EU Kids Online

WHAT CHILDREN DO ONLINE

Only a quarter of children do interactive and creative activities online (e.g. blogging, file-sharing, chatrooms or virtual worlds)

More older than younger children reach this step, adding multiplayer gaming, downloading and sharing UGC

23% OF CHILDREN

56% OF CHILDREN

75% OF CHILDREN

This step adds in social media and news viewing, but not all reach it

86% OF CHILDREN

Most children also watch video clips online

When children first go online, they focus on playing games and schoolwork

100% OF CHILDREN

Many 9-16 year old internet users take risky opportunities:

40% have "looked for new friends on the internet"

34% have "added people to my friends list or address book that I have never met face-to-face"

16% have "pretended to be a different kind of person on the internet from what I really am"

15% have "sent personal information to someone that I have never met face-to-face"

14% have "sent a photo or video of myself to someone that I have never met face-to-face"

"All kinds of bullies, who can hurt person with words" (girl, 14, Estonia)

"Hacker; spying; cheating; strangers who contact you online and you do not really know what they want from you" (boy, 11, Austria)

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4 in 10 children encountered online risk in the past year:

14% of European 9-16 year olds have seen sexual images online.

6% of 9-16 year olds have been sent nasty or hurtful messages/been bullied online.

30% of 9-16 year olds have had contact online with someone they have not met face to face.

9% of 9-16 year olds have been to an offline meeting with a contact first met online.

15% of 11-16 year olds have come across one or more types of potentially harmful user-generated content.
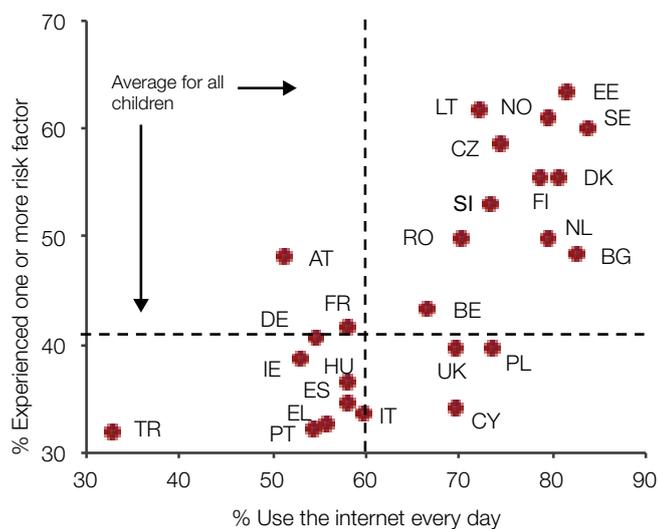
21% of 11-16 year olds have seen or received sexual messages online.

9% have experienced one or more types of personal data misuse.

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As use of the internet increases so does the experience of risk. By comparing the percentage of children who use the internet daily with the percentage who report one or more risks online, striking differences across countries are visible.

MORE USE/MORE RISK

63% of European 9-16 year olds have received internet safety advice from parents, 58% from teachers and 44% from peers.

Safety skills of 11-16 year olds:

64% can block messages from someone they don't want to hear from

56% can change privacy settings on a social networking profile

56% can compare different websites to decide if information is true

28% can change filter preferences

EU Kids Online surveyed 25,000 European children and parents in 25 countries to enhance knowledge of children's experiences of risky and safer use of the internet. See the findings at eprints.lse.ac.uk/33731 and conclusions at eprints.lse.ac.uk/39351

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

● Efforts are needed to support children in a greater diversity and depth of online activities, and to build critical literacy and safety skills that enhance online benefits, digital citizenship and resilience to harm, especially for less privileged and younger children.

● Safety messages should be matched to different groups – teens may worry about pro-anorexia content, young children can be upset by pornography, those who bully may also be bullied. Reaching the 'hard to reach', while difficult, is a priority given that vulnerable children are particularly susceptible to online harm.

● To reduce user confusion and impractical skill burdens, privacy settings, parental controls, safety tools and reporting mechanisms should be age-appropriate, far more user-friendly, and with privacy enabled by default where appropriate.

● The more parents go online, the more effectively they support their children's internet use, so initiatives should encourage parental internet use, notably in Southern and Eastern Europe.

● Since opportunities and risks online go hand in hand, efforts to increase opportunities may also increase risks, while efforts to reduce risks may restrict children's opportunities. A careful balancing act, which recognises children's online experiences "in the round", is vital.

"Be made a ridicule by having personal stuff written about you and then made public" (boy, 11, Greece)

"When I am playing games with my older sister on the internet, naked people pop up and it is very bad" (girl, 15, Turkey)