

National report for Portugal

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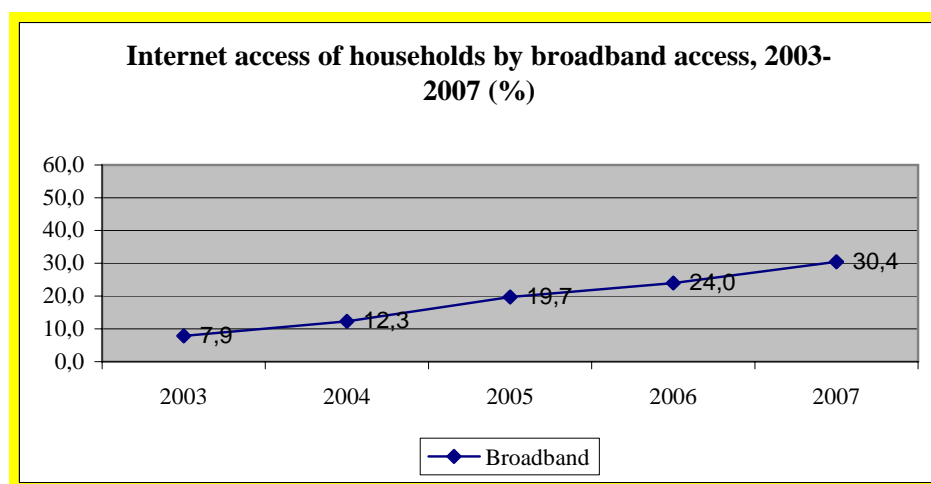
Contribution to the European report:

Uwe Hasebrink, Sonia Livingstone and Haddon, L. (eds) *Comparing Children's Online Opportunities and Risks across Europe: Cross-national Comparisons for EU Kids Online*, a report for the EC Safer Internet Plus Programme, 2008.

1. The Internet

1.1 Children's Internet access

Internet access, particularly to broadband, is still limited in Portugal. According to INE (National Statistics Institute) inquiry on ICT use in Portuguese families, in the first quarter of 2007 only 30.4% of households had broadband Internet access. Compared to 2003, this represents an annual mean growth of 42.1%.



In the same time period, 45.8% of individuals aged 16-74 used a computer and 39.6% accessed the Internet.

If we consider Internet use across the country, we may find some regional asymmetries: 49.7% of the residents of Lisbon said they used the Internet in the first quarter of 2007, while only 30.5% of the population from the Azores region claimed the same.

The use of PCs and the Internet is significantly higher among the 16-24 age group (89.8% and 84.8%, respectively)¹, with values that are closer to youth from other European countries. ICT use also varies according to school level: the proportion of PC and Internet users is highest among Higher Education students (93.5% and 89.5%, respectively), and high school students (87.9% and 80.9%). When analysing the respondents' professional status, students are still the group with the highest levels of PC and Internet access (98.9% and 97.2%), followed by employees (55.1% use PCs and 46.4% use the Internet).

¹ According to an OberCom (Observatory for the Media) study ("E-Generation: Os Usos de Media pelas Crianças e Jovens em Portugal"), published in 2007, 84.3% of young people aged 16-18 year-old use the Internet at home, 51.3% at school, 19% at a friend's/relative's house, 8.3% in a cybercafé, and 11.8% in another place.

According to Eurostat, Portugal still has one of the lowest levels of broadband access, based on the number of broadband line subscriptions in the population (14.8% compared 20.8% in UE15).

Data made available by OECD – the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development— reveal that in the second quarter of 2007, Portugal registered a broadband penetration rate of 14.3% compared to 21.8% in UE15. In the OECD ranking, only Eastern countries and Greece had a lower performance rate.

National sources, such as ANACOM, the regulatory authority for telecommunications and postal communications, show that in the end of the third quarter of 2007, the broadband penetration rate by fixed access was 14.8% per 100 inhabitants, and 11.2% per 100 inhabitants for mobile access.

According to INE, Internet connections through high-speed broadband were rapidly increasing between 2003 and 2007 (about 42.1% of the annual mean growth rate).

INE also points out that in the first quarter of 2007, 48.3% of Portuguese households had at least one computer² and 39.6% had Internet access. The proportion of households with an Internet connection has risen 17.8% in the last five years.

These data are similar to those presented by Eurostat. According to this source, in 2007 40% of Portuguese households had Internet access, compared to 59% in EU15. According to the INE survey, this is due to the high price of high-speed broadband (reported by 46.3% of Portuguese families) and the “lack of necessity” (reported by 50.3% of respondents). All ISPs have an e-mail address for reporting abuse situations (abuse@ISP.pt). According to SAPO (one of the PT ISPs), out of the 200,000 questions per month, only about 100 are associated with safety issues (90% are related to virus protection or phishing).

Together with Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), SAPO.PT provides clients with anti-spam and anti-phishing tools. It is also planning to create a special site about safety issues.

Vodafone Portugal, one of three mobile phones companies and part of the international group, has been considering child protection issues since the launch of a WAP portal which includes erotic content in 2002. It is possible to prevent children from accessing this content if their parents demand it, but at the moment the company has received only 300 hundred blocking requests. In October 2006 Vodafone Portugal became an IWF partner and cancelled its access to illegal and harmful sites identified by IWF. According to the company, Vodafone Portugal tried to promote a shared Code of Practice with regards to child protection. None of the three companies operating in Portugal signed the European Framework for Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children, promoted by the EU Mobile Phone industry (February 2007).

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

According to a national survey³ on media uses by children and youth (Cardoso et al (2007), in 2006 71% of 8 to 18 year olds claimed to be “Internet users”. However, only 31.2% said they use it every day. Most of the children said that they have Internet access at school (73.9%), while 53.2% at had access at home and only 22% used the Internet in other places.

² The OberCom’s study reveals that 56,8% of the inquired people have a computer at home. However, there is a small but significant percentage of young people (40%) that has 2 or more computers. Only 2,5% doesn’t have a computer at home.

³ Cardoso et al (2007).

The studies we have been following do not provide any information about SES regarding Internet/media uses.

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

Eight to 18 year olds spend an average of 8 hours a week on the Internet. This average is based heavily on domestic use: 8-18 year olds claim to be spending 10 hours each week on the Internet at home, which is three times more than the time spent on the Internet in other places like school (3 hours per week) and several other places (2.7 hours per week).

Also, 57% of 8-18 year olds claim that they use the Internet more frequently than any other person in their home (Cardoso et al, 2007)

On the whole our data supports this hypothesis (Cardoso et al ,2007). Older children tend to use the Internet more frequently: 41.6% of 16-18 year olds say they use the Internet every day, compared to 23% of 8-12 year olds who make the same claim.

This information is confirmed when children are asked specifically about "who uses the Internet most frequently at home": Internet use in the household seems to increase with a child's age (36.8% of 8-12 year olds compared to 70.8% of 16-18 year olds).

There are no significant gender differences regarding Internet use. However, boys tend to use the Internet more frequently than girls (56.8% compared to 47.7%, respectively, claim to use the Internet at least 3-4 times a week) (Cardoso et al ,2007)

When asked to evaluate their Internet expertise, 8-18 year old boys tend to consider themselves better users than girls (DR 326): 13% of the boys claim to have "excellent" Internet skills, compared to the 7.2% of girls who maintain the same. However, there is also evidence to contradict this assertion: 3.1% of the boys said they have very bad skills, but none of the girls fell into this category. This may be related to age: younger boys tend to see themselves as less skilled users than older ones. The online survey confirms this information (CIES-ISCTE/Portugal Telecom Foundation, 2006): when asked "Who knows more about the Internet at home?", boys (76.2%) tended to have a better opinion of their own skills than girls (70.7%).

1.4 Internet and Media Content for Children

The Public Service Broadcaster (RTP), a major provider of content for children (more than 50% of the content provided by all the Hertzian channels), has high quality programmes and a diversity of formats. It is often the ratings leader among the age 4-14 audience group. However, the website it launched in 2005 for children under 9 provides a low level of interactivity and is dominated by toys associated with TV series and their merchandise (such as Noddy).

Private TV channels mostly provide content in the form of TV soap operas for teenagers, which are also watched by younger children (6+). Some of these programmes are used to sell merchandise, presented in the form of toys, cookies and so on. TV cable operators like the Disney Channel and Panda present mostly "international" animation and have higher levels of interactivity on their websites.

Educational and entertainment multimedia content is also produced by book publishers which use online space to promote their contents. There is no study about the impact of advertising on children and their lives.

1.5 Opportunities experienced by children online

An online survey⁴ (CIES-ISCTE/Portugal Telecom Foundation, 2006) shows that the main opportunities that children experience online have to do with education: 88.8% of 9-18 year olds claim to use “web pages to study or do homework”, and 45.9% of children from the same age group declare that they use the Internet to “resolve problems, do tests or simulations online”. Besides individual use of existing web content, 9-18 year old children state that they use the “computer to communicate and ask for help from other school friends” (80.6%), or even, in some cases, from their teachers (24.1%). In this case, participation (“child as contact”) prevails.

The range of Internet uses not only seems to have increased with age, but also the importance given to some specific uses (Cardoso et al, 2007). For example, 43.9% of 8-12 year olds use the Internet for “Sending and receiving email messages”, reveals a noticeable growth with age: 43.9% of 8-12 years old compared to 75.7% of 16-18 years olds. The number of children “Participating in chats and newsgroups” also increases significantly with age: as 26.4% of 8-12 year olds compared to 50%, respectively 8-12 and of 16-18 years olds using this function. Other significant differences are:

- “Setting up rendezvous or getting together with friends” (8-12: 18.4%; 16-18: 38.4%)
- “Looking for news on sports” (8-12: 7.1%; 16-18: 29%)
- “Downloading music” (8-12: 6.8%; 16-18: 28%)
- “Sending pictures to oneself or other family members” (8-12: 11.9%; 16-18: 20.9%)
- “Downloading software” (8-12: 9%; 16-18: 15.5%)

The only activity that shows any positive association towards younger children is “playing videogames online” (8-12: 46.3%; 16-18: 31.7%). On the other hand, “consulting libraries, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, and atlases” didn’t show a significant variation between age groups, even though this is an important activity (8-12: 56.4%; 16-18: 57.8%).

Boys and girls appear to use the Internet for the same purposes. However, we may notice some differences in the importance attributed to the same uses (Cardoso et al ,2007):

- “Sending and receiving email messages” (boys: 64%; girls: 52.3%)
- “Playing videogames on-line” (boys: 48.5%; girls: 33.3%)
- “Participating in chats and newsgroups” (boys: 47%; girls: 29.1%)
- “Downloading music” (boys: 25.7%; girls: 11%)
- “Looking for information about shows” (boys: 20.2%; girls: 12.2%)
- “Looking for news on sports” (boys: 20.1%; girls: 13%)
- “Downloading software” (boys: 16.1%; girls: 5.3%)
- “Looking for news in general” (boys: 15.8%; girls: 8.8%)
- “Creating Weblogs” (boys: 11.5%; girls: 7.5%).

As the data show, boys seem to put the Internet to a wider range of uses. The only important activity that shows no gender differences is “consulting libraries, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, and atlases” (exactly 54.5% in both girls and boys).

⁴ This on-line survey was conducted during 2006 by the same research team as the national survey mentioned previously, thus having the same general goals. However, comparing data from these different studies should be done with some methodological precautions: whereas results from the national study, conducted off-line, are representative of the population from which are drawn, results from the on-line study are not completely representative. Nevertheless, for some indicators evidence were only available for the on-line survey, thus being mentioned to support or contradict certain hypothesis.

1.6 Risks experienced by children online

When asked directly about specific online risks (presented by the researcher), most 8 to 18 year olds claimed to have problems with “viruses sent by someone else” (23.7%). Only a small percentage of this population mentioned other risks: “receiving obscene or abusive emails” (6.4%), “being contacted by someone from a foreign country” (4.4%), “buying a product from the Internet that was wrongly presented” (2%), “being contacted by someone asking for bank account information” (1.3%) and finally, a very small percentage declared that their “credit card information had been stolen while making some purchase online” (0.9%) (Cardoso et al ,2007).

If we consider that more use leads to greater risks, then we have to agree with this hypothesis. According to evidence gathered in both studies (CIES-ISCTE/Portugal Telecom Foundation, 2006 ; Cardoso et al ,2007), older children tend to use the Internet more frequently and in a more diversified way, thus exposing themselves to more risks (as well as opportunities). Like in the previous hypothesis, the amount of time spent online and the diversification of use creates new opportunities for encountering risks.

According to the online survey (CIES-ISCTE/Portugal Telecom Foundation, 2006), girls take slightly more chances than boys with regards to social networking. For instance, the percentage of girls who admit to chatting online with complete strangers is higher than that of boys (21.1% and 15.1%, respectively). However, a higher percentage of boys than girls claimed to have contacted people they met online in real life (28.6% and 20.7%, respectively).

We do not have correlations on type of use and place. But since use is apparently more frequent at home, we may presume that risks also will be more frequent in the household.

1.7 Internet regulation and promotion

Since 1985 there have been regulations in place regarding issues of safety, copyright and e-commerce in new technologies. Legislation regarding the protection of citizens (children, young people and adults) may not differ from other EU countries because it is based on European policies.

In 2005 the government launched a **Technological Plan** which aims to mobilise enterprises, families and institutions in order to overcome the modernisation challenges the country has faced during the past few years. In this context, the Portuguese Government made the Technological Plan a priority in the implementation of its public policies. The Technological Plan, as a strategy aiming to promote development and to increase competitiveness in Portugal, is based on three strategic axes: (i) Knowledge – to qualify the Portuguese for the knowledge society; (ii) Technology – to overcome the scientific and technological gap; (iii) Innovation – to boost innovation. It contains 112 measures geared to bring Portuguese technology up to speed with the rest of Western Europe. These measures do not include provisions to increase safety on the Internet. The only references to children are made in the school context, presenting young Internet users as students. Therefore, safety issues related to informal uses of the Internet and corresponding policies seem to be under-researched. Since the discourse is framed by words like ‘progress’, ‘evolution’ and ‘information society of the future’, Internet risks and protection measures have received relatively little attention. In general, the issue of Internet safety has not been strongly highlighted. The focus, at least at the institutional level, has been on promoting the pedagogical advantages of new technologies.

Recently the legal landscape has changed. In 2006, according to a study conducted by the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC), Portugal only fulfilled two of the five criteria analysed: legislation specific to child pornography and computer facilitated offences. The same study showed that Portugal didn’t provide a definition of child pornography, didn’t criminalise possession of child pornography, regardless of the intent to distribute, and didn’t require Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to report suspected child pornography to law enforcement officials or to some other mandated agency.

This situation changed with the **new Criminal Code** and **Criminal Code Process** that came into effect on 15 September 2007. In the field of child protection new crimes were classified as minor pornography, and the use of underage prostitution and genital mutilation is now explicitly covered. In case of crimes perpetrated against children under 16 years old, if the child's legal guardian does not want to press charges the child can choose to press charges from the moment he or she reaches age 16 until the age of 18 years and 6 months. New laws also established that sexual crimes against minors can be prosecuted until the minor reaches age 23.

According to a police inspector working on cyber crime, Law 41/2004 (which transposes to the national legal order Directive 2002/58/EC concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector) protects citizens who accept the law as well as those who refuse to comply with it. This is due to the fact that if a victim of an Internet crime asks for help, Portuguese authorities won't have the necessary tools to compel ISPs to keep technical registers which would allow them to determine the origin of communication and identify its authors. Law 41/2004 obliges operators to delete these registers. Consequently, criminals are better protected than victims. In order to obtain data about someone who publishes and updates images of child sexual abuse on the Internet, there is a bureaucratic procedure: you must send a lawsuit to the Public Prosecutor's Office in order to respect the secrecy breach. Other problems result from the penal framework of the previous Penal Code. In the beginning of 2008 the Convention on Cyber crime was not yet ratified by Portuguese parliament, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already begun the proceedings and the Ministry of Justice was studying the alterations imposed by the ratification to existing laws on cyber crime.

The main regulatory agency is ICP – ANACOM (National Authority for Communications). It was founded in 2002 to support the government in the coordination and planning of public communications. It disseminates and monitors safety and e-commerce, telecommunications operators and all issues concerning telecommunication networks. Nonetheless, our research suggests that monitoring has little public and media visibility, and it can be argued that the actions taken by ANACOM have little relevance and efficiency. As the national regulatory authority for electronic communications, ANACOM has been consulted by the European Union a number of times for its comments on the Internet Action Plan. This is currently a very relevant subject which requires concerted action at the European level, which is why ANACOM is currently involved in raising awareness about Portuguese projects for Internet safety. ANACOM is particularly interested in promoting hotlines to report illegal Internet content and public awareness centres on the issue of Internet safety. Like OFCOM, the Portuguese regulator may address some public policy objectives like media literacy.

In 2005, the Justice Ombudsman worked closely with several ministerial offices, ICP-ANACOM and telecommunication operators on a campaign to promote the safe use of mobile phones by children. The aim was to raise awareness of Internet benefits and risks. The Provedor de Justiça also considered the need to advise children, parents and teachers on health risks surrounding the use of mobile phones, and how to make informed decisions as consumers and educators. Thus far there have been no concrete measures following the Provedor's intervention, and coverage of this appeal in the main newspapers was insignificant.

During the last few years the government has argued that public policies on the development of new technologies will have a beneficial impact at all levels, recurrently using the expression 'the technological shock' to characterise such an investment. Several programmes are being drafted but there is a lack of information on their accomplishments and user impact.

In 2004 the Directorate-General of Innovation and Curricular Development/CRIE Program (Computers, Networks and Internet at School) from the Ministry of Education developed the **Seguranet project**, for the promotion of safer Internet use by primary and secondary school students. According to the latest data available for December 2007, Seguranet received 4,900 visitors and more than 25,000 pages were consulted online.

The initiative **Connecting Portugal (Ligar Portugal)**, adopted in July 2005, is the realisation of plans in the Government's Programme to develop and mobilise the Information Society. It is directed by a strategy of social mobilisation for employment, growth and the economic value of knowledge. The priorities of *Connecting Portugal* are the wide-spread dissemination of ICT technologies in Portugal, namely in the scope of the international comparisons required by the Lisbon strategy and the independent, regular and transparent evaluation of the information systems of public services and administration.

One of *Connecting Portugal's* objectives is to "Assure Safety and Privacy in the Use of the Internet", and more specifically, "to guarantee that everyone, in particular families, has the instruments for protection against risks that might occur in the use of the Internet and that they have the necessary information about how to use them".

The **Safe Internet Project (Internet Segura)**, which was launched in July 2007, contributes to the accomplishment of this strategic orientation. Safe Internet is co-funded until December 2008 by the European Commission, thanks to the Safer Internet plus programme. This is a consortium made up of Portuguese entities: UMIC (National Agency for Knowledge Society), the Directorate-General of Innovation and Curricular Development/CRIE Program (Computers, Networks and Internet at School), the Foundation for National Scientific Computing (FCCN) and Microsoft Portugal.

Two contributions from this consortium are already available:

- The <http://www.internetsegura.pt> portal, designed to make more information on how to use the Internet in a safe and sensible manner available to the general public. There is an "Internet Security Guide" available at the portal;
- The <http://linhaalerta.internetsegura.pt/>, an alert line where anyone can expose Internet content that is likely to be considered illegal to the authorities, so that they can investigate and take action if applicable. The mission of Linha Alerta is to block illegal content on the Internet and prosecute its disseminators in an effective way. These objectives may be achieved by providing Portuguese law enforcement agencies with archived information in order to facilitate elimination of the illegal content and the identification of those responsible for these materials, and by means of collaboration with national Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and international counterparts in the fight against illegal content.

The service Linha Alerta gives the public a means to anonymously report any situation that might involve child abuse, incitement to racism and xenophobia, terrorism and violence. These reports are submitted to triage and duly forwarded for investigation and eventual judicial action.

On 25 October 2007 Linha Alerta became a member of the international association INHOPE. Since its activation in the end of July 2007, Linha Alerta has received 212,385 visitors (on average, 4,800 visits per month), and registered 1,226 denunciations, but only 300 of these were sent to the national authorities or to the international partners of INHOPE. From these 300 occurrences (256 of child pornography, 33 related to racist and xenophobic content, and 11 related to violence), just 37 were located in Portugal.

FCCN has recently ratified protocols in collaboration with two NGOs, IAC and APAV, with the intent of receiving support in Linha Alerta's operationalisation and functioning. Information exchange in common areas such as the fight against racism, violence and child pornography is one of the main objectives the groups are now working towards.

Another recent initiative in Portugal is the DADUS project, launched at the end of January 2008. This project is the practical expression of a protocol signed by CNPD – the Portuguese Data Protection Authority and the Ministry of Education. Its aim is to sensitise the school population to data protection and privacy questions, to promote responsible use of technologies, and to develop the civic consciousness of young people. In schools, the teachers decide whether students will participate. This project is directed at pupils from 5th to 9th grade, and will be implemented in public schools of the continent on a voluntary basis.

CNPD intends to extend this project to the Azores and Madeira regions, as well as to private and co-operative education.

The DADUS project has two main components: the scholarly and the extra-scholastic, implemented through the creation of a blog for a direct interaction with pupils. For the first (scholar component), CNPD has developed Thematic Unities (for example, Internet social networking, the use of e-mail, the universe of mobile phones, video-vigilance and the treatment of personal data), which contain a systematisation of the topics that should be addressed, as well as information sheets for teachers enabling them to give their classes suggestions of activities, working materials and knowledge evaluation exercises, and finally, summaries for pupils.

All of this content will be published in the CNPD website (<http://www.cnpd.pt>) in an exclusive area (<http://dadus.cnpd.pt>) where teachers can register, access and print the necessary materials. An e-mail account was also created to allow direct contact between teachers and the project (projectodadus@cnpd.pt), through which teachers can pose questions, ask for help, share experiences or make suggestions.

The second, extra-scholar component is a blog created by the authors of the project (<http://dadus.blogs.sapo.pt>). It is a space where pupils can find games, entertainment, stories and cartoons to support their ludic learning and, at the same time, to have direct and active participation in the DADUS project by raising doubts, sharing their experiences, and publishing the works developed in the project.

In January 2008, the National Commission for the Protection of Children and Youngsters at Risk (CNPCJR), a member of the Advisory Board of EU Kids Online, reported that it is "aware of initiatives and activities promoted by different sectors that are represented in this Commission, like the Education Ministry and Social Security Institute, and NGOs/IPSS like IAC and AMCV among others, aimed at diminishing the potential dangers of its use". However, the National Commission has acknowledged the existence of some dispersion among these groups' activities, and is fully aware that this phenomenon represents a potentially dangerous situation for children and youngsters who are Internet users. Therefore it is an issue that falls within CNPCJR's legal jurisdiction.

In this context, CNPCJR has already made the identification of all the representatives in this National Commission who have worked on this issue, or who have knowledge of projects or activities concerning Internet use by children, one of its priority tasks for 2008.. CNPCJR is considering the possibility of drawing up proposals in conjunction with different sectors involved in Children Protection. These would concern possible restrictions as well as potential relevant information and/or training packages aimed at Internet users' parents, carers, or educators.

CNPCJR is also conscious of the need to develop better ways of identifying the types of hazards of Internet use, including sexual abuse, prostitution, paedophilia and kidnapping.

Finally, the National Commission wants to promote more research in this area, as well as acquire more knowledge at the international level concerning preventive procedures. It is particularly interested in developing International Polices and creating partnerships with other institutions in the child protection systems.

The influence of NGOs associated with children's rights may seem weak if one considers the scant attention they receive in the main newspapers. Recently, however, the level of attention to Internet risks has been considered in the definition of work plans. Here we present the main NGO running activities:

The "Child Care Institute" (Instituto de Apoio à Criança, IAC) has been involved in Internet Safety concerns regarding its work as the only Portuguese member of Missing Children Europe (www.missingchildreneurope.eu). Its main issue is related to the dangers of personal

encounters with strangers met online and through SMS for children and youth. It aims to teach children safe behaviour regarding their Internet contacts.

The IAC has been in contact with some ISPs in Portugal in order to understand what their most effective practices are. Their hope is that the Portuguese legislator can make these regulations mandatory. The IAC have translated a Spanish campaign from its partners (protegeles) at Missing Children Europe, but there were no funding to bring it to fruition.

- CONFAP was founded in 1985 to congregate, coordinate, defend and represent the parents' movement in Portugal at a national level, and it is frequently present in news about education and children issues. Through a partnership with www.miudossegurosna.net.pt (see below), local parents' associations had the opportunity to learn about Safe Internet. However, when contacted at the end of 2006, it was not aware of the Internet Safety Day and this subject was not a 2007 priority for CONFAP.
- APAV (www.apav.pt): The Portuguese Association for Victims' Support was created in 1990 to promote and contribute to the awareness, protection, and support of citizen victims of a variety of crimes. Recently it has added awareness campaigns for the risks of electronic networks (Internet and mobile phone) to its agenda. APAV developed a community support booklet, but at the time of research there had been no significant requests for support.
- MiudosSegurosNa.Net (Safe Kids online) is a website created in 2003 by Tito de Morais, a former media industry worker. Written in accessible language, its motto is "Minimise risks, Maximise benefits". The site aims to help families, schools and communities to promote ethical behaviour, as well as responsible and safe use of new technologies by children and young people. Its newsletter had around 3,300 subscribers by the end of 2006 and jumped to 4,000 after the 2007 Safer Internet Day, and to 5,000 by November 2007. The most common questions asked by parents are related to filters: "Most parents consider children's online safety as a technological problem which, as such, must be solved through technology. Due to this, the site presents a technological approach besides an approach to parents, education, and legal matters", says Tito de Morais.
- The Association of Women Against Violence (AMCV) is a Human Rights NGO working in the area of violence against women and children, and has Special Consultative Statutes in the ESOSOC of the UN. It develops awareness themed campaigns, most of them national initiatives. In November 2007, AMCV founded a national platform in order to increase assertiveness and build a stronger voice to child protection. This platform involves partners, such as CNPCJR (National Commission for the Protection of Children and Young People at Risk), the Consortium "Internet Segura", DECO (Portuguese Association for the Defence of Consumers), EU Kids Online Portugal, IPJ (Portuguese Youth Institute), MiudosSegurosNa.Net and PJ (Judicial Police). Its main goal is to reflect on child safety on the Internet. On the European Safer Internet Day on 12 February 2008, this Platform promoted five workshops involving young people discussing social networks, and contributed to the media visibility of the day.

1.8 Parental mediation

Most parents do not seem to care about their children's actual media use so much as the amount of time they spend using it. The only visible mediation has to do with access control. According to an online survey (CIES-ISCTE/Portugal Telecom Foundation, 2006) 44.8% of 9-18 year olds claim to have been engaged in some kind of fight with their parents on account of the time they spend online. Only 8.5% of 9-18 year olds said they have had a fight with their parents because of what they were actually doing online.

When asked about what parents did when they are online, the majority of children answered that their parents "don't do anything" (53.6%). However, some parents seem to be curious about what their kids are up to: 41.8% claim that their parents ask them "what they are doing". The percentage of parents that actually sit down with their kids in front of the computer is very low (8%).

We do not have information on a correlation between amount of use, type of activities and computer skills. A qualitative research project focused on a small sample of children (Malheiro, 2007) showed that parents tended to control Internet use more for girls than for boys. It seems that there is a higher level of parental control in online game use by girls than by boys: only 36% of girls have permission to play online games, compared to 51% of boys (Mediappro (2006).

Unfortunately, we do not have the necessary information to correlate parental mediation and children's experiences. There is no evidence to support or contradict this hypothesis. Given the absence of concern from most parents on this matter, and considering that only a few of them seem to take any initiative regarding Internet mediation (Eurobarometer, 2006); CIES-ISCTE/Portugal Telecom Foundation, 2006; Cardoso et al, 2007), we suspect that parents have very little ability to reduce online risks for their children.

1.9 Media literacy

According to an online survey (CIES-ISCTE/Portugal Telecom Foundation, 2006), there is a positive correlation between age and computer skills. When asked about who the Internet expert at home is, 81.5% of 16-18 year old respondents considered themselves to be the ones with the most skills, compared to 41.7% of 9-12 year olds who said the same. Self-perception of expertise is not the same as actually having skills, but gives us an idea of its differentiation by age and corroborates other indicators.

We do not have information on a correlation between the amount of Internet use, the type of activities undertaken and computer skills.

1.10 Factors shaping public discourses about the Internet

In broad terms, the role of NGOs and related stakeholders in shaping public discourses has been relatively weak until recently.

It is difficult to identify an event that could put Internet issues concerning risks or opportunities on the public agenda. Stories about sexual harassment involving teenagers in personal contact with strangers from the Internet, or the use of dangerous "cocktail" recipes available on websites have appeared in popular newspapers or in the TV news, but never in an interactive way. The same is true of issues such as bullying involving mobile phones. A "moral panic" has not happened yet in Portugal.

In May-June 2007 the disappearance of Madeleine McCann in Algarve helped put questions about the safety of circulating young children's photos on the Internet onto the public agenda. The Internet as a public space provided the framework for assessing the attitudes of older children and adolescents about risks concerning their own images in social networking sites.

2 The Educational system

2.1 General education

In 1960 33% of the population was illiterate, whereas according to the 2001 census only 9% of the population had no literacy skills (see Cardoso *et al.*, 2005). Conversely, the number of higher education students has grown more than twelve-fold from early 60s to late 90s (see Balsa *et al.*, 2001). Most of this exponential growth is explained by the creation of private universities and polytechnic schools during the 80s and 90s, thus offering more undergraduate and postgraduate courses in most of its regions.

Generational discrepancies should also be mentioned. As seen above, in the 60s one third of the population was illiterate while in 2001 less than 10% had no education at all. On the other hand, in the 60s only 1.7% of the population aged 20-24 was enrolled in higher education,

while forty years later this percentage has grown to 25.6%. These figures are confirmed by international comparisons: in 2001 10.2% of the Portuguese population between age 25 and 64 had completed a higher education course, whereas the EU average was 21.2% (Cardoso et al., 2005: 51). These generational differences are profoundly rooted in Portuguese society. The collapse of the authoritarian regime that had ruled for almost fifty years on 25 April 1974 may have been a turning point. Besides political and economic consequences, the authoritarian period had obvious cultural effects, namely its clear disinvestment in education. Education, especially at university level, remained a restricted good for a long time.

There is also an important difference between social origins of higher education students in the 60s (mostly from upper classes) and those in the 80s and 90s (more heterogeneous in their social origins. See Balsa et al., 2001). Nevertheless, prestigious schools were more often selected by students with more favourable cultural and economic backgrounds (what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu describes as “cultural and economic capital”). In any case, considering the authoritarian starting point, one must admit an obvious “democratisation” of higher education (or at least, a noticeable “massification”). Also interesting is the fact that the presence of girls in universities has grown tremendously. At present girls represent approximately 60% of higher education students (Balsa et al., 2001; Cardoso et al., 2005).

The most important change in education is related to a new orientation in public policies, which has led to investment in education: first of all, by creating a new legal framework (defining a minimum number of school years for children and establishing new cultural rights for all citizens)⁵, followed by the implementation of a national network of schools (both elementary and secondary, but also in higher education) and lastly, a transformation of the Portuguese educational system in general.

2.2 Education and the Internet

All Portuguese schools (primary and secondary schools over a 12 year period) are equipped with at least one computer (GIASE/Ministry of Education, 2006). In 2006-2007, the number of students per computer at public schools was 10.6, and 6.3 in private schools. The Internet access rate per student was 12.8 and 7.6, respectively. In 2001 there were 38.9 students per computer with Internet in public schools and 17.9 students in private education.

In public schools, these numbers represent a significant change when compared to the recent situation. From a total of 8,733 schools surveyed in 2004-2005, there were 9,043 RDIS and 618 broadband connections; in 2006-2007, a total of 7,068 schools⁶ had 7,219 connections, all by broadband. The presence of computers and Internet access increased in 2007-2008, due to policies facilitating computer access for teachers and students at secondary schools.

Until recently, the ICT curriculum was mainly focused on technical skills and safety protection (anti-virus), so there was not enough critical discussion on safe uses of the Internet at schools. Media literacy or media education is present in the national curricula, but it crosses different subjects and is admittedly unclear in its aims concerning the Internet. Social networking and other ways children use the Internet are not considered. Aside from the traditional subjects, curricular orientations are generic, with such subjects as “civic formation” and “project work” where Internet studies could have a place (and in some schools it has).

⁵ One of the most important legal frames to regulate the Portuguese education system is from 1986 (*Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo*, Lei nº 46/86, from 14th of October), establishing the universal right to a nine years education minimum requirement.

⁶ Primary schools with less than 10 students have been closed, so the total number is reduced.

3 Wider society

3.1 Social change

During the last 50 years, Portuguese society has undergone a modernisation process at several levels- from economy to education, from technology and science to a general reconfiguration of the social structure, from industrial and services growth (and the resulting agricultural decline) to urban intensification and the emergence of new demographic patterns. Together with these transformations, another change (perhaps more relevant for the present discussion) also took place: the formation of a new "public sphere" related to the foundation of a new political cycle. The mid 70s collapse of a totalitarian regime that lasted more than 40 years led to the creation of democratic institutions, free media and freedom of speech. The range of these transformations is too complex and diverse to be described properly in just a few words.

The last two decades reiterate several of the previously observed tendencies. In many ways Portugal has become more like other European countries, especially after entering the EU in 1986. In spite of all these enormous transformations and obvious development, Portuguese society still carries the negative weight of some of the aforementioned structural features (for example, Portugal still has one of the highest levels of relative poverty in the EU and also one of the lowest rates of productivity⁷). The nation also has to deal with new issues like long term unemployment and the social exclusion of minorities. In other words, Portugal remains in something of an in-between position. Although it has the obvious features of most modern countries, some of its pre-modern patterns of development still exist, putting it in a paradoxical *dual position* (Machado e Costa, 1998; Almeida, Costa e Machado, 1994, 2006; Cardoso *et al.*, 2005).

The "technological shock" is still in the governmental discourse, and is considered a strategic way to push the country forward in order to reach European levels of productivity and modernisation. Under this flag, the Education Technological Plan set several objectives for the 2007-2010 period:

- to reach a ratio of two students per computer with Internet connection in 2010
- to ensure high-speed broadband in all schools (kindergarten excluded)
- to ensure that in 2010, teachers and students use ICT in 25% of classes
- to increase the use of electronic media, providing e-mail addresses to 100% of students and teachers
- to award ICT certificates to 50% of students

One could argue that these goals are too optimistic, top-down, and technologically deterministic because objectives involving media literacy, security and social risks of ICT are absent from the curricula. It also could be said that this technological shock might contribute to underestimating risk assessment. The Portuguese Awareness Node and Hotline considered the message of the EU movie made for Safer Internet Day 2008 "too negative" and it was not exhibited on TV. The media campaigns on safety were also conducted relatively outside of the Awareness Node.

Class inequalities may be measured through a professions structure (see below) and income.

As seen above, **educational gaps** are very significant in Portuguese society, and represent a major source of structural inequalities.

As regards **regional divides**, Portuguese society has different levels of economic and social development in different areas of the country. Major dichotomies may be found between urban and rural areas, which generally correspond to littoral and interior regions. Major cities like Lisbon and its suburbs, tend to concentrate most of the country's population, and

⁷ According to Eurostat, in 2003 Portuguese productivity was only 58,9% per working hour of each worker, while in most European countries it was more than 100%. See Cardoso *et al.* (2005: 36-37).

consequently a great deal of its resources (from economic activities to educational and cultural ones).

The presence of **cultural minorities** is only a factor in inequality in regard to other factors like job opportunities, income and educational levels. The importance of specific minorities in Portugal can be explained by the country's history, namely its colonial past in five African countries, Brazil and in some regions of India and Eastern Asia. Like other European countries, Portugal underwent a decolonisation process that led to open conflict between countries. After the colonial war ended⁸, Portugal began to receive several immigrants (especially from former colonies in Africa), which had an impact on the social and economic structure, namely in Lisbon's urban areas. As a consequence, some illegal immigrant neighbourhoods emerged on the periphery of Lisbon and in some of its inner districts.

Income is an obvious source of inequality, but is hard to measure accurately.

Different levels of urbanisation remain a structural feature of Portuguese society, which explains access to and use of all sorts of goods and opportunities.

The enormous growth of urban areas since the mid 60s, combined with an exodus from rural areas, created a "dual society" (Sedas Nunes, 1964): on one hand, the interior regions of the country remain predominantly traditional, while on the other hand the littoral area has obvious modern features. Regional duality has clear economic and social effects. At the moment socio-spatial organisation is more complex than previously described (Ferrão, 2002; Carmo, 2006). Instead of a simple duality between littoral/interior or north/south, we have several contrasts *within* regions (e.g. cities in traditional or less developed areas), creating "islands" of modernity surrounded by areas with evident "pre-modern" features (Ferrão, 2002). This structural duality is still visible to some extent.

ICT infra-structures are located predominantly in more populated areas, which also benefit from other social, economic and cultural infra-structures, thus accentuating already existing gaps. Internet access reflects these asymmetries. This is more obvious if we consider broadband access (see table below):

Internet Access (Broadband) by Regions (NUTS II) 2006 (%) ^(*)

	2006
North	19
Centre	21
Lisbon	34
Alentejo	16
Algarve	22
R.A. Azores	27
R.A. Madeira	33

Source: INE/UMIC, Survey on ICT Use by Portuguese Families 2006.

^(*) Families with at least one individual between 16 and 74

⁸ That begun in the early 60s and lasted until the mid 70s.

Computer and Internet Use by Regions (NUTS II) 2006 (%) ^(*)

	Computer users	Internet users
North	37	30
Centre	44	37
Lisbon	51	45
Alentejo	40	34
Algarve	37	29
R.A. Azores	35	28
R.A. Madeira	39	33

Source: INE/UMIC, Survey on ICT Use by Portuguese Families 2006.

(*) Families with at least one individual between 16 and 74

Work skills and professional structures also reflect these discrepancies and contradictions. There is a clear growth of “intellectuals and scientific professions” from the 1960 census to the 2001 one (from 2.8% to 8.6%, respectively). In 1960 43.6% of workers were in agriculture and related labour, compared to only 4.1% in 2001. On the other hand, “manual workers, craftsman and operators” represented 31% of the labour force in 1960 while their weight remains practically the same 40 years later (30.3%). To sum this up, we may notice an increase in professions involving higher qualification levels, while professions requiring lower skill levels maintain their economic importance (except for the decline of agriculture-related jobs).

This conclusion is substantiated by the fact that most agricultural decline is not replaced by a corresponding growth in technologically sophisticated industries and services, but depends instead on the traditional transformative sector (construction, textiles, metallurgy, the food industry, etc.), the low skill “personal services” sector (domestic and personal services in restaurants, hotels, etc.) and the “social services” sector (which includes public administration and police forces). The only exception is an intensification of banking, insurance and real-estate in “services related to production” (see Cardoso *et al.*, 2005: 39). Another exception to the rule comes from technology businesses which invest in high quality products and services and have grown significantly in the past decades (in spite of being marginal to the national economy).

Portuguese society, particularly in its urban areas, is very multicultural. This has to do with the continuous immigration flow from all continents, especially former Portuguese colonies in Africa and Brazil, as well as from Asian countries. Migration patterns *from* and *to* all these territories are too complex to be explained in just a few words, especially since in some cases we are talking about very long term relationships⁹. To sum up the trend, since the mid 70s we have seen a noticeable increase in the immigration flow from African countries and more recently Brazil, with considerable social and economic impact.

Foreign population with legal residence in the country

	1999		2000(1)		2001(1)		2002(1)		2003(1)		2004(2)		2005(3)	
	nº	%	nº	%	nº	%	nº	%	nº	%	nº	%	nº	%
Total	191 143	100,0	207 587	100,0	223 997	100,0	238 929	100,0	249 995	100,0	263 353	100,0	275 906	100,0
Europa	56 686	29,7	61 678	29,7	67 127	30,0	72 229	30,2	77 124	30,9	83 656	31,8	88 560	32,1
África	89 797	47,0	98 769	47,6	107 309	47,9	114 399	47,9	117 954	47,2	121 638	46,2	125 934	45,6
Angola	17 721	9,3	20 416	9,8	22 751	10,2	24 782	10,4	25 616	10,2	26 520	10,1	27 697	10,0
Cabo Verde	43 951	23,0	47 093	22,7	49 845	22,3	52 223	21,9	53 434	21,4	54 806	20,8	56 433	20,5
Guiné Bissau	14 217	7,4	15 941	7,7	17 791	7,9	19 227	8,0	20 041	8,0	20 583	7,8	21 258	7,7
Moçambique	4 502	2,4	4 619	2,2	4 725	2,1	4 864	2,0	4 916	2,0	4 955	1,9	5 074	1,8
S. Tomé e Príncipe	4 809	2,5	5 437	2,6	6 304	2,8	6 968	2,9	7 279	2,9	7 829	3,0	8 274	3,0
Outros	4 597	2,4	5 263	2,5	5 893	2,6	6 335	2,7	6 668	2,7	6 945	2,6	7 198	2,6
América Central e Sul	25 767	13,5	27 395	13,2	28 835	12,9	30 397	12,7	32 393	13,0	34 778	13,2	37 617	13,6
América do Norte	10 169	5,3	10 195	4,9	10 183	4,5	10 138	4,2	10 116	4,0	10 114	3,8	10 108	3,7
Ásia	7 938	4,2	8 746	4,2	9 724	4,3	10 938	4,6	11 565	4,6	12 331	4,7	12 847	4,7
Outros	786	0,4	804	0,4	819	0,4	828	0,3	843	0,3	836	0,3	840	0,3

⁹ This has to do with an obvious link between all these countries: Portuguese is the country’s official language.

- (1) **Data ratified in 2006.**
- (2) **Preliminary data ratified in September 2006.**
- (3) **Preliminary data from September 2006.**

Source: INE – Demographic Statistics.

As we can see, there has been a general growth in immigration, from 191,143, in 1999 to 275,906, in 2005, representing a growth rate of 44.3%. Africa represents a major component of this immigration (45.6% in 2006), followed by Europe (32.1% in 2006) and Central and South America (13.6% in 2006).

From a cultural point of view, syncretism and heterogeneity are perceptible in many ways (from food to music there are examples of cultural intertwining).

Although there is much evidence of cultural diversity and hybridity in Portuguese society, it is hard to determine if this promotes tolerance (including tolerance of what is on the Internet). We don't have any evidence to support this conjecture. We do, however, have the general knowledge that this cultural mixing and coexistence has been reasonably friendly (at least in the last decades).

3.2 Role of the state

The Portuguese Republic is a democratic and semi-Presidential State. The welfare state is a relatively recent development (started in the 70s), and modernisation of Education, Social Care and Health policies also comes from that period. There is now pressure for more liberal policies in these areas, which goes hand in hand with liberal perspectives on ICTs. There is a policy of not requiring self-regulation from Internet Service Providers (ISPs). The market regulates itself, and therefore *ISPs are not held responsible*.

As stated before, perhaps the most relevant transformations to attitudes and values in Portuguese society have to do with what we have called the formation of a new “public sphere”. For the past few decades Portugal has moved from a (practically) “closed” society to a (generally) “open” one. The qualitative consequences of this transformation are probably more significant than their quantitative ones (measured in terms of its impact on economic and social structure). This “openness” is related to profound changes in the availability of cultural goods, linked to an increase in production and distribution of all sorts of products and services, like free media¹⁰ (both public and private¹¹), remarkable growth of cultural events and their accessibility, increasing participation in civic activities and so on. However, structural features (like a persistently high level of illiteracy) explain the rather low levels of cultural consumption (for instance, low reading habits¹²). This last feature partially explains the low level of Internet penetration. In spite of its considerable growth in the last years most people

¹⁰ One must not forget that overt censorship prevailed until 1974, when finally was disrupted by fall of political dictatorship.

¹¹ Private newspapers only appeared after 1986; radio was also open to privatization in 1988 and, finally, private television appeared in 1992, with two commercial TV channels, only after the 1989 revision of the Portuguese constitution. See Cardoso *et al.* (2005: 76).

¹² According to a national survey carried out by CIES, in 2003, only 44% of Portuguese population declared having read a book recently, whereas 77.5% mentioned that they usually read magazines and newspapers. In the top of Portuguese leisure preferences comes watching television (99,4%) or being with family and friends (93,8%). See Cardoso *et al.* (2005: 202). The same conclusion has been drawn in a national survey to higher education students, supposedly more frequent readers than non-higher education population of the same age. This study has concluded that, on average, Portuguese higher education students do not differ much from the rest of young population. Another explanation was pointed out by this study: it seems that family cultural background is more important than present social position (since students from more favourable social and cultural backgrounds reveal higher consumptions levels of cultural activities in general). See Balsa *et al.* (2001, chapter III).

are still reluctant to use it, particularly adults with low education levels and elderly people¹³. This illustrates a substantial generational gap in ICT use in Portuguese society (see Cardoso *et al.*, 2005: 144, 176-177).

Internet content reflects all these changes. Aside from domain registration (by FCCN), there is no actual regulation of Internet content. This means that the author of specific content is the only one responsible for what appears online. As a consequence, it is up to the user to choose whether or not to see specific content. This may be problematic when vulnerable audiences like children are concerned. Thus, in some cases, the right to create and divulge all sorts of material may contradict the right to be protected from the same material.

4. Other factors affecting children's online experiences

English language use among children and young people is very widespread, thanks in large part to movies, TV series and pop/rock music that is consumed predominantly in English. English is also one of the required languages in formal education (you can learn it as early as the first grade, and in some cases even sooner). The influence of English language is not only "institutional" (or formal), it is also cultural, given its predominance in the leisure time of children and young people. In this sense one could argue that English, more than other foreign languages (which remain residual), constitutes a second language, particularly for young generations.

According to Cardoso *et al* (2007), the bedroom is becoming a space for different social practices associated with youth culture - from its use as a study area to uses mediated by technologies. These may include the consumption of more traditional media like television or computer related activities. A majority of young people use this space¹⁴ to study. The bedroom is a privileged space in a young person's free time, emerging as a location for the private use of media that also appear to function as vehicles for sharing social experiences. The idea of "bedroom culture" is relevant to Portuguese youths, and can be characterised as the use in the private space of the bedroom, simultaneously or exclusively, of different media for young people's leisure and education— these activities include watching television (whether watching *de facto* or having it on as a background to other activities), surfing the Internet, doing homework, using the telephone or mobile phone, etc. The bedroom becomes a space where young people express their individuality. This is reflected not only on their private uses of media but also through choices of decoration, making the bedroom their own domain and their window to other worlds. These emergent media-use patterns raise questions regarding the need for adaptation of parental control, and the configuration of such media uses in relation to space appropriation.

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¹³ The older you are the lesser you are expected to use Internet and other ICT. This last assertion, evidently, has to do with a negative correlation between *age* and *education*, which reflects the broader structural pattern of development mentioned above.

¹⁴ Cardoso, G. (Coordenador), Espanha, R., Lapa, T. 2007. E-Generation: Os Usos de Media pelas Crianças e Jovens em Portugal. Support to Research by Foundation Portugal Telecom. Lisbon: CIES-ISCTE

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