

Net Children Go Mobile: The UK Report.

Aims

This report presents new UK findings regarding children's online access, opportunities, risks and parental mediation. The primary focus is on risk and safety considerations. The new UK findings are compared in this report with:

- The seven country European 2013-14 survey by Net Children Go Mobile (see www.netchildrengomobile.eu/reports/).
- The UK 2010 survey by EU Kids Online (see <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33730>; see also www.eukidsonline.net).

Key Findings

- Home is still the main location of internet use by far, despite it now being available in many locations out and about. Forty per cent of children use the internet at home several times per day, most of them in their bedroom. Over half also go online in other places, and half use it when out and about.
- Compared with 2010, half as many now use a desktop PC, so that access is more often on a personalised device (smartphone, laptop, games console, tablet as well as desktop). In the UK, smartphones are already more popular than laptops (used daily by 56% and 47% of 9- to 16-year-olds).
- Smartphones expand the range of mobile communicative practices and audiences children are now able to engage with. The most popular online activities are watching video clips, social networking and listening to music. More children do more of most online activities now compared with a few years ago. Moreover, smartphone users make considerably more use of the internet in almost every way.
- Facebook is the main platform used by the youngest age band, with 18% of 9- to 10-year-olds and 25% of 11- to 12-year-olds having a profile. Children continue to adopt some of the latest social networking sites (SNSs), and the UK is distinctive in the popularity of Twitter – 14% of all 9- to 16-year-olds use it.
- Children's digital literacy and safety skills have not changed much since 2010, although children are now less able to block junk/spam and more able to manage their privacy settings and delete their history. Smartphone users are generally skilled in the use of their personal devices, but around one-third cannot block pay-for pop-ups or compare and choose the best or most reliable app or deactivate the function showing their geographical position.
- Overall, 15% of UK 9- to 16-year-olds have been bothered, uncomfortable or upset by something online in the past year. Such experiences are reported much more by girls, older teens and those from high SES homes. In 2010, the figure was a little lower, at 13%. Online upsetting experiences are much higher among smartphone and tablet users than non-users, reflecting the fact that these children do more online generally, and possibly more privately from their parents.
- Taking online and offline bullying together, 21% of children aged 9-16 said this had happened to them, and 18% overall were upset by what happened. The incidence of bullying is higher among girls, and this marks a substantial rise since 2010. By 2013, cyberbullying (12%) has become more common than face-to-face bullying (9%) – most cyberbullying occurs on SNSs.

- UK children aged 11-16 report receiving fewer sexual messages (4%) than the European average (11%). This represents a notable decrease since 2010 (when the figure was 12%). By contrast, twenty-nine per cent of 11- to 16-year-olds had seen one or more of the potentially negative forms of user-generated content (UGC) asked about, with hate messages (23%) being the most common, followed by self-harm sites (17%). Such exposure represented a sharp increase on 2010, and was more common among teens, especially 15- to 16-year-olds.
- By comparison with 2010, UK parents are doing less general active mediation of their child's internet use, but more active mediation of their child's internet safety in particular. They also mediate their child's internet safety more than parents in other European countries. However, UK parents are also more restrictive than in other European countries. Parental controls are less often used on smartphones than on domestic computers, according to children. Nonetheless, the percentages for UK parents who use filtering software are almost twice that of the European average.

Methodology

Drawing on the expertise and methodology developed by the EU Kids Online network, the Net Children Go Mobile conducted an in-home survey among 3,500 9-16 year-old internet users in Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Romania, Portugal, and the UK, using a stratified random sample and self-completion methods in the case of sensitive questions. 516 children were interviewed in the UK.

Background

The quantitative data used in this report comes from the UK country study of the Net Children Go Mobile study conducted in seven European countries (UK, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania) (Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2014) on a representative sample of 3,500 children aged 9-16 years old, who are internet users. Many of the questions asked in this survey precisely replicate those asked in the EU Kids Online survey conducted in 25 European countries in 2010 (Livingstone et al., 2011).

Source The Net Children Go Mobile and EU Kids Online networks

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Full report This is available at <http://www.netchildrengomobile.eu/reports>

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