



Researching Children's Rights Globally in the Digital Age

London, 12 February 2015

What's the Problem? Opportunities and
barriers to (researching) children's rights in
a digital, global age

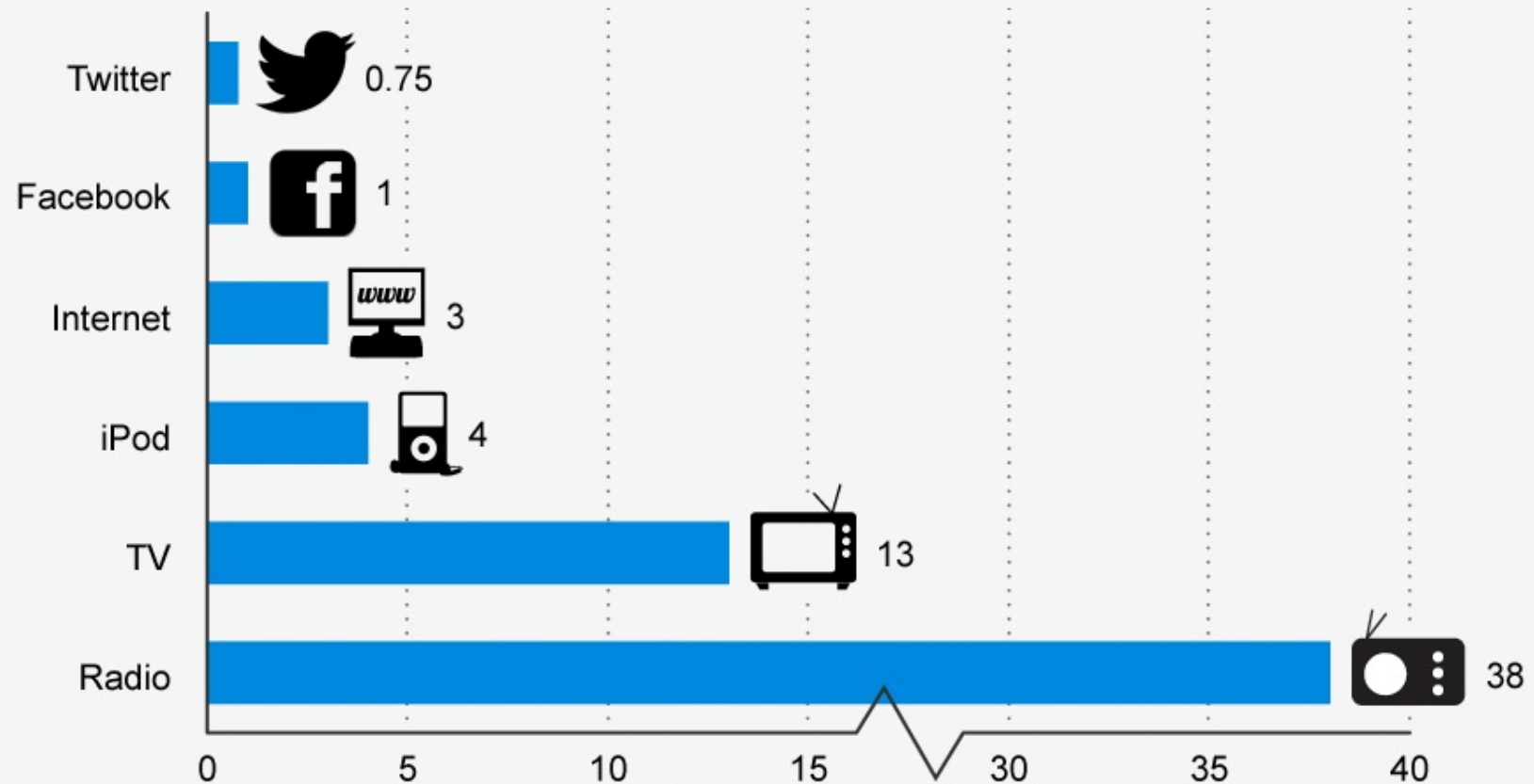
The South African Scenario

Patrick Burton

Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP)

The Rapid Rise of Social Media

Time to reach 50 million users worldwide (in years)



Children in South Africa



- 36% of SA population under 18
- 23% of children live with both parents
- 32% live in a household with no employed adult
- 55% live under the poverty line
- 22% have experienced violence at school
- 48.7% have been exposed to violence in community

ICTs in South Africa

H/H has a mobile phone

88.9

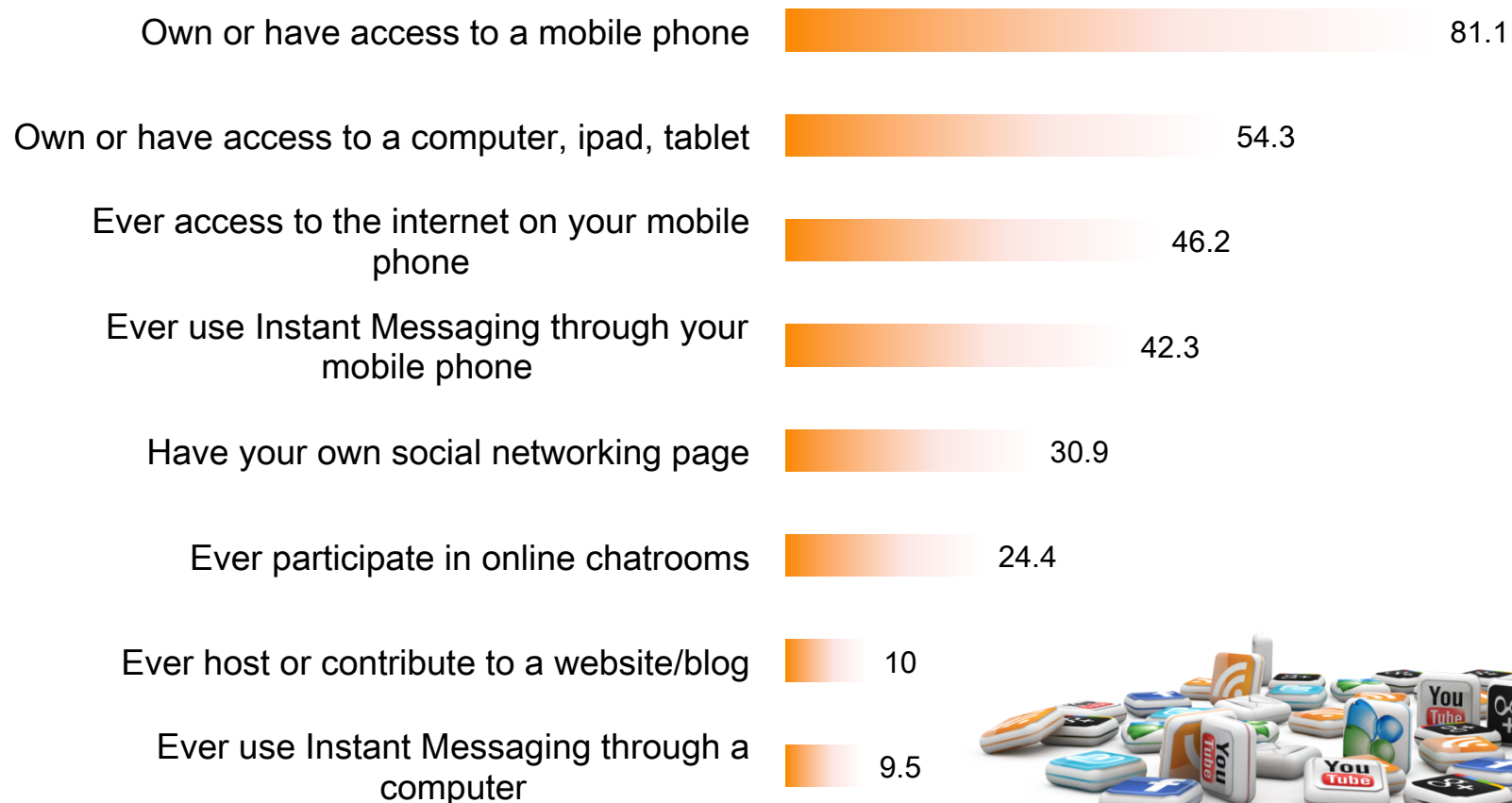
Own a computer

21.4

H/H has a landline

14.5

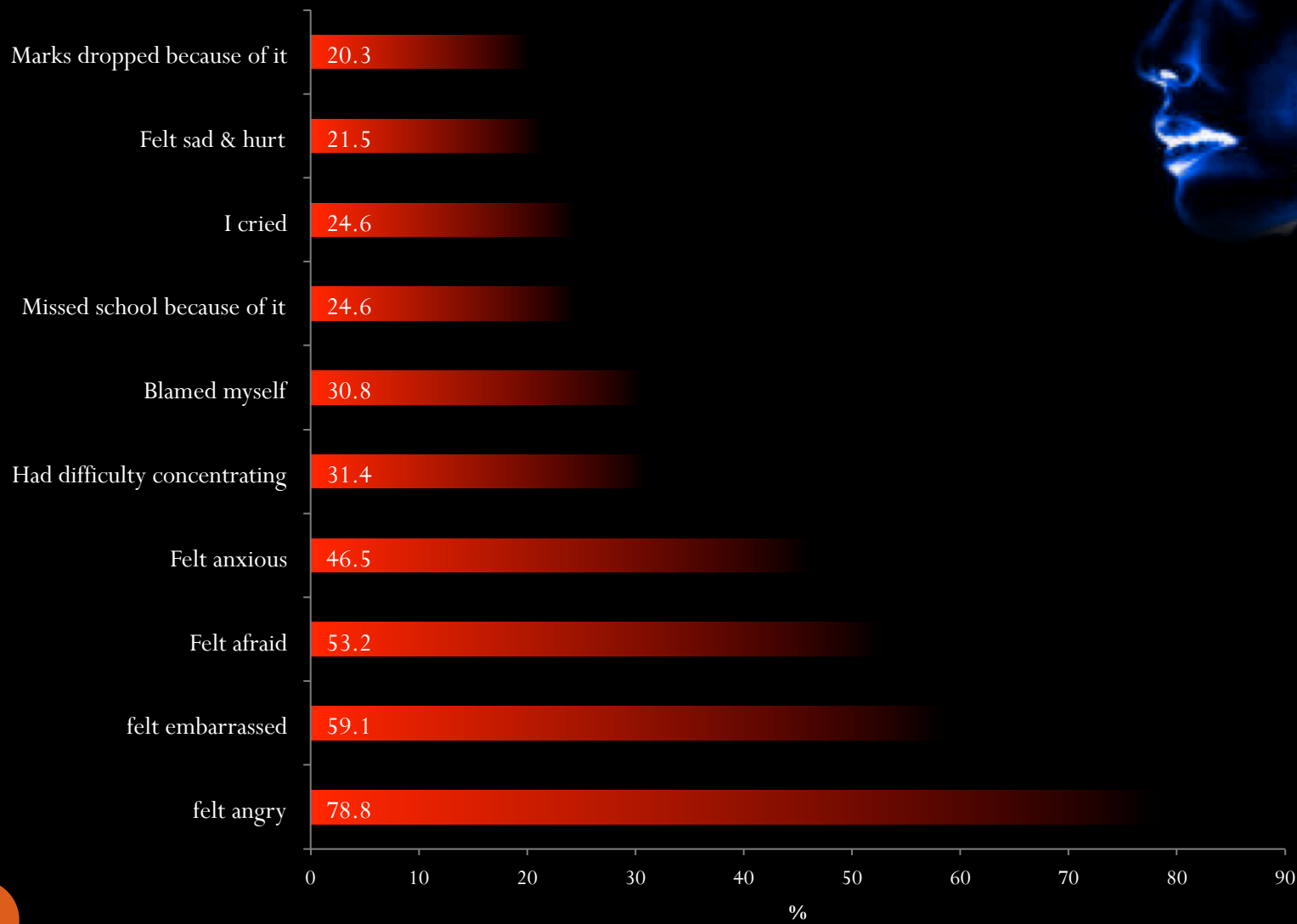
Use of social media and ICT in SA



Experiences of Online Violence



Source: CJCP, 2012



Methodological Challenges

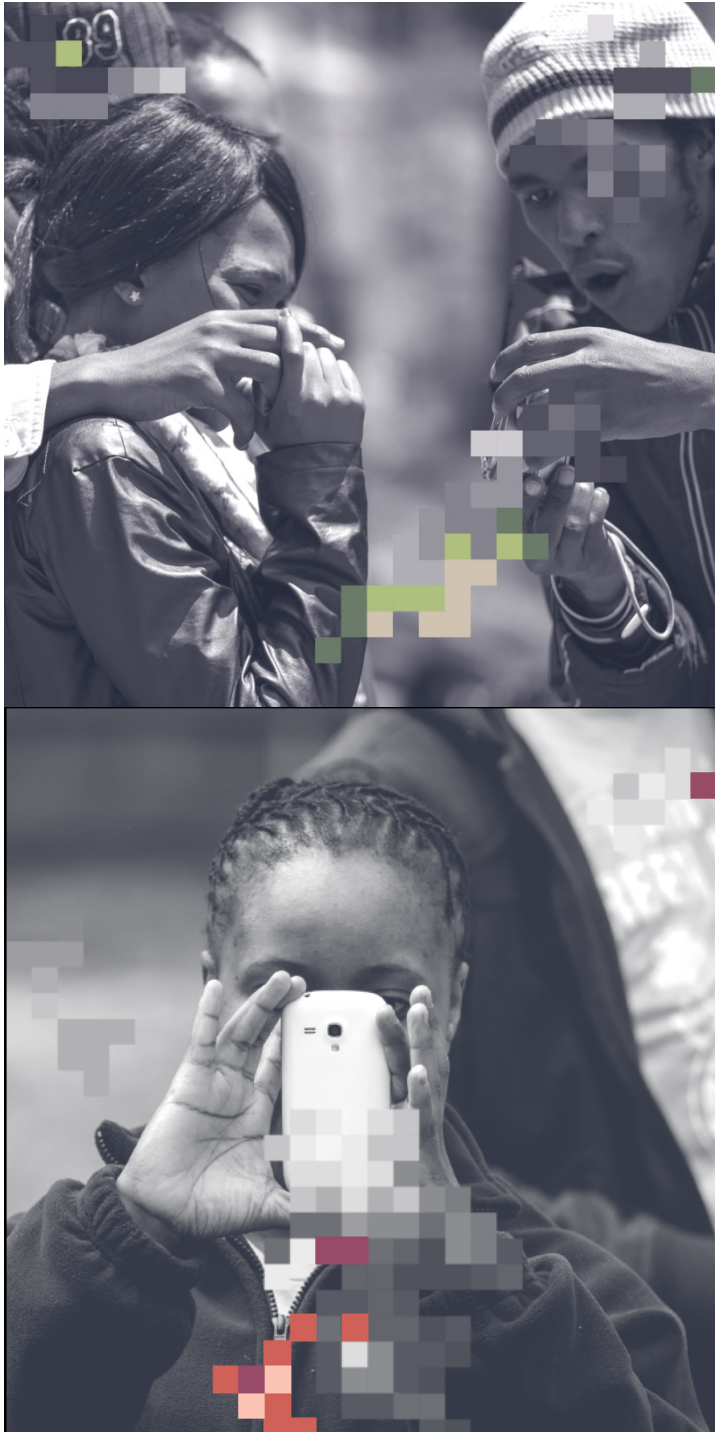
- Impact of legislation on participation:
 - Criminalization of sexting
 - Mandatory reporting
- Appropriate measures of harm?
- Institutionalizing data collection (ownership, quality, funding)
- What constitutes evidence?
- Challenge of research uptake and advocacy when outside existing policy agenda/direction





Research Opportunities

- Prioritization of VAC, including online, in Government's National Plan of Action on VAWC
 - (constraints of conceptualization/language)
- National epidemiological studies (Optimus, NSVS)
 - (but cross sectional, single sample, limitations)
- Political buy-in and support



Research Questions

- ➔ What are the kinds of online experiences children consider harmful and how they would characterise the harm they encounter.
- ➔ What is the relationship between the wider context of violence, inequality and poverty, and access to, and usage of ICTs and social media, and related vulnerabilities attached to online experiences? Are there shared or multiple vulnerabilities, or does vulnerability in one domain impact on vulnerability in the other.
- ➔ What is the most useful conceptual framework for framing our understanding of and research into children's use of ICTs, risks and harms?

Towards Better Understanding Young People's Experience

- ➔ More contextualized research:
 - ➔ Unpacking risk (what is it, how does it develop, response, who's most at risk)
 - ➔ Risks in different contexts – high/low violence; urban/rural; marginalized/wealthy)
 - ➔ Young people's agency in developing resilience
 - ➔ Developing reliable data systems
 - ➔ Developing tailored interventions (not one size fits all)

CONNECTED DOT COM

Young People's
Navigation of Online Risks
Social Media, ICTs & Online Safety

www.cjcp.org.za
www.cyberbullying.org.za
patrick@cjcp.org.za

