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Risks and Safety on the Internet: EU Kids Online Findings from Ireland

Brian O’Neill
Dublin Institute of Technology, brian.oneill@dit.ie

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Risks and safety on the internet: 
*EU Kids Online* findings from Ireland

Brian O’Neill, Dublin Institute of Technology
Surveying ‘Europe’

- Random stratified sample: ~ 1000 9-16 year old internet users per country
- Fieldwork in spring/summer 2010
- Total: 25142 internet-users, 25 countries
- Interviews at home, face to face
- Self-completion for sensitive questions
- Indicators of vulnerability and coping
- Data from child paired with a parent
- Directly comparable across countries
- Validation via cognitive/pilot testing
- National stakeholders consulted
- International advisory panel
How do children use the internet?

Usage
- Where
- How
- Amount
- Skills
- Etc.

What do children do online?

Activities
- Learn
- Create
- Play
- Meet people
- Hang out
- Try new things
- Bully others
- Etc.

What online factors shape their experience?

Opportunities / Risks
- Positive content
- User-generated content
- Sexual content/messages
- Stranger contact
- Bullying
- Personal data misuse
- Etc.

What are the outcomes for children?

Benefits / Harms
- Learning
- Self-esteem
- Sociality
- Values
- In/excluded
- Coping/resilience
- Bothered/upset
- Abuse
- Etc.
How do children use the internet?
Use at home is high

- 87% use internet in a public room at home
- 37% have internet in bedroom
- Privatised use is growing
- SES and age matter more than gender

![Bar chart showing internet use by gender, age, and SES](chart.png)
Mobile access growing

- 23% via handheld devices
- 52% via mobile and/or handheld device
- Flexible access is growing
- Age and SES matter
- In the top league of European countries for mobile access
Internet embedded in daily life, users are getting younger

- 53% use every day or almost daily, 89% use at least weekly

- 61 minutes spent online in an average day (see graph)

- Age matters for daily use: 33% 9-10 yrs vs. 73% 15-16 yrs

- Children first go online at 9 yrs old: at 7 for 9-10 yrs, at 11 for 15-16 yrs

Minutes per day online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All children</th>
<th>Low SES</th>
<th>Medium SES</th>
<th>High SES</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-16 yrs</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-14 yrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-12 yrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-10 yrs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Uneven digital skills

![Bar chart showing digital skills across different countries.](image-url)

- Bookmark a website: 66
- Block messages: 64
- Find information on safety: 64
- Change privacy settings: 58
- Compare sites: 42
- Delete records: 43
- Block spam: 49
- Set filter: 21

Countries: FI, SI, NL, EE, CZ, SE, NO, PT, LT, AT, UK, BG, FR, DK, PL, ES, BE, DE, IE, CY, EL, HU, RO, IT, TR, ALL
Multiple opportunities

Watching video clips and playing games are the most popular activities.

- Watch video clips: 76%
- Games (alone): 76%
- Visit SNS: 58%
- Schoolwork: 58%
- Use IM: 41%
- E-mail: 41%
- Share photos/music/videos: 31%
- Post messages: 31%
- Play games (with others): 30%
- Download music/film: 27%
- Create character/avatar: 25%
- Virtual world: 17%
- Watch/read news: 14%
- Use webcam: 14%
- File-sharing: 9%
- Chatroom: 9%
All children: 59% have a SNS profile. 63% keep their profile private.
What are the risks?
Sexual images off/online

“In the past year, you will have seen lots of different images – pictures, photos, videos. Sometimes, these might be obviously sexual – for example, showing people naked or having sex. Have you seen anything of this kind?”

- 23% have seen sexual images online or offline
- **Who?** More older than younger children
  - Teenage boys 15-16 most likely to see sexual images online – 45%
- **Where did they see this?** 11% online, 14% on television/film/video, 7% in magazines
  - Most often seen via accidental pop-ups

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Websites</th>
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<td>EE</td>
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<td>FI</td>
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<td>37%</td>
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<td>CZ</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ALL</strong></td>
<td><strong>14%</strong></td>
<td><strong>23%</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Bullying off/online

“Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months?/ Have you been treated in a hurtful or nasty way on the internet?”

- 23% have had someone act in this way, online or offline
- Who? Mostly teenagers 15-16 experience this online – 9%
- How? 15% face to face; 9% online, 4% by mobile phone calls/texts
- What (11+)? 3% - nasty/hurtful messages, 1% - messages passed around about them, or threatened online
- 14% have bullied others
"People do all kinds of things on the internet. Sometimes they may send sexual messages or images. By this, we mean talk about having sex or images of people naked or having sex.

Have you seen/sent/received/posted a sexual message (words, pictures or video) of any kind on the internet?"

- 11% have seen/received sexual messages online
- 3% have sent/posted sexual messages online
- **Who?** More older (21% 15-16 yrs) than younger teens
- **How?** Occurs more by ‘pop up’, IM or SNS
- **What?** 7% have been sent message online, 4% have seen sexual messages where others could see it
Other risks

- 25% exposed to potentially harmful user-generated content
- 12% experienced personal data misuse
Among those children who have encountered the particular risk online …

- **Seeing sexual images online:**
  49% of parents are not aware of this, 15% say they don’t know
  36% of parents are aware when their children have seen sexual images online

- **Being bullied online:**
  68% of parents are not aware of this, 3% say they don’t know
  29% of parents are aware this has happened

- **Receiving sexual message online:**
  52% of parents are not aware of this; 27% say they don’t know
  21% of parents are aware this has happened
Overall experiences of harm

“By bothered, we mean, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn’t have seen it”

- 67% of children aged 9-16 think that there are things on the internet that will bother children of their age.
- 11% say there are things that have bothered them personally in the past year
- 11% parents say their child has been bothered
- More girls than boys have been bothered by something online (13% vs. 9%); more older teenagers than younger children (16% vs. 9%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>All Children</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-10 yrs</td>
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<td>Medium SES</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>High SES</td>
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<td>16</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>All children</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More opportunities, more risks

Average number of online activities vs. % Experienced one or more risk factor for all children.
What mediates children’s online experiences?
Vast majority of parents (91%) mediate their children’s internet use in some way.
72% of parents, 68% of teachers and 28% of peers and have suggested ways to use the internet safely, according to child.
Parental restrictions

Restrictive mediation for children in Ireland (93%) is high - highest in Europe - compared to the European average (85%)
Parents’ preferred sources of information on safety

The child’s school is by far the preferred source of information about internet safety

- None, I don't get any/want more information about this
- Other sources
- From my child
- Children's welfare organisations/charities
- Manufacturers and retailers selling the products
- Family and friends
- Websites with safety information
- Internet service providers
- Government, local authorities
- Television, radio, newspapers or magazines
- Your child's school
Policy implications

- Government
- Industry
- Children
- Parents
- Schools
- Civil society
Thank you

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www.webwise.ie