National report for Slovenia

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1 The Internet

1.1 Children's Internet access

According to the last RIS survey[1], 66% of the Slovene population aged 12 to 65 declared themselves to be Internet users (including email, FTP, WAP, WWW), with a gender distribution of 72% males to 61% females. More than half of users (58%) stated they used the Internet severaly times a day. In the age group from 12 to 19, all respondents (100%) stated they are Internet users. The percentage or share of users decreases with age (e.g. age group from 20 to 29 – 91% itd.). According to the alternative source SURS[2], 1.066.400 people or 61%[3] of the population already used Internet by October 2007. The percentage of PC usres and Internet monthly and weekly users is still increasing. The most frequent users of Internet in Slovenia are definitely young people aged 12 to 19. The share of households with broadband Internet is still slightly above EU average[4] (SI – 44%, EU 25 – 43%). When it comes to individual regular users, Slovenia is slightly lagging. 76% of regular Internet users have broadband access (EU25 81%, EU15 81%).

9% of the Slovene population accessed the Internet from an educational institution in the last three months. 45% of the population accessed the Internet from home (EU25 – 49%). At work, 28% of Slovenes access the Internet (EU25 – 26%). 9% of population access the Internet elsewhere (Internet cafes, libraries, etc.)(EU25 – 7%). All public libraries in Slovenia have access to Internet and there are plenty of Internet cafes.

Most ISPs are very active in Internet safety issues. Besides offering filters and safety tools they also cooperate extensively with the national Internet awareness node Safe-si (Insafe). They prepare awareness raising materials, campaigns; they educate general public and youngsters, etc.

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

Slovenian children mostly access the Internet at home. Approx 76 % of children/young people in the population 10 to 15 access the Internet regularly at home, 67 % access it regularly in school, 16 % at public access point, 42 % at somebody else's home or elsewhere. Approx. 38 % of the children/young people in the population 10 to 15 access Internet via mobile phone, 1,4 % access it via palmtop computer and 4 % via laptop computer.

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

Slovenian children have a great deal of access to the Internet. 90 % of them are regular Internet users (which according to definition of the Slovenian Statistical Office means using the Internet in the last 3 months). Approximately 55% of the children/young people in the population from 10 to 15 use the Internet every day or almost every day. Approximately 23% of children/young people use the Internet at least once a week. Around 9% of children/young

[1] Representative telephone survey, sample size 484, october 2007

[2] Statistical office of Republic Slovenia

[3] The differences in shares can be explained by different methodologies used, but the SURS data are more accured.

[4] Source: Eurostat 2007

people use the Internet at least once a month and around 2% of children/young people use the Internet less than once a month.

Gender, location and mode of Internet access

Regularly access the Internet	**Boys**	**Girls**
At home	83%	69%
At school	66%	68%
At somebody else's home	44%	40%
Via mobile phones	40%	35%
Via a palmtop computer	0%	2%
Via a laptop computer	5%	3%

There are also differences in the frequency of Internet usage: 93% of boys and 88% of girls are regular Internet users (which according to the definition of the Slovenian Statistical Office means using the Internet in the last 3 months). 62% of boys and 50% of girls use the Internet every day, 25% of boys and 21% of girls use the Internet at least once a week, 5% of boys and 13% of girls use the Internet at least once a month.

Regarding online abilities, Slovenian boys aged 10 to 15 are more skilled than girls of the same age as shown below:

Skills	**Boys**	**Girls**
Use of search engine	93%	91%
Sending posts to forums and newsgroups	59%	54%
Using P2P	48%	40%
Creating a website	16%	13%
Searching, downloading and installing software	39%	32%
Protecting computer from viruses	31%	27%

Sending an email with attachments, however, is an exception as girls are more skilled in this activity (65% of boys and 67% of girls have this skill).

1.4 Internet and Media Content for Children

The Public Service Broadcaster (RTV Slovenia) is the major provider of content for children with numerous self-produced as well as imported programmes (mostly from the UK). However, it has some competition when it comes to online content. RTV Slovenia offers two sites for children.

In Slovenia, there is no actual body directly responsible for producing good online content for children, but the Ministry for Education and Sport and the Ministry for Culture usually funds projects concerning this subject (on a basis of public bids). The disadvantage of this is that the Ministry for Education and Sport mainly supports projects that deal directly with education, strongly attached to the teaching curriculum. They are not actually concerned with

how Slovene children are entering the online world, what they are actually seeking and what content they are interested in.

The Ministry of Culture does fund some projects, which are concerned with language culture (emphasizing the importance of the Slovene language), but mainly it supports only print media and not so much online content (in fact they do not support journals or portals which only exist online, which is indicated from public bids). Thus, for online content, the main responsibility falls on the Ministry of Education. It advises and recommends certain topics through various seminars (for example, they support the children's portal www.zupca.net).

The kind of information that the sites for children usually cover can be classified according to the age of children they are targeted at. For example, for small children, sites contain different games (such as Memory), sheets to be coloured in, or different shapes to be assembled. Most of these websites are actually supplemental media for children's print media (such as iciban-on-net/MK, Vede/DZS, Svetizbesed/Rokus).

For primary school children, the content is usually entertaining and educating at the same time (e.g. www.zupca.net), some content is also interactive. For teens, unfortunately, we have only dating and friendship sites (for networking).

The Slovene government and other political actors do not have any special approach to conceiving children literacy or to promoting it. While a good deal is said about literacy this is mainly for reading books and printed media with almost nothing for online media. In primary schools, there are approximately only 4 hours per year devoted to interactive media (such as movies) but nothing dedicated to the Internet. Basically, some teachers try to provide their pupils with such information, and some do not. There is no systematic solution or policy on that issue. For example, there are some reading societies for children but they emphasise books and overlook the important fact that children are interested in movies, computer games and the Web, so they do not thematise these subjects.

The Ministry for Education did a great job in providing IT equipment in schools, for bringing computer into schools and connecting them to the Internet, but the actual use of these, let alone education on Internet use, is in hands of teachers, so some are more motivated than others. There is no common vision of what children should do on the Internet, how they could use it and what could they learn from it. So good online content for children would mean quality standards that are used by print media for children, with carefully chosen articles with suitable visual content. The editors of children's websites should also be aware of specificities of this medium and how to use all the possibilities offered by it. Too much formal education on websites for kids can also be boring for them, so good sites should not only be focused on educational material (as it is often the case) but should include entertaining aspects as well.

Perceived priorities: More public bids from the Ministry should be made to attract more of those who are qualified in producing good content. Independent children sites are known to die quickyl as they are mostly run by a single person. A good site requires a team of well-qualified people, which of course means more money (that has not been spent for this purpose so far).

Barriers: There is no money for creating sites for kids in Slovenia, so those who are doing it are doing it out of enthusiasm, which we all know is limited.

1.6 Risks experienced by children online

According to results of the RIS survey conducted in 2006[5] young Slovenians are mostly bothered by spam (40%) and other commercial messages (32%). They report having serious trouble with viruses (35%) and the slowness of the websites loading (32%). It seems not only

[5] RIS research: Survey on PC and mobile Internet use and web visits 2006 at: http://www.ris.org

parents but also young people are concerned about Internet safety – 44% of young people in a survey express this concern. 45 % of young Slovenians have heard of cases of Internet addiction, 25% of them even know cases from their social environment. 36% of youngsters have heard of cases of addiction with online pornography, 14% have heard of cases of losing real life friends because of to extensive Internet use, 9% have heard of such cases in their own social environment.

The EB 2007 focus groups of children aged 9 to 14 years have shown that open chat rooms pose the greatest risk on the Internet. Girls are more concerned about possible personal danger while the boys worry more about the viruses which could harm their computer. According to the Eurobarometer survey of 2005/6, 28% of parents/guardians think that their child has encountered harmful or illegal content on the Internet

1.7 Internet regulation and promotion

There are two laws in Slovenia, regulation ICTs/Internet: The first one is a Personal Data Protection Act (2007, dealing with privacy and anonymity) and Electronic Commerce Market Act (2006, dealing mostly with spam and the responsibility of Internet providers). Child pornography is regulated by the Penal Code of the Republic of Slovenia. However, it does not make a distinction between 'illegal' and 'harmful' content.

The overall amonunt of ICT/Internet crime is moderate. The Slovenian Police Force has a department for cyber crime and is also responsible for dealing with child pornography. Within this, there are special sections for online child pornography and for cybercrime, including a forensic centre. In addition, every police department in Slovenia has got to have one specialist in this area. In general, there have not been many interventions on the Internet. There is also an Inhope Slovenian hotline Spletno Oko (www.spletno-oko.si/en), which deals with the reports on child pornography and hate speech on the Internet. The membership of the Spletno Oko advisory board includes the State prosecution of Slovenia (www.dt-rs.si), the Slovenian Police Force (www.policija.si), Slovenian media and other institutions concerned with children's rights protection. They stated there are many cases of hate speech but little child pornography in Slovenia.

The Slovene Government has implemented the Strategy si2010, which is a Slovene national strategy for the development of the information society under the strategic framework i2010. The Directorate for the bInformation Society funds and promotes various projects of open source/code, projects for measuring indicators of the information society, e-Schools, e-Libraries, Multimedia centres. They promote e-business and e-commerce, and the production of Slovenian Internet contents. They also fund various research projects about the information society, however, none so far with regard to children on Internet. The Directorate for Information Society is involved in funding the Slovene hotline Spletno oko and Slovenian awareness node Safe.si. The Directorate for Information Society prepares and conducts programmes for the promotion of computer literacy.

The Slovenian government has a contract with one ISP provider ARNES (ARNES stands for Academic and Research Network of Slovenia). Its main task is development, operation and management of the communication and information network for education and research, and was established as an independent public institution in 1992. It provides network services for research, educational and cultural organisations and enables them to connect and cooperate with each other and with related organisations abroad. These institutions have free access, whilst individuals (students, teachers, professors) have subsidised access. The ARNES network links over 1000 Slovenian organizations and makes Arnes' services available to nearly 200,000 people. International connections with educational and research networks in other countries are provided through the several-dozen gigabit GÉANT2 network (www.geant2.net), which is co-financed by the European Commission.

There is another project, RO, which aims to increase computer literacy in Slovene educational institutions. It aims to increase the level of informationisation in Slovene schools. Part of this project is intROnet, a connecting point (centre) in ten locations in Slovenia. The educational

role of the connecting point, intROnet, is to give pupils the opportunity to look for information, to improve their computer knowledge and use it in everyday situations, to meet new people, work with them and help them when looking for information. The Ministry of Public Administration also provides a Government portal (www.gov.si/za_otroke/) for children and youth. Here they also provide tips for Internet safety for children and parents.

Further, the Information Commissioner has launched an initiative to raise awareness amongst children and youth as regards personal data protection on the Internet. The department has written and designed a brochure entitled "*Only you decide*", which will be available on its website and other related websites, printed in hardcopy (110.000 copies) and distributed to children and youngsters. The brochure addresses both youngsters and parents and teachers, pricipally stressing the importance of responsible publishing of personal data on the Internet and raising general awareness of one's rights in terms of personal data protection. The department is closely collaborating with Slovenian Safer Internet Awareness node (www.safe.si) in reaching as wide an audience as possible.

On Data Protection Day, the Information Commissioner is organising a round table in one of the schools in Slovenia. The round table will address the issues from the brochure and serve as its formal launch.

Only one NGO, MISSS, is active in this field. The Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia (MISSS) was founded in 1995, as a non-governmental, non-profit organisation. Currently, it is working as a national youth information and counselling service, thus collaborating with 16 regional and local youth information and counselling centres throughout the Slovenia. The local YIC, applying the European standards and principles of general youth information work, disseminate information in local areas and provide counselling in choosing the right information.

The activities of National Youth Information and Counselling Service (MISSS), as well as those of the regional and local youth information and counselling centres, therefore, is in accordance with ethical and professional principles, based in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1990), the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (1992), as well as with the European Charter of Youth Information and Counselling for Young People, adopted in 1995 at the General Assembly of the ERYICA, in Bratislava. Following these sources and taking into consideration the European White Book, as well as several other documents, the National Youth Information and Counselling Service has elaborated the standards and premises for further development of youth information services in Slovenia. The document, Information and Counselling for Young People in Slovenia, therefore, provides basic standards and directives for the activities of the national and local YICs. Using the open method of co-ordination, the document has been prepared in 2003, on the initiative of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth (Governmental office) and with collaboration from the local YICs. National Youth Information and Counselling Service provides several means of support for local YIC. MISSS, thus, provides them with youth information of national and transnational importance and mediates in exchanging local information. It also maintains a national youth database with collected information on the programmes for youth, held in Slovenia, and the organisations that perform these programmes for youth (available on the first page of this website). MISSS has been a member of European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) since 1995. However, they are not specifically lobbying in the field of child online protection.

1.9 Media literacy

The EB 2007 focus groups involed children aged 9 to 14 years showed that:

- Awareness about possible abuses increases with the age.
- The youngsters aged over 12 years are well aware of the possible dangers of paedophilia; they believe that the girls are more in danger.
- Younger girls know that it is not right to communicate with strangers but some of

them have no perfectly clear conception why.

According to the Eurobarometer 2005/06, 62% parents/guardians think their child knows what to do if uncomfortable online, 19% think they do not.

1.10 Factors shaping public discourses about the Internet

As an example of an influential event, youngsters took over a class in high school and started destroying school property. They were dancing on the tables, burning chairs, making fun and insulting the teacher. They videotaped this on mobile phones, it spread like fire and soon enough it was available on the Internet. A large-scale public discussion and media attention focussed on issues of teacher's authority, youth behaviour, and ICT use in classrooms by children.

There was also some media and public discussion following the event when a jealous ex-boyfriend put naked pictures of a girl online.

2 The Educational system

2.1 General education

The index of education level in Slovenia level is 0,98, which is an average of the country's literacy rate (percent of adults literate). In Slovenia there is 100% literacy rate.

In 2006, Slovenia participated in the PISA study. PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) is a standardised assessment test that was jointly developed by participating countries and administered to 15-year-olds in schools. It is an international study on reading, mathematics and science literacy, and is conducted every 3 years. The results showed that achievement of Slovene students in science is above OECD average, and this also applies for achievement in reading and mathematic literacy, although, those results are somewhat lower when compared to science. In science, only students from 11 countries performed better than Slovenian students (Finland, Hong Kong, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Estonia, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Netherlands, Lichtenstein and Korea). In the study, 57 countries participated – 30 OECD countries and 27 partner countries (Slovenia is among them). The results show that the Slovenian schooling system is successful and can be compared to the schooling systems of the most developed countries.

age	total	No education	Incomplete basic education	basic	lower and middle vocational	technical, professional and general	Short term tertiary	Undergraduate	post-graduate
20-24	147.687	0	1.207	14.400	39.863	87.803	964	0	16
25-29	144.977	478	1.465	15.450	43.463	55.102	6.676	21.233	1.110
30-34	140.612	518	1.472	22.005	43.052	44.301	8.799	18.166	2.299
35-39	153.518	549	1.886	23.536	50.667	48.795	11.107	14.490	2.488
40-44	152.142	673	4.224	28.394	49.537	42.021	11.573	13.422	2.298
45-49	158.611	892	7.639	36.189	51.403	38.150	10.394	12.001	1.943
total	897.547	3.110	17.893	139.974	277.985	316.172	49.513	79.312	10.154

	100%	0%	2%	16%	31%	35%	6%	9%	1%

The table represents educational attainment by age groups in absolute numbers (in 1000). At the bottom of the table, the educational attainment is presented in percentages in total for all age groups. As we can see,about 18% of population aged 20 to 50 have completed basic education or less (primary school; ISCED2), the majority of population, 66% in the selected age group, has finished upper secondary education (ISCED3 (A, B, C)) and only 10% has university education or more (ISCED5, ISCED6).

In public school, nine grades instead of eight were introduced a couple of years ago. Children now go to school at an earlier age (6) and have an external examination at the end of primary school. Perhaps a main change is also the use of ICTs in curriculum.

2.2 Education and the Internet

All schools in Slovenia have computer and Internet access. According to the SITES 2006 study, there are 42 computers per school. Most of them have access to the Internet and the local network. On average, there is one computer per 9 students in primary school (grade 1-9).

In Slovenia, ICT is implemented into different subjects, but in higher grades there are also specific subjects related to ICT and ICT literacy. In the first three grades there should be a computer with Internet access in every classroom.

3 Wider society

3.1 Social change

We had a change of social, economic and political system in nineties, moving from communism to capitalism and a free market economy. That also included a multi-party system in political sense and the introduction of democracy. In economical terms, the supply of goods was greater, including more diversity in supply and more imported goods. In general, these changes mainly created more inequalities regarding SES, though we still do not have such apparent social class differences as, say, in the UK.

The Government has been very enthusiastic aboth the EU. Basically, anything coming from the EU bodies is immediately accepted and greeted (various action plans, strategies, including strategy si2010). We even had a Ministry for the Information Society until the last Government took over in 2004. The current government only kept the Directorate for the Information Society. The former Ministry funded many research projects (e.g. the majority of RIS project, many open source projects, Cyberpipe project -an Internet cafe with weekly workshops and lectures about Internet, information society and computers - and many other projects [mentioned earlier]).

Slovenia is average in relation to technological changes. The key inequalities in Slovenia are based on income and education. As in other countries, the digital divide in Slovenia varies according to standard control variables: age, gender, education, religious belief, social status, monthly income of the household, and level of urbanisation (Dolnicar et al., 2002), but it is narrowing slowly. The main digital divide is based on age and education and it is constant (source: various RIS studies).

We can say that in Slovenia there is mostly rural population (roughly 70%). According to data on population density from the National Statistical Office, 18% of population aged 10 to 75 lives in high population density areas (capital and some bigger cities), 33% is lives in medium population density area, and 48% is lives in low population density areas.

Persons in employment by sectors of activity and sex, Slovenia, 1st quarter 2006

1000 Total	%	
946	100,0	Total
85	9,0	Agriculture
343	36,2	Industry
(5)	0,6	Mining and quarrying
271	(28,7)	Manufacturing
(10)	1,0	Electricity, gas and water supply
56	(5,9)	Construction
514	54,3	Services
121	12,8	Wholesale, retail; certain repair
39	4,2	Hotels and restaurants
51	5,4	Transport, storage and communication
22	2,4	Financial intermediation
61	6,4	Real estate, renting and business activities
53	5,6	Public administ. and defence; comp.soc.sec.
78	8,2	Education
50	5,3	Health and social work
37	3,9	Other social and personal services
.	.	Other services
(4)	(0,5)	Not stated

In previous years, Slovenia was a more orientated to manual-work than now but after the change of political and economic system in nineties, we became a relatively non-manual work population, mainly dealing with services.

Slovenia is a very homogeneous country, only opening up to outsiders since being in the EU. There are many cases of hate speech (source Spletno oko), and many forums have to be moderated (speech against Croatians and so on).

3.2 Role of the state

The state does not interfere with people's lives. In Slovenia, there is free speech and no censorship. Pages that appear online are not censored (apart from forums where considerable moderation is needed, mostly for hate speech).

4. Other factors affecting children's online experiences

Children start learning English in school from grade four on, but many children take lessons before that, starting as soon as age 4. Slovenes could read English pages in general, but other languages are more subject to the individual knowledge of the readers of that particular language (e.g. Croatian, Italian, German). English is widely spoken and used among the Slovene population, and most of people understand and have at least basic active knowledge. But many can speak quite fluently. Many children can actually speak English and almost all teenagers. The Slovene language, however, is only spoken by Slovenes (only two million people actually speak it), therefore, the Slovene presence on the Internet is relatively small in comparison to other languages. Thus, Slovenes largely read the Internet in English. Some (those living near Austrian boarder mainly) can also read German Internet, and those near Italy Italian. Slovenes can also read Croatian and Serbian Internet websites (at least

older generations that had these languages at school). But mainly, they stick to Slovene or English pages.

In Slovenia there is a lack of research focusing on children. Most available data about children comes from international studies on education (PIRLS, TIMSS, PISA), where the main population are children. From the PISA study, where the target population are children aged 15 years, we see that 95% percent of children report having a computer at home and 40% report having more than one computer in the household (11% report having 3 or more computers). 70% of them report having a personal mp3 player. According to the study, only 23% of households have only one TV, 47% have two TVs and 30% have three or more TV sets. The National Statistical Office also reports that in the age group of 10 to 15 years olds, 94% have already accessed the Internet. Another study (RIS 2007) shows, in the age group 12 to 15, 100% have already accessed the Internet. Different studies also show that more households with children have access to the Internet compared to households without children.

There is no strong evidence that “bedroom culture” exists, but from some data we can conclude that children of today are quite media enriched and have pretty good access to digital devices.