

High speed access, Over Time

Among all 8- to 18-year-olds, percent with high-speed Internet access at home, over time:

- 1999: n/a
- 2004: 31%
- 2009: 59%

Internet in bedroom access, over Time

Among all 8- to 18-year-olds, percent with Internet access in their bedroom, over time:

- 1999: 10%
- 2004: 20%
- 2009: 33%

Computer Time, By Activity

Proportion of recreational computer time 8- to 18-year-olds spend in various activities:

- Social networking: 25%
- Playing games: 19%
- Video sites: 16%
- Email: 6%
- Instant messaging: 13%
- Other websites: 12%
- Graphics/photos: 5%
- Other: 5%

Gender differences fading?

![Graph showing the percentage of children who use the internet by age and gender over the years 2005/06 and 2008. The graph indicates a closing gap between boys and girls in internet usage.]

Co-funded by the European Union

EU Kids Online
Key trends

- Personalised access and mobile platforms make for privatised use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From the family's computer at home</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From his/her own computer at home</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At friends' homes</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Device ownership/use and online access, as reported by children and young people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Owns or has use of</th>
<th>Uses to go online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Base: All children and young people age 7-16 (797)</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games console</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable Media Player</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Children no longer the digital natives?
More parent use, more child use
Parental mediation varies

Correlation between parental mediation and restriction

$r_{xy} = 0.86$
The parental regulation gap
More risk, less coping, say parents
## Key trends

### Moderate to high rates of reported risk among teenagers

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Key trends

- Experimental, sometimes risk-taking youth, at home with the internet
  - Pleasures of networking, ‘constant contact’
  - Importance of self-expression, identity
  - Culture of peer experimentation, pushing boundaries
  - Desire for privacy from adult supervision
  - Fascination with ‘adult’ themes – sex, violence, paedophiles
Demographic similarities

- Teens encounter more risks, because do more online
- Younger children now getting online more
- Ladder of opportunities
- Gender differences reducing as internet more common
- Lower SES children encounter more risks
- Boys: more porn, violent content, meetings, disclosure
- Girls: chat, unwanted sexual comments, personal invitations
- Parental mediation – prefer social to technical approaches
- Less mediation for boys, teens, lower SES
- It seems likely that internet-related skills increase with age
- Growing evidence of array of coping strategies
- Positive association between risks, opportunities, skills
Cross-national differences?
More use, more risk...
New use, new risk...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online risk</th>
<th>Low (&lt; 65%)</th>
<th>Medium (65%-85%)</th>
<th>High (&gt; 85%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Cyprus, Italy</td>
<td>France, Germany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, Spain</td>
<td>Denmark, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Czech Republic</td>
<td>Estonia, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, UK</td>
<td></td>
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The evidence base and key gaps

- Mostly national studies, funded by Governments (though EC funds aid comparisons)
- Over half of all research is online; little reaches formal publication, quickly dated
- Research on access and use in all countries; less on opportunities, skills
- Most research on teenagers, not younger; some on parents, teachers, etc.
- Most is quantitative; less qualitative/mixed methods (except for young children)
- Nearly all is on fixed internet, not on mobile, gaming or other platforms
- Most research is on content risks, little on contact, commercial, suicide, anorexia
- For risk, need clear definitions, measures of severity, comparisons with offline
- Little research matches risky experiences to clinical/criminal evidence of harm
- Little known of parental regulation or of children’s psychological coping with risk
- Little on identifying vulnerable children (already disadvantaged or newly at risk?)
- Most conceive of child as victim rather than perpetrator (or both)
- Little research on use and effectiveness of safety strategies (e.g. filtering, parenting)
Building on EU Kids Online I

To design a robust survey instrument appropriate for identifying . . .
(a) children’s online access, use, range and nature of risk experiences, coping responses and safety awareness
(b) parental experiences and safety practices 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 identify and disseminate . . .
(a) findings in a timely manner to relevant national/international stakeholders
(b) recommendations for safety awareness initiatives in Europe
(c) remaining knowledge gaps and methodological guidance for future research
Europe

- 25 countries included
- Range of large/small, north/south, old/new etc.
- Some financial limitations
- Plus affiliates outside Europe
Survey strengths

- Administration in home, face to face
- Self-completion for ethically sensitive questions
- Data from children, paired with a parent
- Randomised survey sample
- 1000 children per country
- Aged from 9 – 16 years old
- Directly comparable data across countries
- Ability to analyse indicators of vulnerability among children
- Questions that compare online and offline risk
- Follow up questions for how children respond to or cope with online risk
Children’s face to face questionnaire

Internet use
- Use of technologies for going online
- Location of internet use
- Time use

Internet opportunities
- Activities undertaken on the internet
- Online communication
- Who in contact with online
- Use of social networking sites

Online skills
- Competencies
- Self-confidence online

Mediation – parents, peers, teachers, other
- Parental mediation - strategies used
- Peer mediation - strategies used
- Teacher mediation - strategies used
- Safety advice received
Children’s self-completion questionnaire

Risky activities
- Experimental/exploratory activities

Vulnerability
- Measures of vulnerability, self-efficacy, sensation-seeking, offline risks, social support, addiction

Experience of online risks and coping (contd.)
- Pornography – if, how often, what they saw, on what platform, response, coping, social support, action taken, comparison with offline pornography
- Other risks – if seen self-harm or hate messages, drug sites, abuse of personal information, computer virus, cheated of money, password stolen
- Offline meetings – if, how often, who met, how met, who told, whether hurt, how responded, coped, actions taken
- Sexting – if, how often, how, what received/sent/posted/seen, which platform, how felt, coping, social support, actions taken

Experience of online risks and coping
- Things that bothered you online
- Being bullied – if, how, how often, what happened, response, coping, social support, actions taken, comparison with offline bullying
- Bullying others – if, how often, how
Parents’ questionnaire

Demographics
- Child’s age
- Other children/adults at home
- Education of parents, SES of household, languages spoken at home, whether discriminated group

About the child
- Whether child has physical/mental/learning difficulties
- Parental worries about the child

Parent’s internet use
- Yes/no, location/frequency/confidence of use, where child goes online

Parental mediation
- Parental mediation strategies used
- Safety advice received/desired

Parent perception of risks online
- Has your child been bothered by something on the internet, how often, tell us what, is it likely this will happen in future, do you feel able to minimise or help, is your child able to deal with things online that bother them
- Has your child – met an online contact offline, seen sexual images, been bullied, bullied another child, been sent sexual messages, sent sexual messages, seen aggressive or violent images, visited self harm or hate sites or drug sites, had personal information abused, computer got a virus, been cheated of money, had password stolen
Country
- Economic (GDP, Gini)
- Regulation (positive content, ICT regulation, child welfare)
- Values/religion
- Education (provision, policy)
- Others (To be added)

Social
- Family
  - SES
  - Siblings
  - Parental education
  - Media at home
  - Parental worries
  - Parental internet use
  - Relations with parents
  - Parental internet mediation
  - Parent support for coping
- School
  - Relations with teachers
  - School internet mediation
  - Teacher support for coping
- Peers
  - Relations with friends
  - Peer internet mediation
  - Peer support for coping
- Other
  - Safety information
  - Support for coping

Individual
- Demographic
  - Age
  - Gender
- Resources
  - Academic
  - Health
  - Self-esteem
  - Self-efficacy
- Vulnerabilities
  - Emotional problems
  - Conduct problems
  - Peer problems
  - Offline risk experiences
  - Sensation-seeking

Skills
- vs. non-usage

Activities
- vs. benefits

Risks
- vs. offline risks

Coping

Harm

Frequency
- Platform
- Location
- Context

Range:
- Content
- Contact
- Conduct

Bullying
- Pornography
- Sexting
- Meetings
- Other
- NB victim/perpetrator

Subjective
- Objective
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month Range</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>June 2009</strong></td>
<td>Kick-off meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 2009</strong></td>
<td>Tender for fieldwork subcontractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oct 2009</strong></td>
<td>Workshop 1: Survey questionnaire/sample design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nov 2009 - Mar 2010</strong></td>
<td>Survey development, translation, piloting, finalising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mar - June 2010</strong></td>
<td>Fieldwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July - Aug 2010</strong></td>
<td>Consult stakeholders about analysis and dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 2010</strong></td>
<td>Data cleaning, top line analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aug-Oct 2010</strong></td>
<td>Workshop 2: Core findings and emerging messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autumn 2010</strong></td>
<td>REPORT: Core findings and recommendations (at SIF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan 2011</strong></td>
<td>Statistical analysis – patterns, hypotheses, comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>March 2011</strong></td>
<td>Consult stakeholders about analysis and recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>May 2011</strong></td>
<td>Workshop 3: Analysis, recommendations, dissemination</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>June 2011</strong></td>
<td>REPORT: Patterns of risk and safety online</td>
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<td>Conference and FINAL REPORT</td>
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Thank you

www.eukidsonline.net