

Sweden

Sweden lacks national directives concerning young people's online safety, making it hard to coordinate research, policy development and the allocation of resources. The EU Kids Online findings in Sweden show that media is one of the parents' primary sources of information. This constitutes a problem because young people's internet use is often portrayed in a sensationalist manner. There is therefore a risk that parents worry more than is called for. Both children and parents in Sweden want more information about internet safety from school. Compulsory school is in fact an arena in which information can reach all children, and via the children also their parents. A national directive could therefore give schools and teacher education the responsibility to educate children in internet security issues.

Findings from EU Kids Online together with an overview of other research on actual cases of internet risks/harm (cf. e.g. Shannon, 2007; Ybarra et al., 2008)¹ should be the basis for new guidelines for children, so called Safe Use Guides, and for adults, such as tips on monitoring and restricting children's use. Current guidelines are largely obsolete and are in many cases built on assumptions rather than scientific knowledge.

It is important that education on internet safety focuses on a critical approach in general rather than on specific media. This would increase the chances for children and adults being prepared for a continuously changing media landscape, offline as well as online.

Future research should focus not only on if, and how often, risk occurs but also on the child's subjective experience. The rich description that is the result of the EU Kids Online project provides a backdrop against which we must now project children's own views.

¹ Shannon, D. (2007). *Vuxnas sexuella kontakter med barn via Internet* [Adults' sexual contacts with children online]. Stockholm, Sweden: Brottsförebyggande rådet.

Wolak, J., Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Ybarra, M. L. (2008). Online "Predators" and their victims. Myths, realities, and implications for prevention and treatment. *The American Psychologist*, 63, 111–128.