



EU Kids Online II

Enhancing knowledge regarding European children's use, risk and safety online

A new project funded by the EC Safer Internet Programme

It is vital to chart and understand the complex nature of the changing risk context for children and their families, so as to inform policy makers, educators and the public about emerging online trends and possible solutions. EU Kids Online II is a new project designed to examine children's and parents' experiences and practices regarding use, risk and safety online.

Between 2009 and 2011, EU Kids Online II is conducting original empirical research across member states with nationally representative samples of children aged 9-16 years old and their parents. The aim is to produce a rigorous, cross-nationally comparative quantitative evidence base regarding internet use across Europe.

Directed by Professor Sonia Livingstone of the London School of Economics and Political Science, the project team includes an expert management group, an international advisory panel, and multidisciplinary research teams in 25 participating European countries:

- Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom

Why is this research needed?

Online risks high on public, research and policy agendas include exposure to inappropriate content (e.g. pornographic, self-harm and violent content, racist/hate material), unwelcome contact (e.g. grooming, sexual harassment, bullying, abuse of personal information and privacy) and, attracting growing attention, inappropriate conduct by children themselves (e.g. bullying, abuse of privacy).

EU Kids Online I (2006-9) examined available findings on cultural, contextual and risk issues in children's use of online technologies across 21 countries. It located and evaluated findings from some 400 studies, identifying key findings and pinpointing gaps in the evidence base. Its reports examine data availability, comparative findings, best research practice, research contexts and policy recommendations.

But exactly how common these risks are, how much risks result in genuine harm, how children react, whether some children are particularly vulnerable, how parents can or should act – all these questions and more await cross-nationally comparative and reliable research for their answers.

Aim and objectives

Adopting an approach which is child-centred, comparative, critical and contextual, EU Kids Online II aims to design, conduct and analyse a major quantitative survey of children's experiences of online risk.

The survey – interviewing children face to face, at home, with careful ethical and procedural protections for sensitive questions - will encompass questions about children's internet use, digital literacy, coping responses, perceptions and safety practices. These findings will be systematically compared to the perceptions and practices of their parents.

Specific objectives are as follows:

- To design a thorough and robust survey instrument appropriate for identifying the nature of children's online access, use, risk, coping and safety awareness.
- To design a thorough and robust survey instrument appropriate for identifying the nature of parental experiences, practices and concerns regarding their children's internet use.
- To administer the survey in a reliable and ethically-sensitive manner to national samples of internet users aged 9-16, and their parents, in member states.
- To analyse the results systematically so as to identify both core findings and more complex patterns among findings on a national and comparative basis.
- To disseminate the findings in a timely manner to a wide range of relevant stakeholders nationally, across Europe, and internationally.
- To identify and disseminate key recommendations relevant to the development of safety awareness initiatives in Europe.
- To identify any remaining knowledge gaps and methodological lessons learned, to inform future projects regarding the promotion of safer use of the internet and new online technologies.

Expected results

- Core findings regarding children's and parents' experiences of online technologies, focused on comparisons of children's and parents' perceptions of and practices regarding online risk and safety.
- Patterns of risk and safety online to be identified following top-down hypothesis testing and bottom-up exploration of relationships among different variables, conducted on a cross-national basis.
- Evidence-based policy and research recommendations.

Timetable

Autumn 2009	Project planning, survey design, sampling
Spring 2010	Fieldwork
Summer 2010	Core data analysis
Autumn 2010	Report on core findings
Spring 2011	Contextual and comparative analysis
Summer 2011	Final report and recommendations

- For information, reports, updates and contacts, see www.eukidsonline.net.