www.eukidsonline.net

EU Kids Online

Findings • methods • recommendations

Executive summary

EU Kids Online coordinates and stimulates investigation into the way children use new media, with a particular focus on evidence about the conditions that shape online risk and safety.

"EU Kids Online has been hugely important for European stakeholders as the key provider of trusted evidence to help us make the internet a better place for kids."

European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes, Commissioner for the Digital Agenda

Welcome and overview from the project director, Professor Sonia Livingstone.

Click on the above image for our YouTube playlist of 75+ videos in multiple languages.

A stranger said that he liked me and that I was pretty. This was creepy, and I felt uncomfortable and weird about this.
(girl, 11, Belgium)

Some videos I see on the internet make me scared. Filthy images don't frighten me! But they make me feel bad. Because I don't like them. And frightening things stay in my mind.
(boy, 10, Spain)

She wrote to me that I am a bitch and so on … then she came to me with an older friend, I think she was seventeen or so, they shouted at me and just kept writing ugly things.
(girl, 12, Czech Republic)

My dad knows my Messenger and Facebook passwords. He sometimes checks to see if I've spoken with strangers after the cases they've heard of …
(girl, 12, Romania)

Compared with 2010, European 11- to 16-year-olds are now:

more likely to be exposed to hate messages — 13% to 20%

more likely to be exposed to pro-anorexia sites — 9% to 13%

more likely to be exposed to self-harm sites — 7% to 11%

more likely to be exposed to cyberbullying — 7% to 12%

13% to 17%

European 9- to 16-year-olds say they are now: more likely to say they were **upset** by something seen online in 2014

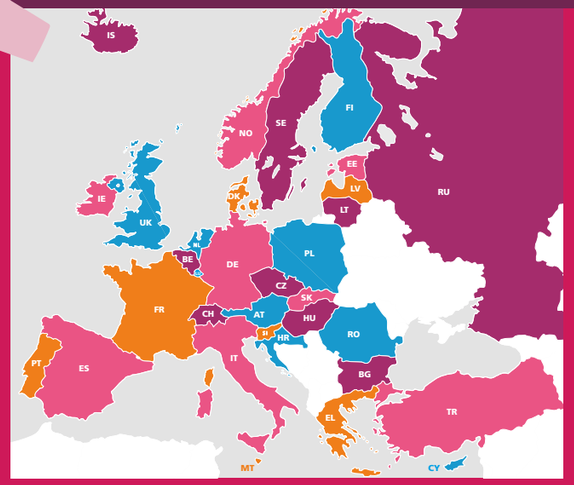
EU Kids Online recent research findings, methods and recommendations

- Updating and analysis of our 25-country, pan-European survey.
- In-depth interviews with 9- to 16-year-olds in nine countries.
- Expansion of the open access, searchable European evidence database.

1500 STUDIES IN THE DATABASE

- Research toolkit of our methods to guide researchers and research users.
- Active dialogue with stakeholders to ensure policy has a robust evidence base.

RESEARCH TOOLKIT



eukidsonline.net

eukidsonline@lse.ac

#EUKIDSONLINE

Contents

#EUKIDSONLINE

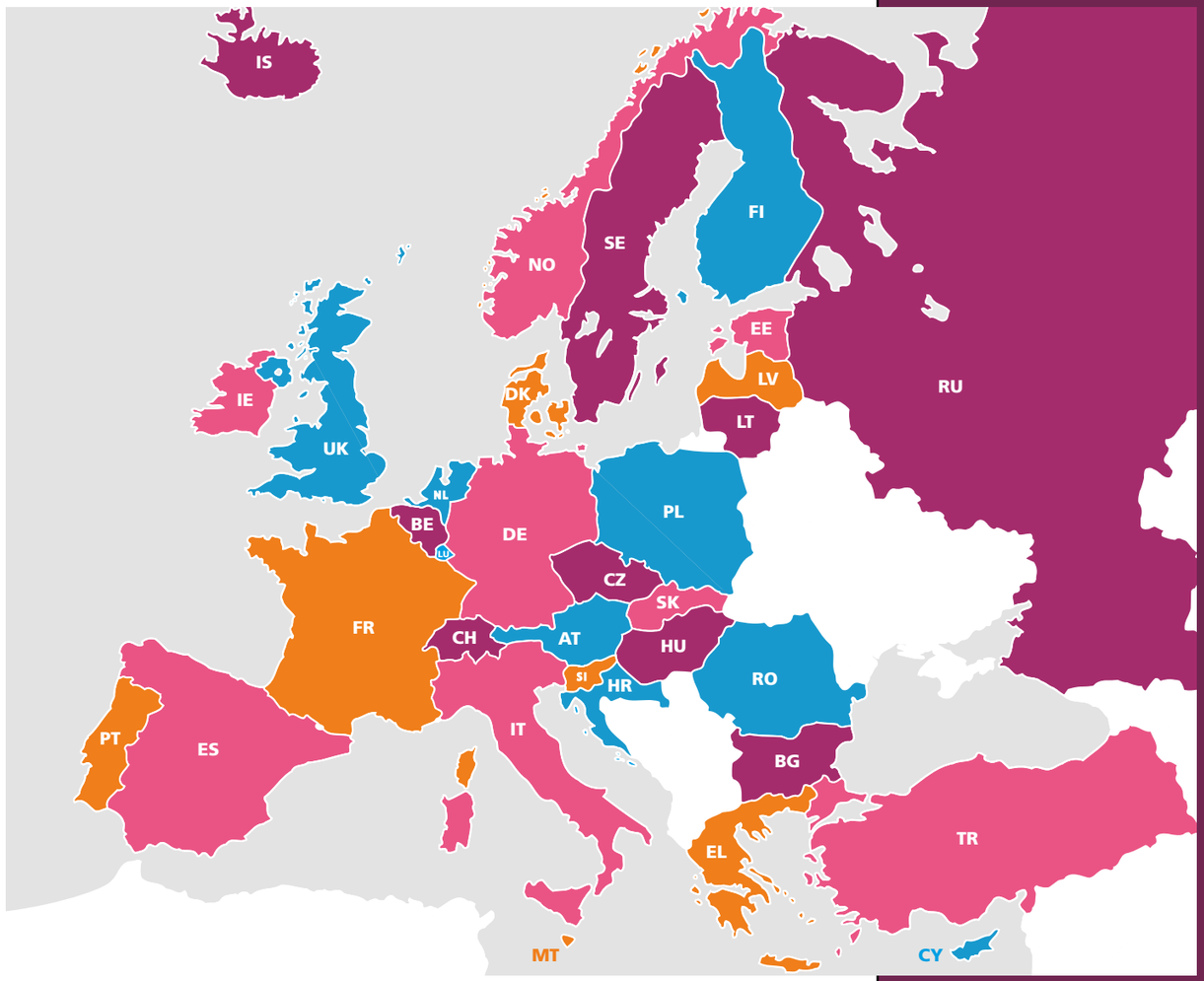
eukidsonline.net eukidsonline@lse.ac.uk

The EU Kids Online network has been funded by the EC Better Internet for Kids programme*

From **2006-09**, as a thematic network of 21 countries, EU Kids Online identified and evaluated the findings of nearly 400 research studies to draw out substantive, methodological and policy implications.

From **2009-11**, as a knowledge enhancement project across 25 countries, the network surveyed 25,000 children and parents to produce original, rigorous data on online opportunities and risk of harm.

From **2011-14**, the network expanded to 33 countries to conduct targeted analyses of the quantitative survey and new qualitative interviews with children.



It happened in our school. Someone took a picture of someone in a pose and then they edited the picture making a small comment and then…my schoolmate was pretty sad about it, then I told everyone to delete the photo because I just asked them, if that was you, how would you feel, so they deleted the photo and everything's fine now.

(boy, 11, UK)

*Originally, Safer Internet Programme

Once you read it, it can be deleted from the computer but not from your head
(girl, 15, Portugal)

Children are going online more, at younger ages, and in more diverse ways

Children are using the internet in more places in their daily lives.

They go online on more personal and mobile devices, making it hard for their parents to guide their online activities – **See our report** and **video.**

Ever younger children are gaining access to internet-enabled devices, with largely unknown consequences – **See our report** and **video.**

The **'ladder of opportunities'** is still too steep: most children do not reach the level of creative, collaborative or civic activities online.

The digital age raises some key questions

How can children's online opportunities and digital skills be further developed and more strongly supported?
See our report and **video.**

- **What are the implications of these changes for the risk of harm facing children online and offline?**

Are some children using the internet to excess?
See our report and **video.**

- **What actions are needed from parents, schools, industry, children's organisations and governments to maximise online benefits and to minimise harm?**
- **Are all countries facing similar challenges? If not, which differences really matter?**

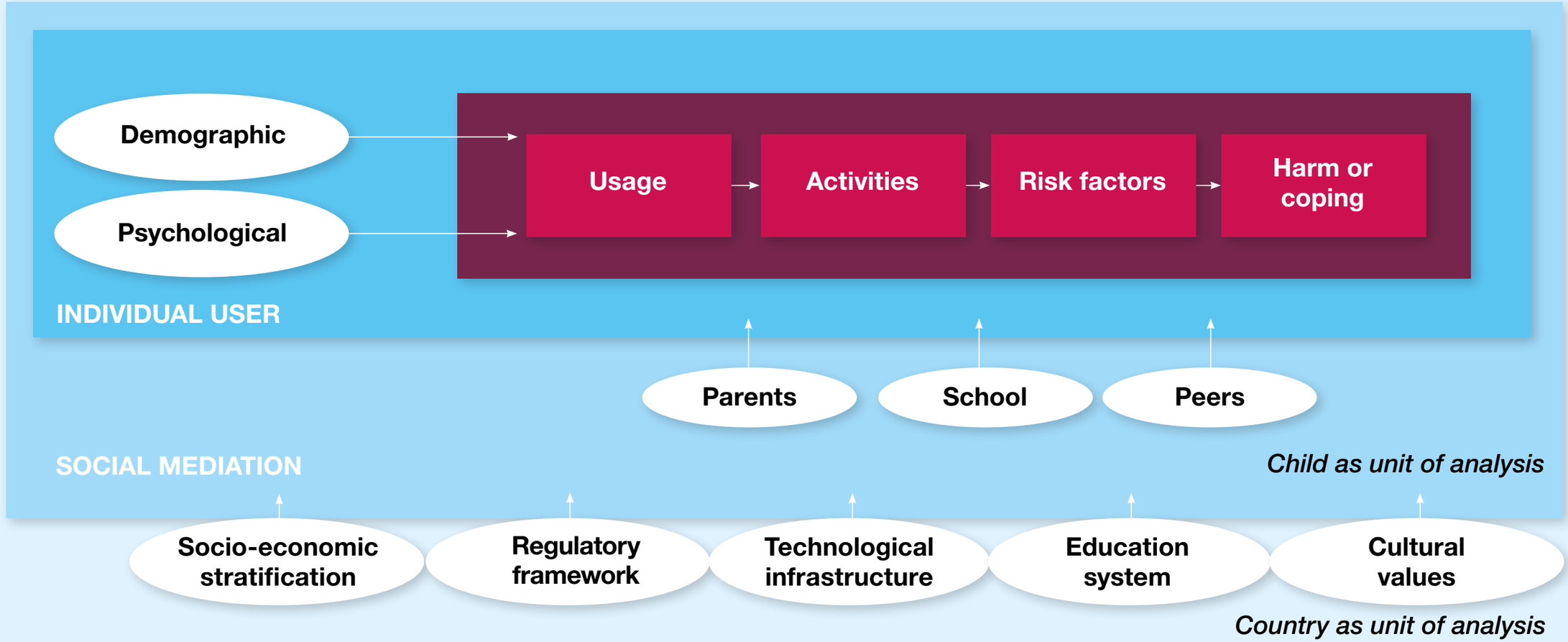
Are all families facing similar challenges?

See our report on disadvantaged children and

on vulnerable children.

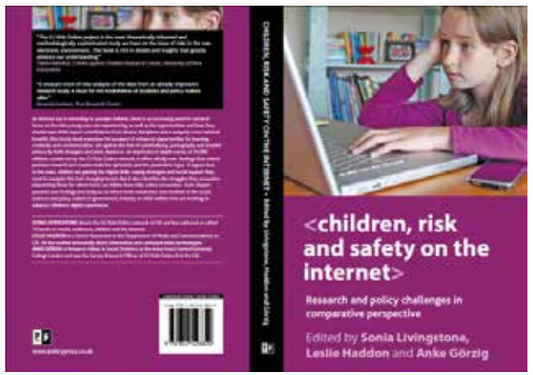
- **How can research and policy anticipate the further changes that lie ahead?**

Explaining risks and opportunities: The EU Kids Online model



Using the model to explain online risks and opportunities

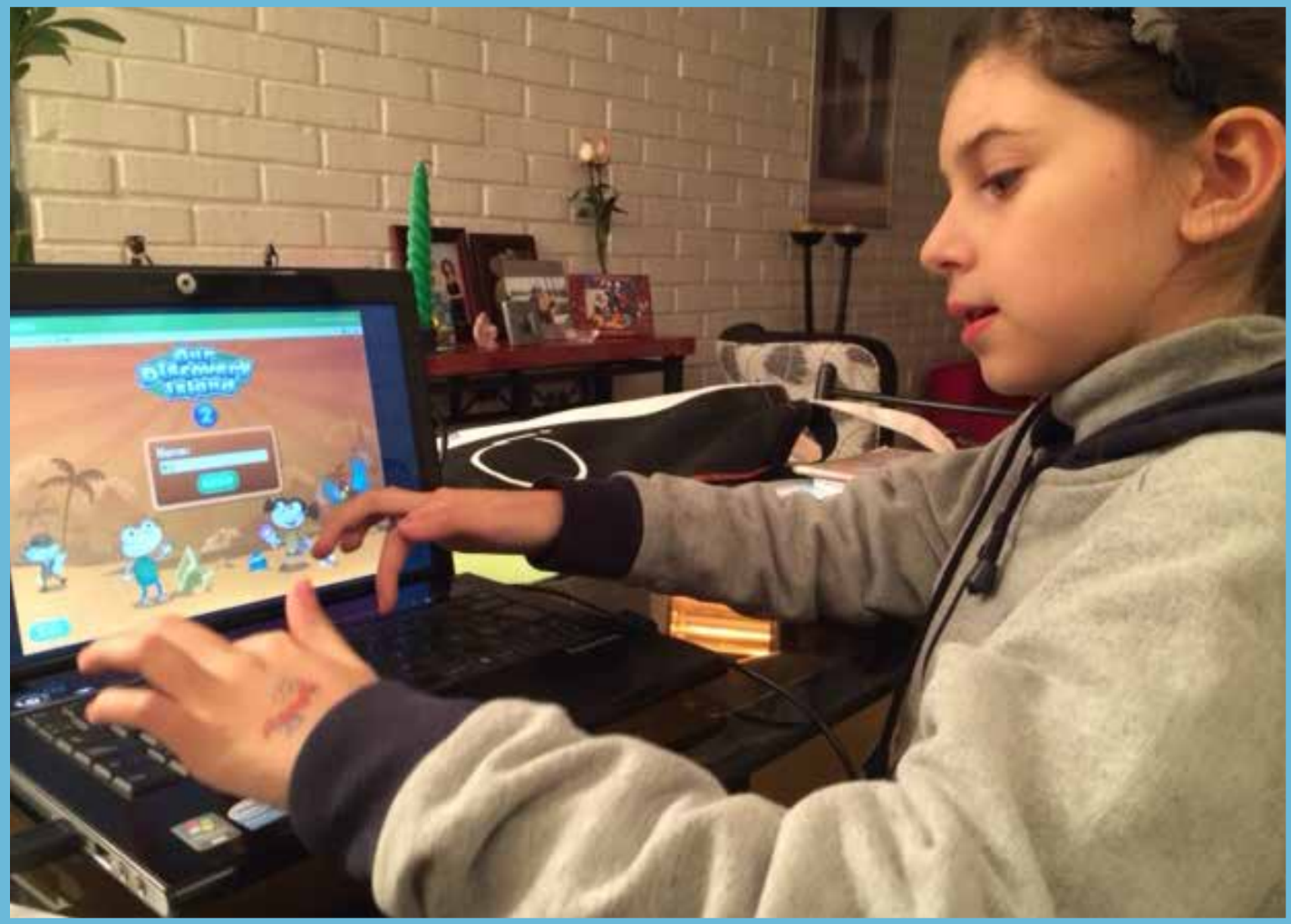
Many factors account for children's online experiences, which is why there are no 'one size fits all' policy solutions. Our model shows the factors we have investigated and how they intersect with each other.

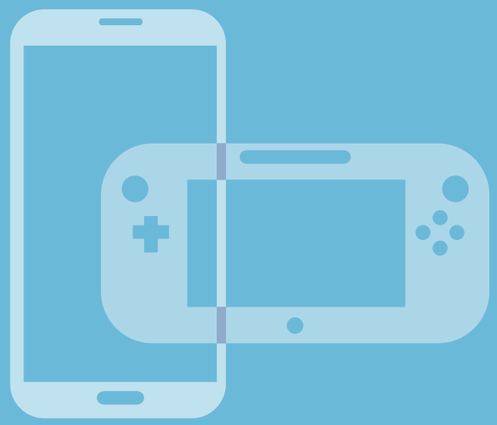


The relations among these variables are examined in our **recent book**. The **chapter** summaries show how the model predicts positive and negative outcomes.

5 key findings

1. The more children use the internet, the more digital skills they gain, and the higher they climb the 'ladder of online opportunities' to gain the benefits.
2. Not all internet use results in benefits: the chance of a child gaining the benefits depends on their age, gender and socio-economic status, on how their parents support them, and on the positive content available to them.
3. Children's use, skills and opportunities are also linked to online risks; the more of these, the more risk of harm; thus as internet use increases, ever greater efforts are needed to prevent risk also increasing.
4. Not all risk results in harm: the chance of a child being upset or harmed by online experiences depends partly on their age, gender and socio-economic status, and also on their resilience and resources to cope with what happens on the internet.
5. Also important is the role played by parents, school and peers, and by national provision for regulation, content provision, cultural values and the education system.





What do children do online?

Since the **EU Kids Online 2010 survey of 25 countries,** our sister project **Net Children Go Mobile** updated the survey in seven countries in 2014.*

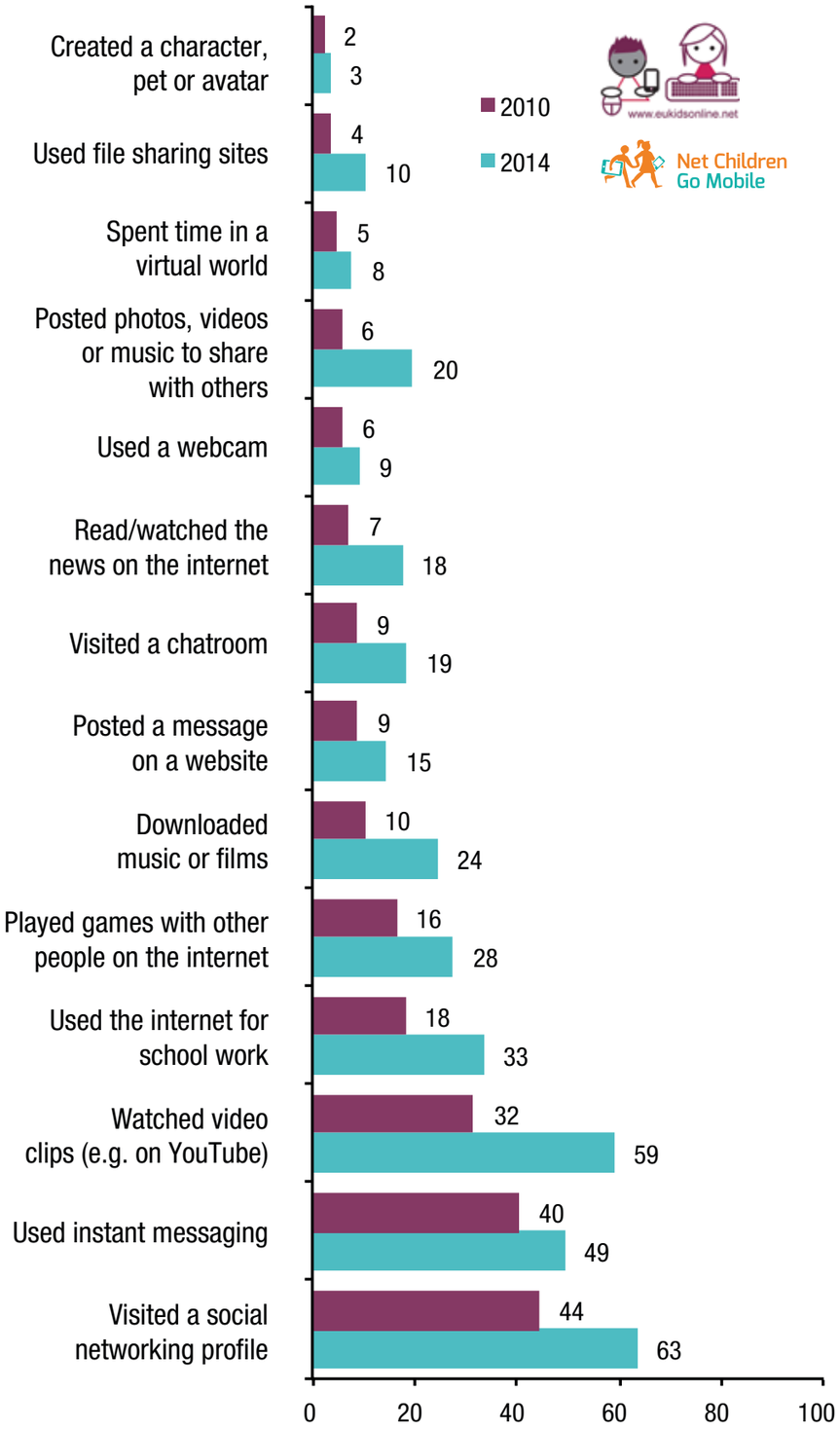
Data from 11- to 16-year olds in 2010 and 2014 (for Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Romania and the UK) show what they do online on a daily basis.

While they are indeed doing more than before, the ladder of opportunities is as steep as ever.

Children are most likely to engage with social network sites, instant messaging, YouTube and gaming.

They are much less likely to create or upload content, read the news online or participate in virtual worlds.

***Net Children Go Mobile** surveyed 9- to 16-year olds in Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Romania, UK.



What bothers children online?

What bothers children online?

We asked the children to tell us **in their own words** what bothers or upsets people their age on the internet, if anything. Nearly 10,000 children told us of their concerns and their responses were very diverse.

Click on the image to play the video

5 key findings

1. Pornography tops children's online concerns.
2. Violent, aggressive, cruel or gory content came a close second – although violence receives less public attention than sexual material. What particularly upsets them is real (or realistic) rather than fictional violence, and violence against the vulnerable such as children or animals.
3. Children see video-sharing websites as most linked with violent, pornographic and other content risks.
4. Boys express more concern about violence than girls, while girls are more concerned about contact risks.
5. Children's concern about online risks rises markedly from 9 to 12 years old. Younger children are more concerned about content risks, and as they get older they become more concerned about conduct and contact risks.

Here's what the children told us bothers them 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)

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

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

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

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

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)

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

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

How many children encounter online risks?

In 2010, we surveyed 25,142 internet users aged 9-16 and their parents in 25 countries*.

***For exact phrasing for risk measures and all findings click here.**

How many children encounter online risks?

We only asked the 9- to 10-year-olds about a few of the possible risks, for ethical reasons. In the previous year, 5% of internet users in this age group said they had seen sexual images online, 3% had been sent bullying (nasty or hurtful) messages, 13% had met a new contact online and 2% had met an online contact offline.

We asked more questions of children aged 11-13 and 14-16.

Key findings

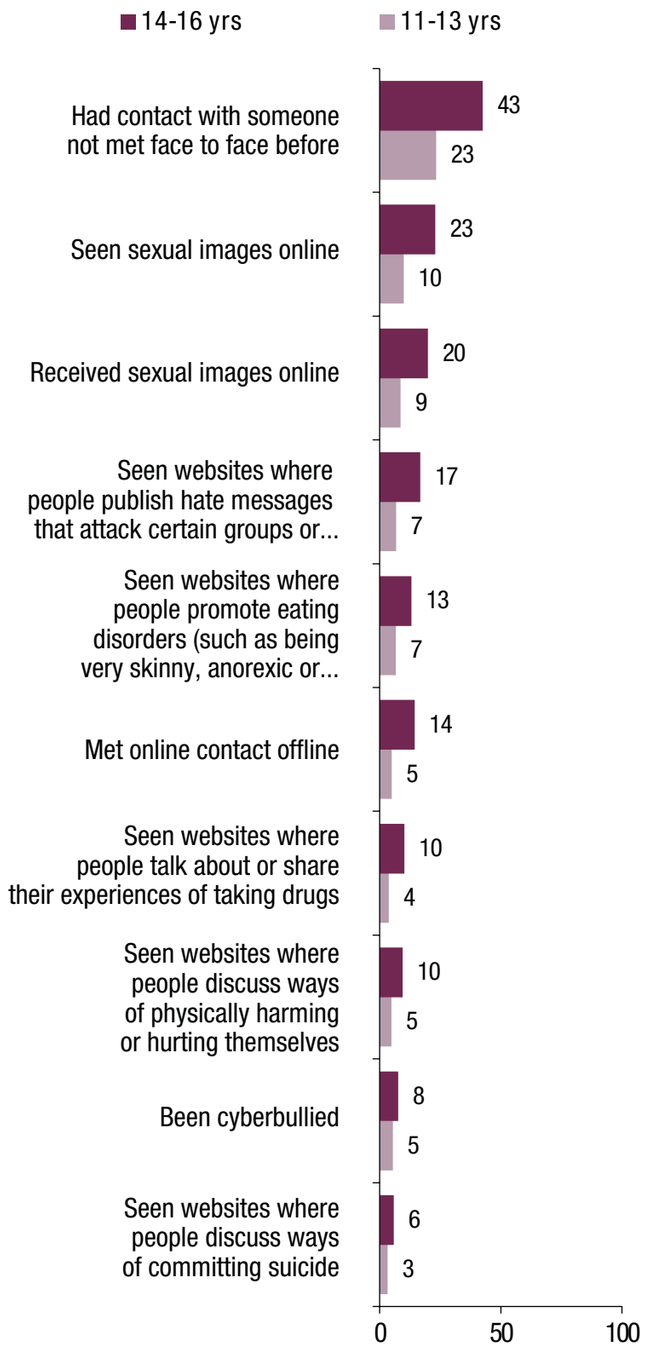
1 The most common risk is making contact online with someone that the child does not know face to face. This finding – while meriting the efforts of awareness-raisers in relation to safety – illustrates the gap between risk and harm, for while many children make such contacts, only a subset go on to meet such a person online and nearly all of them report that the meeting turned out well **(see our full findings).**

2 Next most common is seeing **sexual images** and receiving sexual messages. Exposure to pornography was reported more by boys and older children, and some (though not all) found this upsetting or intrusive or inappropriate. In comparing across countries, exposure to sexual risks was more typical of countries that we labelled **'supported risky explorers'** (Nordic countries and the Netherlands) where parents are more laissez-faire and children more free to explore the opportunities and risks online.

3 Third come a set of risks related to user-generated content (UGC). These are likely to become more common as children increasingly engage with UGC, and yet these risks receive little attention from policy makers. This is partly because, other than blocking YouTube, Facebook and other UGC sites entirely, it is difficult to produce tools that filter such content. It is also because parents and educators seem reluctant to talk to children about such content. Thus it is important to note that a fair number have seen hate content, pro-anorexia content (especially teenage girls) and sites that discuss drug use, self-harm and suicide.

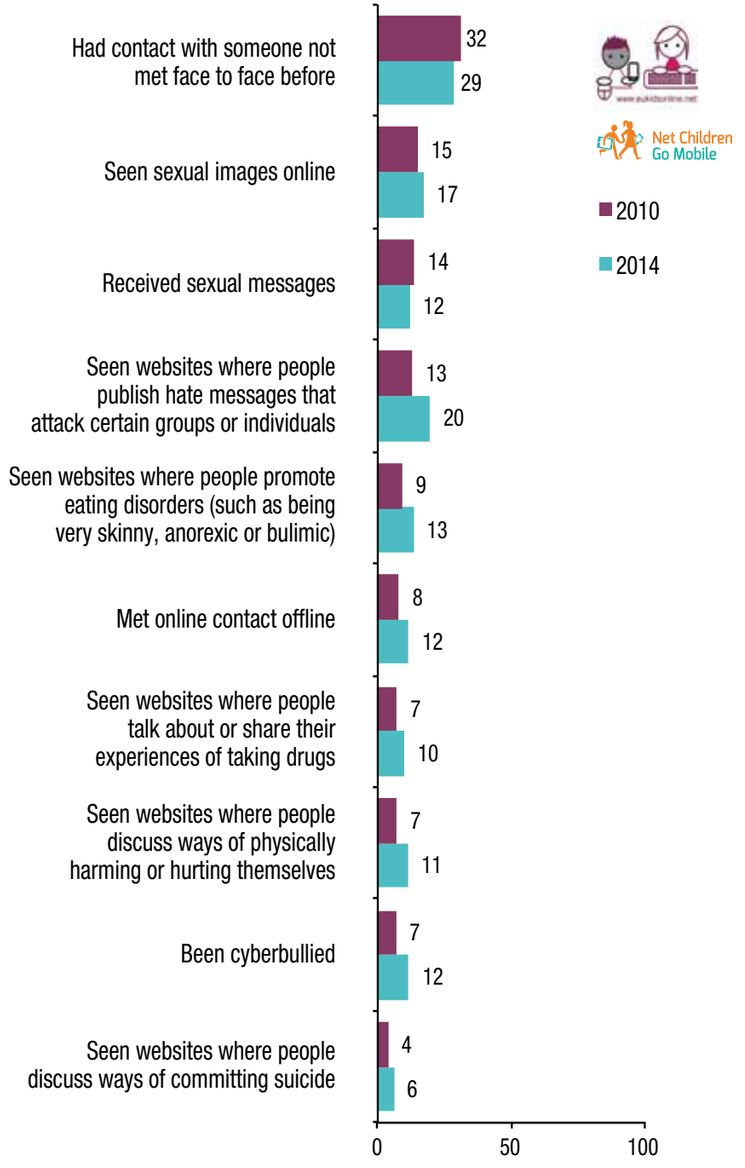
4 Finally, being cyberbullied is reported by a small minority of 11- to16-year-olds. However, this risk is the most likely to result in harm – half of these youngsters report being fairly or very upset by receiving nasty or hurtful messages online.

Older and younger children's risk encounters compared



Is children's exposure to online risk changing?

We again compared our findings from the 2010 survey with **Net Children Go Mobile 2014 survey findings*.** The graph shows data only for seven countries, for 11- to 16-year-old internet users.*



Children's exposure to online risk is changing in key ways

Children are now **more likely** to be exposed to hate messages (from 13% to 20%), pro-anorexia sites (from 9% to 13%), self-harm sites (from 7% to 11%) and cyberbullying (from 7% to 12%).

Children are now **less likely** to make contact online with someone they don't know face to face (from 32% to 29%): possibly awareness-raising efforts about 'stranger danger' are proving effective. However, they are slightly more likely to meet an online contact offline.

Overall, online risk affects a significant minority, but by no means a majority of young internet users. The challenge of addressing negative UGC is, however, of increasing importance.

***Net Children Go Mobile** surveyed 9- to 16-year-olds in Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Romania and the UK in 2013-14

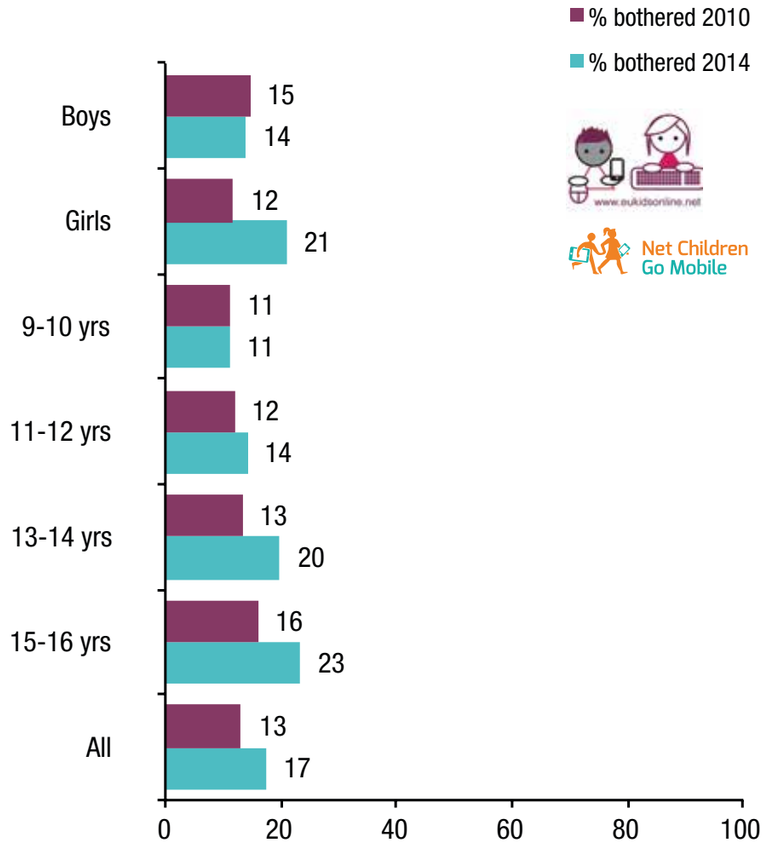
But not all risk results in self-reported harm

In our 2010 survey of 25 countries, 12% of 9- to 16-year-olds said that, in the past year, something had bothered or upset them on the internet.

This question was asked again by the **Net Children Go Mobile survey** in 2014, in seven countries.

Key findings

1. Fewer than one in five 9- to 16-year-olds say they were bothered or upset by something online in the past year. This figure has risen slightly since 2010 (from 13% to 17%).
2. The increase is striking among girls and among teenagers – this matters, since much public anxiety centres on boys (or excessive or violent use) and young children (for being vulnerable).
3. There is a real need to target safety resources on girls and teenagers. It is also vital to understand why these girls and teenagers are increasingly likely to experience harm linked to internet use.
4. Overall, the incidence of harm online is less than many panicky media reports would suggest.
5. Nor is the increase as great as one might expect given the rise of frequent, personalised internet use. Possibly the many safety and awareness-raising initiatives are proving effective.



How do children cope with online risks?

In 2010, using qualitative methods, we interviewed nearly 400 children aged 9- to 16-years-old, individually and in groups, in nine countries*.

Again we heard a lot about children's experiences of risk of harm online.

While adults distinguish between contact (adult strangers) and conduct (peer-to-peer) risks, children didn't find this so easy: people communicating with them, whether more or less known to them, of varying (and often unknown) ages, presented both an opportunity and a risk to them.

This led to lots of discussion among the children about what was or wasn't safe in different situations.

One important theme was about the difficulty of responding to inappropriate material that has been produced by their friends or peers – adults often talk about 'risks' as if they come from far away, but for children they can arise in their everyday chat with people from school, and because this is so close to home it can be much harder to deal with.

Encouragingly, they had lots of ideas and strategies for how to respond to online risk.

Children were keen to discuss how they try to avoid risky online problems and how they reflect on situations when they go wrong so as to be better prepared another time. They prefer to discuss these situations with peers because parents tend to criticise children for getting into the situation in the first place. They fear parents will invade their privacy or limit their online freedoms.

See our full report and **video**

See our related reports on **children's approaches to preventive measures** and **coping strategies**

*Belgium, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and the UK.

Pop up text 1 relates to page 20

Again we heard a lot about children's experiences of risk of harm online.

Types of online problematic situations that children told us about

The most common online problematic situation includes the sending of content that is violent, vulgar, or sexual. Other problematic situations include perpetrating, experiencing, and/or witnessing hateful, vulgar, or nasty messages. Although less covered in the risk literature, some involve being killed, cursed, excluded, and/or verbally assaulted in online games. Lastly, some include meeting online peers offline, sending "friend" requests or communicating with strangers not their own age.

Turning first to sexual issues, although many children are bothered by vulgar content displayed in dating site advertisements, some post attractive or sexual content, usually through pictures, to attract peers.

Occurring less frequently, some children engage in the sharing of private, naked pictures of someone without the owner's permission. This activity is mostly perpetrated by boys.

Online problematic situations related to school involve children using incorrect information for school assignments, and perpetrating or knowing about the cyberbullying of teachers.

Sexual content is often perceived as bothersome by children and often found by mistake, but sometimes children, particularly older children, intentionally search for this content. Older children sometimes report positive feelings about this content as well. Girls experience more sexual communication and post "sexy" or provocative pictures to receive "likes".

Sharing personal information and passwords for Facebook or game accounts with family members and friends is common across all groups of children. This particular activity isn't perceived as risky, despite some children indicating that someone had misused their personal information.

Many children recognize the symptoms of internet addiction, including losing contact with reality, losing interest in activities, headaches, eye problems, sleep problems, and losing friends.

Children download illegal games, software, videos, and music. They do not perceive such behaviour as particularly harmful.

Children sometimes encounter fake information and racist or hateful content on the internet, which they perceive as bothersome.

Pop up text 2 relates to page 20

Encouragingly, they had lots of ideas and strategies for how to respond to online risk.

Awareness of online problematic situations

Children's framing of online problematic situations differs from adults' perspectives especially in the case of online bullying, where children distinguish bullying from other forms of online conflict (i.e., "drama").

Awareness of rare risks such as "stranger danger," is influenced by the sensationalist tone that figures heavily in the media.

Younger children's awareness of risk reflects the perceptions of the media and parents, whereas older children draw more on personal experiences or those of their peers.

Dealing with problematic situations online

Many children manage their online experiences by planning, strategizing, and reflecting on ways to avoid risky online problematic situations.

Proactive strategies are used more frequently than seeking-support strategies when dealing with online bullying.

Girls are more likely to seek social support when faced with online problematic situations compared to boys.

14–16 year olds use more preventive behaviour than younger children, and this intensifies as their social networking site (SNS) usage increases.

Avoidance tactics, that is, avoiding or clicking away from certain online platforms, applications or websites, is a popular strategy among the youngest age group (9–11).

Family, peer and school support

There is a range of parental mediation interventions, from parents who explicitly express and explain their concerns to their children to parents who may have concerns but articulate them less, failing to fully explain the nature of the risk as they see it.

Younger children often view parental intervention as positive, or at least do not mind it, whereas older children are more ambivalent, inclined to regard parents as invading their privacy; hence they often prefer to talk with peers.

Siblings and cousins provide support and advice to children and serve a protective role, particularly for younger children, although they may also introduce children to online risks.

Aunts, uncles, and grandparents also provide advice for children, and sometimes children find it easier to talk to them than their parents; however, children don't like it when relatives are asked by parents to monitor what children do online.

Peers also support each other, including through sharing negative experiences; this allows children to learn from their peers' mistakes and to discuss these risks – again, peers also introduce children to risks.

The involvement of schools varies considerably: some schools provide children with strategies for dealing with online risks; others do not do very much, or scare children about the dangers of online activities.

Hear from the researchers

Children's online opportunities and risks are different in each country.
Watch how we explain our findings in 32 different countries and languages.

Austria English

Belgium English

Bulgaria English

Croatia English

Click on the image to play the video in English, or the button below for the native language version.

Austria Austrian

Belgium Flemish

Bulgaria Bulgarian

Croatia Croatian

Cyprus English

Czech Republic English

Denmark English

Estonia English

Czech Republic Czech

Denmark Danish

Estonia Estonian

Finland English

Finland Finnish

France English

France French

Germany English

Germany German

Greece English

Greece Greek

Hungary English

Hungary Hungarian

Iceland English

Iceland Icelandic

Ireland English

Italy English

Italy Italian

Latvia English

Latvia Latvian

Lithuania English

Lithuania Lithuanian

Luxembourg English

Malta English

Malta Maltese

Netherlands English

Netherlands Dutch

Norway English

Norway Norwegian

Poland Polish

Portugal English

Portugal Portuguese

Romania English

Romania Romanian

Russia English

Russia Russian

Slovenia English

Slovenia Slovene

Spain English

Spain Spanish

Sweden English

Switzerland English

Switzerland German

Turkey English

Turkey Turkish

UK English

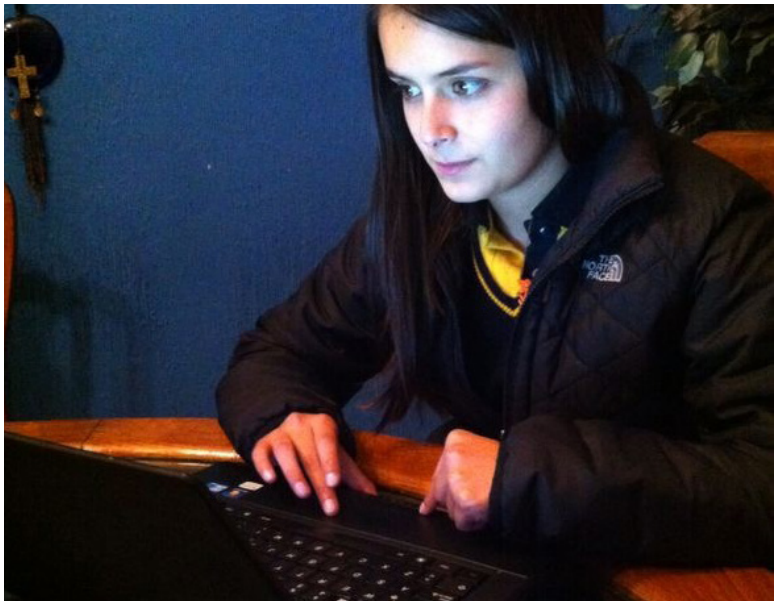
Explaining change

Is online risk increasing? Isn't everything changing fast as the internet changes? How can families, communities and policy makers keep up?

We have already seen that children's online activities are increasing year on year. Yet those same findings showed that the patterns don't change so much. Age differences persist. Socio-economic inequalities still matter. Most children still don't reach very high up the ladder of opportunities.

The same may be said for the risks of harm. Research suggests that the more online activities, the more risks as well as more opportunities. Yet those same findings show that the patterns aren't changing much. It seems that the effort on the part of policy makers matters: policy initiatives can slow or halt increases in more familiar risks, yet new risks continue to emerge.

Our report on explaining change – which analyses available longitudinal results over time – goes a step further. It shows how change in children's lives depends on more than technological or policy change.



How children engage with the internet: Sonia Livingstone at TEDxExeter

Click on the image to play the video.

Explaining change continued

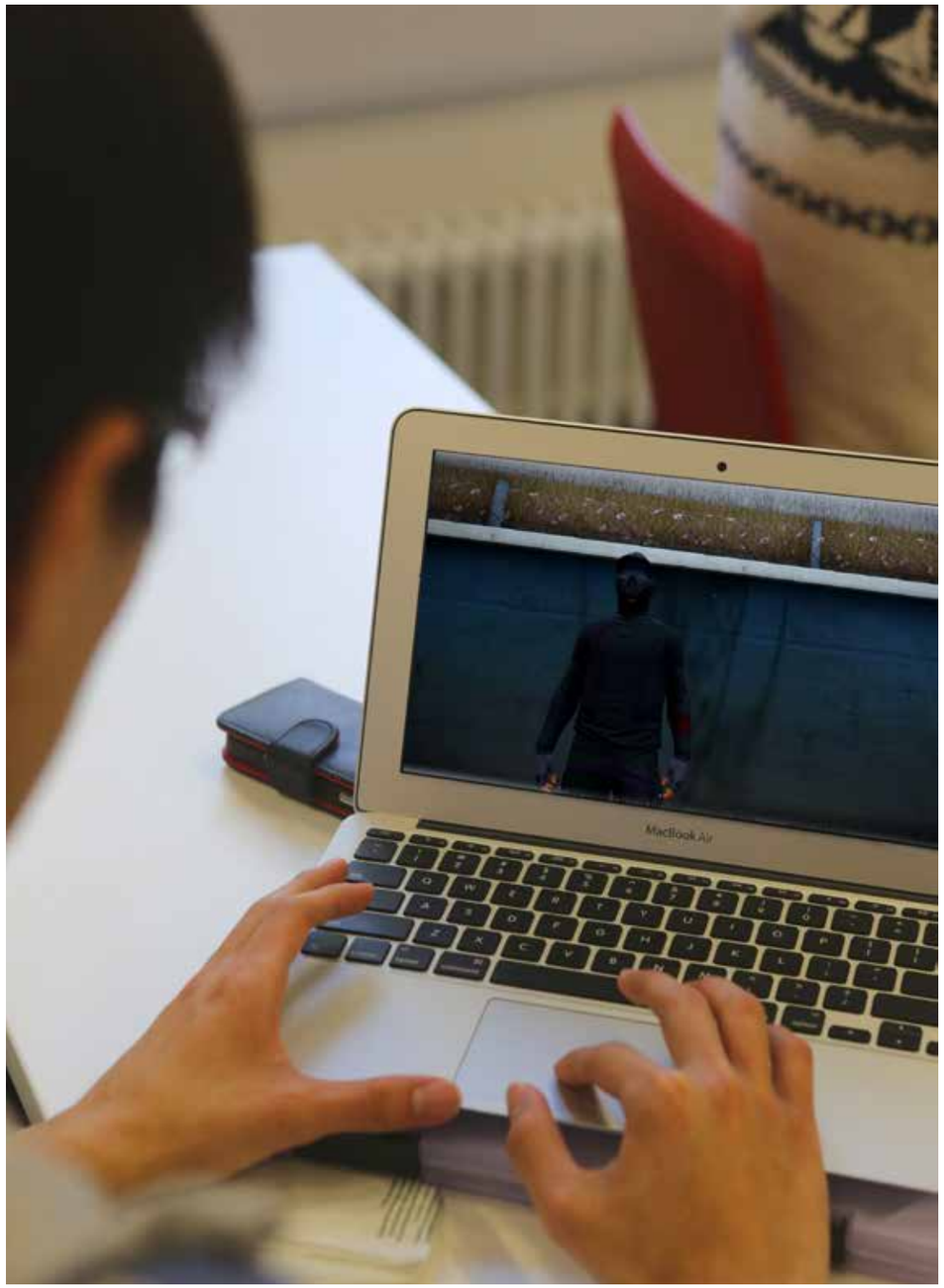
Also important are:

1. Increasing access to ever more online services, resulting in structural change in the online population.
2. Ongoing societal practices of incorporating and adjusting to new technologies within everyday contexts.
3. New cohorts (or 'digital generations') of parents and children, with changing knowledge and expectations.

Some of these changes occur rather slowly and gradually (e.g. the gain in parental experience and expertise regarding the internet, or changes in the school curriculum to teach digital skills). Some may be rather sudden (e.g. the take off of a new social networking service or a fashionable practice among youth).

The mass media's barrage of headlines claiming that everything is new may usefully call attention to the need for public awareness and resources, but it is misleading in terms of more fundamental processes of change.

While up-to-date research is extremely valuable, we must also consider the many factors that shape long-term trends over time. **Recalling the EU Kids Online model (see page 8)**, the outcomes for children depend on a host of individual, social and cultural factors, all influencing each other, and all changing according to different time scales.



How parents support their children's internet use

The main ways that parents support their children's internet use are:

1. **Actively talking to or sitting with children or sharing online activities**
2. **Actively talking to children or advising them on safety strategies**
3. **Setting rules and restrictions on how children can use the internet**
4. **Using technical filtering or parental control tools or interpersonal monitoring strategies**

Our report comparing these approaches found that:

- 'Active mediation' (#1) is associated with lower online risk of harm, as well as children enjoying more online opportunities and gaining more digital skills.
- 'Active safety mediation' (#2) is more often used after a child has experienced something upsetting online, to prevent further problems.
- 'Restrictive mediation' (#3) is also associated with lower online risk of harm, but also lower online opportunities and digital skills, because children are less free to explore, learn and become resilient.
- Use of 'parental filters' (#4) was not found to reduce online risk.

We found that:

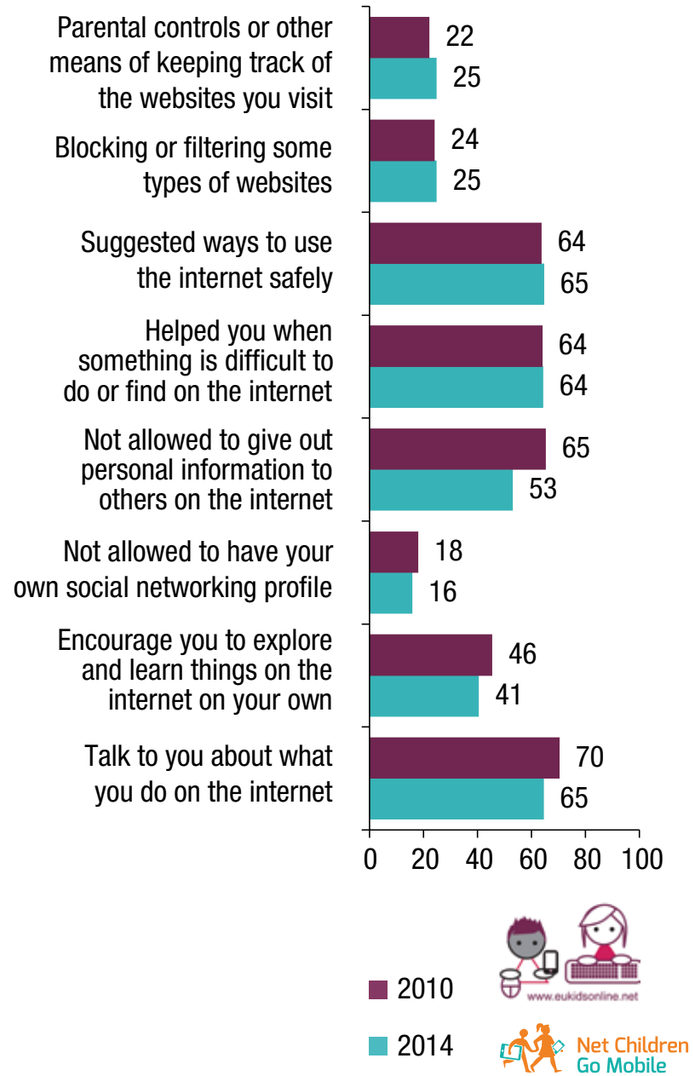
Parents are more likely to use filtering if they are confident users of the internet themselves, or if they are worried about their child online, or if their child is young and inexperienced in using the internet.

There is a correlation such that more parental filtering is linked with less online risk. But when we control statistically for the child's age, this correlation disappears. It seems that parents more often apply filters for younger children and, separately, younger children encounter less risk since they use the internet less. There is no statistical link between parental filtering and level of risk after controlling for age.

How parents support their children's internet use continued

Are parents changing their approach? As the graph comparing these findings with **Net Children Go Mobile** findings shows, according to children the answer is – not very much.

But parental mediation varies across Europe (see on page 19).



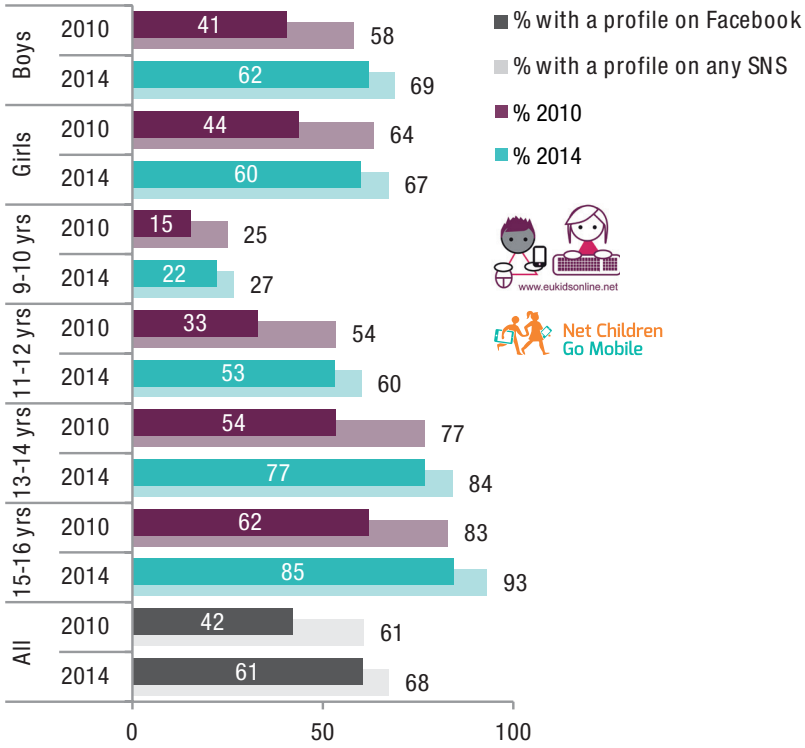
Social networking sites bring particular opportunities and risks

Our report on social networking sites (SNSs), age and privacy revealed that age restrictions applied by social networking sites are ineffective, and that children often do not understand the privacy and safety features provided by these sites. But when parents ban their children from using SNSs, this is often effective among 9- to 12-year-olds though less so for teenagers.

Our report on risky communication online revealed that nearly 50% of 11- to 16-year-olds say it is easier to be themselves on the internet than with people face to face. This is more common among teenagers who have problems with their peers.

Comparing EU Kids Online 2010 findings with **Net Children Go Mobile** 2014 findings in seven countries reveals, as shown in the graph opposite that:

- SNS use has increased a little (from 61% to 68%) but the proportion of that use which is on Facebook has increased substantially (from 7 in 10 to 9 in 10).
- The number of 'under-age' children on SNSs has not changed much but it remains substantial – with 22% of 9- to 10-year-olds and 53% of 11- to 12-year-olds on Facebook.



Our report to the European Commission's CEO Coalition for a better internet for children showed further that:

Only one in seven of those upset by an online risk used the reporting tools provided.

Children are more likely to have a public profile if they cannot understand or manage SNS privacy settings or if they have psychological difficulties.

More efforts are needed to make privacy settings and reporting tools user-friendly for children.

25 countries compared for online opportunities and risks

Using measures of online activities, risk of harm and parental mediation, we identified four country clusters (see the map).

- **Unprotected networkers**
- **Protected by restrictions**
- **Semi-supported risky gamers**
- **Supported risky explorers**

There are more differences within countries than between countries. Thus, online opportunities, risk and parenting vary more within a country than across countries.

What's useful about pan-European similarities is that it makes sense for policy makers in one country to learn from the best practice in another.

But since there are big differences within each country, many factors must be taken into account in developing policy and practice initiatives.

The incidence of sexual content risk varies cosiderably across countries. Children who are bullied or who give away personal data are evenly distributed across Europe.

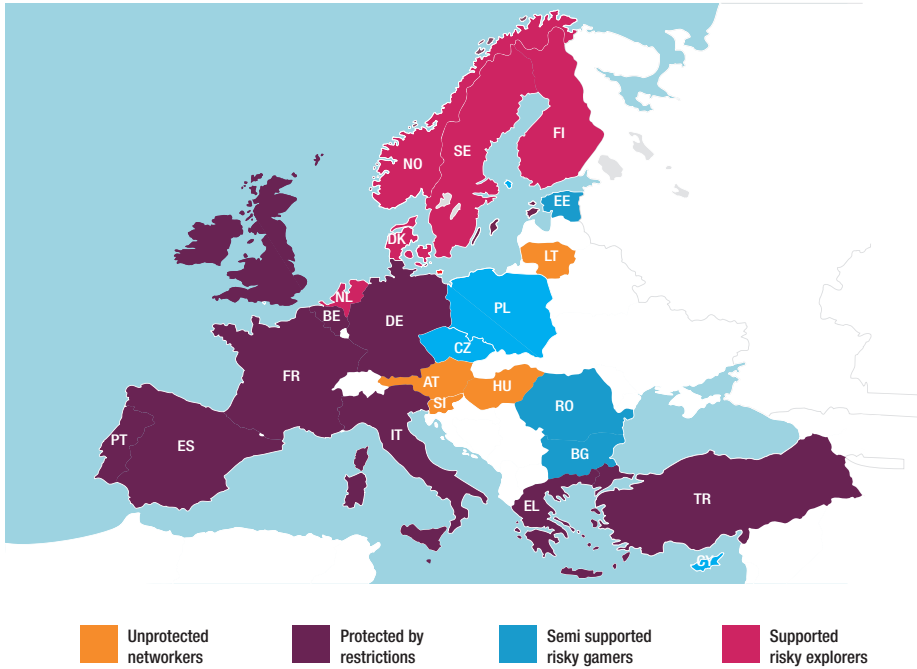
There are grounds for concern in the *protected by restrictions* countries where parents are so cautious about safety that their children may lack online opportunities.

There are also grounds for concern in the *unsupported networkers* country where children may receive little parental mediation and so are unprepared for online risks.

Report

Video

Information on each country



Pop up text relates to page 30

Supported risky explorers

Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden

This cluster has more children who are experienced social networkers. They encounter more sexual risks online and their more parents are actively involved in guiding their children's internet use.

Parental mediation might co-evolve with risk and opportunity taking by children: as children gain more experience and encounter more risks, parents engage more actively in safeguarding their internet use. There is, however, a relatively small group of vulnerable children in these countries that experience similar levels of risk to their peers but lack the parental mediation and opportunities also enjoyed by their peers.

Policy makers should therefore support parents and schools, and stimulate industry players to enhance responsible practices in relation to internet safety, including seeking to reach and support those few vulnerable children may 'get lost' in an environment full of experts.

Semi-supported risky gamers

Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland and Romania

In these countries, children encounter only moderate online opportunities, mainly focused on entertainment, and games in particular. Yet they still experience relatively high levels of risk and harm: some encounter a specific risk, others a range of risks.

Parents undertake rather diverse types of mediation in these countries, including active and restrictive forms of mediation, although it seems these are relatively ineffective. This may be because the online opportunities and associated digital skills have only emerged relatively recently in these countries, so supportive structures and good practice are not yet established.

Although parents seem to be trying strategies across the board, further investigation is needed to understand why levels of risk are relatively high and what further interventions would be beneficial to encourage opportunities and reduce harm.

Protected by restrictions

Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and the UK

Children's online experiences in this cluster of countries is characterised by relatively low levels of risk probably because internet use is also more limited and largely restricted to practical activities. While parents might be glad that their restrictive mediation practices prevent risk, it does seem that they may miss out on many of the online opportunities.

The question for policy makers, parents and educators in these countries is whether opportunity uptake can be increased while simultaneously limiting more extensive risk of harm. It is possible that this could be achieved by a move away from more restrictive forms of mediation towards more active mediation patterns.

Such an approach would have to acknowledge that risk will thereby result, and further investigation is needed to see whether children can become sufficiently resilient to cope with risk when they encounter it.

Unprotected networkers

Austria, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovenia

There is a cluster of countries where children's experiences are fairly narrow but potentially problematic: the social aspects of Web 2.0 seem to have been taken up with gusto and the children subsequently encounter risks but not as much harm, from being in contact with these opportunities.

Here the challenge is that parents are not as involved in their children's internet use as in the supported risky explorers cluster that they otherwise resemble, probably because, as with the semi-supported risky gamers, the internet is a relatively recent addition in many families, especially for the parents.

Towards evidence-based policy

It's important that policy developments are firmly grounded in evidence. It's also important that policy makers and practitioners should seek to maximise children's opportunities to benefit from the internet as well as trying to minimise harm.

Based on our research findings, we offer evidence-based recommendations for each of the following groups:

See our full policy report for how these recommendations are evidence-based.
See the video.

See also our report on policy influences and country clusters for the different policy contexts across Europe.

Families – for children and for parents

Educators, awareness raisers and media

Government and industry

The book can be obtained here

All the chapters are summarised here

Families – for children and for parents

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE are encouraged to:

Maximise the benefits that the internet affords through diverse activities that expand their digital skills to more participative and creative uses.

Share responsibility for the online safety and welfare of others, particularly in contexts of online bullying and harassment where as bystanders or participants they can have decisive impact.

Respect age limits for online services and seek advice from parents and teachers about the suitability of services and content they would like to access.

Develop proactive coping strategies such as deleting messages, blocking unwanted contacts and using reporting tools.

Seek help from a parent, trusted adult or friend if they have been bullied or encounter something problematic online.

Review online privacy settings on a regular basis; share personal information only with friends; and never post another's personal information, including pictures, without consent.

PARENTS should:

Support children's exploration of the internet from an early age and inform themselves about the benefits and the risks that the internet offers.

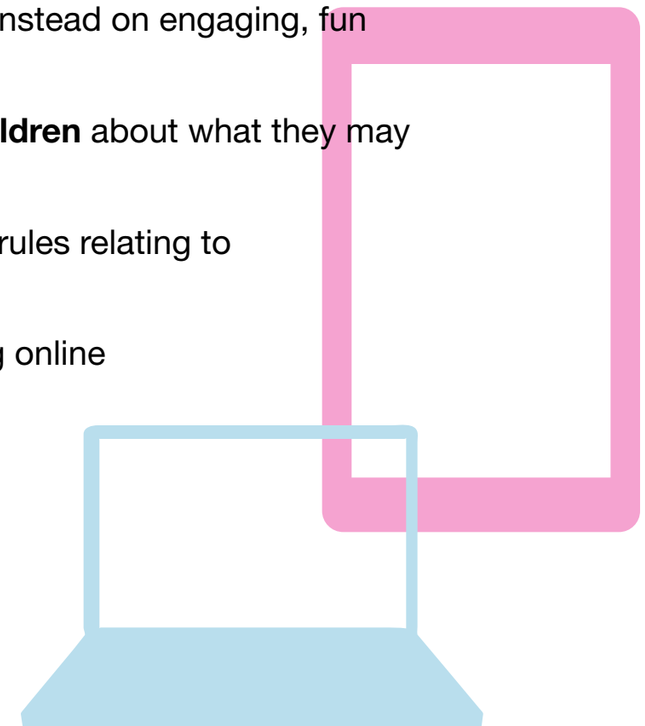
Focus on enhancing children's opportunities, coping skills and resilience to potential harm.

Think less about risk and focus instead on engaging, fun activities and positive content.

Communicate regularly with children about what they may find problematic online.

Be clear about expectations and rules relating to online behaviour.

Treat media coverage concerning online risks critically.



Educators, awareness raisers and media

EDUCATORS should:

Promote positive, safe, and effective use of technology by children in all educational contexts including homework, using public libraries, computer clubhouses, ICT workshops, etc.

Integrate online safety awareness and digital skills across the curriculum.

Ensure the benefits of digital technologies reach all children.

Ensure provision of ICT and digital skills development for teachers, supported by awareness raising about risks and safety for young people online.

Develop whole-school policies regarding positive uses of technology as well as protocols to deal with instances of online bullying and harassment.

Form partnerships with trusted providers and sources of expertise in the delivery of internet safety education.

AWARENESS RAISERS AND MEDIA should:

Increase parental understanding about the risks young people face online without being alarmist or sensationalist.

Focus first on the many opportunities and benefits that the internet affords and only second on the risks to be managed and harm to be avoided.

Represent and present young people's perspectives about online experiences in ways that respect their rights and their privacy. Ensure reporting and awareness raising is based on reliable evidence and robust research.

Government and industry

GOVERNMENT should:

Coordinate multi-stakeholder efforts to bring about greater levels of internet safety and ensure there is meaningful youth participation in all relevant multi-stakeholder groupings.

Review adequate legislative provision for dealing with online harassment and abuse.

Ensure provision for youth protection in traditional media can also support online safety provision.

Continue efforts to support digital inclusion of all citizens while providing support for socially disadvantaged parents and households.

Promote positive online content, encouraging broadcasters, content developers and entrepreneurs to develop content tailored to the needs of different age groups.

INDUSTRY should:

Ensure 'safety by default' and enable customisable, easy-to-use safety features, accessible to those with only basic digital literacy.

Promote greater standardisation in classification and advisory labels to guide parents.

Ensure age limits are real and effective using appropriate methods of age verification where possible and accompanied by sufficient safety information.

Implement tools so that under-18s can remove content that may be damaging to their reputation and/or personal integrity.

Ensure commercial content is clearly distinguishable, is age-appropriate, ethical and sensitive to local cultural values, gender and race.

Support independent evaluation and testing of all specified safety tools and features.

Develop a shared resource of standardised industry data regarding the reporting of risks.

EU Kids Online has worked in 33 countries

On the following two pages are 33 country buttons that link to key information, *usually in English and in the national language*.

Highlights

Factsheet

Video from the researcher

Summary of findings

Policy recommendations

Full report and publications

Available studies in the database

Safety guide for families

Survey questionnaires

Team members and contacts

EU Kids Online has worked in 33 countries

Find out more:

Austria

Belgium

Bulgaria

Croatia

Cyprus

Czech Republic

Denmark

Estonia

Finland

France

Germany

Greece

Hungary

Iceland

Ireland

Italy

Latvia

Lithuania

EU Kids Online has worked in 33 countries

Find out more:

Luxembourg

Malta

Netherlands

Norway

Poland

Portugal

Romania

Russia

Slovakia

Slovenia

Spain

Sweden

Switzerland

Turkey

UK

Affiliated Countries

Australia

Brazil

The European evidence base

This database contains the available research on children and the internet and mobile technologies in Europe. It was created for researchers, research users, students, and anyone who wants to know the findings on children's internet use.

EU Kids Online has reviewed 1500 recent studies – in many languages.

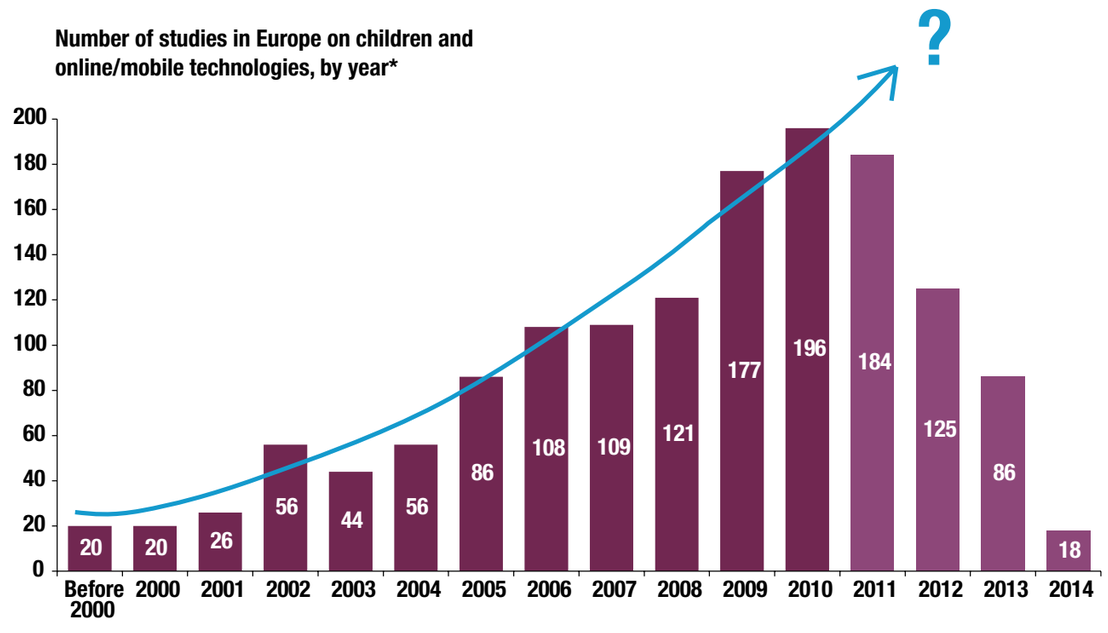
Relevant details are entered in this online, open access, fully searchable database.

We created short summaries of the main findings for many of these studies.

We hope you will search for studies that interest you - by country, topic, keyword, etc.

If you know of other studies in this area, do please tell us so we can update the database.

Number of studies in Europe on children and online/mobile technologies, by year*



* There may be more studies to be found for recent years and these will be added to the database in due course.

The European evidence base continued

The database reveals key gaps to be addressed by the future research agenda:

Uneven coverage by age, especially young children, despite the rapid rise in their access to online devices.

A focus on the fixed internet, to the neglect of mobile, convergent and emerging technologies.

More on risk than on opportunities, with too little known about which children are developing skills or how they are gaining real benefit from the internet.

Gaps regarding exposure to the full range of online risks, with too little known of which children are particularly vulnerable to harm.

Not enough on the role of parents and teachers and other mediators: which of their strategies really work to empower children online?

Gaps in certain countries – while we can sometimes generalise across countries, for many purposes, national and context-specific research is needed.

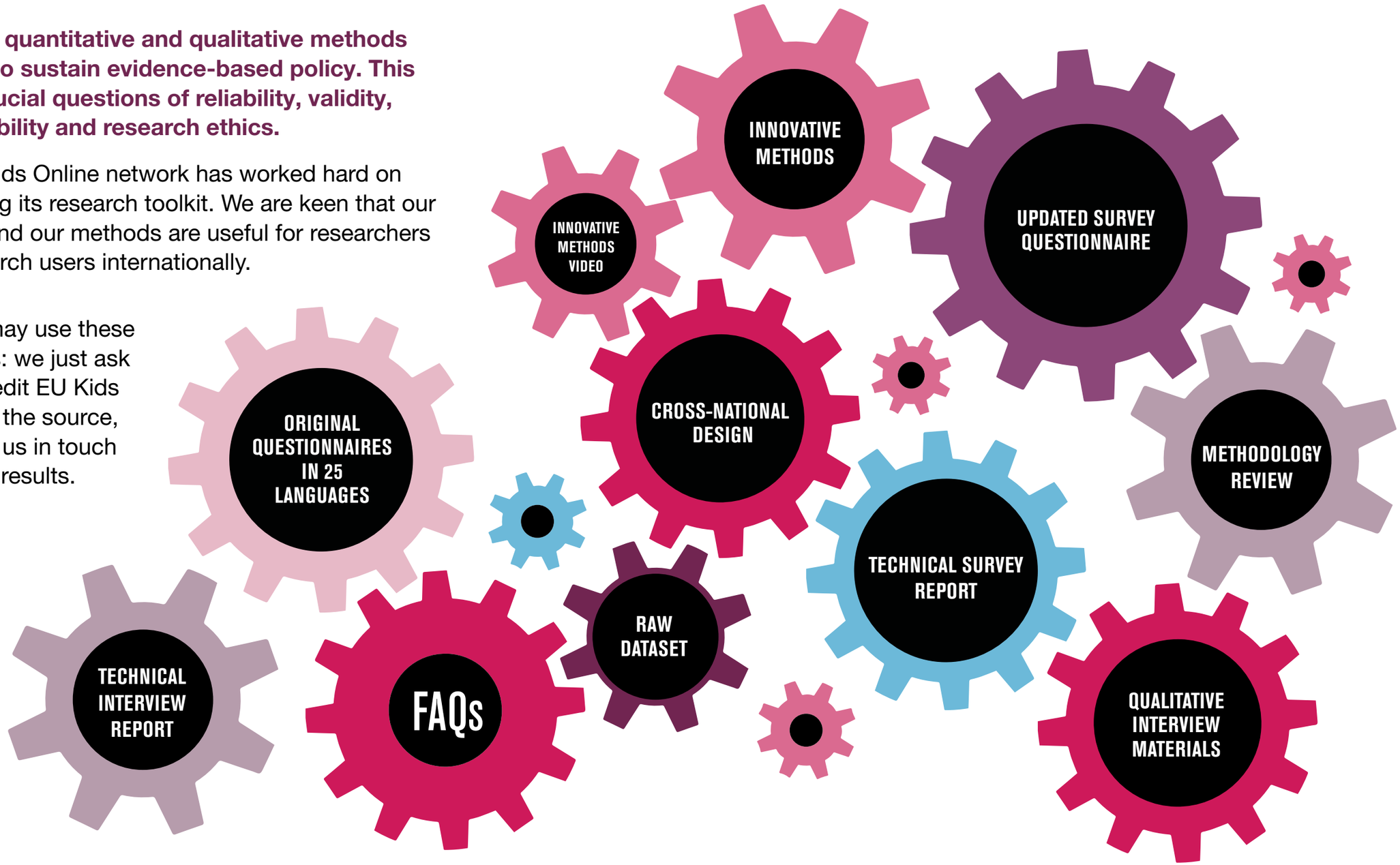
Full report

Our research toolkit

Rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods are vital to sustain evidence-based policy. This raises crucial questions of reliability, validity, comparability and research ethics.

The EU Kids Online network has worked hard on developing its research toolkit. We are keen that our insights and our methods are useful for researchers and research users internationally.

Anyone may use these resources: we just ask you to credit EU Kids Online as the source, and keep us in touch with your results.



The EU Kids Online network at work

Over the years we have worked with many stakeholders, and we have presented our research findings and recommendations at a host of international and national meetings.

Highlights include regular presentation of findings at:

- European Commission's annual Safer Internet Forum in Brussels.
- European Commission's CEO Coalition meetings.
- Insafe – European network of internet safety awareness raisers.
- Family Online Safety Institute's conferences in Washington DC.
- International Governance Forum.
- Diverse meetings of governments, industry stakeholders, educators, researchers, parenting groups and the public.

Selected roles:

- Sonia Livingstone chaired the **European Commission's Positive Content Competition.**
- Brian O'Neil conducted the **independent review of Europe's ICT Coalition.**
- Elisabeth Staksrud and Bojana Lobe evaluated the **European Safer Social Networking Principles.**

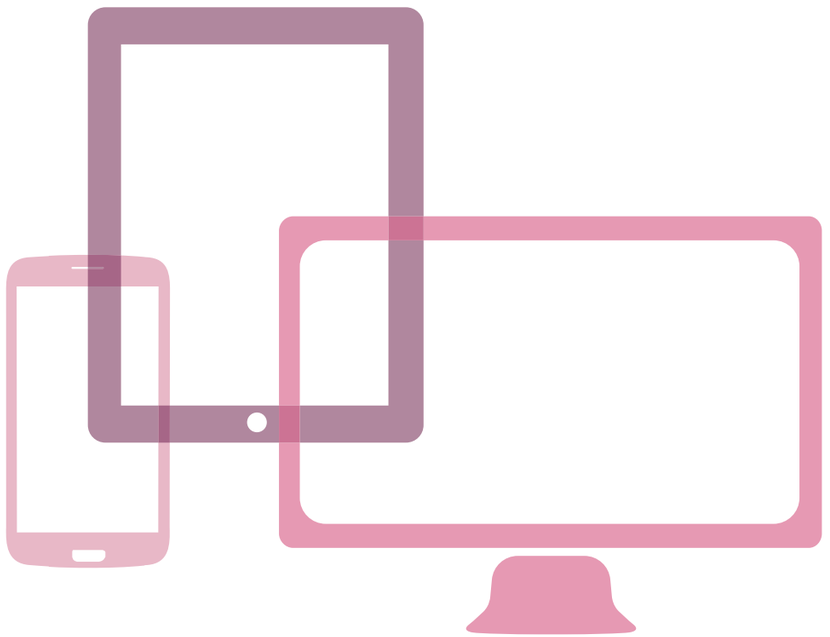
EU Kids Online policy impacts

Policy impacts – our work is widely read, sought after, cited and used.

- **UN (2014)** Releasing Children's Potential and Minimizing Risks: ICTs, the internet and violence against children.
- **EC (2012)** Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions: European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children, COM (2012) 196 final.
- **UNICEF (2012)** Child Safety Online: Global challenges and strategies. Florence.
- **OECD (2011)** The Protection of Children Online: Risks faced by children online and policies to protect them, OECD Digital Economy Papers, No 179.
- **EC (2011)** Protecting Children in the Digital World COM, 556 final.
- **EC (2011)** Digital Agenda: Commission to step up efforts to safeguard children online.
- **ITU (2010)** Child Online Protection. International Telecommunications Union (2010) Child Online Protection. Geneva.

We thank everyone who has worked with us, advised us and listened to us – especially the thousands of children who took part in our research!

Thanks also to our **international advisory panel.** All the network members who contributed to this effort are listed **here.**



What's next?

Both children and the internet continue to change, posing new challenges all the time. Thus – now more than ever – more research is needed!

Here's our upcoming research agenda for the coming years. We regard digital skills, literacies and coping strategies as crucial in whether activities turn out to be beneficial or harmful. It's now important to understand how these operate in relation to socio-technological changes in online and offline environments. These environments can be conceived in terms of specific domains of children's lives and relevant contexts of internet use, as below:

Key domains of children's lives:

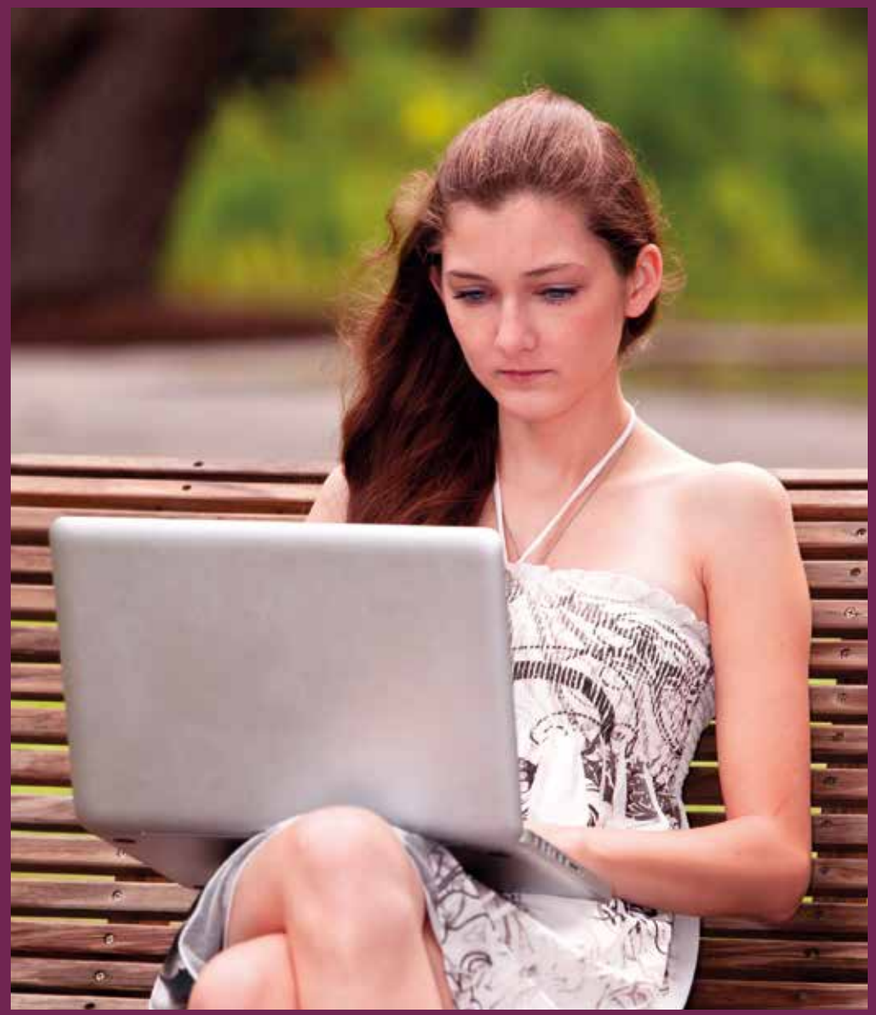
- **Children's rights to provision, protection and participation**
- **Information, education and informal learning**
- **Health, advice and well-being, with a focus on children with special needs or vulnerabilities**
- **Identity and relationships**
- **Creative, collaborative and civic engagement**

What's next? continued

Relevant contexts of internet use:

- Parenting and communicative dynamics within families
- Social networks, peer support and digital citizenship
- Schools, teachers, and places of informal learning
- Industry's strategies and offer, including positive content, classification, tools and safety by design
- Technological developments, including 'the internet of things', smart homes, wearable sensors, and more
- Societal norms and values, communication cultures and regulatory frameworks

We will pursue projects on these topics using qualitative and quantitative methods. We also have hopes of an updated pan-European survey in 2016 or 2017. We hope you'll stay in touch with us as we work to meet these challenges.



visit: eukidsonline.net

LSE THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

The EU Kids Online network has received funding from the European Commission Safer Internet Programme. The authors are solely responsible for the contents of this report. It does not represent the opinion of the Commission and nor is the Commission responsible for any use that might be made of information contained in it.

Final report (deliverable D1.6) to the EC Safer Internet Programme from the EU Kids Online network 2011-2014 (contract number: SIP-2010-TN-4201001) ISSN 2045-256X

Project director: Sonia Livingstone, LSE

Management group:
Leslie Haddon, LSE
Uwe Hasebrink, University of Hamburg
Kjartan Ólafsson, University of Akureyri
Brian O'Neill, Dublin Institute of Technology
David Šmahel, Masaryk University
Elisabeth Staksrud, University of Oslo

Co-funded by the European Union

Contact information

eukidsonline.net

eukidsonline@lse.ac.uk

#EUKIDSONLINE