

Press release XXIII.10.2014

From EU Kids Online III, London School of Economics (LSE)

Parents less likely to monitor their children's internet use if accessed via smartphones

Parents are less likely to closely supervise their children's internet use if they are accessing the internet using a smartphone or tablet, finds the latest report from EU Kids Online at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). This is despite the fact that children experience an increased online risk when accessing the internet through a smartphone or tablet device.

The report, produced in association with Net Children Go Mobile, finds that this relaxation of parental monitoring if children are on handheld devices is due to the fact that both parents and children are more likely to view the use of smartphones and tablets as 'private'. This means that parents are less likely to pry into their children's smartphone use, and children are more likely to resent it when they do.

Online on the Mobile analyses how children aged 9-16 across Europe changed their internet use between 2010, when most children used fixed computers and laptops, and 2013, which has seen a great increase in use of handheld devices by children.[1]

Smartphones and tablets increase the potential of experiencing online danger, the report argues, by introducing new risks such as geo-locational data and apps which connect mobile users with co-present strangers.

The researchers found that younger children are less likely than older children to encounter online risks, but more likely to be affected by the risks they experience. Children aged 9-10 who access the internet with a smartphone or tablet are more likely to experience online risks than those who don't.

Professor Sonia Livingstone, who leads the EU Kids Online project at LSE, said: "Children who have access to handheld devices and smartphones are more likely to encounter risks online. Despite this, our latest data show that parents of children with access to handheld devices are less likely to impose a range of rules regarding internet use. We know that children across Europe are getting their first smartphone at a younger and younger age so it is ever more important for parents to understand that while the ways children access the online world may have changed, and that the potential for them to encounter online risks is in fact increased with the new handheld technology.

"We also recommend that software developers, technology companies and service providers prioritise the development of a suite of consistent easy-to-use handset controls which parents can use to support and monitor their children's safe mobile internet use. "

Online on the Mobile: Internet use on smartphones and associated risks among youth in Europe is by EU Kids Online network members: Gitte Stald (Denmark), Lelia Green (Australia), Monica Barbovski (Romania), Leslie Haddon (UK), Giovanna Mascheroni and Barbara Scifo (Italy), Bence Ságvári (Hungary) and Liza Tsaliki (Greece).

For the full report, see

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20III/Reports/MobileReport.pdf>
Ends

For more information about the EU Kids Online project please contact the LSE Press Office, pressoffice@lse.ac.uk or call 0207 955 7060.

For more information about the Net Children Go Mobile project please contact Giovanna Mascheroni, giovanna.mascheroni@unicatt.it, or see www.netchildrengomobile.eu

Notes:

[1] In 2013, over one-quarter (28%) of 9-12 year olds and over one-half (60%) of 13-16 year olds are found to be accessing the internet via a smartphone.

In 2010, children using smartphones came from richer, more privileged backgrounds, but in 2013 a majority of 13 to 16 year olds in Europe have smartphones.

Information about the project and survey:

- **The *EU Kids Online*** project aims to enhance knowledge of European children's and parents' experiences and practices regarding risky and safer use of the internet and new online technologies, and thereby to inform the promotion of a safer online environment for children. The project is funded by the EC Safer Internet Programme (SI-2010-TN-4201001).
- **This report uses the findings from EU Kids Online II (2010-2011). Countries included are:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK.
- **It also references the Net Children Go Mobile project (2013-14). Countries included are:** Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania and the UK. Net Children Go Mobile is also funded by the EC Safer Internet Programme. More information is available here <http://www.netchildrengomobile.eu/>
- **Australian partner research** referenced in Figure 1 gratefully acknowledges the use of EU Kids Online materials and processes. Their project was funded by the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for Communications and Creative Industries and supported by Edith Cowan University.
- **For more findings**, other reports and technical survey details please see www.eukidsonline.net.