

Net Children Go Mobile: New Risks and Opportunities

The Net Children Go Mobile project launches its report today, showing that smartphones and tablet users engage in more online opportunities, but are also exposed to more risks.

51% of children own a smartphone and 45% use it daily to go online, while 20% own a tablet but 30% use it on a daily basis to access the internet.

Smartphone and tablet **users** engage more in communication and entertainment activities. They also have a **higher level of digital skills, safety skills and communicative abilities**. However, they are **more** likely to be exposed to online **risks**.

Risk does not necessarily mean harm. Bullying is still the most harmful risky experience: two out of three children who have been bullied on - or offline claim they have been 'very' or 'a bit' upset. Sexual risks are second: half of the children who have received sexual messages or have seen sexual content of any kind (on- and offline) have been concerned. While smartphones and tablet users encounter more risks, they don't report more harmful experiences. **Mobile internet access and use is not, therefore, a factor of vulnerability**.

Giovanna Mascheroni heads up this European wide project, and says: "Exposure to online risks appears greater among children who also use mobile devices to go online when compared to the 2010 EU Kids Online data. This is not a causal relationship, though. Rather, we observe the same correlation between opportunities and risks: older users and smartphone and tablet users benefit from more online opportunities, but are also exposed to more risks. **As children go online more in a variety of contexts and from a wider range of devices, they also encounter more risks**".

Children say they are unhappy with online content. While over four in ten (43%) 9- to 16-year-olds are very satisfied with the online provision available to them, younger children are more likely to express dissatisfaction about online content for children - only 33% of 9- to 10-year-olds say there are lots of good things for children of their age to do online. Children are most satisfied in the UK (57%) and Ireland (51%), and unhappier in non English speaking countries - ranging from 40% of Romanian children, to 37% of Danish children and only 30% of Italian children who are satisfied with online content for children.

Negative user generated content (NUGC) (31%) - concerning hate, pro-anorexia, self-harm, drug taking or suicide - tops the list of risks that children are likely to encounter on the internet, followed by communicating with people never met face to face (30%) and seeing sexual images (29%). While 27% of children report being bullied face-to-face or online, 14% have experienced any form of cyberbullying on the internet or through mobile phones. Least common risks include receiving sexually suggestive messages (13%) and offline meetings with online contacts (12%). Children in Denmark and Romania are more exposed to risks than their peers in Ireland, Italy and the UK.

For more information:

The Net Children Go Mobile is co-funded by the Safer Internet Programme to investigate through quantitative

and qualitative methods how the changing conditions of internet access and use - namely, mobile internet and mobile convergent media - bring greater, lesser or newer risks to children's online safety. Net Children Go Mobile conducted a face-to-face, in-home survey among 2,500 9-16 year-old internet users and their parents in Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Romania, the UK, using a stratified random sample and self-completion methods in the case of sensitive questions.

Participating countries include Denmark, Italy, Romania, the UK, Belgium, Ireland, and Portugal, the three latter joining the project on a self-funded basis. A report including Belgium and Portugal will follow in spring. For the full report **Net Children Go Mobile: risks and opportunities** see:

<http://www.netchildrengomobile.eu/reports/>

For more information please contact Giovanna Mascheroni giovanna.mascheroni@unicatt.it or visit <http://www.netchildrengomobile.eu>

Safer Internet Day is organised by **Insafe** each year to promote safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones, especially amongst children and young people across the world. The theme of SID 2014 is **Let's create a better internet together** www.saferinternetday.org/web/guest/sid-2014