EU Kids Online: Risks and safety on the Internet from the Perspective of European Children

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EU Kids Online: Risks and safety on the internet from the perspective of European children

Presentation to: “Crianças e Internet”, Brasilia, November 16, 2010
Brian O’Neill, Dublin Institute of Technology
Overview of presentation

1. Background to the Survey
2. How children use the internet
3. What children do online
4. What are the risk factors
5. What are the outcomes for children
6. Policy implications
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.
Building on EU Kids Online I

21 national teams coded nearly 400 studies in an online database at www.eukidsonline.net
### Online Affordances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative outcomes</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not realised (digital exclusion)</td>
<td>Upset (subjective) Harm (objective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outcomes</td>
<td>Benefits of internet use</td>
<td>Learning to cope (resilience)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 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.

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**Project scope**

**Project focus**
INDIVIDUAL USER

Usage \rightarrow Activities \rightarrow Risk factors \rightarrow Harm or coping

Demographic \rightarrow Psychological

Parents \rightarrow School \rightarrow Peers

Socio-economic stratification \rightarrow Regulatory framework \rightarrow Technological infrastructure \rightarrow Education system \rightarrow Cultural values

SOCIAL MEDIATION

Child as unit of analysis

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Country as unit of analysis
Survey development

- Literature review to identify themes and gaps, previous questionnaires
  - from the work of EU Kids Online I, 2006-9

- Scope themes and hypotheses, sampling decisions, research ethics
  - network meeting with international advisors, June 2009
  - draft survey questionnaire, Nov 2009

- Iterative drafting and validation process, with network and experts:
  - cognitive testing in UK, Jan 2010
  - translation (and back translation) into 24 languages, Feb 2010
  - cognitive testing in 24 countries, March 2010
  - pilot testing in 5 countries, April 2010

- Fieldwork in 25 countries, May-Oct 2010
Leaflet left with each child

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 hate 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 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 real 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://zaptopan.net/newsensetips 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 isn’t!

www.eukidsonline.net

EU Kids Online

EU Kids Online 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 is conducting original empirical research across member states with national samples of children aged 9-15 years old and their parents. Further information is available from http://www.isee.ac.uk/colloquium/EUKidsOnline/

For further information about any online safety issues, please do not 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 010 2244.

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 safety kit at www.childlykit.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.
How do children use the internet?
Use at home is high

- 85% use at home
- 48% have in bedroom
- Privatised use is growing
- SES and age matter more than gender
- National variation

Bar chart showing percentage of children who own a bedroom at home and the percentage who have it in their bedroom. The chart also shows the percentage of children who have a bedroom but not in their own bedroom by gender, age group, SES, and national variation.
Mobile access growing

- 10% handheld devices
- And 21% have mobile access
- Flexible access is growing
- Age and SES matter
- National variation

![Chart showing mobile access by age and SES]
Internet embedded in daily life, users are getting younger

- 57% use every day or almost daily
- 92% use at least weekly
- 86 minutes online in an average day *(see graph)*
- SES matters especially for daily use: 64% high SES vs. 49% low SES
- Age matters also for daily use: 33% 9-10 yrs vs. 77% 15-16 yrs
- Children first go online at 9 yrs old: at 7 for 9-10 yrs, at 11 for 15-16 yrs

![Bar chart showing minutes per day online by gender and age group.](chart.png)
Uneven digital skills

- Average 3 skills claimed by each child
- Teens more skilled, 11-12 year olds lack basic skills
- Boys claim more skills
- Most skills (4+) in FI, SI, NL, EE, least skills (<3) in TR, RO, IR, HU
- 37% (though only 13% 9-10 year olds) say it’s very true that “I know a lot more about the internet than my parents”
What do children do online?
Multiple opportunities

- Average 7 of 17 activities in past month
- Schoolwork tops the list
- Then content produced by others
- Also communication – IM, SNS, email
- Webcams popular among teens
- Chat rooms less common overall
- Creating content is still less common
- Few gender differences except games
- Age differences are substantial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% who have...</th>
<th>9-12 year old</th>
<th>13-16 year old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the internet for school work</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watched video clips</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Played internet games on your own or against the computer</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used instant messaging</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited a social networking profile</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent/received email</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read/watched the news on the internet</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Played games with other people online</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downloaded music or films</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put or posted photos, videos or music to share with others</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put or posted a message on a website</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used a webcam</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited a chatroom</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created a character, pet or avatar</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used file sharing sites</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spent time in a virtual world</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written a blog or online diary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of activities
- 5.7 (9-12 year old boys)
- 5.4 (9-12 year old girls)
- 9.0 (13-16 year old boys)
- 8.1 (13-16 year old girls)
- 7.1 (all)
Positive content

“There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age”

- 43% say “very true”, 46% say “a bit true”, 12% say “not true”
- Only 32% of 9-10 year olds say “very true”
Online communication

- % Easier to be myself on the internet
- % Talk about different things
- % Talk about private things

Girls

- % Met on the internet, no other connection
- % Met on the internet, friends/family of people you know
- % First met in person face-to-face

Boys

11-12 yrs

13-14 yrs

15-16 yrs

Low SES

Medium SES

High SES

All children

www.eukidsonline.net
What are the risk factors in children’s online (and offline) experiences?
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 13-16 most likely to see sexual images online – 23%

- Where did they see this? 14% online, 12% on television/film/video, 7% in magazines
  Most often seen via accidental pop-ups

- What did they see? 12% - nudity, 8% - someone having sex, 8% - genitals, 3% - violent sex
Bullying off/online

“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. It can include teasing someone in a way the person does not like; hitting, kicking or pushing someone around; leaving someone out of things.

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?”

- 19% have had someone act in this way, online or offline
- **Who?** Few differences by age, gender or social class
  - Teenage girls 13-16 most experience this online – 7%
- **How?** 13% had this happen in person face to face, 5% had this happen online, 3% by mobile phone calls/texts
  - Most often happens online via SNS or IM
- **What?** 4% - nasty/hurtful messages, 2% - messages passed around about them, 1% threatened online
- 12% have bullied others, online or offline
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?”

- 15% have seen/received sexual messages online
- 3% have sent/posted sexual messages online
- **Who?** More older (21%) than younger teens
- **How?** Occurs more by ‘pop up’, IM or SNS
- **What?** 5% have seen other people perform sexual acts, 2% have been asked to talk about sexual acts online, 2% have been asked for photo/video of genitals
Meeting new people

“Have you ever had contact on the internet with someone you have not met face to face before? Have you ever gone on to meet anyone face to face that you first met on the internet in this way?”

- 29% have contact(s) they met online
  - 12% of 9-10 year olds up to 44% of 15-16 year olds

- 8% have met an online contact offline
  - 2% of 9-10 year olds up to 15% of 15-16 year olds

- More online contacts - more offline meetings

- Half who went to a meeting met one or two people this way; 24% met 5+

- 56% of those who went to a meeting met friend of a friend/family; 43% met a new person

- Contact first made usually via SNS or IM
Parental awareness

Among those children who have encountered the particular risk online …

- **Seeing sexual images online:**
  41% of parents are not aware of this, 24% say they don’t know
  Parents are least aware when daughters (47%) and younger children (56% 9-10 year olds) have seen sexual images online

- **Being bullied online:**
  56% of parents are not aware of this, 14% say they don’t know
  Parents are less aware when this involves their 9-10 year olds (64%)

- **Receiving sexual message online:**
  52% of parents are not aware of this; 26% say they don’t know
  Parents of younger children, and in higher SES homes, are least aware

- **Meeting an online contact offline:**
  61% of parents are not aware of this, 11% say they don’t know
  Parents of younger children, of boys, and in higher SES homes, are less aware
What are the outcomes for children?
Overall subjective harm

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

- 55% think there are things online that bother people their age
- 12% have been bothered themselves
- 8% parents say their child has been bothered
- 9-10 year olds less likely to be bothered
- More children have been bothered in DK, EE, RO, SE, NL
- Fewest say this in IT, PT, FR, DE
## Coping strategies

*Just those who encountered the risk and were bothered by it*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Who did they tell?</th>
<th>What did they do?</th>
<th>Online help?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual images</strong></td>
<td>53% told someone</td>
<td>25% hoped it would go away</td>
<td>29% deleted messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36% friend</td>
<td>21% tried to fix it</td>
<td>24% stopped using the internet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18% parent</td>
<td>11% felt guilty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9% sibling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2% teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bullying</strong></td>
<td>79% told someone</td>
<td>21% hoped it would go away</td>
<td>45% blocked person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45% parent</td>
<td>39% tried to fix it</td>
<td>41% deleted messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42% friend</td>
<td>10% felt guilty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14% sibling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7% teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual messages</strong></td>
<td>61% told someone</td>
<td>19% hoped it would go away</td>
<td>38% deleted messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57% friend</td>
<td>23% tried to fix it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54% parent</td>
<td>5% felt guilty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14% sibling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3% teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting contacts offline</strong></td>
<td>75% told someone (their age) before, 56% told after</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>For the above, 1 in 7 or so reported the problem to ISP, online advisor or ‘report abuse button’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are the policy implications?
More opportunities, more risks
Policy implications

Government

Civil society

Children

Industry

Schools

Parents
Actions at governmental level

- Governments and regulators should encourage development of positive online content through production funding programmes and incentive schemes.

- Regulatory authorities at a national level need to monitor and evaluate on an ongoing basis compliance with agreed codes of practice.

- National governments need to ensure that internet safety is prioritized within the national educational curriculum.
Actions from industry

- Service providers to provide the maximum amount of security and highest level of privacy by default for children using their services.

- Prominent internet safety advice and user-friendly internet tools

- Encouragement for more positive online content, especially for younger users.

- Special attention to the data protection and privacy issues for younger children, including underage children using SNS sites.

- Ensure parental controls are effective and meet the needs of parents.
**Actions for awareness-raising**

- **Focus on developing self-protection and self-responsibility among children.**

- **Develop specific safety messages with regard to mobile devices and other platforms.**

- **Special focus on younger children as internet users and tailor resources accordingly.**

- **Greater awareness on potential dangers of excessive internet use into internet safety awareness raising**

- **Provide internet safety advice in the other public locations for internet access (internet café, public library etc.) used by young people.**

- **Specific guidance for parents of younger children to support internet safety education at home.**

- **Peer mediation strategies to support children’s safety awareness and skills.**
Education and schools

- **Schools need to be adequately resourced to deliver digital skills and e-safety education**
- **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.**
- **Training to broaden the range of activities undertaken specifically, more creative aspects including content development**
- **Emphasise digital citizenship and self-management in online content and behaviour**
- **Peer-to-peer education and intervention programmes**
- **Home-school initiatives to support parental mediation**
Advice for Parents

- Parents occupy preeminent role in safer internet use for children
- Parental awareness of risks for all children needs to be strengthened
- Parents should be encouraged to discuss the topic of excessive internet use with their children and to agree limits of screen time and internet use at home
- Emphasise self-management skills regarding their use of the internet
- Guidance is needed in how best to talk to children about their privacy settings, respectful of their privacy while being alert to the risks involved.
- While contact risks are a relatively low occurrence, parents should be alert to the dangers involved.
Thank you

More at www.eukidsonline.net