



Prince's Trust



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Lack of trust in “dehumanising” online world leaves disadvantaged young people further behind

Prince's Trust and Samsung report calls for greater digital inclusion for UK's most disadvantaged young people

- **New, independent research** commissioned by The Prince's Trust, in conjunction with Samsung, and carried out by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), reveals that the disadvantages young people face offline are preventing them from making the most of the online world.
- **The report published today finds that a staggering 50% of young people** who are currently not in employment, education or training (NEETs) believe that **no one or almost no one can be trusted online**

Slipping through the Net, a report carried out by Dr Ellen Helsper at the LSE, reveals a **clear distrust by Britain's most disadvantaged young people of online interactions**, which is a major obstacle in harnessing the digital world to improve their situation.

While 53% of the UK's disadvantaged young people believe that *information* found on the internet is “generally reliable”, **50% say that no one or almost no one could be trusted online**.

While these young people were positive towards the potential benefits of ICTs (Information Communication Technology), they often ran into frustrations, from what they perceived as **dehumanising experiences**.

The report's author, **Dr. Ellen J Helsper**, Associate Professor in Media and Communications at LSE, said: “*Whilst some of the young people we spoke to in the focus groups were resigned to the fact that this is an inevitable consequence of online interactions, many reported taking drastic action such as disconnecting altogether.*”

Disadvantaged young people are using ICTs more to engage in **employment related activities**, yet they were less likely than their peers to succeed, even partially, through this medium (46% compared to 65% of their employed peers). Similarly, **over half of these**

young people did not obtain a formal qualification through ICTs that they could not have obtained otherwise.

NEET young people expressed a preference to **apply for jobs in person**, rather than digitally, in particular because of the lack of follow up messages received from employers online. Many of these young people, who have a history with rejection, took this as a further setback.

One young person who took part in a focus group said: *“I’m only going to find the local jobs and then I’ll go into the place and hand in my CV and stop there.”*

Disadvantaged young people are also being held back in the digital world by **their lack of softer social skills**. Around **40%** of them struggled with “netiquette”, that is decisions about their own behaviour or dealing with the negative behaviour of others online. The report shows that this issue also affects young people who are in education, employment or training.

Dr. Helsper said: *“Most of the time, the young people we interviewed in the focus group did not realise that these are skills which could be learnt and used to advance in life. Only more technical skills such as those taught in school, were seen as requiring training.”*

Only 17% of NEETs – arguably those who need it the most – had asked for help with using ICTs in the last three months. When they did ask, these young people relied on a **narrower and less expert network** of support often unable to teach them sustainable skills, instead of going to professionals such as help desks or teachers.

Martina Milburn CBE, chief executive at The Prince’s Trust said: *“We need to dispel the myth that all millennials know how to make the most of the digital world. Many disadvantaged young people, as this research shows, are not achieving positive outcomes online, in particular when it comes to education or employment. The findings show that a lot of young people struggle with social interactions online. We should ensure that these softer social skills, including safeguarding, are included in training programmes.”*

The **series of recommendations in the report** also calls on employers to develop new digital services to avoid frustrating experiences, such as a lack of communication in particular with regards to online job applications.

A round table event will be held in the Houses of Parliament on 7th December to mark the launch of the report and to discuss its findings and recommendations. Attendees will include Members of Parliament, including The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, leaders of the business, educational, charitable and academic worlds.

-Ends-

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Notes to editors:

About The Prince's Trust

Youth charity The Prince's Trust helps disadvantaged young people to get their lives on track. Founded by HRH The Prince of Wales in 1976, this year it is celebrating 40 years of supporting 13 to 30 year-olds who are unemployed and those struggling at school and at risk of exclusion.

Many of the young people helped by The Prince's Trust are in or leaving care, facing issues such as homelessness or mental health issues, or they have been in trouble with the law. The Trust's programmes give vulnerable young people the practical and financial support needed to stabilise their lives, helping develop self-esteem and skills for work. Three in four young people supported by The Prince's Trust move into work, education or training.

The Prince's Trust has supported 825,000 young people in the last 40 years and this year it will support over 100 more each day.

Further information about The Prince's Trust is available at princes-trust.org.uk or on 0800 842 842.

About Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.

Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. inspires the world and shapes the future with transformative ideas and technologies. The company is redefining the worlds of TVs, smartphones, wearable devices, tablets, cameras, digital appliances, medical equipment, network systems, and semiconductor and LED solutions. For the latest news, please visit Samsung Newsroom at <http://news.samsung.com>

About The Prince's Trust and Samsung partnership

Prioritising science, technology, engineering and maths subjects – known as STEM – The Prince's Trust and Samsung are tackling youth unemployment together, by helping vulnerable young people gain essential digital skills. Together, they have created Samsung Digital Classrooms at Prince's Trust centres in Kennington (London), Stoke-on-Trent and Glasgow.

About the London School of Economics and Political Science

The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) studies the social sciences in their broadest sense, with an academic profile spanning a wide range of disciplines, from economics, politics and law, to sociology, information systems and accounting and finance.

The School has an outstanding reputation for academic excellence and is one of the most international universities in the world. Its study of social, economic and political problems focuses on the different perspectives and experiences of most countries. From its foundation LSE has aimed to be a laboratory of the social sciences, a place where ideas are developed, analysed, evaluated and disseminated around the globe.

Visit <http://www.lse.ac.uk> for more information.

Methodology

This study combined qualitative focus groups with an online survey. The survey included a sample of youth in general while the focus groups focused exclusively on conversations with NEETs.

Five focus groups were conducted during the month of August, 2016 on locations where The Prince's Trust NEET related Team and Fairbridge programmes ran (including FE Colleges, Prince's Trust centres, and fire stations). Each of the discussions lasted from one to one and a half hours and involved anywhere from four to eight participants between the ages of 16 and 26.

The survey sample consisted of 1344 young internet users in the UK between 16 and 24 (including a sample of 318 NEET youth) who on average had used the internet for 10 years. The survey was created and managed on LSE servers and distributed to Toluna's survey panel and (for the NEETs) their partner panels.