What is Research telling us?

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EU Kids Online

www.eukidsonline.net
What is research telling us?

INSAFE Regional meeting 5-6 July 2010, Dublin
Presentation by Brian O’Neill, Dublin Institute of Technology
EU Kids Online

- Thematic network examining European research on cultural, contextual and risk issues in children's safe use of the internet, funded by Safer Internet Programme (2006-9)
- Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
- Aims to compare recent and ongoing empirical research across Europe:
  - To identify and evaluate available data on children’s use of online technologies
  - To inform the research agenda, noting gaps in the evidence base
  - To compare findings across Europe, contextualising similarities and differences
  - To produce a best practice guide for methodological issues and challenges
  - To develop policy recommendations for awareness-raising and media literacy
## Classifying opportunities & risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
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<td>Racist, biased info/ advice (e.g. drugs)</td>
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What research?

Nearly 400 studies (single/multi-country)
Online Database at www.eukidsonline.net
Children online 6-17 years
(Source: Eurobarometer)

EU Kids Online
Key trends

- Ever younger children getting online (6-17 yrs, EB)
Among all 8- to 18-year-olds, average amount of time spent using a computer in a typical day, over time:

Home Internet Access, Over Time

Among all 8- to 18-year-olds, percent with Internet access at home, over time:

- 1999: 47%
- 2004: 74%
- 2009: 84%

High speed access, Over Time

Among all 8- to 18-year-olds, percent with high-speed Internet access at home, over time:

1999: n/a
2004: 31%
2009: 59%

Internet in bedroom access, over Time

Among all 8- to 18-year-olds, percent with Internet access in their bedroom, over time:

- 1999: 10%
- 2004: 20%
- 2009: 33%

Computer Time, By Activity

Proportion of recreational computer time 8- to 18-year-olds spend in various activities:

- Social networking: 25%
- Playing games: 19%
- Video sites: 16%
- Email: 6%
- Instant messaging: 13%
- Other websites: 12%
- Graphics/photos: 5%
- Other: 5%

Gender differences fading?

The graph shows the percentage of children who use the internet over different age groups and years. The lines indicate a trend where the gap between boys and girls is narrowing. The data points for both boys and girls from 2005/06 and 2008 are compared, with the lines for 2008 being closer together than those for 2005/06, suggesting a reduction in gender differences in internet usage.

EU Kids Online

Co-funded by the European Union
Key trends

- Personalised access and mobile platforms make for privatised use

![Bar chart showing the percentages of children accessing the internet from different locations]

<table>
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>From the family's computer at home</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From his/her own computer at home</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At friends' homes</td>
<td>25%</td>
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### Device ownership/use and online access, as reported by children and young people

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Owns or has use of</th>
<th>Uses to go online</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Base: All children and young people age 7-16 (797)</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games console</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable Media Player</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
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Children no longer the digital natives?
More parent use, more child use

![Graph showing the relationship between parent use of the internet and child use of the internet. The graph has three lines representing high, medium, and low use. The x-axis represents the frequency of parent internet use, ranging from 'Never use' to 'Several times a day'. The y-axis represents the predicted probability of using the internet. The graph shows a positive correlation between parent and child internet use.](image-url)
Parental mediation varies

Correlation between parental mediation and restriction

$r_{xy} = 0.86$
The parental regulation gap
More risk, less coping, say parents
# Key trends

**Moderate to high rates of reported risk among teenagers**

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Key trends

- Experimental, sometimes risk-taking youth, at home with the internet
  - Pleasures of networking, ‘constant contact’
  - Importance of self-expression, identity
  - Culture of peer experimentation, pushing boundaries
  - Desire for privacy from adult supervision
  - Fascination with ‘adult’ themes – sex, violence, paedophiles
Demographic similarities

- Teens encounter more risks, because do more online
- Younger children now getting online more
- Ladder of opportunities
- Gender differences reducing as internet more common
- Lower SES children encounter more risks
- Boys: more porn, violent content, meetings, disclosure
- Girls: chat, unwanted sexual comments, personal invitations
- Parental mediation – prefer social to technical approaches
- Less mediation for boys, teens, lower SES
- It seems likely that internet-related skills increase with age
- Growing evidence of array of coping strategies
- Positive association between risks, opportunities, skills
Cross-national differences?

More use, more risk...

New use, new risk...

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<th>Online risk</th>
<th>Children's internet use Low (&lt; 65%)</th>
<th>Children's internet use Medium (65%-85%)</th>
<th>Children's internet use High (&gt; 85%)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Cyprus, Italy</td>
<td>France, Germany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, Spain</td>
<td>Denmark, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bulgaria, Czech Republic</td>
<td>Estonia, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, UK</td>
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The evidence base and key gaps

- Mostly national studies, funded by Governments (though EC funds aid comparisons)
- Over half of all research is online; *little reaches formal publication, quickly dated*
- Research on access and use in all countries; *less on opportunities, skills*
- Most research on teenagers, *not younger*; some on parents, teachers, etc.
- Most is quantitative; *less qualitative/ mixed methods* (except for young children)
- Nearly all is on fixed internet, not on *mobile, gaming or other platforms*
- Most research is on content risks, *little on contact, commercial, suicide, anorexia*
- For risk, need *clear definitions*, measures of severity, comparisons with offline
- Little research matches risky experiences to clinical/criminal *evidence of harm*
- Little known of *parental regulation* or of children’s *psychological coping* with risk
- Little on identifying *vulnerable children* (already disadvantaged or newly at risk?)
- Most conceive of child as victim rather than *perpetrator* (or both)
- Little research on *use and effectiveness of safety strategies* (e.g. filtering, parenting)
Building on EU Kids Online I

To design a robust survey instrument appropriate for identifying . . .
(a) children’s online access, use, range and nature of risk experiences, coping responses and safety awareness
(b) parental experiences and safety practices regarding their child’s internet use

To administer the survey in a reliable and ethically-sensitive manner to national samples of internet users aged 9-16 and their parents in Europe

To analyse the results systematically to identify core findings and more complex patterns among findings on a national and comparative basis

To identify and disseminate . . .
(a) findings in a timely manner to relevant national/international stakeholders
(b) recommendations for safety awareness initiatives in Europe
(c) remaining knowledge gaps and methodological guidance for future research
Europe

- 25 countries included
- Range of large/small, north/south, old/new etc.
- Some financial limitations
- Plus affiliates outside Europe

EU Kids Online

Co-funded by the European Union
Survey strengths

- Administration in home, face to face
- Self-completion for ethically sensitive questions
- Data from children, paired with a parent
- Randomised survey sample
- 1000 children per country
- Aged from 9 – 16 years old
- Directly comparable data across countries
- Ability to analyse indicators of vulnerability among children
- Questions that compare online and offline risk
- Follow up questions for how children respond to or cope with online risk
Children’s face to face questionnaire

Internet use
- Use of technologies for going online
- Location of internet use
- Time use

Internet opportunities
- Activities undertaken on the internet
- Online communication
- Who in contact with online
- Use of social networking sites

Online skills
- Competencies
- Self-confidence online

Mediation – parents, peers, teachers, other
- Parental mediation - strategies used
- Peer mediation - strategies used
- Teacher mediation - strategies used
- Safety advice received
# Children’s self-completion questionnaire

## Risky activities
- Experimental/exploratory activities

## Vulnerability
- Measures of vulnerability, self-efficacy, sensation-seeking, offline risks, social support, addiction

## Experience of online risks and coping
- Things that bothered you online
- Being bullied – if, how, how often, what happened, response, coping, social support, actions taken, comparison with offline bullying
- Bullying others – if, how often, how

## Experience of online risks and coping (contd.)
- Pornography – if, how often, what they saw, on what platform, response, coping, social support, action taken, comparison with offline pornography
- Other risks – if seen self-harm or hate messages, drug sites, abuse of personal information, computer virus, cheated of money, password stolen
- Offline meetings – if, how often, who met, how met, who told, whether hurt, how responded, coped, actions taken
- Sexting – if, how often, how, what received/sent/posted/seen, which platform, how felt, coping, social support, actions taken
Parents’ questionnaire

Demographics
- Child’s age
- Other children/adults at home
- Education of parents, SES of household, languages spoken at home, whether discriminated group

About the child
- Whether child has physical/mental/learning difficulties
- Parental worries about the child

Parent’s internet use
- Yes/no, location/frequency/confidence of use, where child goes online

Parental mediation
- Parental mediation strategies used
- Safety advice received/desired

Parent perception of risks online
- Has your child been bothered by something on the internet, how often, tell us what, is it likely this will happen in future, do you feel able to minimise or help, is your child able to deal with things online that bother them

- Has your child – met an online contact offline, seen sexual images, been bullied, bullied another child, been sent sexual messages, sent sexual messages, seen aggressive or violent images, visited self harm or hate sites or drug sites, had personal information abused, computer got a virus, been cheated of money, had password stolen
**Timetable**

- **June 2009**: Kick-off meeting
- **July 2009**: Tender for fieldwork subcontractor
- **Oct 2009**: Workshop 1: Survey questionnaire/sample design
- **Nov 2009 - Mar 2010**: Survey development, translation, piloting, finalising
- **Mar - June 2010**: Fieldwork
- **July - Aug 2010**: Consult stakeholders about analysis and dissemination
- **July 2010**: Data cleaning, top line analysis
- **Aug-Oct 2010**: Workshop 2: Core findings and emerging messages
- **Autumn 2010**: REPORT: Core findings and recommendations (at SIF)
- **Jan 2011**: Statistical analysis – patterns, hypotheses, comparisons
- **March 2011**: Consult stakeholders about analysis and recommendations
- **May 2011**: Workshop 3: Analysis, recommendations, dissemination
- **June 2011**: REPORT: Patterns of risk and safety online
- **May 2011**: REPORT: Cross-national comparisons + recommendations
- **June 2011**: Conference and FINAL REPORT
Thank you

www.eukidsonline.net