

Department of Media and Communications public lecture

# Children's Rights in the Digital Age

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Council on Child Internet Safety*

Suggested hashtag for Twitter users: **#LSEchildrights**

**LSE** events



# Children's rights in the digital age

Sonia Livingstone



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@Livingstone\_S

LSE, February 2015



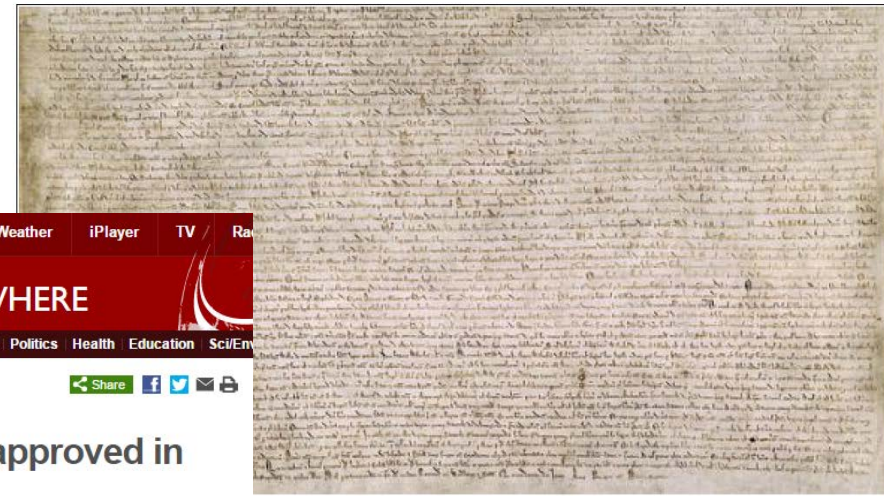


# EU Kids Online

Findings • methods • recommendations







## Internet 'bills of rights'

### Tim Berners-Lee calls for internet bill of rights to ensure greater privacy

Web inventor says world needs an online 'Magna Carta' to combat growing corporate control



Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the world wide web, campaigns to maintain its democracy.

Agence France-Presse  
Sunday 28 September 2014 04:26 BST

The inventor of the world wide web has warned that the freedom of the internet is under threat by governments and corporations interested in controlling it.

Tim Berners-Lee, the British computer scientist who invented the world wide web, called on Saturday for a bill of rights that would guarantee the freedom of the internet and ensure users' privacy.

The internet can only be a tool to empower the people of the world if the rights within this Charter are protected and respected.



www.apc.org info@apc.org



27 March 2014 Last updated at 13:58

### Brazil: Internet 'bill of rights' approved in key vote



By News from Elsewhere...  
...as found by BBC Monitoring



A pioneering bill protecting individual rights and freedom of expression has been approved by Brazil's Chamber of Deputies, being seen as a significant step towards becoming law.

Known as the **Marco Civil** - or Bill of Rights - it would enshrine the right to privacy and the principle of web neutrality. The measure must still be approved in the Brazilian Senate before being signed into law, the **Latin Post news website reports**.

...ed a Magna Carta for the Internet (James Joel/flickr)

...neighbors in respect to digital infrastructure and culture. Internet access



### NETmundial INTRODUCTION

The Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance, also known as NETmundial, is convened to discuss two important issues relevant for the future evolution of the Internet, in an open and multistakeholder fashion:

1. Internet Governance Principles, and
2. Roadmap for the future evolution of the Internet Governance Ecosystem

The recommendations in this document have been prepared with the view to guiding NETmundial to consensus. This has been a collaborative effort among representatives of all stakeholder groups.

More than 180 contributions have been received from all stakeholders around the globe. Those contributions have been taken as the basis for the elaboration of the recommendations submitted here to the participants of NETmundial towards the development of broad consensus.

The recommendations of NETmundial are also intended to constitute a potentially

# What about children's experiences?

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# Key questions

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- Conditions of access and use in daily life?
- Greater opportunities for information, education, participation?
- Compounds or adds new risks of harm?
- Effective initiatives, policies and practices?

# Ladder of online opportunities

Daily online activities of  
European 9-16 year olds  
Net Children Go Mobile 2014

8% spent time in a virtual world

14% read/watched the news online

15% posted a message on a website

17% posted content to share with others

29% used the internet for school work

31% checked information out of curiosity

53% watched video clips, 53% visited a social network



# Diverse risks bother children online

When strangers message me on the internet, sex sites that open without me clicking on them. (boy, 10, Austria)

Violence against women and children and perverted humiliations and cruelty. (girl, 14, Germany)

To take a photo of me without my knowledge and upload it to an inappropriate website. (girl, 10, Bulgaria)

See people having sex or naked people. (boy, 10, Portugal)

Showing images of physical violence, torture and suicide images. (girl, 12, Slovenia)

Facebook shows scary things even if you click on something that does not look or sound scary. (girl, 9, UK)

Animal cruelty, adults hitting kids. (girl, 9, Denmark)

Propositions to meet from people whom I do not know. (boy, 12, Poland)

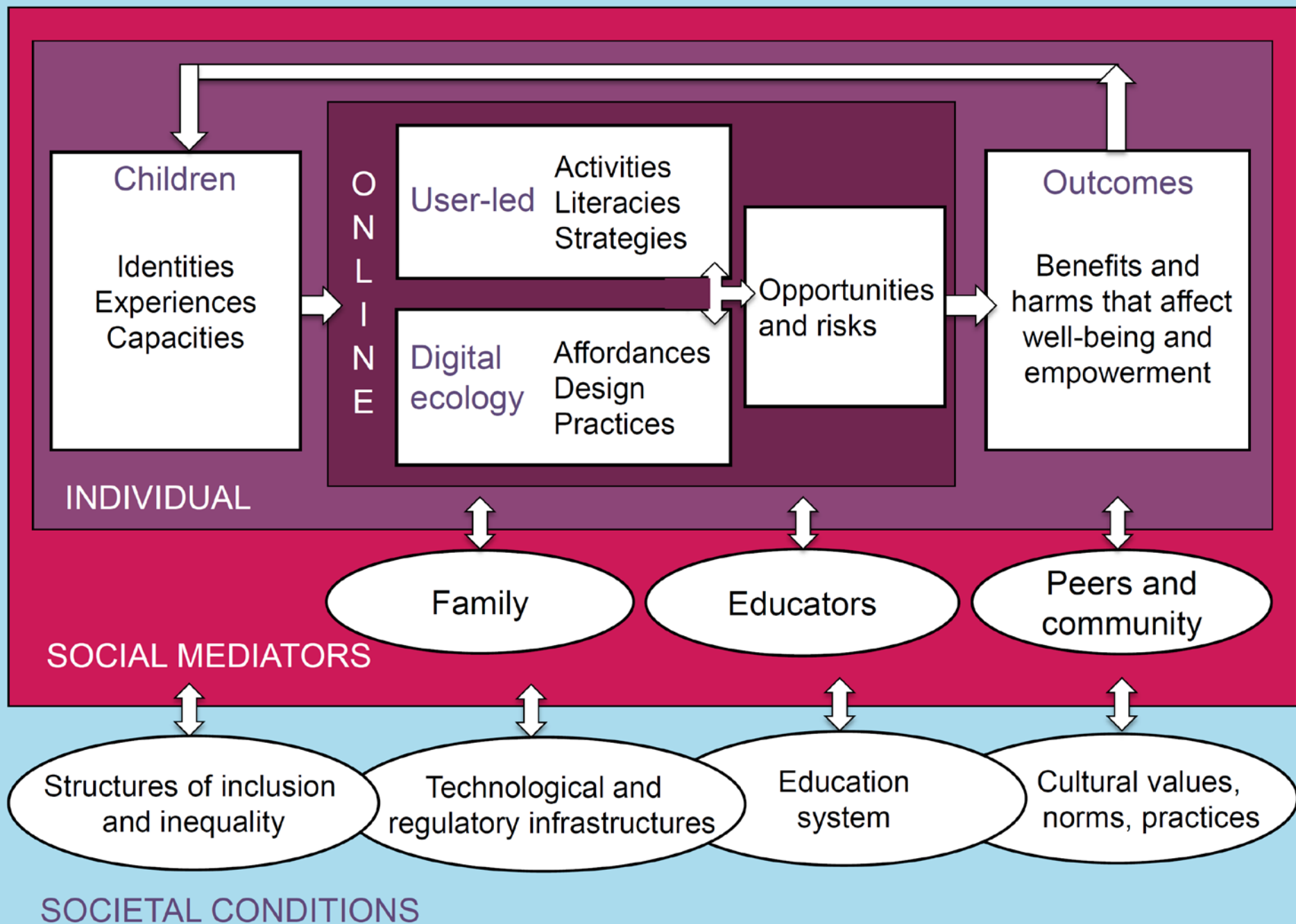
A mate showed me once a video about an execution. It was not fun, but insane. I get scared. (boy, 15, Sweden)

Scary things - I saw something at my friend's house and I can't get it out of my head. (boy, 11, Ireland)

Those things that show other people's suffering or torment as a funny thing. (boy, 14, Hungary)

I was shocked seeing a starving African child who was going to die and a condor waiting to eat him. (girl, 13, Turkey)





# Media anxieties

**Generation Xbox**

**Health** Half of Britain's seven-year-olds do not do enough exercise, according to new research. The study, by University College London, of 6,500 primary pupils found the number playing sport has dropped to its lowest level for five years despite last year's Olympic Games.

**Fears for children's safety on Facebook**



**Cyber-bullying now just a part of life, believe most children**

al network giant opens profiles to strangers

imed Technology Reporter

's groups and internet safety have rounded on Facebook's social network company plans which will allow of teenage users to open u files to strangers.

ge in the company's rule at children aged from 13 to 1 able to post online statu pictures and videos that ca by anyone. Until now the ly been visible to a limite of "friends", or "friends o

ok, which has more than n users in Britain, said that n by the wishes of teenager

be harmful now may come back to haunt them later. This is a move in the wrong direction."



**Thousands of British children caught in web of online blackmail**

Overseas paedophiles target UK teenagers in fast-growing trend combining extortion, cyber-bullying and sex abuse

By PAUL PEACHEY  
Crime Correspondent

Thousands of British children have been targeted by internet blackmailers, with many forced to use webcam to film themselves performing sexual or self-mutilation because they fear losing their school pictures sent to their families, child protection experts warn today.



Hague and Cable 'misled' public over arms trade

By CAHAL MILMO  
Chief Reporter

Senior cabinet ministers have been accused of making "profoundly misleading" claims about Britain's lucrative arms export industry by stating there is no evidence that shipments to hostile regimes are used for "internal repression".

MPs have demanded an explanation from the Government as to why export licences were granted earlier this year for the goods ranging from sniper rifles to C-130 gun-rudders to be sent to countries with questionable human rights records, such as Saudi Arabia and Libya.

The Commons committee dealing with arms exports has listed six nations subjected to embargoes, or considered a "Country of Concern" for human rights, which were cleared to receive military or law-enforcement equipment.

Continued on PAGE 2

**Qatar set to host winter World Cup**

By ROBIN SCOTT ELLIOT  
Sport News Correspondent

The prospect of the world's World Cup for 2022 being held in winter would significantly closer when FIFA, the game's governing body in Europe, backed plans to switch the event, which is being staged in June. UEFA members consider it "impossible" to play in the scorching heat of a Qatar summer.

Report, PAGE 10

**Schools chief urges iBan for the under-11s**

Sian Griffiths  
Education Editor

allow anonymous messages to be posted and have allegedly been used to publish

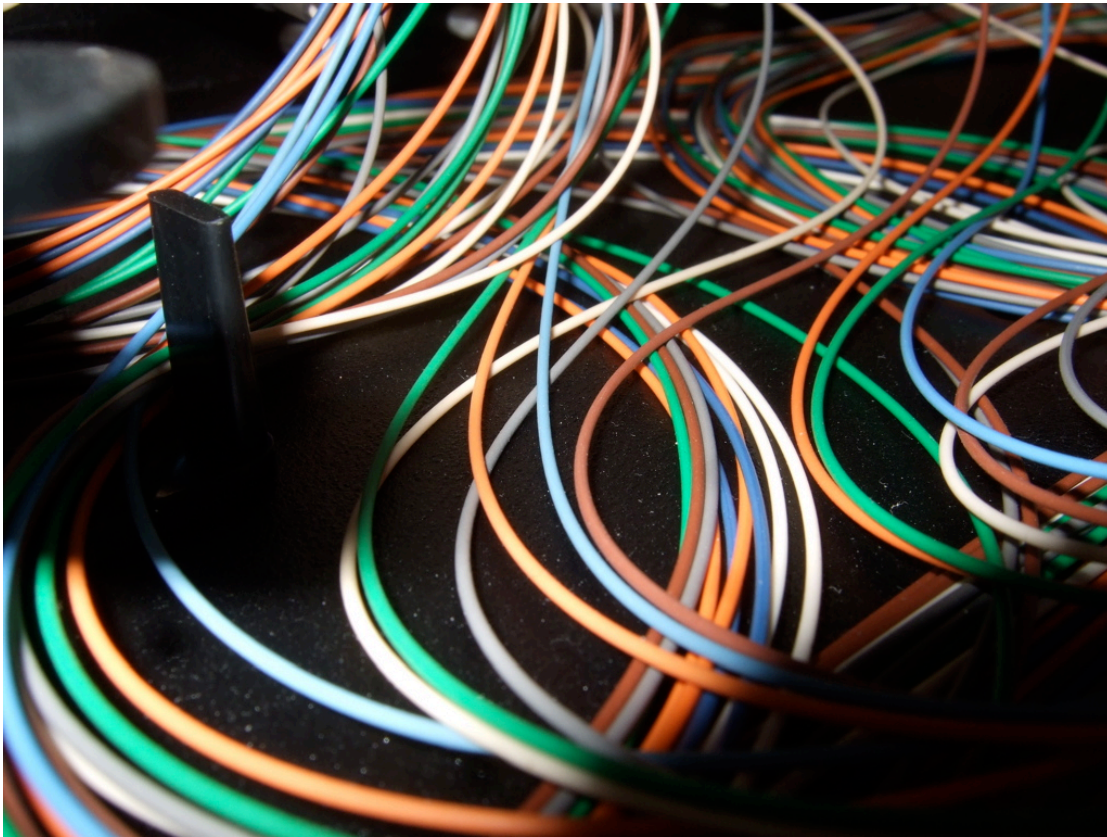




*"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."*

# What differences does the digital make?

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- Networked
- Interactive
- Persistent
- Ubiquitous



# UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

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## The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



When children's social environment is no longer only physical but also digital, then that's got to have an impact on almost every aspect of their lives...

If there were a CRC for the Digital Age and a series of policy recommendations that we could put in place to governments that say these are [what] you need to do to ensure that young people's engagement is constructive rather than destructive or worrying, then that would be a hell of a good start.

(UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office)

# UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

**Protection** from any kind of discrimination (**Art.2**), all forms of abuse and neglect (**Art. 19**), including sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (**Art. 34**), and other forms of exploitation prejudicial to the child's welfare (**Art. 36**), from 'information and material injurious to the child's well-being' (**Art. 17e**), 'arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, or correspondence [and] unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation' (**Art. 16**)

**Provision** to support children's rights to life and development (**Art.6**), to preserve his or her identity (**Art. 8**), to an education to support the development of their full potential (**Art. 28**) and prepare them 'for responsible life in a free society' (**Art. 29**), to recreation and leisure appropriate to their age (**Art. 31**), to diverse material of social and cultural benefit to the child (including minorities) to promote children's well-being (**Art. 17**) and all appropriate measures for recovery from neglect, exploitation or abuse (**Art.39**)

**Participation:** 'In all actions concerning children... the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration' (**Art. 3**), including the right of children to be consulted in all matters affecting them (**Art. 12**), to freedom of expression (**Art. 13**), freedom of thought (**Art.14**), of association and assembly (**Art. 15**), to information (**Art.17**) and to participate fully in cultural life (**Art.31**)



# CRC

# Issues arising in the digital age

**Protection** from any kind of discrimination (**Art.2**), all forms of abuse and neglect (**Art. 19**), including sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (**Art. 34**), and other forms of exploitation prejudicial to the child's welfare (**Art. 36**), from 'information and material injurious to the child's well-being' (**Art. 17e**), 'arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, or correspondence [and] unlawful attacks on his/her honour and reputation' (**Art. 16**)

- Sexual grooming and sexual exploitation
- Creation and distribution of child abuse images
- Online dimensions of child trafficking
- New threats to privacy, identity and reputation
- Availability of (diverse, extreme) pornography
- Personal data exploitation, misuse, tracking
- Hostility, hate and bullying content and conduct
- Persuasion re: self-harm, suicide, pro-anorexia, drugs

**Provision** to support children's rights to life and development (**Art.6**), to preserve his or her identity (**Art. 8**), to an education to support the development of their full potential (**Art. 28**) and prepare them 'for responsible life in a free society' (**Art. 29**), to recreation and leisure appropriate to their age (**Art. 31**), to diverse material of social and cultural benefit to the child (incl. minorities) to promote children's well-being (**Art. 17**) and measures for recovery from neglect, exploitation or abuse (**Art.39**)

- Formal and informal learning resources and curricula
- Wealth of accessible and specialised information
- Opportunities for creativity, exploration, expression
- Digital and information skills and literacies
- Ways to counter traditional inequalities or problems
- Expanded array of entertainment and leisure choices
- Access to/representation in own culture and heritage

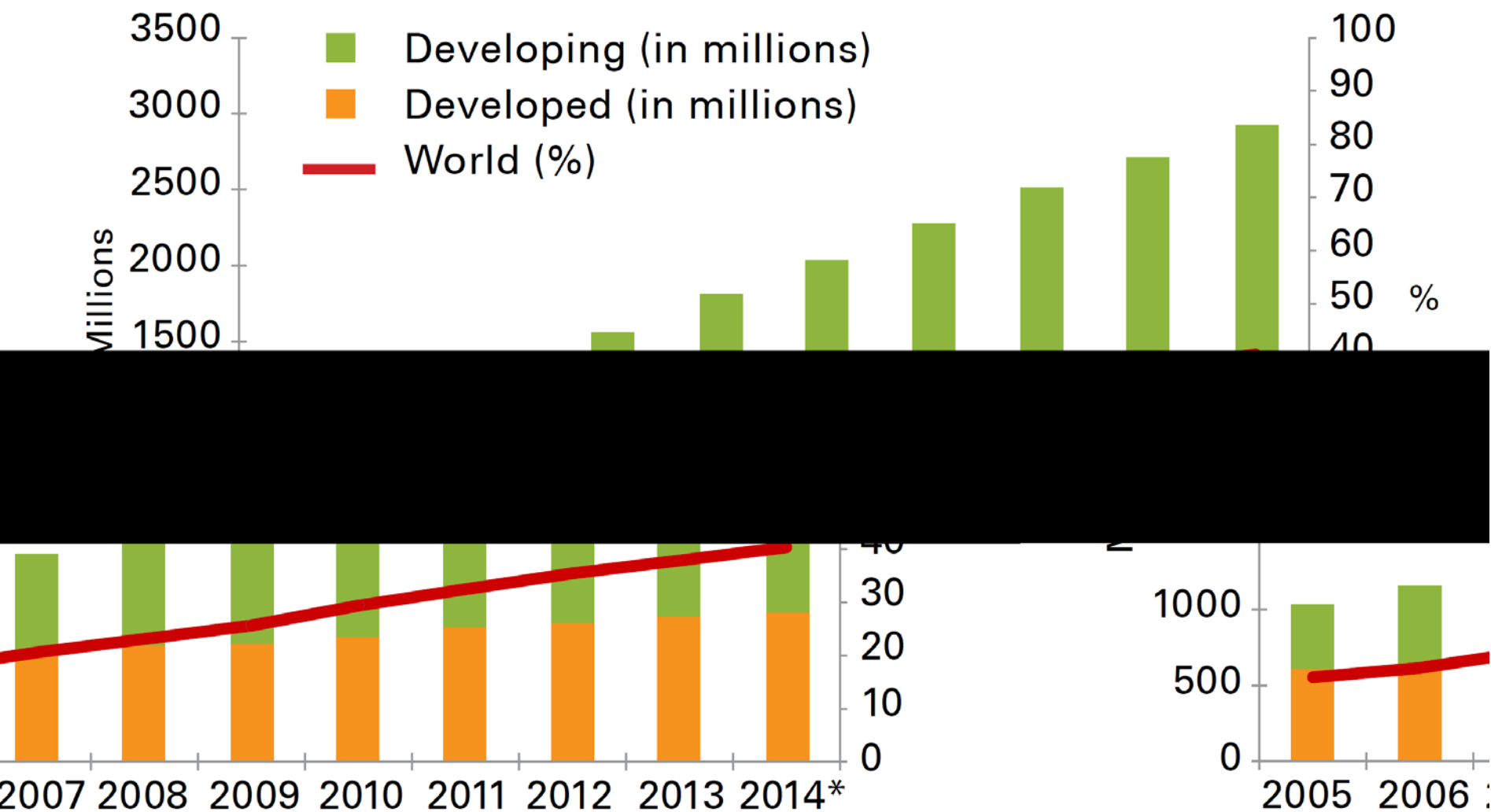
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- Enhanced connections and networking opportunities
- Scalable ways of consulting children about governance
- User-friendly fora for child/youth voice and expression
- Child-led initiatives for local and global change
- Peer-2-peer connections for sharing and collaboration
- Recognition of child rights and responsibilities

05-2014 Percentage of individuals using the Internet,



# Individuals using the Internet, total and percentage



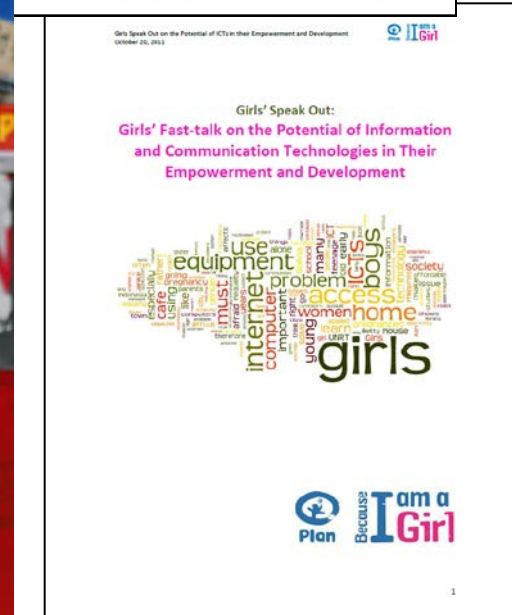
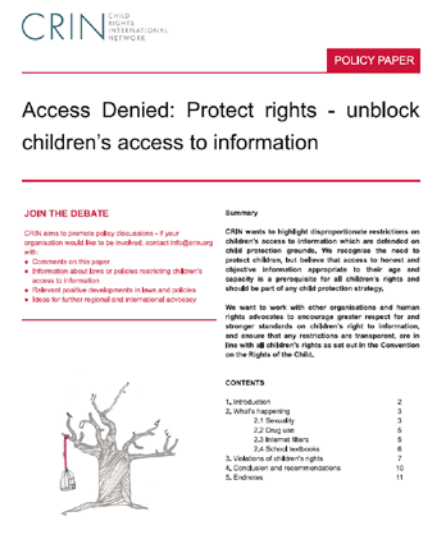
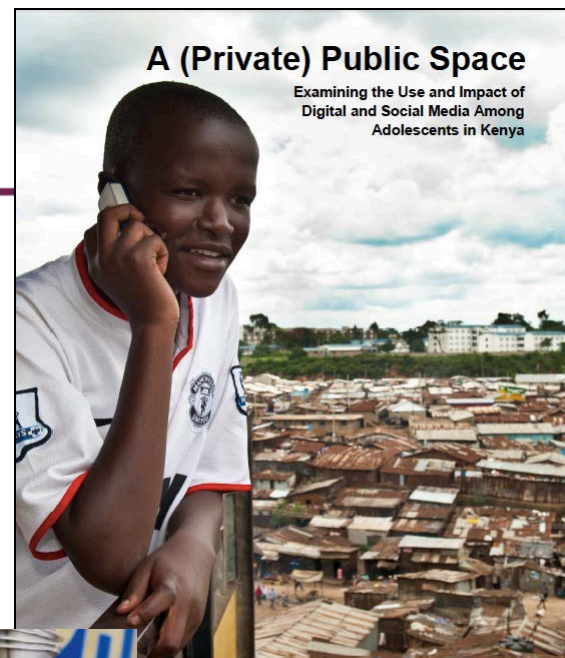
# The nature of internet use is changing

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# A wider evidence base





# 25 year anniversaries in 2014

The image is a screenshot of the United Nations Human Rights website, specifically the page for the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 2014. The top section features a large graphic with the text "Web 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY" and a call to action: "Send your birthday greetings to the Web in 2014!". Below this, it lists several notable figures who have contributed to the web, including Tim Berners-Lee (Web inventor), Vint Cerf (Internet Pioneer, Currently Chief Internet Evangelist), and Jimmy Wales (co-Founder Wikipedia). A social media sharing bar is also present, encouraging users to "Share a greeting anywhere on the Web, including:" with links to various platforms.

The main navigation bar includes the United Nations Human Rights logo and the text "Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights". It also features a search bar and a "Donate now" button. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- The Committee**: This section includes links to "Introduction", "Membership", and "Meeting of States parties/Elections". It also has a sub-section for "Basic documents" with links to the "Convention", "OP on Sale of Children", "OP on Children in Armed Conflict", "OP on a communications procedure", "Rules of procedure", "Rules of procedure OPIC", "Working methods", and "Biennial documents".
- The work of the Committee**: This section includes links to "Key documents related to reporting cycles", "States parties reports", "List of issues (LOIs)", "Replies to LOIs", "Concluding observations", "Reporting to the Committee", "Initial report", "Periodic reports", and "OPAC report".
- COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**: This section features a large graphic of a globe with the number "25" and the text "Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989-2014". It includes the heading "Celebrating 25 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child!" and a paragraph stating: "20 November marks 25 years since the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the General Assembly in New York. November 1989 was historical in many ways, not least because it was the first time that children were recognised as rights holders in an international treaty. This marked the transition from addressing children's immediate needs through charity alone, to galvanising the move towards advocacy that would bring about systemic change for the realisation of children's rights." Below this, it mentions a video of a statement by Kirsten Sandberg, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child at the 69th session of the General Assembly, and provides a link to the full statement.
- Country-specific information**: This section includes a dropdown menu to "Select a country" and a "GO" button. It also has sub-sections for "Meetings and deadlines" (Sessions, Calendar of country reviews by treaty bodies, Deadlines for the submission of documentation), "Search" (Treaty body database, Universal human rights index), "Publication" (Fact Sheet No.10, 18 Candles: The Convention on the Rights of the Child Reaches Majority), "Useful links" (Special Rapporteur on sale of children, SRSG for children and armed conflict, SRSG on Violence Against Children, Study on Violence Against Children, UNICEF, UN Cyberschoolbus, UN Special Session on Children, UN GA on Children), and "External links" (Treaty Body Webcast).

## CRC

## Evidence

## Internet Rights & Principles Coalition stresses...

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- Sexual exploitation
- Child abuse images
- Child trafficking
- Threats to privacy
- Pornography
- Personal data exploitation
- Hostility, hate, bullying
- Self-harm, suicide, pro-anorexia

- Learning resources
- Wealth of information
- Creativity & expression
- Digital literacies
- Ways to counter inequalities
- Expanded entertainment
- Access to own culture

- Enhanced networking
- Ways of consulting children
- Fora for child voice
- Child-led initiatives
- P2p sharing
- Recognition of rights

- Dignity must be respected, protected, fulfilled online
- Privacy, freedom from surveillance & censorship and the right to online anonymity
- Control over personal data collection, retention, processing, disposal and disclosure
- Protection against harassment, crime, defamation, hate (& for children, sexual exploitation)
- Children must be free to use the internet and be protected from its dangers, depending on capabilities
- Life, liberty and security
- Access and use of a secure and open internet, incl. addressing specific needs of disadvantaged groups
- Cultural and linguistic diversity on the internet must be promoted and innovation should be encouraged to facilitate plurality of expression
- Education through the internet, to culture and knowledge online
- The internet is a space for promotion, protection and fulfilment of human rights & advancing social justice
- Seek, receive and impart information freely, and to associate freely with others for social, political and cultural purposes



**“On Facebook, 273 people know I’m a dog.  
The rest can only see my limited profile.”**



# Questioning rights

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**“There is no way to move from announcing formal entitlements to securing real conditions for their enjoyment without acknowledging different possible paths and controversial political choices.”**

(Samuel Moyn, 2011)

**We must critically examine “the intended and unintended consequences of developing legislation, policies and programmes in the name of children’s rights.”**

(Karl Hanson, 2014)

**“Child protection arguments are part of a new pattern in which children are increasingly used to justify restrictions not only on their access to information, but also on the rights of adults.”**

(Frank La Rue, 2014)

**“States parties are no longer just given the option to pursue policies and practices that are beneficial to children – they are required to do so as a legal obligation.”**

**Yet “Governments around the world continue to violate the rights of children on a widespread and systematic basis, and they do so with impunity.”**

(UNICEF’s 25 year review of UNCRC)



How the hell does Facebook know I'm a dog?

# Children's views

- Access to digital media is a fundamental right and lack of access is often children's main problem.
- Children's digital media uses are generally positive and have much in common worldwide.
- The offline/online binary has been transcended by a diversity of communicative modes & contexts.



- ICT are the means by which children exercise rights to information, education and participation.
- Literacy (digital, media, social) is fundamental to using digital media and so to exercising rights in a digital age.
- Children understand that with rights come responsibilities; they want adults to support and trust them in using digital media wisely.
- Children wish to be involved in policy deliberations to offer their expertise and engage with processes that affect them.

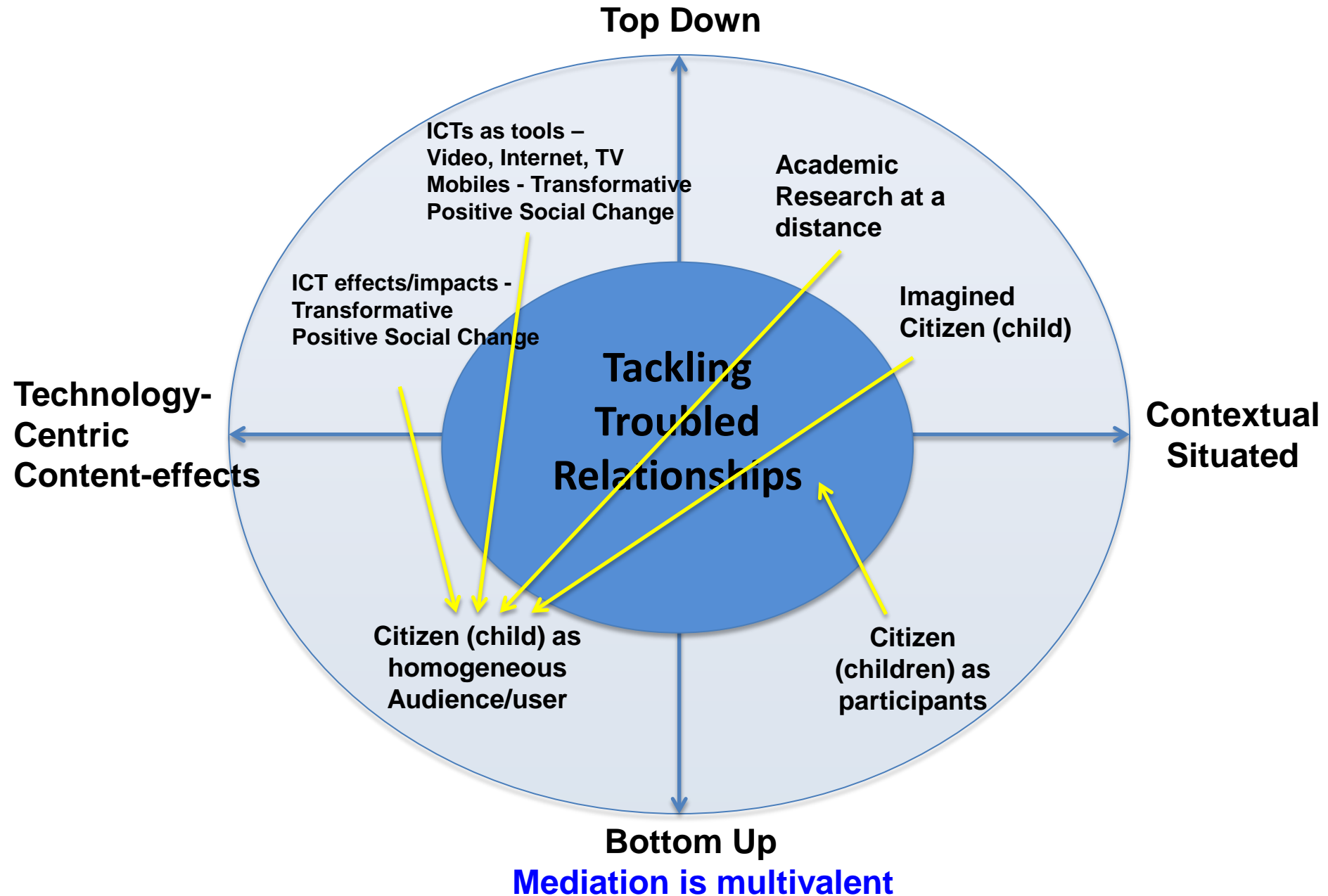


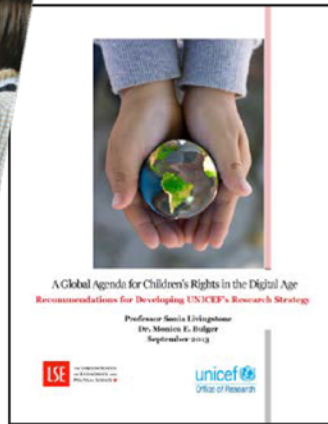
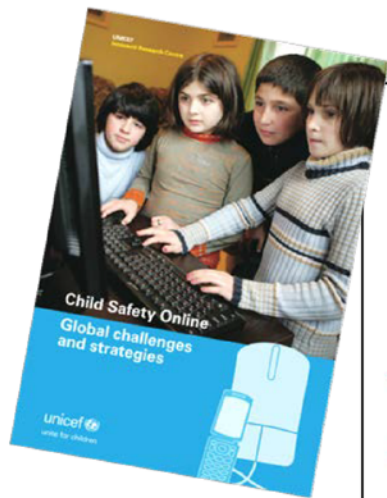
# Thank you

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# ICTs for 'development' in Practice





[www.itu.int/cop](http://www.itu.int/cop)

[www.unicef-irc.org](http://www.unicef-irc.org)

<http://www.itu.int/en/cop/Pages/guidelines.aspx>

1. Disparities in access *between* and *within* the global North and South
1. Social norms and value systems that discriminate against certain groups (e.g. girls) inhibit access
1. Internet as a vehicle for social inclusion
1. Need to acknowledge political and civil risks
1. Internet as a protective tool



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