

Cyprus

Online technologies have been on the rise in Cyprus only in the last decade. At the same time, policy efforts through schools and online safety organizations have attempted to ensure that children are aware of the dangers and can protect themselves when using the Internet.

The EU Kids Online survey has highlighted the major areas in which policy action is needed in Cyprus. Most children in Cyprus appear to go online on a computer in their own bedroom rather than in a common area where parents can more easily check what they are doing online. More significantly however, EU Kids Online has identified that parents in Cyprus are not aware of what their child may be encountering when online, especially in cases where a child has encountered harmful or disturbing material. Most parents expressed their wish to be more actively involved in what their children are doing on the internet and likewise children in Cyprus mentioned that they'd welcome more parental involvement. Therefore, more child-parent communication should be encouraged either through schools or other safety organizations with access to both target groups.

In addition, the vast majority of Cypriot children have a social networking profile. Even though EU Kids Online showed that most child keep their profile private, they still accept invitations from strangers while at the same time displaying abundant information about themselves. Children need to be educated on how to safely use social networking sites and learn how to protect themselves in the cases where they encounter something harmful. EU Kids Online has raised the concern that cyberbullying goes unrecognized by Cypriot parents and that this can have detrimental effects on children. It is important then, that parents get more involved in their children's online activities and learn how to identify and control suspicious behaviors that may occur from exposure to cyberbullying, before it is too late to act.

Noteworthy also is the fact that parents are unaware of children going to meetings with people they have first met online. It is critical, therefore, that all relevant stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies find ways to reach out to parents and help them understand the dangers of such meetings and help them find ways of communicating with their children about their online activities.