

Executive Summary

Who they are; how they are

This report presents the results obtained from a final (cleaned) sample of 2,900 children. Slightly more than half (51%) of the children surveyed were boys and 49% were girls. Forty-seven per cent (47%) of the children are between 13 and 17 years of age, and 53% are between 9 and 12 years of age. Ninety-eight per cent (98%) of the children live with their mother, father, or both.

Girls, boys and adolescents have positive perceptions of their problem-solving ability. What stands out most is their proactive attitude, as more than 70% of them say that if they have problems, they look for or think of solutions, and that they can solve most problems if they make an effort. Six out of ten say they think before doing things. Furthermore, less than half of the children say it is quite easy for them to achieve their objectives and goals.

Access and use

Among the daily activities on Internet that children carry out most frequently, those of a communicative and recreational nature predominate. They like to communicate with family and friends (70%), listen to music (63%), watch video clips (55%), and play online (46%), although video games are much more popular among boys than girls. Also noteworthy is the use of Internet for homework (43%). On the other hand, online activities related to education or civic participation are very limited.

Competencies

Social and instrumental skills are the most widespread among Spanish minors. Nearly nine out of ten children know how to install applications on their devices, and three out of four know how to remove people from their contact list and differentiate information they can share from what they should not share. Fifty-six percent (56%) know how to save photos they find on Internet, and 59% know how to change the privacy settings of their online spaces. On the other hand, informational and creative skills are a bit less common: although 53% know how to create and publish videos online, only 23% know how to edit or make changes to content created by others.

Critical skills also have ample room for improvement, as only 29% of the children surveyed find it easy to check whether the information they find online is true.

Risk and harm

Thirty-three percent (33%) of Spanish children and adolescents from 9 to 17 years of age say they have found themselves in situations on the Internet that have bothered them. Overall, this figure has increased substantially when compared to investigations conducted in 2010 and 2015.

Bullying continues to be the most harmful risk, with 39% of those affected by this behaviour claiming to have felt either quite upset or very upset as a result of such situations. On average, one out of three Spanish children and adolescents claims to have been the victim of offline or online bullying in the previous year. This is slightly higher than in 2015, and is more than double that of 2010.

Based on age, the increase is uneven. Compared to 2015, the percentage of people affected in the 15-17 year old age group has increased markedly (from 18% to 42%). It is also noteworthy that it affects girls more than boys. However, face-to-face bullying occurs more frequently than by technological means. On the other hand, one in five children between the ages of 9 and 17 reports having inflicted some kind of bullying on their classmates in the last year.

Some 42% of Spanish girls and boys between the ages of 9 and 17 have seen sexual images on the Internet or through some other channel. The increase in viewing of this type of content according to age is striking: among children between the ages of 11 and 12, the percentage of those affected are 25%; between the ages of 13 and 14, the figure is 53%; and between the ages of 15 and 17, it is 75%.

As for their reactions to this content, 10% said they were very uncomfortable with what they had seen, and 17% felt a bit or quite uncomfortable. On the whole, the older ones were less bothered than the younger ones, and the girls were more affected than the boys.

With regard to receiving messages with sexual content (sexting), 3 out of 10 minors state that they have received such messages. Among 11 to 12 year olds, 12% have received these type of messages, while among 15 to 17 year olds this figure rises to 45%.

Online contact with people who are strangers is relatively widespread. Forty per cent (40%) of children aged 9 to 17 have had this type of contact in the previous year. The practice is heavily

dependent upon age: two out of every three young people (66%) between the ages of 15 and 17 and more than half (53%) of those between the ages of 13 and 14 claim to have participated in this practice. By contrast, almost one in five children had face-to-face encounters with people contacted through the Internet. It is striking that the overwhelming majority of the children were satisfied with the outcome of such encounters.

The negative content produced by users themselves that minors see most often is related to hate messages against certain groups of people (those of other ethnic groups, religions, nationalities, or sexual orientations) (32%) and pages with gore or violent images (31%). Access to this type of content increases with age.

With regard to the excess use of Internet, 40% of those surveyed said that they had sometimes felt upset when not being able to connect, and 36% admitted having used the Internet without really being interested in doing so. Nine percent (9%) say they often try unsuccessfully to spend less time online.

Responses to risk

When faced with negative experiences on the Internet, minors tend to combine different strategies to deal with them. Friends are the main source of support (70%), and the role of mothers and fathers also stands out (46%); however, 23% say they don't talk to anyone when they encounter a problem on the internet.

When faced with potentially difficult situations, children and adolescents use proactive strategies such as taking actions to make the bothersome person leave them alone (57%), or put a block

on their messages (56%). Passive strategies are also common such as ignoring the problem and waiting for it to disappear by itself (55%), or shutting the window or application where the conflict occurs (53%). In contrast, changing their privacy settings (24%) and reporting the problem (16%) are less frequent actions.

Mediation

A large majority of the children surveyed said they felt safe (79%) and supported (72%) within the family environment. However, somewhat fewer (50%) said they are listened to when they speak. Fathers and mothers are more likely to give advice on the safe use of Internet (37%) or to help their children when they have problems (35%) rather than talk about what they do online (23%) or encourage them to explore the internet (18%).

There are notable variations in this respect between boys and girls, and the latter - especially in adolescence - receive more attention from their parents.

In general, restrictive technological mediation strategies have lower values than the enabling strategy- which generally suggests positive use of technology and includes all forms of active mediation strategies for internet and online safety - and is applied more commonly to younger children.

Childhood mediation shows it is more common for children and adolescents to help their parents and caretakers do things online (48%) rather than talk to them when something online has bothered them (14%), which shows the eagerness with which they tend to guard their privacy. These data also vary by age and gender: girls ask for, and offer, more help than boys.

The school environment is also a space for integration, since the feelings of belonging, security and trust are widely shared: seven out of ten children say they share such feelings. With regard to mediation strategies, restrictive measures prevail in schools (39%) compared to those that are enabling (less than 30 %).

Finally, children and adolescents have a remarkably positive perception of the help and support they receive from their peers and express a high level of trust in friends (around 75%). It is worth noting the help that one in five children report receiving from their peers in addressing a problem online.