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*Kids and violence on the Internet*

How vulnerable children feel on the Internet, and how vulnerable they really are, was the focus of a study conducted by the Applied Research and Communications Fund – the coordinator of the Bulgarian Safer Internet Node – among approximately 400 school children, all 12-17 years old. The study was conducted in November-December 2008 in 5 schools in Sofia participating in the project “Real and Virtual Violence: Prevention through interactive education” co-financed by the European Commission and the Swiss Oak Foundation. 22.6 % of the interviewed children admitted to have taken part in some form of violence on the Internet in the last 4 months. 35 % of them admitted to have taken part in some act of violence at school in the same period, 30% had taken part in some act of violence on the streets, 14.9% - through a mobile phone, and 11.6% - at home. 16.7 % of the children identified themselves as perpetrators, 18.8% as victims, around 60 % of the children said they have witnessed violence online in the last 4 months, 78.3 % - on TV, 72.6 % on the streets, 27.4 % in mobile communications, and 10.4 % - at home. 66.7 % of the children believed that they are protected against online violence at home, but at the same time 54.8 % said that Internet is a dangerous place. 89.6% felt protected at home, 70.2% felt protected with mobile communications, 69.9% felt protected at school, 42.8% on the streets and 90.4% of the children felt safe at home. 58.9 % said that they feel safe on the internet, 64.3 feel safe with mobile communications, 61 % feel safe at school and only 29.2 % feel safe on the streets. When asked what is most dangerous about the Internet, chatting and meeting unknown people through IM like Skype and through social networking sites figured highest on the list at 17.1%, 9.2% pointed at computer viruses and 7.7% - theft from credit cards through online shopping sites. The study, with a slightly changed questionnaire, will be repeated in the same schools at the end of the school year in May-June 2009 in an attempt to capture some of the changes after the children have passed the interactive educational course on violence.