

National report for Cyprus

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1 The Internet

1.1 Children's Internet access

In Cyprus, there are many Internet cafes as well as cafes that offer WLAN Internet services (usually for a fee) in towns. The situation differs completely in rural areas where Internet cafes are rarely to be found. However, no data are available for the numbers of Internet cafes in Cyprus. Cytanet is offering WLAN Internet at many cafes and other social places.

Regarding libraries, firstly there are not many libraries in Cyprus and secondly based on personal experience, libraries usually do not offer Internet access.

Cyprus does not have DSL but only ADSL, which is a slower version of DSL. With respect to the speed of access, some ISPs provide misleading information by using non-standard units for measuring the speed. For instance, PrimeTel offers broadband Internet at 750Kbps downloading rate and 256Kbps uploading rate for heavy Internet users, which are both rather slow, especially in comparison to other countries. The company even calls speeds of 300Kbps/128Kbps 'unbeatable broadband Internet speed'!

Three ISPs (Cytanet, Spidernet, & PrimeTel) offer such services. Besides free anti-spam and antivirus protection for personal email, Cytanet offers Safe Internet Service that aims to help its customers protect their children from illegal, undesirable and harmful Internet content. The service includes: filtering software with 30 different categories for filtering, the option to select for each profile the content to which access is denied and applications that may not be used, software for blocking applications, white and black lists and controls relating to the days and times for Internet access. Spidernet offers a Mail Security Service that does not allow spam and virus infected emails to be downloaded through the email software. PrimeTel offers free Value-Added services with Anti-Virus and Anti-Spam connection.

1.2 Findings on children's access to the Internet and online technologies

An overall description of how much access the population of Cyprus has to the Internet at home was provided by the statistical service of the Republic of Cyprus (Republic of Cyprus, Statistical Service, 2006a).. In 2005 31.7% of households had Internet access. In 2006 the report showed that 36.7% of households had access to the Internet. As far as the forms of Internet connections, results indicated in 2005 4.5% and in 2006 12.1% had broadband connection, 3.8% in 2005 and 4.6% in 2006 had wireless connection and 27.5% in 2005 and 24% in 2006 had an ISDN connection.

Even though there is no scientific evidence suggesting that there are inequalities in access as a consequence of Socioeconomic status, it is likely that there would be inequalities in access based on people living in rural areas where Internet technology is still not available. Those children are more likely not to have access to the Internet.

1.3 Findings on children's use of the Internet and online technologies

Research conducted by the European Commission (EC, 2007) provides a description of how much use of the Internet children make according to gender and age. The authors divide their description into 4 categories (girls 9 and 10 years old, boys 9 and 10 years old, and girls 12 to 14 years old and boys 12 to 14 years old). Boys' responses (ages 9 and 10) differ slightly from girls of the same age (see below). For example, the most frequent time they use the

Internet is the weekends. The other age group of girls (ages 12 to 14) use the Internet less frequently than the other groups. That is, most of the girls stated that they use the Internet "sometimes." In contrast, boys (ages 12 to 14) indicated that they use the Internet from 1 to 3 hours. According to the EC's study, boys report using the Internet more often when they get older. Girls, however, report using the Internet less frequently when older.

Mavris (2005) conducted qualitative research to present mobile usage among adolescents. The author states that most of the children who own a mobile are 14 or 15 years old (p.20). Mavris states another important issue is that there is no difference between the genders as regards having a mobile phone.

However, findings suggest that there are gender differences in children's access to or amount of use of online technologies.

In EC (2007) answers from the boys group, 9 and 10 years, as regards how much they use the internet varied. They mentioned the following:

- "When I feel like it" (Boys group, 9 and 10 years)
- When they have some assignment from school
- At least once a day
- Once a week
- When they finish their homework
- Sometimes (almost everyday)
- More during the weekend than during weekdays.
- Time of Internet usage might vary from 1 to 5 minutes, up to 1 hour.
- They usually connect to the Internet searching for specific information. Once they find it they exit.
- One of the respondents mentioned that he has a limitation of 1 hour usage per time imposed by his father.

More frequent usage habits could be detected from girls group, 9 and 10 years. They answered:

- As soon as I finish school,
- Two hours per day,
- Once a day,
- ½ an hour every day,
- one hour every day,
- one hour every two days

As with the boys group, 9 and 10 years, girls group also mentioned increased Internet usage during the weekend. The reason behind this that they have no school the next day and they can stay up late. Also they can play games during the morning, afternoon and night.

Boys group, 12 to 14 years' Internet usage is also frequent. Most boys use the Internet daily or at least 3-4 times a week. Frequency of usage also changes in this group during the summertime, where it becomes more frequent.

- Time spent online varies depending on the reasons why the boys group, 12 to 14 years, connect to the Internet. This can vary from one hour to 2-3 hours each time.
- On a typical week, boys spend between 1 to more than 3 hours on the Internet per day playing games. On the weekends, this usage may as much as double.

Girls group, 12 to 14 years, do not use the Internet as often as boys of the same age.

- They mentioned that they do not use it everyday; they use it sometimes, whenever they have time. One of the respondents mentioned that she uses it one hour per day. One mentioned that she uses it at school.
- Usage depends on homework load, on private lessons and on MSN usage. Internet usage varies between 2 hours per week up to 14 hours per week with increased usage – once more – during the weekend.

Girls mentioned that Internet usage increases when they have an assignment to complete or during summertime.

Children's perception :

Boys group, 9 and 10 years: When respondents were asked as to whether these 'virus' problems changed the way they use the Internet, it was evident that boys do not realize the seriousness of such a problem.

Girls group, 9 and 10 years: Girls are more cautious because using the Internet extensively might cause problems (brain, eyes, etc.).

Boys group, 12 to 14 years: These boys appear to be very cautious about giving away their personal information on the Internet. They also mentioned that one should be very careful in the way they spell words on the Internet as misspelling a word might redirect them to other irrelevant sites. They also mentioned that with antivirus programs installed on their computers, they feel more protected although they mentioned the downside of these antivirus systems is that they have a license that expires too often or too soon.

Girls group, 12 to 14 years: When asked whether the virus problems they mentioned changed the way they use the Internet, only the parents only mentioned that they install antivirus programs on their computers in order to protect it from any malicious virus.

1.4 Internet and Media Content for Children

The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) has only recently begun to deal with children's content. CyBC is a partner in the Safer Internet Awareness Node. We therefore expect its role to increase. The Ministry of Education is the major content provider. Currently only mpeg sounds are targeted to the children's population.

1.5 Opportunities experienced by children online

The information provided by the EC (2007) qualitative research noted above is outlined in Table 1

Table 1: Applications used by different age groups

	Girls 9-10 */**	Boys 9-10 */**	Girls 12-14 */**	Boys 12-14 */**	Total */**
Searching for information as a part of my school work	8/0	7/0	8/4	8/0	31/4
Searching for information on subjects which interest me/surfing for fun	8/0	4/0	8/2	7/0	27/2
Sending and receiving emails	4 / 1	2/0	5/0	6/0	17/1
Using instant messaging (MSN)/chatting with friends		2/0	5/1	8/2	15/3
Engage in open chat rooms	1/0	2/0	2/0	2/0	7/0
Creating my own blog/homepage and posting my own texts, photos, music on the Internet	5/0	1/0	3/0	2/0	11/0
Reading and responding to friends' blogs/homepages		1/0	4/0	2/0	7/0
Reading and responding to blogs/homepages of someone I have never met		1/0		2/1	3/1
Playing on-line games	8 / 5	5/0	8/1	7/1	28/7
Downloading music, films, videos, games or other files	7 / 3	5/0	8/1	6/2	26/6
Sharing files (music, films, videos, games or others)	3/0		3/0	5/1	11/1
Sharing photos	2/0	2/0	2/0	2/0	8/0
Downloading ring tones/images for my mobile phone	2 / 1	1/0	6/0	7/1	16/2
Taking part in competitions		1/0		4/0	5/0
Making phone calls through the Internet		1/0			1/0
Total	48/10	35/0	62/9	68/8	213/27
* Applications used ** Applications mostly used					

- The boys group, 9 and 10 years mentioned that as regards to the Internet applications used they like playing games on the Internet because they can find games that they do

not already have, they like spending their free time playing games and these games are cheaper to play on the Internet than buying them for their videogame console.

- Like boys of the same age, most of the girls group, 9 and 10 years, play games on the Internet because they are fun and it is a pleasant way to spend their time. Girls mentioned that although there are games installed on their computers those are limited and not as amusing as the ones they find on the Internet. The games they like are SpongeBob, Jungle Trouble, Balloons, and many others. One of the girls mentioned that she mostly uses the Internet to check her emails. Another girl mentioned that she has tried to create her own blog; her father already has one and she tries to do the same. All girls group, 9 and 10 years mentioned that they download music and films. They also look things up for any school assignments they might have. It seems that girls group, 9 and 10 years, confuse being connected, having an account with MSN messenger, with having their own webpage.
- The Boys group, 12 to 14 years, mostly download music, videos and games. They like it, they find it amusing and they do it everyday. Furthermore, it is free of charge, hence they do not need to pay in order to get a music CD. There are sites that require payment in order to be able to download but they do not use those sites, even though they admit that those have a much faster downloading speed. They also use MSN Messenger and play games on the Internet (backgammon, World Cup, etc.). They like playing group games on the Internet as they interact with other people from Cyprus but also other countries. They use MSN to talk to their friends at night. They note that It is quicker to write a message on MSN rather than on their mobile phone and it is also is cheaper. Most of them do not use blogs.
- The Girls group, 12 to 14 years use email, and they use MSN messenger, which enables them to talk to their friends since this cheaper than sending an SMS text message and one can also send videos. They download music and films and download games – different and more pleasant than the ones installed on their computer. They download ring tones. And they look for information for their school assignments – it is easier to search for information on the Internet.
- It is obvious that almost all respondents download things for free from the Internet, regardless of their other usage of it.

1.6 Risks experienced by children online

Several newspaper articles argue that one of the most crucial risks that exist in Cypriot online society is sexually offensive content on the Internet.

The EC 2007 focus groups of children aged 9 to 14 have shown that:

- Youngsters are conscious about giving away their personal information and also about interacting with strangers online. They consider this as a very serious problem/risk.
- Potentially dangerous contact is considered to be by far the most dangerous risk/problem children can come across, according to most of the respondents.
- None of the respondents downloading music, films, games or other material from the Internet for free were aware that this action was illegal. Even after they were informed most did not seem to mind and gave the impression that they would continue their free downloading.

Breaking down children's concerns by age and gender

- Boys group, 9 and 10 years were concerned about viruses that might affect their computers resulting in losing data and information.
- Girls group, 9 and 10 years were afraid that they might unknowingly give away their personal information, resulting in a stranger coming to their home to rob them or even hurt them.

- Boys group, 12 to 14 years were afraid they might transfer a virus to their computer. They were also concerned that someone might give false personal information – i.e. that they were not who they say they are and might want to cause harm.
- Girls group, 12 to 14 years expressed no risks

According to the Eurobarometer survey of 2005/6, 8% of parents/guardians think that their child has at some stage encountered harmful or illegal content on the Internet.

Breaking down children's experience of risks by age and gender:

Boys, 9 and 10 years:

- Mentioned that they never came across anything of potentially shocking material.
- Had come across pornographic material.
- Consider engaging in relations with a stranger to be a serious problem but not a very serious one.
- The boys interviewed have never added an unknown person to MSN contact list.
- They had never been bullied online
- All have downloaded something for free from the Internet but are not aware that it is illegal.

Girls, 9 to 10 years:

- Very few girls stated that they never came across shocking contents.
- They had come across pornographic material.
- Consider engaging in relations with a stranger to be the most dangerous side of the Internet.
- But it has never happened to them.
- They do not believe this or something similar will happen to them.
- They had never been bullied online
- Some have downloaded thing for free.
- Are not aware that downloading music, films, games without paying is illegal.
- They do not consider this as a very serious problem.

Boys, 12 to 14 years:

- Believe that it is more probable they will come across pornographic material than scenes of violence.
- Consider engaging in relations with a stranger to be a very serious problem, a more serious problem than all others.
- Do not believe it happens often although it could happen to anyone.
- Some of the boys never heard about cyberbullying.
- As far as they know most people gossip behind their backs but consider this to be harmless.
- All respondents downloaded for free.
- They are not aware that downloading music, films, games without paying is illegal.
- They do not consider this as a very serious problem.

Girls, 12 to 14 years:

- All girls interviewed have seen nudity on the Internet.
- Consider engaging in relations with a stranger to be a serious problem.
- It has never occurred to them.
- Cyberbullying has never happened to them.
- Do not consider this as a problem.

- They know that lots of talking, gossip takes place in blogs.
- They are not aware that downloading music, films, games without paying is illegal.

Schools have a controlled access to the Internet, providing children with a safer environment for use. Children are exposed to a greater risk when using the Internet at home, especially if they are not controlled by their parents.

1.7 Internet regulation and promotion

In Cyprus we have the following Internet Service Providers: CYTANET, Logosnet, Spidernet, OTEnet, Thunderworx, Netway, and PrimeTel. Following an initiative of the Cyprus Institute of Technology (a government supported Technology Institute), they now have an Association and they are locally connected (as a means to reduce international traffic when users request websites that are local). To our knowledge there is no initiative or legislation in place that restricts and controls access to content in any way. Three ISPs (CYTANET, Spidernet, & PrimeTel) provide filters for parents to regulate content access for their children, as a form of self-regulation.

Cyprus has both a Safer Internet Awareness Node (www.CyberEthics.info) and a Hotline (SafenetCY). The first is operated by the Cyprus Neuroscience & Technology Institute, through a consortium that involves the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation, The Department of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Cyprus, the Cyprus Youth Council (CyC), the Family Planning Association and the Olive Tree Branch Foundation (the human rights association in North Cyprus). The Cyprus Neuroscience & Technology Institute together with the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority operate the Hotline. However, the Republic of Cyprus has signed, ratified or acceded to and essentially incorporated into the Republic's municipal law all international treaties and conventions concerning child protection, elimination of racism, fortification and efficient application of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in general. A list of all relevant international treaties and conventions is provided by the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/mfa.nsf/FPHumanRights).

When the Commissioner of Electronic Communications & Postal Regulations (who is appointed by the President) was asked to monitor or agree to accept reports about illegal uses of the Internet, he refused and explained that this issue is outside of his duties. Issues concerning Internet Safety and Protection of Personal Data are addressed in Part 14 of the Law 112(I)/2004. Part 14 of the above mentioned law (Security, Secrecy and Data Protection) is essentially the incorporation of Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2002 concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector into the Republic's municipal law. The Directive 2002/58/EC can be accessed through the Portal to the European Union Law (europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/el/oj/dat/2002/l_201/l_20120020731el00370047.pdf). In addition to Law 112(I)/2004, the Office of the Commissioner of Electronic Communications & Postal Regulations has published a number of regulations and decrees governing relevant issues.

The Ministry of Education has implemented programmes that promote the use of the Internet in the school setting. Apart from the mandatory computer's course that students take, the Ministry of Education offers wide Internet access in all public schools. In addition, the Ministry of Education is preparing an Internet school programme where education in classrooms and at school will be based on a computer. The program is called DIA.S and it enables students to log on to the web from any computer, check their emails, check school assignments, have access to online libraries associated with their school material and check every day's classes. The teacher can provide computer-based exercises. Moreover, parents get an account as well where they can check all the personal data, assignments and grades of their children. Information on this plan can be found on www.moec.gov.cy/presentations/ppt/Presentation_DIA.ppt.

The police have produced some flyers raising the awareness of people about Internet crime and especially child pornography. In addition, the Ministry of Education has implemented various programmes to raise awareness of potential social impacts and risks related to the Internet both for children and for educating parents. Moreover, they have a video and safety guidelines on their website (www.schools.ac.cy/safety_manual.html). The Ministry of Education has been circulating leaflets promoting safer use of the Internet. Members of the Ministry of Education are now on the Safer Internet Advisory Board. The Ministry of Education is in the process of developing programmes that would educate teachers and students on how to learn to use computers and the Internet. Attempts are still at a very early stage, but students are being informed and encouraged to use the Internet for school purposes.

To support safer use of the Internet in public schools, the Ministry of Education has agreed on the development of software by Cyta called Safe Internet for Schools. This software has been given to schools the last two months. Schools have to install and run it on each computer that has access to the Internet. Technical support is provided to them from both the IT advisors and Cyta. This software is the same for all levels of education since it can be customised. Most of the teachers were trained in how to use the Internet (i.e. basic use) from seminars provided by the Ministry as well as the Pedagogical Institute. The Internet is used substantially by students in all-day and morning schools. It is mainly used as a source for gathering data for projects and other activities given across the curriculum.

NGOs have not been influential so far in shaping legislation/regulation but they are working on it. The first hotline in Cyprus (Safeweb; which is now no longer operational) managed to introduce the problem to the Parliament and the police. The current hotline (operated by the Cyprus Neuroscience & Technology Institute and Cytanet – national ISP) is now working closely with the police and indirectly with the Government, which appears ready to respond to needs and even pass relevant legislation if it is deemed necessary. The Safer Internet Awareness Project 'CyberEthics' as well as the current hotline have worked together with one ISP (Cytanet) that now offers filtering software.

1.8 Parental mediation

In the EC (2007) study the boys group, 9 and 10 years mentioned the following:

- One boy mentioned that his parents have laid down rules for him.
- Others mentioned that they can use the Internet as much as they want, even though all parents tell their children to be careful as to the sites they log onto and not to go to sites with pornographic material.
- A few of the boys group, 9 and 10 years, mentioned that their siblings might sit with them when while on the Internet.
- Some of the boys group, 9 and 10 years, believe that their parents are justified in imposing rules as regards Internet usage. One of the rules boys think that their parents could impose would be to block their Internet usage if they use it more than their allowed time. Boys mentioned that the parents could even sell the computer if they do not comply with their recommendations/rules.

Girls group, 9 and 10 years mentioned that the following rules and recommendations are given to them by their parents:

- Stop using the Internet for about ½ to 1 hour between 'sessions'.
- Do not overuse the Internet/computer as this might create problems in their eyes, cause them to have an uneasy sleep.
- Time limitations. Parents tell them to use the Internet prudently "I can use it as much as I want during the day but I have to turn the computer off at 20:00."
- Not to use it during the night.
- Not to give away their personal information.
- Not to enter unknown websites.
- Not to mess with their emails.
- Most of the girls believe that their parents are overreacting in terms of the rules and recommendations imposed upon them.

- One of the girls, on the other hand strongly, believes that what their parents tell them and whatever rules they impose are strictly for their own good, and hence justified.

Boys group, 12 to 14 years commented as follows:

- "When I finish my homework I can sit for as long as I want at the computer."
- "I have a time constraint on weekdays until 22:00, which does not apply during the weekends."
- Boys group, 12 to 14 years, have more or less the same rules and recommendations imposed by their parents as regards to Internet usage. These rules and recommendations do not apply during summer months, where respondents have no school.
- Some of the respondents mentioned that although they have no school during the summertime and they could play on the Internet for as much as they please, they prefer to play outdoors.
- Parents said they should not use the Internet/computer for too long as they might hurt their eyes.
- One of the boys actually admitted that parents are justified in telling them to be careful not to overuse the Internet/computer as they indeed might get dizzy and hurt their eyes.
- Parents of the 12 to 14 year olds also warn their boys to watch out as regards what sites they connect (boys actually mentioned gambling sites and not pornographic material), and also to be careful not to download any viruses onto the computer.
- Boys stated that their parents do not usually sit with them while they are on the Internet; one of the respondents mentioned that once he comes across information that might interest his parents he calls them to sit with him. One other respondent mentioned that his sometimes parents sit with him just to see what he looks for on the Internet, what he downloads.
- All respondents mentioned that their older siblings could not be bothered with them.
- Boys group, 12 to 14 years, mentioned that on one hand they sometimes find that their parents are overreacting in the things they say, as they almost always argue with them about the Internet whilst on the other hand see how their parents might be right that overuse might hurt their eyes.

Girls group, 12 to 14 years:

- Mentioned that the only rule their parents have as regards Internet usage is that they first have to finish their homework. They agree with their parents about imposing this rule. After finishing their studies, those who have a computer at home can connect to the Internet for as long as they want.

1.9 Media literacy

The EC's 2007 qualitative study revealed the following coping strategies of children aged 9 to 14, from the childrens' perspectives:

- Computer viruses are another concern that was mentioned by respondents although this is controllable by antivirus programs.
- Although respondents are aware that certain information they find on the Internet is not truthful, they do not consider this to be a very serious problem.
- Most respondents came across websites/ webpages with potentially shocking contents. Although they think that such incidents are mostly embarrassing for them rather than dangerous (e.g., pornographic material), they immediately close the webpage.
- Bullying is not really considered as a problem. Many respondents mentioned that they have actually come across online gossiping rather than bullying.
- They mentioned that they would report unpleasant incidents to a family member (usually older sibling, grandmother, in some cases parent), only if it were serious. Anonymous reporting to other organisations or institutions would be preferred.

More specifically, different groups of children have argued in this study the following:

Boys group, 9 and 10 years:

- “Be careful where to log on.”
- “Do not spend too much time on the Internet.”
- “Buy programs that can help our parent check what sites we use and to buy programs that are like hospitals and dispense of viruses.”

Girls group, 9 and 10 years:

- “Do not enter web-pages... and never to give away their personal information.”
- They mentioned that they would not follow what they advise others to do.

Boys group, 12 to 14 years:

- As regards the Internet, do not enter webpages you do not recognize.

Girls group, 12 to 14 years:

- They would advise their younger siblings not to enter webpages they do not recognize; to search only for what interests them and not search generally and vaguely about information. Furthermore, do not to talk/chat with strangers and never to reveal personal information (e.g., address).
- They, on the other hand would, not ‘practise what they preach’.

According to the Eurobarometer 2005/06, 71% parents/guardians think their child knows what to do if uncomfortable online, 22% think they do not.

1.10 Factors shaping public discourses about the Internet

NGOs that deal with these issues:

- CARDET (Centre for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology)
- Future Worlds Centre
- The Family Planning Association
- The Olive Branch Foundation

They have been active in raising awareness/organising campaigns since 2006, offering e-learning sources, technology integrated into education, as well as monitoring, evaluating and improving e-trainers’ competences in a lifelong learning environment. They also contribute to using PDAs in the teaching of Science

NGOs speak with one voice and they are coordinated. The Future Worlds Centre coordinates the others and sends them awareness raising leaflets that they then disperse to the public through their organisations. They also offer advice through their websites. Helplines are not yet available, but there is a hotline for reporting Internet crimes. They target in their awareness campaigns at teachers and students. In the awareness leaflets and campaigns, child pornography is emphasized more than others so that people get to know that it is a very serious crime and in fact one of the most serious crimes that can be committed electronically.

They are very successful in getting media coverage (they have been invited many times to TV stations and radio shows and they also have TV spots playing continuously on various TV channels). They have also had newspaper and magazine coverage on various occasions. Awareness campaigns have been very successful, especially when directed to children because more and more children are starting to become aware of the risks the Internet entails and more parents have found the information they need to protect their children.

There had been several cases of electronic child pornography published in the media over the past few years. The media appeared to be very judgemental of issues like these and the police are enforce strict controls to capture and punish criminals of this kind.

2 The Educational system

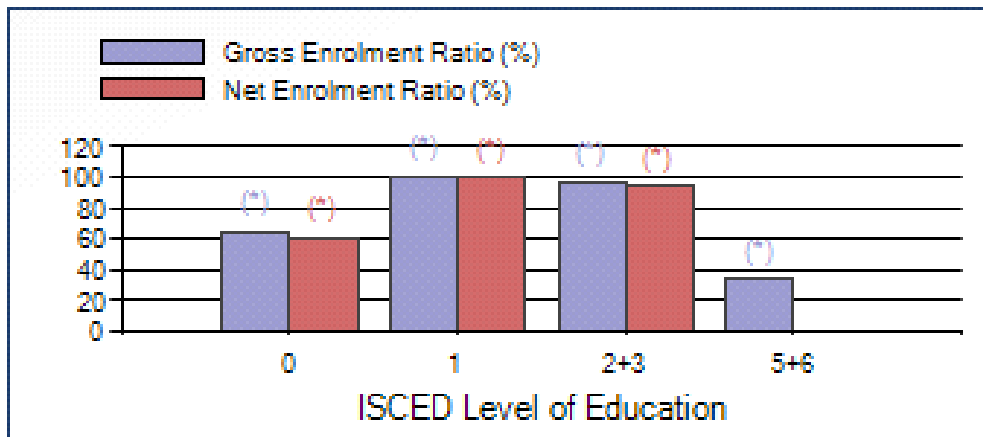
2.1 General education

UNICEF DATA

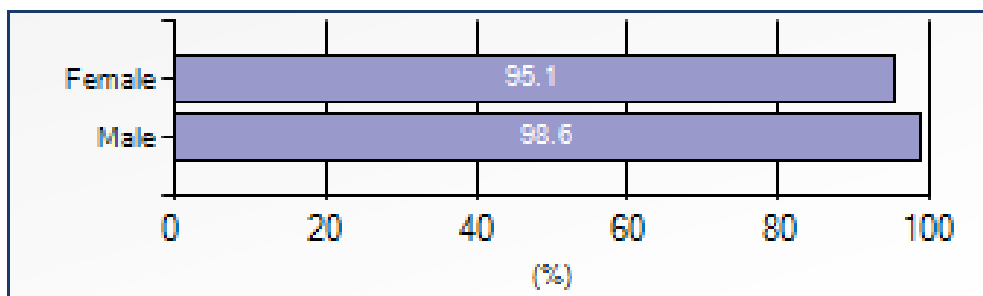
Total adult literacy rate	2000		97
Net primary school enrolment/attendance (%)	1996-2002*		95
Under-5 mortality rank			164
Adult literacy rate	1990	Male	98
		Female	91
	2000	Male	99
		Female	95
Number per 100 population	2001	Phones	109
		Internet users	22
Primary school enrolment ratio	1997-2000*	(gross) male	97
		(gross) female	97
		(net) male	95
		(net) female	95
Net primary school attendance %	(1992-2002*)	Male	-
		Female	-
% of primary school entrants reaching grade 5	1995-1999*	Admin. data	99
	1995-2001	Survey data	-
Secondary school enrolment ratio	1997-2000* (gross)	Male	93
		Female	94

UNESCO DATA

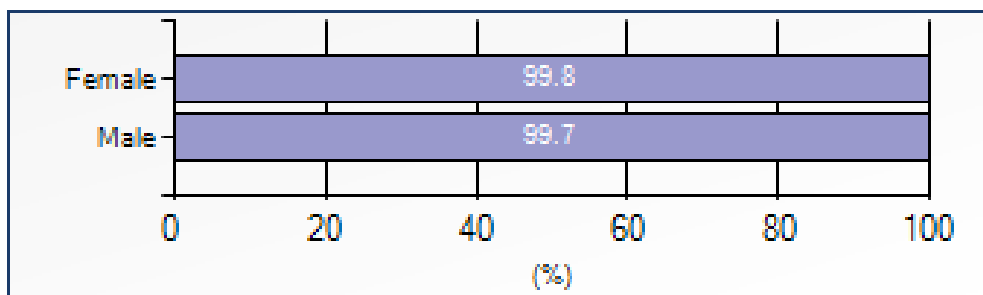
Participation in education



Literacy Rates - 15 years and older - 2001



Literacy Rates - 15 to 24 years old - 2001



Education Indicators

Pupil / teacher ratio (primary)	(**)	18
Percentage of repeaters, primary (%)		-

According to the annual report 'Statistics of Education' (Republic of Cyprus Statistical Service, 2006b) of all pupils/students, 75,5% were enrolled in public schools and 24,5% in private schools. Enrolment by level of education was as follows: Pre-primary 27.028, Primary 61.247, Secondary 65.274, Tertiary 20.078 and Special education 391.

No available data were found regarding parents' education. Nowadays, however, more and more students enter higher education, which is a sign that societal demands have been changing. Cyprus is not one of the poorer countries in Europe, thus higher education is something that is affordable by most families and since the demands of the society require that people have some kind of degree to ensure their future, more and more students enter higher education to achieve this.

Children today have more advanced tools for learning. This is due to the introduction of the Internet and the use of audio-visual aids to enhance their learning. Schools appear to be less strict than in the generation of their parents, regarding the use of violence by a teacher. However, a good deal more is expected from children nowadays than was expected from their parents' generation. School today appears to be of utmost importance and the foundations of it can shape the future of a person. In previous decades, children could withdraw from the school to help the family by working in the fields, or by working in places that would give them money for supporting their family.

2.2 Education and the Internet

Internet access in the different education levels is as follows (according to Republic of Cyprus, Statistical Service, 2007b): In 2006, in Primary education there were 6,4 computers connected to Internet per 100 pupils (5,7 computers in 2005), in Secondary education 13,1 computers connected to Internet per 100 pupils (12,2 computers in 2005) and in Tertiary education 14,0 computers connected to Internet per 100 students (11,7 computers in 2005).

The Internet is not a subject on the curriculum. School students encounter information about the Internet/IT/Media through informational events that are being organized by CyberEthics in order to raise awareness of safer use of Internet. They are also encountering Internet/IT/Media education through parents and friends that have some knowledge on these issues.

3 Wider society

3.1 Social change

The use of the computer (including the use of the Internet) is one of the most rapidly changing phenomena in Cyprus. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of people who are using the Internet. In order to hire an employee, companies now require PC knowledge. Children have also started using the computer and the Internet, and it started becoming necessary of school education as well. The consequences of this rapid changing social phenomenon are many and varied. On the one hand, people acquire more advanced knowledge and tasks become less time consuming than before. Far more information regarding topics can be found instantly. On the other hand, people and especially children that do not have the necessary knowledge for using a computer and the Internet are either left behind in their schoolwork or adults have difficulties finding a job.

The Government and public seem enthusiastic about the changes associated with the information society but this is progressing slowly due to the high demands that technological programmes include. It is obvious, however, that these efforts have a high profile in public discourses. The country is about 'average' in Europe in relation to these technological changes. While young people assimilate these changes easily and are more capable of facing the demands required by companies and/or schools, older people are having a harder time adapting to these change

Some inequalities between the genders exist (according to Republic of Cyprus, Statistical Service, 2001):

- Regarding employment: less females than males have an employment:

INDICATOR	Year of reference	Total	Males	Females
Employment rate (employed, 15-64 years/population, 15-64 years) (%)	<u>2006</u>	69,6	79,4	60,3
Employment in Agriculture (% by sex)	<u>2006</u>	100,0	69,8	30,2
Employment in Industry (% by sex)	<u>2006</u>	100,0	80,2	19,8
Employment in Services (% by sex)	<u>2006</u>	100,0	47,8	52,2
Unemployment rate (unemployed/labour force) 20+ (%)	<u>2006</u>	4,5	3,9	5,4

- Regarding decision making and politics: less females than males are involved in politics and decision making processes:

INDICATOR	Year of reference	Total	Males	Females
DECISION MAKING AND POLITICS	-			
Decision-making posts in the Labour Force, (Administrative and Managerial Personnel) (%)	<u>2006</u>	100,0	83,8	16,2
Members of the House of Representatives (number)	<u>2007</u>	56	48	8
Senior Level Civil Servants*	<u>2005</u>	441	339	102
Judges	<u>2007</u>	98	63	35
Members of Municipal Councils or Other Local Area Governing bodies	<u>2007</u>	414	330	84

- Regarding crime:

INDICATOR	Year of reference	Total	Male	Female
CRIME	-			
Adults convicted	<u>2004</u>	1406	1278	128
Victims of Offences relating to the Violence within the Family	<u>2004</u>	19	5	14
No. of Persons in Prison per 100.000 People**	<u>31.12.2004</u>	49,5	95,1	5,3
Victims of Sexual Assault	<u>2004</u>	73	11	62

31% of the total Cypriot population lived in rural areas in 2004 (Republic of Cyprus, Statistical Service, 2001, 2004)

Employment in agriculture is as follows (Republic of Cyprus, Statistical Service, 2007c).

2nd quarter of 2006: 4.3%

1st quarter of 2007: 4.0%

2nd quarter of 2007: 4.3%

The rural population has steadily increased from 198.900 in 1992 to 235,800 in 2006; this is an increase of 19%. The urban population has also steadily increased from 416,000 in 1992 to 542,900 in 2006; this is an increase of 31%.

In urban centres there is a higher percentage of people using the Internet. It is important to mention that many rural areas have a poor Internet infrastructure. Most villages have no Internet coverage and can only use dial-up even though the use of the Internet is still not very popular there. There are current attempts, however, from telecommunication companies to cover all parts of the island with broadband Internet.

According to the distribution of employment by sector, in the 2nd quarter of 2007 the largest percentage of employed persons was concentrated in services sector with 73.0%, whereas manufacturing followed with 22.7% and last came agriculture with only 4.3%. In the 1st quarter of 2007, 73.6% were employed in services, 22.4% in manufacturing and 4.0% in

agriculture. In the 2nd quarter of 2006, 73.0% were employed in services, 22.7% in manufacturing and 4.3% in agriculture Republic of Cyprus, Statistical Service, 2007c)..

Cyprus has been changing demographically much more intensively during the past few decades. Partly because of the political problem (flow of Turkish immigrants as a result of the Turkish intervention in 1974), partly because of the political status quo (Cyprus cannot control its borders due to the presence of the Turkish army and it makes an easy target to illegal immigrants) and partly because of EU accession, more than 20% of the people that live on the island do not have permanent residence or citizenship. This situation certainly creates racism and nationalism, which is often expressed in the media. Although, it did not make it to the Internet yet, we expect that soon websites with hate language and racist messages will appear.

3.2 Role of the state

The state is not very interventionist in people's lives but it offers all the help they can for protecting its citizens. It provides information and awareness nodes for all the subjects that the public needs to be aware of. For example, in regards to Internet safety, the Government dispenses leaflets to students raising their awareness of the hazards that the Internet entails and helping them to be protected from being victimized through the Internet.

The main regulator and entity responsible for Internet safety is the Ministry of Education. Of course, parents play an important role in enhancing Internet safety in children, but the Government needs to awaken people as to what issues they should be cautious of.

Cyprus has a well-established democratic system with quite open and free expression of opinion and speech. The Government does not interfere in any way with what is or is not published on the Internet. The issue of censorship is almost non-existent. The only exceptions that could be made are that during the last 5 years were accusations by the Opposition on two occasions. One case involved the political stance of people during the UN referendum for re-unification in 2004. The second case concerns an accusation by the political Opposition that the Government monitored certain mobile phones. However, both events are disputed and in any case they do not involve censorship of Internet content.

4. Other factors affecting children's online experiences

English is widely used as lingua franca and language of education. Private schools are all English speaking schools. However, an estimated 25% of young people do not properly know how speak English. In general, the older generation does speak English due to the historical connections to the UK. Schools begin teaching English in the 4th grade of primary school. Both national languages (Greek and Turkish) are part of the Internet. In fact, many Greek Cypriot websites are bilingual (Greek and English), some websites, especially those that are related to bi-communal activities and projects, are even trilingual (Greek, Turkish, and English). Greek Cypriots can easily read Greek and English.

Cypriot households do not yet have fears relating to unsupervised spaces outdoors. Cyprus is a very closed and conservative society. There are not so many dangers outside the house as is the case in larger countries. However, children's rooms have become increasingly media rich, including access to the Internet but this is the case primarily because of the advancing technology. Children nowadays ask to have ICT equipment either because their peers have it or because they heard about it and it's in fashion ("that's what everybody does").

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