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Findings of the EU Kids Online Project

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THE LONDON SCHOOL
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EU Kids Online

www.eukidsonline.net



Findings of the EU Kids Online project

Brian O'Neill

Member of Management Group, EU Kids Online

**Child Safety on the Internet: Modern Approach in Russia and Europe”,
Moscow, 2nd February, 2010**



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EU Kids Online

- A thematic network examining European research on cultural, contextual and risk issues in children's safe use of the internet
- Funded by the EC Safer Internet plus Programme (2006-9) and (2009-2011)
- Network of 21 research teams: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom



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Aims of the project in general

- To identify and evaluate **available data** on children's use of online technologies
- To **compare findings** across Europe
- To identify reasons for reasons for **different patterns of national research**
- To produce a best practice guide for **methodological issues and challenges**
- To develop **policy recommendations** for awareness-raising and media literacy



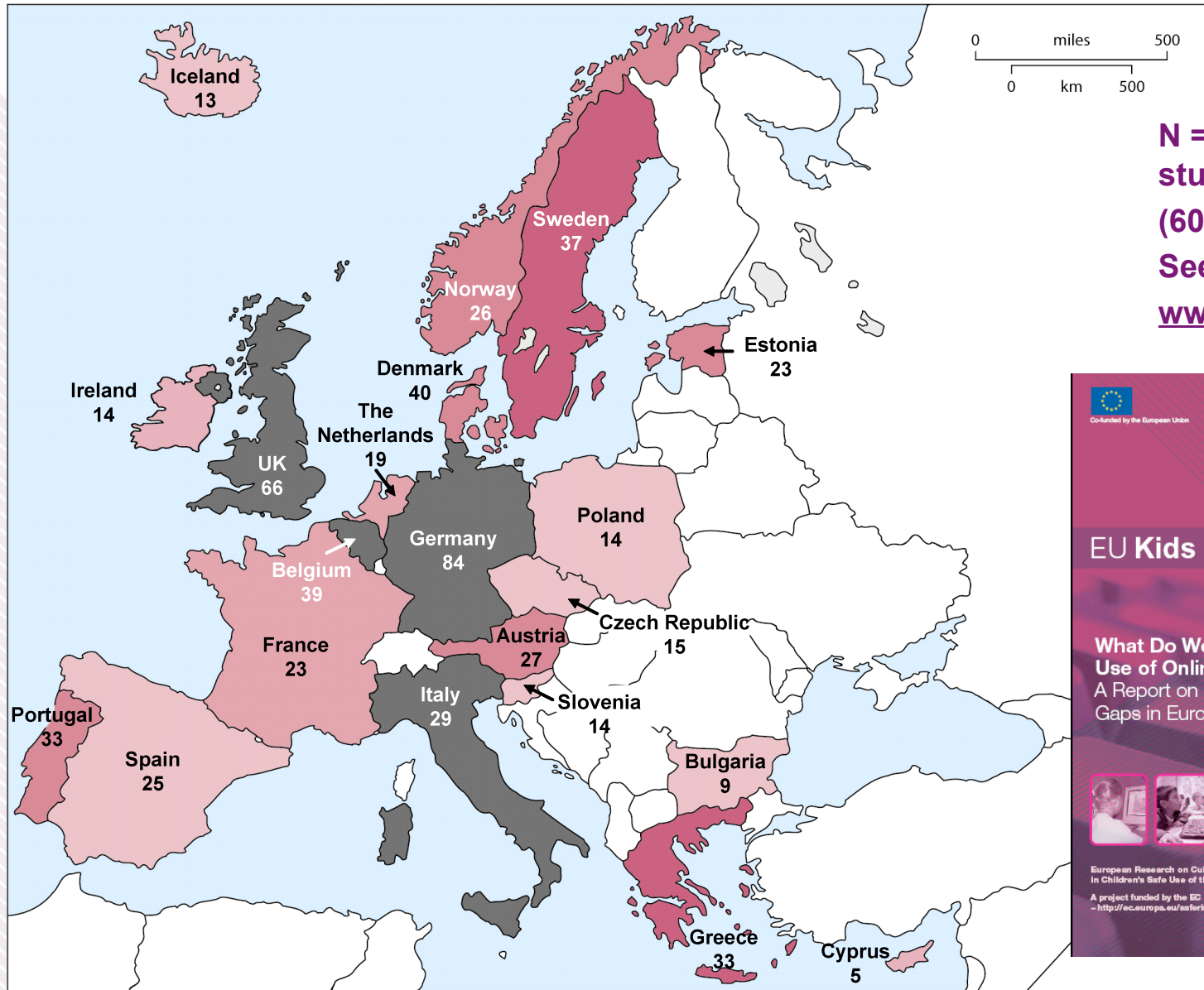
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Europe



N = 400+ single country studies

(600+ multi-country)

See online database at
www.eukidsonline.net



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Overview of presentation

- General trends: children, parents and the internet
- Data on risks
- Parental mediation
- EU kids Online II



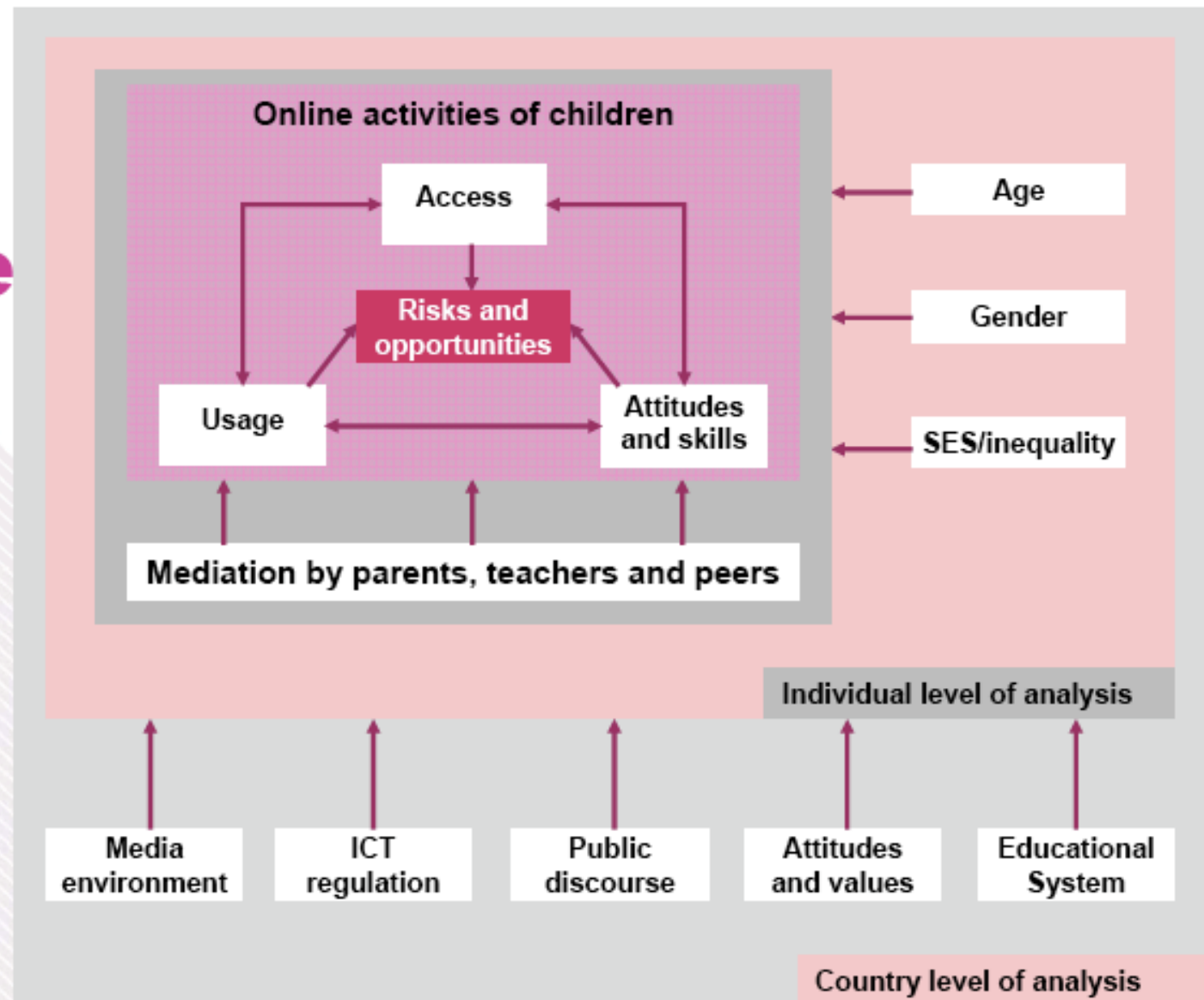
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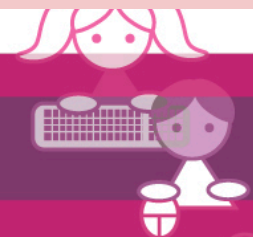
Structure of the research field



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General findings about children and the internet

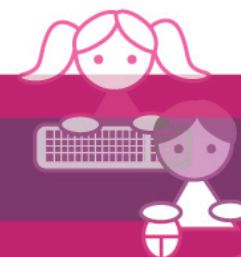
- Although the focus of the presentation is on risks it is worth making some general points about the patterns of children's internet use.
- This is relevant because the more children use the internet the more they encounter both risks and opportunities.



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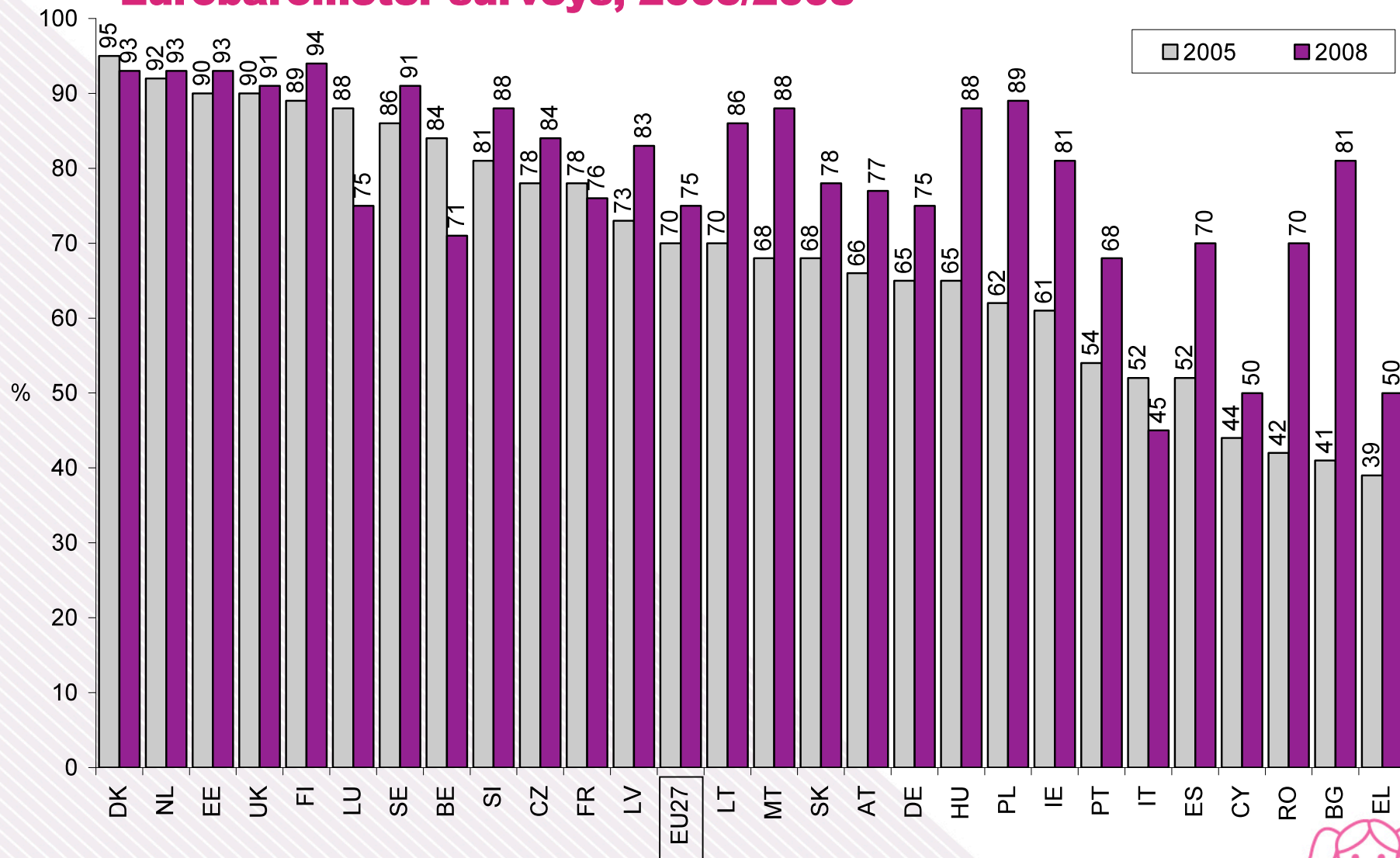


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Children online 6-17 years

Eurobarometer surveys, 2005/2008



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Parents and the age of children

- Assumption: children are the ‘digital natives’, parents are ‘digital immigrants’
- Result: It depends on age
- For younger children (up to 11 years old), their parents are the greater users
- Teenagers are more likely (87% of 12-17 year olds) to use the internet than are the parents of teenagers (65%). So the label ‘digital natives’ applies best to them.

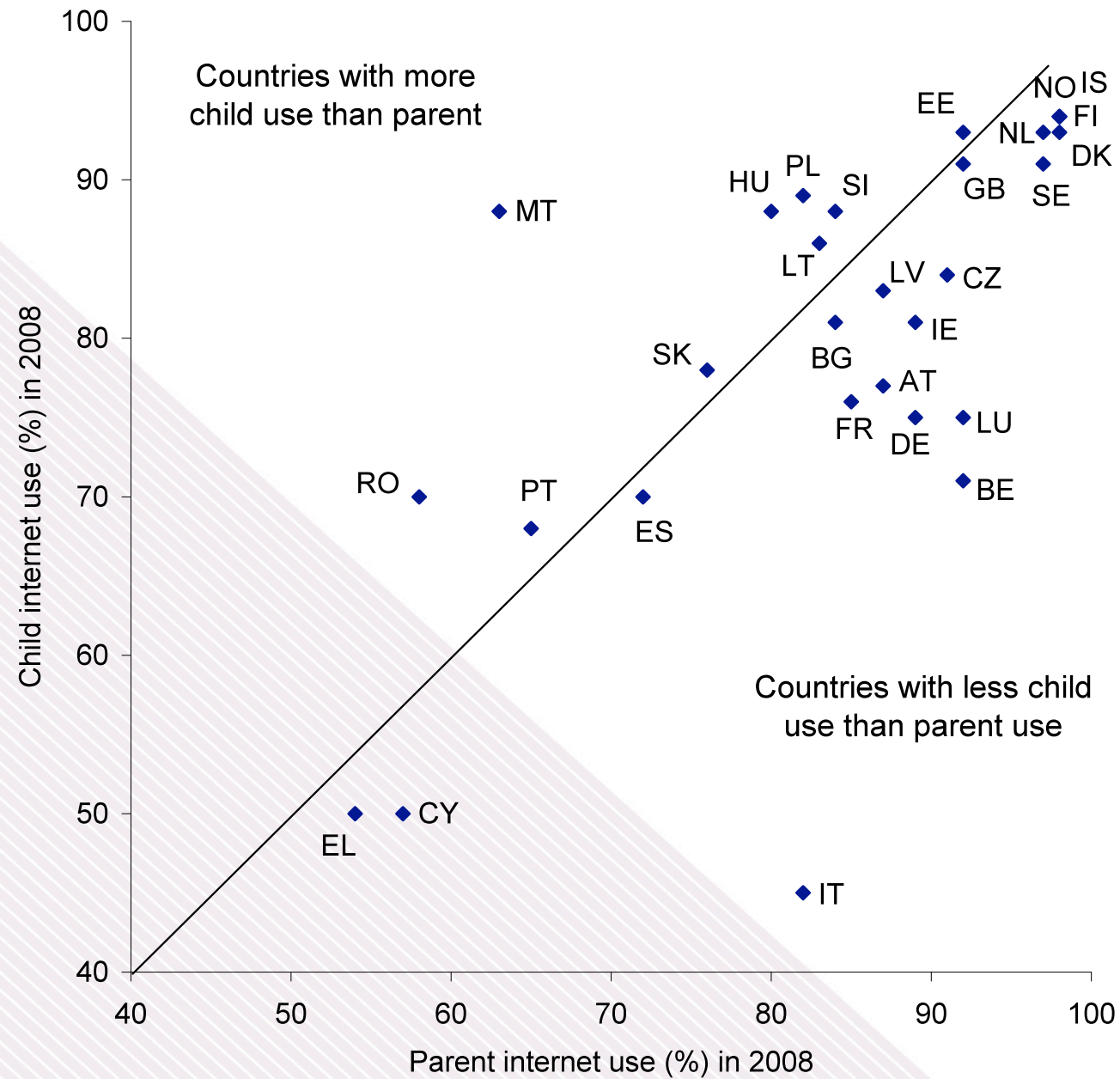


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Gender differences

- As regards gender, on balance, if we go beyond some variation in specific country results, boys use the Internet for more time and in more places, than do girls.
- There are indications that these inequalities are becoming less as younger children go online.
- And in a few countries (Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal and the UK), the Eurobarometer survey finds internet use to be greater among girls than boys.



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Socioeconomic status

- In almost all countries, higher SES households are more likely to provide their children with access to the internet, this resulting in greater or more frequent use among more advantaged children.



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Varieties of online risk

	Commercial	Aggressive	Sexual	Values
Content Child as recipient	Adverts, spam, sponsorship, personal info	Violent/hateful content	Pornographic or unwelcome sexual content	Bias, racist, misleading info/ 'advice'
Contact Child as participant	Tracking/harvesting personal info	Being bullied, harassed or stalked	Meeting strangers, being groomed	Self-harm, unwelcome persuasion
Conduct Child as actor	Illegal downloading, hacking	Bullying or harassing another	Creating and uploading porn material	Providing misleading info/advice



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Prevalence of risks

- Giving out personal information (1st) – around half of online teenagers, with considerable cross-national variation (13% to 91%)
- Seeing pornography (2nd) - around 4 in 10 online teens across Europe, but again considerable cross-national variation (25% - 71%)
- Seeing violent or hateful content (3rd) - approximately one third of teens and, apart of a figure of 90% among social networking teens in Ireland, a fair degree of consistency across countries
- Being bullied/harassed/stalked online (4th) : generally around 1 in 5 or 6 teens online.



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Prevalence of risks

- Receiving unwanted sexual comments (5th) - only around 1 in 10 teens in Germany, Ireland and Portugal; but closer to 1 in 4 teens in Iceland and Norway (and 1 in 6 in Sweden), rising to 1 in 3 in the UK and 1 in 2 in Poland
- Meeting an online contact offline (6th) – the least common but arguably most dangerous risk; there is considerable consistency in the figures across Europe at around 8% (1 in 12) online teens going to such meetings; the exceptions are Poland (23%) and, especially, the Czech Republic (65%).



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Age

- Generally, older teenagers encounter more online risks than younger children – largely related to the fact that they use it more
- The question of how younger children cope with online risk remains little researched.



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Gender

- Boys appear more likely to:
 - seek out offensive or violent content,
 - access pornographic content or be sent links to pornographic websites,
 - meet somebody offline that they have met online and to give out personal information.
- Girls appear more likely to
 - be upset by offensive, violent and pornographic material,
 - chat online with strangers,
 - receive unwanted sexual comments
 - be asked for personal information (but be wary of providing it to strangers).



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Risks and opportunities are linked

- Research shows the more teens take up online benefits, the more risks they encounter
 - Conversely, safety initiatives to reduce risk tend also reduce opportunities
 - It is important to balance children's protection against children's rights (to opportunities)
 - This is relevant for police and parents
 - Like riding a bike, research shows more skill means more, not less, risk



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Parental mediation patterns

- There are differences cross-nationally in parents preferred strategy for mediating their children's online activities – including imposing time restrictions, sitting with their children as they go online and discussing internet use
- But across countries parents tend to prefer these social strategies to technical mediation (filtering, monitoring software).



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Parental mediation patterns

- More consistent across Europe is the tendency for
 - a) higher SES parents to mediate their children's internet use more
 - b) for girls to be more subject to such mediation than boys.
- With regard to age, the consistent finding is that of a U-curve: parental mediation increases with age until the age of around 10-11 years and then decreases again.



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Parental mediation challenges

- Parental mediation is difficult to implement and has not (yet) been shown to be effective
- Activities seen as risky by adults may be seen as opportunities to teenagers (making new friends, sharing intimacies, pushing adult boundaries, enjoying risk-taking)
- Teenagers value their privacy online and seek to protect it (especially from parents)
- They fear parents becoming more restrictive
- Where they are more expert than parents, teenagers can often evade parental efforts to regulate use



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Research recommendations

- More focus on young children
- More focus on use of mobile applications
- More focus on the use of Web 2.0 applications and content creation
- More attention to some under-researched risks
- More attention to media literacy
- More attention to parental mediation (e.g. effectiveness)
- Gaps regarding the role of teachers
- Coping strategies
- Long term effects
- Fill the gaps in the evidence base in some countries



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- Survey of 25 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom
- 1000 households per country
- Child + 1 parent, face-to-face interviews



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- Key areas: meeting strangers, cyberbullying, sexual harassment and pornography
- Asks for their evaluations
- 1st results: autumn 2010
- In depth results: autumn 2011



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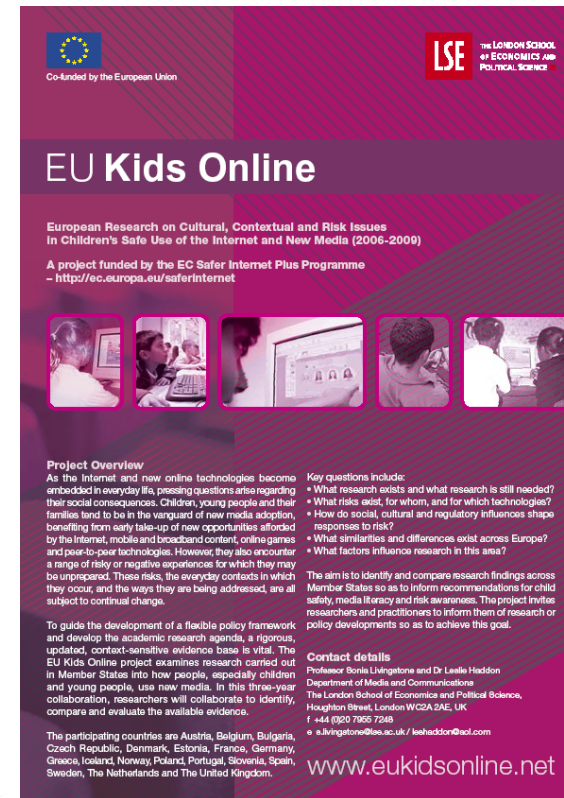
Thank you

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The poster features a purple and white color scheme. At the top left is the European Union flag with the text 'Co-funded by the European Union'. At the top right is the LSE logo with the text 'THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE'. The title 'EU Kids Online' is prominently displayed in the center. Below the title, it states 'European Research on Cultural, Contextual and Risk Issues in Children's Safe Use of the Internet and New Media (2006-2009)' and 'A project funded by the EC Safer Internet Plus Programme - http://ec.europa.eu/saferinternet'. A row of five small images shows children using computers and tablets. The 'Project Overview' section discusses the challenges of internet use for children. The 'Key questions include:' section lists four research questions. The 'Contact details' section provides information about Professor Sonia Livingstone and Dr. Leslie Haddon. The 'The participating countries' section lists 15 European countries. The website 'www.eukidsonline.net' is at the bottom right.

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EU Kids Online

European Research on Cultural, Contextual and Risk Issues in Children's Safe Use of the Internet and New Media (2006-2009)

A project funded by the EC Safer Internet Plus Programme
- <http://ec.europa.eu/saferinternet>

Project Overview
As the Internet and new online technologies become embedded in everyday life, pressing questions arise regarding their social consequences. Children, young people and their families tend to be in the vanguard of new media adoption, benefiting from early take-up of new opportunities afforded by the Internet, mobile and broadband content, online games and peer-to-peer technologies. However, they also encounter a range of risky or negative experiences for which they may be unprepared. These risks, the everyday contexts in which they occur, and the ways they are being addressed, are all subject to continual change.

To guide the development of a flexible policy framework and develop the academic research agenda, a rigorous, updated, context-sensitive evidence base is vital. The EU Kids Online project examines research carried out in Member States into how people, especially children and young people, use new media. In this three-year collaboration, researchers will collaborate to identify, compare and evaluate the available evidence.

Key questions include:

- What research exists and what research is still needed?
- What risks exist, for whom, and for which technologies?
- How do social, cultural and regulatory influences shape responses to risk?
- What similarities and differences exist across Europe?
- What factors influence research in this area?

The aim is to identify and compare research findings across Member States so as to inform recommendations for child safety, media literacy and risk awareness. The project invites researchers and practitioners to inform them of research or policy developments so as to achieve this goal.

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The participating countries are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands and The United Kingdom.

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