

National report Germany

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1. The Internet

1.1 Children's Internet access

Table: Internet access from 1997 to 2007 (in percent)

	1997	1998	1999	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Modem	80	64	56	35	34	25	25	18
ISDN	19	34	43	40	40	38	24	20
DSL/Broadband	-	-	-	24	24	36	48	59

Gescheidle/Fisch (2007): Onliner 2007: Das "Mitmach-Netz" im Breitbandzeitalter. (Onliner 2007: The "participation net" in broadband era), p. 394. Sources: ARD/ZDF Online studies 1997-2007. (Base: Online user from 14 years in Germany)

Between 1997 and 1999, the dial-up modem was the most common form of Internet connection. ISDN-connections had increased continuously and surpassed modem connections in the early 2000s, but was overtaken by the DSL technology in 2006. Broadband-connection has increased in the last two years and has by now become the market leader. Currently, the highest percentage of DSL/Broadband can be found in the lower age groups (14 to 19 years: 63%; 20 to 29 years: 64% ; 30 to 39 years: 63%). The highest growth was in the group of the 50 to 59 year old respondents (from 39-50%) (ibid: 394).

If ISPs provide problematic contents that may affect children negatively, they have to ensure that children do not get in contact with these (see: § 5 Jugendmedienschutz-Staatsvertrag). The provider can fulfil this request if the content is coded for a special youth protection program or if a youth protection program is set up in advance (see: § 11, 1).

Youth protection programs have to be accredited by the Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz (KJM, Commission for the Protection of Minors in Electronic Media). The Landesmedienanstalt (State Media Authority) in the Federal State where the application is made is responsible. The accreditation is limited to five years, but a extension is possible. Up until now there has been no youth protection program that fulfils the request of JMStV. That means that no program has been officially accepted by the KJM. There are some pilot projects which will be tested and evaluated with regard to their functionality and quality. At the moment, there is one current pilot program ("jugendschutzprogramm.de", by the Verein Jus Prog e.V.). This program combines professional edited filter lists with the filter system *ICRAplus* (see: www.kjm-online.de). Jugendschutzprogramm.de is powered by freenet, In-et-Cash, Lomex Media, afendis and different providers of erotic content (e.g. coupe, beathe use, orion and fundorado.com).

There is a number of available filter-software, but all programs are criticised as not being 100% reliable.

Just to point out to examples: AOL and T-Online offer different safety tools such as age-related user profiles with different rights (access to different websites [AOL offers a black and a white list], functions for mail- and Newsgroups, time budget and time of day). AOL offers the possibility of proposing websites that should be blocked, be available or be shifted into another age group. T-Online enables the compilation of black and white lists and of a wish list of websites that should be unlocked. Furthermore, they offer (partly for a fee) protection tools against different kind of viruses, diallers etc.

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

Annotation: While some studies concentrate on the media environment as an indicator for access, others ask the children directly where they have access to the Internet. For the latter option the difference between the *regular* and the *rarely access/usage* has to be taken into consideration (see: Feil/Decker/Gieger 2004, p. 21).

Internet access at home

Computer and Internet access can be found in most German households (KIM 2006: Computer in the household 2006: 89%; Internet in the household: 89%; p.7). However only 16,6% of the children between the age of 6 and 13 own their own computer and even less (8%) have their own Internet connection (ibid., basis: information of the parents, N=1.203). The JIM study 2007 in which teenagers between the age of 12 to 19 years old were questioned finds almost everyone had computers (98%) and Internet connections (95%) in the household (No.173, JIM 2007; p. 8, base: all teenager, N=1.204). 67% of teenagers already have their own PC (p. 9) and 45% have their own Internet connection (p. 10). 45% own a PlayStation and 34% own a portable PlayStation with which an Internet connection is also available.

In the new survey "Slapping, Bullying, Snuffing" from 2007 it was found, that 99% of households own at least one mobile phone and 93,5% of children and teenagers already have their own mobile phone (see: Grimm/Rhein 2007, p. 87, base: adolescents from 12 to 19, N=804). 91% of households have an Internet connection, and here it is stated that even 58% of teenagers own their own PC and already 41% have their own Internet connection (ibid.).

In the survey (N)Onliner Atlas 2005 (No. 75, p. 64 in the special part "2010 Living visions online") participants were asked if they "at least sometimes" use the Internet. (N=1000; for German population from the age of 14) a huge majority of 96,6% uses the Internet at home. More than half of the participants (56,6%) use it at their work place and about a third (34,7%) uses it at a friend's place. Internet cafes are used by 19%, and at school or university only 15,1% use the Internet. The library is used by a mere 8,9% of the participants.

Internet access at school and other places

In most German surveys socioeconomic status is decided either through the income of the parents or their educational level. Sometimes only the educational level of the children is asked. For a better understanding it should be mentioned that the German school education system is divided up into three groups: Hauptschule (lowest level), Realschule (middle level) and Gymnasium (high level). (However if one has a certificate from the lower level education one can usually only get a job with a low income, so there is a connection.)

In KIM 2006 (the base data for the 6 to 13 year old children), the income of a parent and the equipment with PCs and Internet connection is shown. Whereas 95% of households with an income of 2.500 Euro or more own a PC/Laptop, only 75% of those who earn less than 1.500 Euro own a computer. As regards the Internet connection the difference is even larger, since it is to be found in 91% of wealthier households but only in 61% of poorer ones (KIM 2006 p. 8).

In the study JIM 2007 (which focuses on teenagers from 12 to 19 years), computer ownership and school education was explored. While only 57% of students from the "Hauptschule" (lowest possible standard school type) owned their own PC, 67% of "Realschule" (middle standard school type) and 71% of students from the "Gymnasium" (highest standard school type) owned their own PC. With the Internet connection it is about the same: Only 32% adolescents from the Hauptschule; 47% of the Realschule but 50% of the students from the Gymnasium have their own Internet connection.

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

According to the KIM 2006 survey, 24% of children use the computer every day and 44% use it once or several times per week (KIM 2006; p.10). 81% use the computer at least rarely (p. 29). 14% use the Internet every day and almost half of the children (43%) use it once or several times per week. About the same percentage (42%) use the Internet less often (p. 42).

The JIM 2007 survey shows, that 84% of teenagers (12 to 19 years) use the computer daily or several times per week (p.12). 77% of the teenagers use the Internet daily or at least several times per week (JIM 2007; p.12). The study "Slapping, Bullying, Snuffing" found, that almost 70% (68,8%) use a mobile phone several times or once per week (No. 325, Grimm/Rhein 2007, p.84). Almost 60% (59,1%) use it several times per day. 52% use a computer and 45% use the Internet also daily. 29% even use it several times per day (ibid., p. 85). According to the (N)Onliner Atlas 2007 over 60% of the German population is online. (N=49.135, p. 5) From the 14 to 19 year olds 89,4% are online; 5,3% plan to go online and only 5,3% are so called offliners (N=3.871; p.12).

There is little current data about the time adolescents spend online. According to the ARD/ZDF-Online study, the average exposure time for teenagers (14 to 25 years) is about 155 minutes per day and thus above the general average (118 minutes) (see: van Eimeren/Frees 2007, p.375f.). The JIM study 2007 found that the time students spend on a computer between Monday to Friday is in 20% of cases less than an hour, 50% between one to three hours, 19% three to five hours per day and 11% use it five hours or more per day. The last option (five hours or more) was not offered until last year. So the usage of computers and the amount of children who use it for longer periods has increased in the recent years. The exact amount of time during which the teenagers were online is however not mentioned (N= 1.161 PC users and students; p.32).

In another question it can be seen that in all age groups the Internet is now used much more frequently than just a year ago (in 2006)(p. 38). Daily use or use several times per week has in general risen from 77% to 83%. It is 5% more for boys (now 85%) and 7% more for girls (now 80%). The largest rise in the usage can be seen with the 12 to 13 year olds (from 58% to 68%) and the 18 to 19 year olds (from 78% to 88%) where the usage has increased by 10% for each group in just one year (p. 38).

According to young Internet users, they spend about 114 minutes every day (Monday to Friday) online. On average, boys spend a good deal longer online than girls (131 minutes to 97 minutes). 12 and 13 year olds use the Internet 78 minutes per day. 16 and 17 year olds, however, spend almost double that time (138 minutes) online. However the 18 and 19 year olds spend only 118 minutes per day online, which might be due to changed living conditions (school, job).

According to KIM 2006 Internet usage increases with age: While only 31% of the 6 and 7 year olds rarely use the Internet, more than half (60%) of 8 and 9 year olds use it; 84% of 10 to 11 year olds and already 91% of 12 to 13 year olds (p.41). The JIM 2007 survey supports this hypothesis. Here the Internet is used daily by 68% of 12 and 13 year olds, 83% of 14 and 15 year olds, 87% of 16 and 17 year olds and 88% of 18 and 19 year olds (p.38).

The data indicate that there are still gender specific differences regarding access and online usage. According to KIM 2006 (N= 1.203; p. 9) 21% of boys but only 14% of girls own their own PC. 10% of boys already have their own Internet connection, compared to only 7% of girls. However the percentages of girls and boys that go online at least rarely are about the same (boys 71%/ girls 72%). Also the frequency of using the Internet seems to be about the same: 14% of the girls and 15% of the boys go online every or almost every day. 43% of girls and boys go online once or several times per week and 42% girls and 43% of the boys go online less frequently (N=695 Internet users; p. 42). Girls go online more often with their mother (22% girls/ 16% boys) and boys more often with their friends (17% boys/ 13% girls). In the JIM 2007 survey, more boys (72%) than girls (61%) own their own PC (N=1.204, p. 10). There is also a gender difference with regard to the Internet: 48% of boys, but only 41% of girls own their own Internet connection. There are no more large differences in frequency of

use: 78% of boys, and 76% of girls go online once or several times per day (N=1.204, p. 32). The study of Grimm & Rhein supports the finding that boys (70,1%) own computers much more often than girls (45,6%). Mobile phones, however, are owned more often by girls (97,7%) than by boys (90,7%). Internet access is also different for both genders: 57,1% of boys have their own Internet connection, but only 32,7% of the girls do (N=804; p.88).

The data clearly shows that there is a considerable inequality between boys and girls concerning the ownership of computers and Internet connections. Since JIM and Grimm & Rhein observe an older generation than KIM (in which there are hardly any differences in the frequency of Internet use) it might be the case that gender differences with regard to online usage are slowly diminishing. In addition, the N(O)nliner Atlas 2007, which examines annually the German population from the age of 14 years, supports this: women or rather girls between the age of 14 to 19 are for the first time in this survey more often online (90,9%) than men (88,4%) of the same age.

The 1. World Vision study 2007, which investigates amongst other things the Internet access and usage of 8 to 11 years old children, states that gender differences in regard to the time children spend online (per week and on average per session) are marginal (World Vision Deutschland 2007, p. 189). The studies indicate that the *self-estimation* of boys with regard to the computer skills is higher than that of girls (KIM 2006, p. 54, basis: PC-users, N=972)

- Girls: 6% very good; 42% good; 34% less good; 16% not good
- Boys: 7% very good; 52% good; 30% less good; 11% not good

1.4 Internet and Media Content for Children

Public Service Broadcasters (e.g. Kids Channel "Kinderkanal") provide several programmes as well as websites for children and can be therefore characterised as important providers (see: www.kika.de, <http://www.kindernetz.de>, [www.tivi.de](http://www tivi.de)). Also important is the programme of the commercial broadcaster SuperRTL with its website for children (<http://www.toggo.de>). Since September 2005, the commercial broadcaster NICK is again available in Germany. It also has a website (www.nick.de), which offers tips for safer Internet use (see: about NICK).

Current data of the online preferences of children indicate that the websites of these television broadcasters are quite popular. 18% of children between 6 and 12 years named [toggo.de](http://www.toggo.de) (Super RTL) as their favourite website, followed by 8% for www.kika.de and 4% for [knuddels.de](http://www.knuddels.de), Google and www.tivi.de (ZDF) (MPFS, KIM 2006). With increasing age, the favourites change and the websites of the broadcasters become less important (this is compatible with the fact that there are less programmes specifically for teenagers). Instead, the adolescents (12 to 19 years) prefer searching applications like Google (21%) and social websites like YouTube, SchülerVZ oder Wikipedia (19%) (MPFS, JIM 2007, p.40f.).

With the start of www.fragfinn.de on 29 November 2007, there is a new special Internet portal for children, which is based on a white list. The portal is funded by the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media, The Federal Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Children, and numerous companies and associations. There is no information on the extent to which children are targeted by commercial media (online) content.

1.5 Opportunities experienced by children online

According to the KIM 2006 (p. 44) study the main Internet activity (at least once a week) for children is seeking information (44%), in particular for school (48%). Online games played alone (40%) or with others (24%) and visiting children's sites on the net (38%) are also frequent activities of 6 to 13 year olds. A third (33%) write emails, a quarter use grown-up pages and a fifth chat at least once a week. 7% of the children use chat rooms daily; 14% use it once or several times per week; however 63% never use a chat room (KIM 2006 p. 48). Listening to music (17%) and downloading music (15%) as also quite frequently activities.

The activities to choose from in the JIM 2006 study were slightly different from those in the KIM study, so it is not clear if the differences found are based on different preferences of older children or by the different the answers possible in the surveys.

The main Internet activities for the 12 to 19 year olds are connected with communication (59% of the Internet usage is connected to communication; 23% the Internet for information seeking and 18% of use is related to gaming, p.41). This main usage has even increased since it became the most common usage in 2006. 72% (2006: 58%) use an Instant messenger (like ICQ or msn) and 60% (2006:50%) write and receive emails daily or several times per week. About a third (30%) (2006:26%) uses chat rooms. Information seeking is another often practised activity. 40% search personal information about interesting subjects, 38% (2006: 30%) search for the news about the world to be up to date; and 36% search for school or work reasons. 15 % search for regional events in the area they live in. Half of the of the teenagers 49% (2006: 34%) listen to music or sounds on the Internet and 12% also download music. 21% read in Newsgroups and 20% watch films online. 15% look around at eBay, 14% play online with other Internet users and 13% write in newsgroups (N=1.119; p.40).

In the Study "Slapping, Bullying, Snuffing" (N=804 teenagers between 12 and 19, p.90/91) once again the most common activities were related to communication. 45,4% use an instant messenger daily, 28,9% write emails, 12,2% chat, and 9,7% write daily in newsgroups and forums. Information seeking is also a main activity. 19,6% seek news and current affairs, 13,1% look for information about a certain topic, and 11,5% seek information for school or a job. In addition, in this survey eBay or other online-auctions are mentioned, but only 4,5% use them daily. Music or sound data is listened to by 20,6% daily, and 16,1% download music from the Internet. Looking at photos was added as a possibility in this survey and 9,5% do it daily. 9,8% download photos, and 5% put photos on the Internet themselves. Films or/and videos are watched daily by 5,4%, and 5,9% download films from the Internet. However 93,9% have never put a film on the Internet, a finding which was interesting in regards to the contribution of violent videos on the Internet and mobile phones. It is important to stress that the data of the different studies are difficult to compare because the online-activities are measured differently (e.g. with regard to the predetermined activities).

The studies concentrate on the online-activities of different age groups. In the KIM-study there is a hint that older children extend their online usage, such as by creating Internet homepages themselves (p.55). Homepage creation tried or achieved by age is as follows:

- age 6-7: 0%
- age 8-9: 1%
- age 10-11: 3%
- age 12-13: 13%

With regard to children (aged 6 to 13 years), the data state that no gender differences exist concerning the activity "surfing in the Internet" (40% boys: 41% girls, KIM 2006, p. 32, Children and Computer activities [at least once a week]). For the teenagers, the differences between boys and girls are very explicit concerning Internet activities (daily or several times per week). For all Internet activities, the percentages of boys are higher than the percentages of girls. Only email sending and information seeking for school and jobs are more frequently found amongst girls than amongst boys (JIM 2007, p.40f.). The main difference is with regard to net- and multi-user games, which are predominantly used by boys (24% boys | 4 % girls), while girls are more interested in communicative activities like email or chat.

Table: Internet activities (daily or several times per week)

Online activity	boys	Girls
Instant messenger (ICQ)	75%	68%
<i>Email</i>	58%	61%
Information seeking (not school)	46%	34%
Listening to music/sound	56%	41%
Job, profession information, school:	31%	42%
News	44%	31%
<i>Chatting</i>	30%	30%
eBay	21%	9%
Music download	16%	7%
Newsgroups schreiben	19%	7%
Multi-user games	24%	4%

JIM (2007), p. 40. Basis: Internet user, N=1.119.

As regards general media use in leisure time, gender differences can be mentioned with regard to the following online activities:

- Computer usage daily or several times per week: 87% boys: 81% girls
- Internet connection daily/ several times per week: 78% boys: 76% girls

(see: JIM 2007: p.12. Base: all respondents, teenager between 12 and 19 years; N= 1.204).

Mobile phones seem to be a domain of the girls: 97,7% of the girls own a mobile phone in comparison to 90,7% of boys (see: 325, Grimm/Rhein 2007, p.88).

According to the 1. World Vision Study 2007, the social class and migration background are important indicators of access to the Internet. The data indicate that children with a lower socioeconomic standing and/or an immigration background are disadvantaged with regard to online access.

Table: Access to the Internet (in percent)

	yes	No
Kids (in total)	54	46
Age		
8-9	44	56
10-11	64	36
Socioeconomic background		
Underclass	26	74
Lower middleclass	48	52
Middleclass	53	47
Upper Middleclass	62	38
Upper-class	66	34
Migration background		
German kids	57	43
Kids with Migration background	43	57

Source: World Vision Deutschland (2007), p. 189, N=1.592 children.

According to the (N)Onliner Atlas 2007 (Internet usage and education, p. 14), 91,6% of students today are Onliners (problem: the age group is not well defined), but only 45,8% of those who attended a "Volksschule" with a job training are online and for those from the "Volksschule" without job training it is even less: just 30,5% use the Internet. 66,3% of those

from secondary schools without an Abitur are online, compared to 82,9% of those with an Abitur. The percentage of those with a University degree is 81,2%. The results show that a higher school education leads to a higher percentage of people who use the Internet.

Another Socioeconomic effect presented in (N)Onliner Atlas 2007 that has an influence on Internet use is income (p.15). The more money one has, the more often he or she uses the Internet. Whereas only 37,6% of those who earn up to 1.000 Euro use the Internet, the percentage rises to 50,8% for those with 1.000-2.000 Euro. It reaches 70,4% for those between 2.000-3.000 Euro and achieves the highest percentage of Onliners with 83,7% of those who earn more than 3.000 Euro.

Employment in general is another factor: while three quarters (75,7%) of working people are online, only 43,7% of the unemployed are (p.16).

There are also more Onliners in large cities with many inhabitants than in villages or small towns (p.17). In areas with under 5.000 inhabitants 54,9% are online, in cities up to 20.000 residents 56,9% are online and it rises again for cities of up to 500.000 with 61% of the inhabitants being online. In cities with more than 500.000 people, 63,8% are online. Comparing the German federal states ("Bundesländer"), the two "city states" of Berlin and Hamburg have the highest percentage of people being online (p.20). Also Hessen (in the centre) and Schleswig Holstein (the north state with a border to Denmark) have high percentages of Internet users. In comparison, all former eastern states: Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/ Sachsen and Brandenburg show a smaller number of Internet users than either of the western states, with the exception of Saarland, which has the lowest percentage of Internet users in Germany. (This however may again be linked to the special demographics of these states. Since there is a higher unemployment rate than in other states in Germany, many young people with a higher official education level move away from there and so more old and/or unemployed people with less well-paid jobs still live there.)

1.6 Risks experienced by children online

According to the Eurobarometer survey of 2005/6, 12% of parents/guardians think that their child has encountered harmful or illegal content on the Internet.

In Germany, research on children and online risks is still in its early stages. Most empirical studies focus on access to online media, usage and online-activities.

a) Risks perceived by parents or other adults

Up to now, the online risks are not investigated thoroughly from an adult perspective. One reason might be that most parents only have little experience of the Internet and hardly any ideas about Internet content and risks. In contrast to the scientific literature, there are many publications and guidebooks, which point out the risk potential.

Parents attribute a high risk potential to the Internet in general and see the necessity for (in first place legal) protection. The younger the children, the higher the percentage of parents who state that protection of minors is needed, but this trend changes as children become older than 16 year (Schumacher 2005, p.71).

b) Risks perceived by children themselves

The research Network "Medienpädagogischer Forschungsverbund Südwest" provides annual empirical data on children's media usage. Online risks are only mentioned marginally. 9% of children between 6 and 13 years have already received "strange or nasty things" on the mobile phone (No. 257, KIM 2006). These "things" were mostly sexual offers or commercial information. Violent content was mentioned in only a few cases (ibid.).

In the study JIM, which focuses on adolescents between 12 and 19 years, the risks of chat rooms were discussed. In JIM 2006, 44% of the questioned girls said that they had met

unpleasant people in a chat room several times while 30% of the boys also declared that it has happened several times. In JIM 2007, among chat room users (N=579, 53% of the total sample [N=1.204]), 59% of the girls were asked by strangers in a chat room to give out personal information (address, telephone number, name) and also almost half of the boys (47%) were asked for the same (JIM 2007 p.51).

In JIM 2006, 77% had already heard that violent videos on mobile phones exist. One third of the adolescents had heard about it from friends or others who had received such content (No. 173, JIM 2006, p. 53f.). 7% stated that they themselves had received violent or sexual films on their mobile (ibid.). There is no information about the precise content of those films. Of course, the content may vary enormously. In JIM 2007, 87% of the teenagers (between 12 to 19 years) know that brutal or porn films for mobile phones exist (p. 60). 34% have friends who received such a video and 9% have even received such a video themselves. 29% have seen for themselves that a beating has been filmed. Here huge differences between the levels of official school education can be seen. Whereas only 21% of "Gymnasium" students have witnessed such a "Happy-Slapping", 30% of "Realschule" students have. Almost half (44%) of all "Hauptschule" students, however, have witnessed such a beating, more than the double amount of Gymnasium students. This result makes it clear that Happy-Slapping is mostly a problem in the lower educated and social classes.

Another risk explored in the JIM study '07 was related to Internet costs. 15% of teenagers have already experienced "rip offs" on the Internet. Usually that was the case in relation to tests that cost money, downloads, text message services, by accidentally signing up for a subscriptions, or by opening homepages that charge money (p.45).

At the end of September 2007, a new study was published, which focused on violent and pornographic video clips on mobile phones of adolescents, happy-Slapping and cyberbullying (Grimm/Rein 2007)¹. In this study, 93,1 % of adolescents indicated that they had already heard about violent videos. Only 6,9 % mentioned that they had never heard of it before (ibid., p. 105, base: teenager [12 to 19 years], N= 804. With regard to other mobile related risks, the study indicated that most of the teenagers are aware of these risks, e.g.:

- 93,1% have already heard of violent videos in general; 6,9% have never heard of them.
- 77% have heard of violent videos on mobile phones; 23% have never heard of them.
- 72,3% have heard of self-made mobile videos where people are beaten up, so called "Happy-Slapping"; 27,7% have never heard of them.
- 68,9% have already heard of sex videos for the mobile phone; 31,1% have never heard of them.
- 65,5% have heard of self-made mobile videos that show others in embarrassing or bad situations, so called "Mobile Bullying"; 34,5% have never heard of them.
- 42,7% have heard of Nazi-videos for the mobile phone; 57,3% have never heard of them.
- 34,9% have heard of mobile videos in which sex with animals is shown; 65,1% have never heard of them.

¹ Grimm, Petra/Rhein, Stefanie (2007): Slapping, Bullying, Snuffing! Zur Problematik von gewalthaltigen und pornographischen Videoclips auf Mobiltelefonen von Jugendlichen. Berlin: Vistas.

Table 1: Awareness of videos with problematic content according to socio-demographic specifications

	boys	Girls	12-13 years	14-15 years	16-17 years	18-19 years	General-education secondary school	Secondary modern school	Grammar school
overall Awareness	91,4	94,9	89,2	94,0	95,8	92,8	93,9	91,6	94,0
<i>Violent videos for the mobile phone</i>	78,7	75,3	64,7	80,7	80,2	81,0	75,8	73,6	80,3
<i>Self made videos in which others were beaten.</i>	69,0	75,9	61,8	73,8	78,3	74,0	61,8	72,2	76,6
<i>Sexvideos for the mobile phone</i>	71,0	66,6	52,8	73,3	71,2	76,0	61,6	69,9	70,9
<i>Self made videos in which others were shown in bad (displeasent) situations.</i>	62,6	68,6	58,6	63,3	68,7	70,1	58,5	66,5	67,5
<i>Nazi videos for the mobile phone</i>	46,7	38,4	32,4	41,4	47,9	47,2	46,0	45,7	38,9
<i>Videos in which sex with animals is shown.</i>	33,4	36,5	21,8	35,6	41,1	39,0	34,9	33,0	36,4

Source: Grimm/Rhein (2007), S. 106; Basis: Teenager (12-19 years), N=804 (data in percent).

The table shows the awareness of risky content with regard to different forms like "Happy-Slapping", Sex videos, "Mobile Bullying" and even videos in which sex with animals is shown (Grimm/Rhein, p.105). The answers of the adolescents (in the qualitative part of the study) suggest that there is a small sample of videos which circulate intensively between peers. Awareness is not congruent with personal experience and/or contact with of owning this risky content. Only 5,4 % indicate that they had this kind of video on their mobile (ibid., p.111), whereas 88 % deny it. The main source of problematic videos are peers who had the video from the Internet (72,7%, 30 teenagers) or who made the videos themselves 30,3% (12). 21,9% (9 teenagers) created a video themselves and 9,9% (4 teenagers) downloaded it from the Internet.

There are occasional data that offer a comparison by age. With regard to problematic video films on mobile phones, the data indicate that awareness of the existence of these films increases between the age of 12 to 17 (89,2% to 95,8%). In the group of teenagers from the

age of 18 to 19 years, the percentage decreases (92,6%, see Grimm/Rhein 2007, p.106). However, ownership of violent videos on the own mobile increases from the age of 16:

Age	Ownership of violent videofilms on the mobile phone
12-13 years	3,2 % (5)
14-15 years	2,5% (5)
16-17 years	6,2% (13)
18-19 years	8,7% (19)

Grimm/Rhein (2007), p.112 (extract), basis: teenager with mobile phones (12-19 years, N=752)

Concerning the reception of unpleasant things through mobile phones, there is a small increase from the 8 year olds up to the 13 year old teenagers (KIM 2006 p.51):

- age 6-7: 7%
- age 8-9: 5%
- age 10-11: 7%
- age 12-13: 12%

Receipt of unpleasant things through mobile phone: (KIM 2006, p.51)

boys: 7% | girls: 11%

(Base: children with mobile phones, 6 to 13 years, N=527)

Met unpleasant people in a Chat room (No. 173, JIM 2006, p. 44):

boys 30% several times | girls 44% several times

boys 14% once | girls 13% once

(Base: user of chat rooms, 12 to 19 years, N=581)

Was asked in a chatroom by strangers for one's address, telephone number and name:

- boys 47% (19% gave out information/ 28% didn't give out information)

- girls 59% (11% gave out information/ 48% didn't give out information)

(JIM 2007, p. 51. Base: users of chat rooms, 12 to 19 years, N=579)

Knowledge/ receipt of brutal videos or porno videos on the mobile phone (JIM 2007, p. 60):

- boys: 86% know about it; 41% friend has received it; 13% have received it themselves

- girls: 87% know about it; 27% friend has received it; 4% have received it themselves

(JIM 2007, p.60. Base: teenagers with mobile phones, 12 to 19 years, N=1.127)

"I have witnessed a row being filmed with a mobile phone"

2006 : boys: 19%; girls: 15%

2007 : boys: 33%; girls: 26%

(JIM 2007, p.61. Base: Teenagers with mobile phones, 12 to 19 years, N=1.127 and JIM

2006, p. 44. Base: Teenager with mobile phones, 12 to 19 years, N=1.103)

Gender differences are also stated in relation to problematic mobile content (see: Grimm/Rhein 2007, p. 106). The boys are more aware of problematic films with violent, sexual or Nazi-related content than girls. In comparison to boys, girls are more aware of self-produced videos, in which others are beaten up or shown in embarrassing situations. Also the percentage of girls who are aware of videos in which sex with animals is shown is higher than the percentage of the boys (for details, see table 1). It is important to mention once again that

the awareness allows no conclusion about contact with these problematic contents. However, the study indicates that boys have violent videos on their mobile to a larger extent (8,5%) than girls (2,5%) (ibid., p.112). The study about mobile phones and risks indicates that less-educated teenagers own violent video films on the mobile phone to a larger extent than better-educated teenager:

General-education secondary school	11,9% (16)
Secondary modern school	6,4% (18)
Grammar school	2,1% (7)

Grimm/Rhein (2007), p. 112 (extract), basis: teenager with mobile phones (12-19 years, N=752)

1.7 Internet regulation and promotion

General framework

In order to understand the regulatory system on youth protection in Germany, it is necessary to describe the two legal texts that cover the whole range of media. Since 2003, the overall regulatory concept is that of co-regulation as a combination of state control and self-regulation.

When it comes to the protection of minors in the film sector, the federal Jugendschutzgesetz (JuSchG, Federal Act for the Protection of Minors) distinguishes between different levels of content: content that is harmful to children (jugendgefährdend) is classified by the federal Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Medien (BPjM, Federal Department for Media Harmful to Young Persons). Material that is classified as harmful to minors must not be shown in places where children have access and must not be provided to children. Content that is not harmful to children but is capable of impairing children's development is rated by the State Authorities Responsible for the Protection of Minors. However, this age classification (suitable for all children and adolescents, 6 years and older, 12 years, 16 years, or not suitable for children and adolescents) has been handed over to non-state bodies: Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Filmwirtschaft (FSK, Film Classification Board) is responsible for the age-classification of films. Age classification of video games falls within the responsibility of the Unterhaltungssoftware Selbstkontrolle (USK, Association for the Self-Monitoring of Entertainment Software). Persons and organisations offering the respective content or granting access to it have to comply with classifications made by FSK and USK. While prior to 2003, FSK classified films on the basis of an agreement between the states, the new Federal Act stipulates that age classification may be performed by non-state bodies ("Organisations of voluntary self-regulation"). According to the JuSchG, the state authorities responsible for the protection of minors may agree on a joint procedure including decisions of "Organisations of voluntary self-regulation" funded or supported by industry associations. This agreement determines that decisions of "Organisations of voluntary self-regulation" are seen as decisions of the state authorities as long as a state authorities do not make a different decision.

Protection of minors in the broadcasting and Internet sector

The enactment of the Jugendmedienschutzstaatsvertrag (JMStV, Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors in the Media) in 2003 extended the responsibility of non-state bodies ("Organisations of voluntary self-regulation") and their scope for decision-making. In order to secure compliance with the terms of the interstate treaty, it established a certification requirement for non-state bodies. In the television sector, Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Fernsehen (FSF, Organisation for the Voluntary Self-Regulation of Television) was certified under the new law. Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter (FSM, Association for the Voluntary Self-Monitoring of Multimedia Service Providers) gained certification for the Internet sector. On the state side, responsibility for the supervision of broadcasters and providers lies with the Landesmedienanstalten (State Media Authorities) and the Kommission

für Jugendmedienschutz (KJM, Commission for the Protection of Minors in Electronic Media). The KJM makes all decisions regarding the protection of minors to ensure the consistent application of the Interstate Treaty on the Protection of Minors while the State Media Authorities are responsible for executing these decisions.

For the broadcasting sector, it is the task of the certified “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” to classify content and to ensure the enforcement of rules. Furthermore, it may make exemptions to the watershed regulation for the broadcasting of films, which had been given a rating by the non-state body for film (FSK, see above) under the Federal Act for the Protection of Minors in the past. With regard to so-called “Telemedien” (telemedia, mainly Internet services), content does not have to be submitted to an “organisation of voluntary self-regulation” beforehand. However, if there is a breach of the law, certified “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” have to deal with the matter. FSM has set up a code of behaviour (Verhaltenskodex Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter e.V.), which refers to the rules of the Interstate Treaty. There is also a special code for search engines. Under the JMStV, instruments are in place to regulate non-state regulation, of which the most important is that “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” need certification. Certification is only granted if:

- independence and competence of the members of the control committees are ensured;
- adequate funding is guaranteed by a multitude of providers;
- guidelines for the decisions of the committees have been worked out in such a way that in practice effective protection of minors is ensured;
- procedural rules have been worked out on the extent of examination, on the obligation on the participating providers to submit relevant content to the “organisation of voluntary self-regulation”, on sanctions, and on the revision of decisions (organisations responsible for the protection of minors must be given the chance to request a revision);
- providers are heard before a decision is made, the reasons for the decision are given in writing and are disclosed to interested persons; and,
- a body responsible for dealing with complaints exists.

Certification may be granted for four years, but may be renewed. Certified “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” are supervised by the KJM. If the decisions of a non-state organisation are not in line with the JMStV, the KJM has the authority to revoke its certifications. The JMStV does not stipulate any other sanctions that can be imposed on the non-state organisations. Where certified “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” exist, the powers of state regulatory bodies to impose sanctions on broadcasters are limited. The state media authorities and the KJM may not impose sanctions on broadcasters as long as the following requirements are met: the respective broadcasting content had been submitted to a certified “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” before this content was broadcast, the provider had followed the decision of this non-state body, and the “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” had not acted beyond the scope of their discretionary power. When the rules of the JMStV have been broken by the broadcast of content that could not be submitted to “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” beforehand (e.g. live broadcasts) or by an Internet service provider (Telemedien), certified “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” have to deal with the matter. As long as a provider follows the decision of the non-state body and this body does not act beyond the scope of its discretionary power, the state media authorities and the KJM cannot impose sanctions on the provider. However, in the case of broadcasting this non-state regulatory “shield” only gives “protection” if the broadcaster is affiliated with the licensed “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” (such affiliation is not necessary, if the respective content is submitted to the “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” before the content is broadcast). Internet providers need not be affiliated with the “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” to be protected by the non-state shield. For them it is sufficient to follow the decisions of a licensed “organisation of voluntary self-regulation” – irrespective of whether they are affiliated to this body or not. When certified “organisations of voluntary self-regulation” “deal with the matter” this includes imposing sanctions. “Organisations of voluntary self-regulation” will be certified only if they have issued procedural rules, including rules on possible sanctions. Besides monitoring by the state media authorities, complaints help to find

illegal content. "Organisations of voluntary self-regulation" can be certified only if it is possible to file complaints with them.

On 29 November 2007, the online portal for children www.fragfinn.de was launched, which is based on a white list. The portal is funded by the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media, The Federal Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Children and numerous companies and associations.

In February 2003, there was the launch of the awareness initiative "Schau-hin" (www.schau-hin.info), which was organised by the The Federal Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Children, the programme guide "Hör zu", the public broadcasters ARD and ZDF, Arcor and INTEL. In the last few years, there has been a slight change regarding the supporters of this initiative. The current partners are still the The Federal Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Children, the public broadcasters ARD and ZDF and Arcor and – as a new partner – the programme guide "TV Spielfilm". The initiative wants to sensitize parents and educators about the media use of children and provides general information and tips for media education and safer Internet use). A magazine for parents is part of the initiative as well as TV-Spots and a website.

The Federal Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Children also publishes a special brochure for safer Internet use for parents and (separately) for children (see the above mentioned initiative of an online portal for children that has been the result of negotiations between the government and ISPs and NGOs). This approach reflects the general principle of co-regulation, which has been adopted for the whole area of youth protection.

The "Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V." (*German Children's Fund*) stands up for children's rights and participation and is also active in regard to safer Internet use. They provide an own website (www.kindersache.de) and support – together with the Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter (FSM, *Association for the Self-Monitoring of Multimedia Service Providers*, funded in 1997), MSN and the initiative "Deutschland sicher im Netz" (*Germany safety on the Internet*, an Initiative of different companies and associations) – the project "Die Internauten", a media education project to improve the media literacy of children. Another important NGO is the "Erfurter Netcode" (since 2002), which focus on the quality of websites for children. The "Netcode Siegel" is a kind of quality label (signet) which marks adequate websites for children (criteria are for example: separation of content and advertising, protection of minors, data security, promotion of media literacy etc.). This initiative is also involved in political discussion (e.g. the discussion about the online portal www.fragfinn.de) and also stays in contact with the provider of children-related websites (particularly with those who apply for the "Netcode-Siegel").

1.8 Parental mediation

Online media pose a challenge to German parents. Parents attribute a high risk potential to the Internet (vgl. Schumacher 2005). 43% of the parents with children under 14 years use special software or browser-adjustments (TNS Infratest/Initiative D21). In the KIM-study 2006, 77% of parents agree squarely with the statement that the Internet is dangerous. Also, 77% are of the opinion that children should only be allowed to use the Internet with filter software.

Children and their parents, however, do not seem to be aware of the risks concerning the communication via mobile phones. Parents are not perceived as an authority by their children since they think that they are more technical competent than their parents (No. 325, Grimm/Rhein 2007, p.183). 32,4% of parents check the costs of their mobile phone; however, only 17,2% of the parents check the content on the mobile phone. (22,7% of the 12 to 13 year old children, 10,6% of the 18 to 19 year old adolescents) (ibid., p. 96). Boys and less educated adolescents, in particular, state that they are regulated by their parents.² The

² The statements in the qualitative interviews indicate that the teenagers guard against sanctions by showing them innocent videos (see: Grimm/Rhein 2007, S. 183).

temporary privation of the mobile phone is perceived by the adolescents as an extreme sanction, irrespective of problematic videos on the mobile phones. From the point of view of the adolescents it is an intervention in their private lives, because the mobile phone is a very personal, intimate medium with a high level of identification (ibid., S. 180).

(Up to now, there is no study which investigated parental mediation with regard to the online media, but we know from other studies that parents with lower educational background are normally hardly interested in the media consumption of their children and rather overstrained by this topic.)

1.9 Media literacy

According to the Eurobarometer 2005/06 survey, 71% parents/guardians think their child knows what to do if uncomfortable online, 17% think they do not.

1.10 Factors shaping public discourses about the Internet

The “Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.” (*German Children’s Fund*) cooperates with the “Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter” (FSM, *Association for the Self-Monitoring of Multimedia Service Providers*) and is also a member of the “Erfurter Netcode e.V.”, which supports quality websites for children. Together with these partners they conduct several activities, which try to raise awareness on the one hand, but also activities that improve the media and Internet related literacy of children by doing projects. Another important partner is the “Gesellschaft für Medienpädagogik und Kommunikationskultur e.V.” (GMK, *Association for media education and communication culture*), which is the umbrella association for the practitioners of media education. The head of the media division of the “Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.” (Sandra Ostermann) is also lector at several universities (different disciplines).

With regard to other (non-media related) topics, Unicef and the “Deutschen Kinderschutzbund” (*German Child Protection Agency*) are also important partners. The “Kinderhilfswerk e.V.” provides policy documents and conducts special activities, such as in the context of the Safer Internet Day (e.g. workshops for children). In 2007, they had a special about chats, which also had consequences for their own chat on the “kindersache” website (fixed timeslots, moderation by children *and* adults). The website “Kindersache.de” has existed for ten years and the media division of the “Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.” for around twelve years.

The NGOs have in each case their own positions (and in some cases different target groups). “Kinderhilfswerk e.V.”, for instance, concentrates on children and their media literacy. “Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.”, the “Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter” (FSM, *Association for the Self-Monitoring of Multimedia Service Providers*) and “The Erfurter Netcode” are national initiatives. In 1999, the FSM funded the European umbrella organisation “INHOPE” together with other Internet hotlines. Klicksafe can be seen as the most relevant international initiative, which is connected with almost all national initiatives. The online platform Klicksafe.de provides helpful information about initiatives, which provide advice or helplines. “Jugendschutz.net” provides a good deal of informational material and a “hotline” (which is, however, in an online form, not a telephone service) to complain about problematic websites (which are youth or development endangering, illegal, etc.). The FSM offers, together with the Association of the German Internet Economy (eco) the opportunity for users to gain advice (online) on problematic or negative websites, chats, news groups, mobile content etc. (www.Internet-beschwerdestelle.de). The media division of the “Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.” does not have a special helpline for Internet related problems. There is only a moderator in the chat, who can be asked. The “Erfurter Netcode” does not provide advice or helplines.

The NGOs focus on different target groups. For example, the target group of the media division of the “Kinderhilfswerk e.V.” is quite broad. Apart from the children, they try to reach agents of the policy, economy, sciences and “the public” as well as agents from the out-of-school juvenile labour. On the one hand, the focus of the awareness activities is dependent on current events (e.g. debate about violence games after school shootings). On the other hand, the NGOs try to set a course by themselves.

The media presence is described as “partly-successful” (Sandra Ostermann). One observation is that some topics are focused on raising public attention, but the media are hardly interested in further details. In a long-run perspective, the awareness campaigns can be regarded as successful (according to Sandra Ostermann of the “Kinderhilfswerk e.V.”). Indicators for the success are for example the increasing number of children who use the website www.kindersache.de and the increasing demand for the information material (Internet guide and mobile guide for children).

2002	April: Erfurt School shooting
2003	April: amendment of the Law for the Protection of Minors
2006	November: Emsdetten school shooting
2007	January: two boys killed a married couple in Tessin
2007	Upcoming Discussion about Happy Slapping (first in the media)
2007	Discussion about the website www.spickmich.de , which allows pupils to rate their teacher online. (The association of teachers got very upset after some teachers were rated negatively).

The school shootings have, in particular, had an impact on the discussion about children and media and focused attention on the risk potential of media. “Medienverwahrlosung” (media squalidness) is still used as a catchphrase in the public discourse to (over)emphasize the negative media impact.

2. The Educational system

2.1 General education

For comparison we should rely on the comparative statistics as provided by Eurydice, OECD, UNICEF etc., and in addition to the following considerations, try to provide some interpretations of how the situation might affect children and their Internet use. The trend that later cohorts have better formal education than their predecessors is still going on. Thus, the children’s generation will get a higher formal education than their parents’ generation. Meanwhile, the overall proportion of the population that enjoy a higher education is quite high.

However, there are some more specific trends that contradict this general trend towards better education. Within the German school system, which includes three main levels of general education, the “lowest” level is becoming increasingly precarious because it suffers from several processes of negative selection. Young children in these schools come from socially disadvantaged families, often from a migrant background, live in problematic environments, do not get support from their parents – and have a decreasing chance of getting a job or the opportunity to learn a profession after school.

Among the increasing number of migrants, many are not able to speak German, thus it is hard for them to participate in any social activity outside their own community. These parents cannot help their children at school, and it is difficult to reach them with information on specific issues, such as Internet safety.

Even among the German population, the difficult living conditions, leading to frustration and demotivation, cause a decrease of interest and learning and an increase in rather escapist entertainment activities (mainly TV). One of the results is that an increasing number of adults is classified as functionally illiterate.

The proportion of young people being qualified for acceptance to some kind of university or university of applied sciences has been steadily growing in the last years. In 2006, 43,5% of 17 to 21 year olds belonged to this group; ten years earlier, this figure was just 36% (KMK, Dokument 184, November 2007). Accordingly, there is a slight increasing trend toward higher formal education: between 1996 and 2006, the proportion of young people in 8th grade who go on to attend "Gymnasium", the highest category of general education, increased from 28,9% to 31,5%.

Didactic principles and the organisation of schools have been changed several times within the last decades. Project-oriented learning, more participatory kinds of discussions, more responsibility for what and when they learn on the side of the pupils, and, linked with this, more information and communication technologies in the class – these are some of the important changes compared to when today's parents' generations were children.

2.2 Education and the Internet

According to the report of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research concerning the IT-Equipment in Schools in 2006, 99% of the German schools are equipped with computers with different standards. More than one million computers are located in the schools, and 71% of the computers (649.207) have an Internet connection. The general public schools have the highest amount of computers with Internet access, followed by the Secondary Schools (I and II), the vocational schools and the primary schools.

	Primary School [class 1-4]	Secondary School (I+II) [class 5-13]	Public School**	Vocational school	Total***
Total Number of Schools	14.053	14.174	28.227	2.837	31.064
Number of Schools (response rate, database)	13.597	13.986	27.800	2.805	30.605
Response rate (in %)	98	99	98	99	98
Number of PC-appointed schools*	13.597	13.926	27.523	2.781	30.304
PC-appointed schools in %	98	100	99	99	99
Computer (in general)*	234.738	543.187	777.925	297.468	1.075.393
Computer with Internet connection	108.383	347.470	455.853	193.354	649.207
Percentage of computer with Internet connection, related to all available computer.	52	75	68	79	71
Kind of the Internet connection (multiple answers)					
ISDN	54	32	43	25	42
DSL	41	66	53	67	54
Dedicated line	6	11	8	21	10
Others	2	2	2	3	2

Federal Ministry of Education and Research (2006): IT-Equipment of the public and vocational schools in Germany. Inventory 2006 and Development 2001 till 2006, p. 21f.
(Base: 31.064 schools)

- * Schools which are equipped with computer
- ** Sum of Primary School and Secondary School
- *** Sum of Public School and Vocational School
- **** This category includes also mobile PC and PC which can not be used for multimedia applications.

Most of the schools use or have a DSL-connection; only in primary schools, the percentage of ISDN is higher than DSL. The decrease of ISDN-connections corresponds with the increase of the DSL connections. The greatest number of dedicated lines is to be found in the vocational schools. It is important to mention that the figures do not allow conclusions about the actual Internet usage (see also: Feil/Decker/Gieger 2004, p.27).

Feil, Decker and Gieger attribute the improvement of the equipment to the European "Action plan eLearning". Between 2000 and 2004, the German Confederation provided 700 million Euros in the program "IT in the education – connection instead of exclusion" ("IT in der Bildung – Anschluss statt Ausschluss"). These subsidies were and are still restocked by the Federal States and the initiative D21 (p.25).

Since education lies within the responsibility of the single states, it is difficult to provide an overview for all states. In as far as IT/Media are defined as obligatory subjects, the approach is rather technical, in the sense of informatics, whereas media and communication as a social and cultural practice has no institutionalized position in most of the curricula.

3. Wider society

3.1 Social change

Beginning with the Unification, the economic and financial situation declined. The increase in immigration from Eastern Europe, demographic changes and lack of public money led to a substantial unemployment rate, cuts in income and social security, and decreased standards of living. Today, social justice has become the top issue of the political debate – referring to a society in which the poverty of elderly people and children becomes more and more obvious and even well positioned people may experience unemployment and a fall back into precarious conditions of living.

Within this general change some specific developments should be emphasized: the proportion of young parents who cannot stand the increasingly demanding everyday tasks and are not able to provide a stable and trusting home for their children is increasing. These parents do not find their own place or stable social relationships, so they cannot guide their children to find their ways. Children's poverty, child abuse, violence against children – these issues are increasingly observed and discussed.

As for any new technology in the past, the Internet and other new communication technologies have stimulated an ambivalent debate, which was characterized by two extreme positions. On the one hand the new technologies were embraced as a means to overcome economic problems; on the other hand they were regarded as supporting the negative effects of globalisation on employment in Germany and widening the gap between the more or less educated milieus. The main idea within the official discourse from the side of the government refers to the information society as the necessary condition for economic and social development in Germany, in order to overcome the above mentioned economic and social problems. This position made the government support initiatives that aim at bringing computers and the Internet to schools as early as possible. One result of this discursive background has been that at least one part of the German population did not adopt new technologies because they were intrinsically motivated to use them, but because they thought this was necessary in order to get a good job.

Within the discourse on the information society a stable reference is made to those countries, which are “ahead”, in particular Finland, Sweden, and the United States. There is much concern over not being at the leading edge or, even worse, being left behind. The consequence is that the issue of the information society is linked with stressful competition, in which everybody has to be as successful as possible in order to keep the high standard of living.

Inequalities are perceived on different levels:

- Eastern (former GDR) vs. Western part
- Less educated vs. higher educated
- Migration (most important: Turkish) vs. German background
- Women vs. men

A study examining children’s access to media in seven federal states found that Sachsen (the only Eastern State considered in the study) has an especially small number of children with access to the Internet at their parents’ home (64% compared to 73-78% in other federal states)(LBS Kinderbarometer 2007, p.133). Regarding the actual use of the Internet there are no regional differences, although the children in Sachsen make especially little use of the chat function (LBS Kinderbarometer 2007, p.135ff.).

During the last few years Germany has seen an increasing gap between the upper and the lower classes – at least many people are convinced that this gap is becoming continuously larger. The current issue at the forefront of public debate is minimum wages for certain jobs on the one hand and the enormous income of managers who receive high wages even if they are not successful and have to leave the company.

Five years ago, Germany experienced a public dispute on the concept of “Leitkultur” (“guiding culture”). After German politics had acknowledged rather late, that Germany is an immigration country, this dispute referred to different approaches to the integration of migrants in Germany. As in other countries, the current laws include an obligatory test in the German language and knowledge on the basis of the constitution and the political system. This approach puts an emphasis on the idea of cultural homogeneity. According to this position, the fact that migrants increasingly use media in their home languages from their home countries and thus create “parallel worlds” within the country is seen as being negative. In particular the Internet as the most globalised medium is often criticized because of its politically or ideologically problematic content, which is regarded as a factor disturbing integration. On the other hand, large parts of the public (on the party level: the Green party, Social Democrats) regard the Internet as providing a good chance to improve intercultural understanding. (also see Eurostat/OECD statistics on the proportion of inhabitants with migration background etc.)

3.2 Role of the state

German society seems to rely particularly on institutions and official administrative procedures. People expect administrative solutions for any kind of problem, including Internet safety. Possible alternative approaches (e.g. civil society or grass roots movements), which are directed to the ISPs or other media companies, are seldom pursued. There is a kind of reflex in the German public to ask for new laws whenever a negative event puts Internet safety or negative media effects on the agenda.

Censorship is officially forbidden according to the German constitution. The level of free speech is quite high in Germany. In particular the constitutional court keeps an eye on any development that might affect free speech. The principle of co-regulation or regulated self-regulation (e.g. in the field of youth protection [see above]) reflects this general trend.

However, whenever there is some accident or crime, which is related to media content, many people tend to ask that certain kinds of content be forbidden.

4. Other factors affecting children's online experiences

Because of the large German-speaking market, there are plenty of media in the German language. This is true for all media, including the Internet. Because of foreign audiovisual media being dubbed, Germans have few opportunities for incidental contact with other languages. As a consequence, many Germans – even when they are able to understand English – have no exercise in actually using the language.

However, there are some significant exceptions to this rule. As in other countries young people clearly prefer Anglo-American pop music. More than three quarters of the music they listen to is in English. Other reasons that might challenge the priority of the German language are related to an interest in specific topics, which motivates people to search for international websites. (For a systematic comparison of English as a second language in Germany versus other European countries, the Eurobarometer 2006 "Europeans and their languages" can be used. And Eurydice provides data on English lessons at school.)

In some countries, such as the UK, parental fears about the risks to children in unsupervised spaces outdoors have been one factor that has led parents to encourage their children to stay indoors, to spend time in friend's homes and/or participate in (adult) supervised activities elsewhere. The first trend has supported the emergence of a 'bedroom culture' where children's rooms have become increasingly media rich, including access to the Internet.

According to the 1. World Vision Kinderstudie, 53% of the children (8 to 11 years) live in a one-family house, 36% in a house with maximum of 12 flats and 11% in a block of more than 12 flats (p. 81). 80% of the children (8 to 11 years) have their own room, 18% share the room with their siblings and 2% do not have their own room (p.81).

Parents were asked where their children pass their leisure time. The answers indicate that 73% of the children (8 to 11 years) – mostly boys and older children – spend their time in institutionalised leisure time facilities (above all, sport clubs, p.166). The girls are infrequently in groups or clubs, but as a rule they are member of more than one group. Children with lower social background are more seldom in clubs (47%) than children with higher social background (89%). The same can be stated for children with migration context. The authors refer to Fuhs (1996) who stated ten years before that childhood is a kind of "appointment-childhood" ("Terminkindheit") and also "club-childhood" ("Vereinskindheit").

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