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Net Children Go Mobile: Full findings from Ireland

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Net Children Go Mobile

Full findings from Ireland.

Brian O'Neill & Thuy Dinh



Full Findings
from Ireland

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1. Summary of Findings

Net Children Go Mobile is a two-year research project funded under the European Commission's Safer Internet Programme. Seven countries participated in the project: Denmark, Italy, Romania, United Kingdom, Ireland, Portugal and Belgium.

Findings from the survey are compared with EU Kids Online which because of the similar methodology adopted allows trends to be identified.

The project uses quantitative and qualitative methodologies to investigate access and use, risks and opportunities of mobile internet use. This report presents the full findings of the survey with extracts from qualitative data about young people's use of mobile internet technologies in Ireland.

500 young people, aged 9-16, were interviewed face-to-face in their homes. Ipsos MRBI carried out the quantitative fieldwork in Ireland in November and December 2013, while the qualitative study was carried out from April to June 2014, with the involvement of 32 children and 10 parents of children from 9 to 16 year-olds.

Access and Use

Mobile and personalised media are expanding the locations for internet use among children by providing 'anywhere, anytime' accessibility.

- Home is still the main location of internet use by far, despite it now being available in many locations out and about. 63% of children report using the internet several times a day or at least once a day at home.
- Smartphones stand out as the most used device for internet access on a daily basis by 9-16 year olds in all contexts. Smartphones (35%) followed by laptops (29%) and tablets (27%) are the devices most used most to go online.

- Just under half or 46% of children access the internet from their own bedroom on a daily basis, with 22% saying they do so several times per day.
- Most online use is during the day. A minority go online after 9pm: 28% say a little and 14% say a lot.
- Over half (53%) of 9-16 year olds say they never or almost never use the internet in school. Just 7% of Irish 9-16 year olds children report using the internet in school on a daily basis.
- Internet access while on the move - such as on the way to school or when out and about - is still limited. 87% of children say they never or almost never do this. Three quarters of young people rely exclusively on free Wi-Fi access to go online using their smartphone.
- In Ireland, home games consoles are the device that 9-16 year olds are most likely to own (44%), followed by smartphones (40%), a tablet (28%) or a mobile phone that is not a smartphone (27%).
- Compared with 2011, internet use in the child's own room increased in 2014, strikingly so among older teenagers (15-16 years) with over quarters (77% vs.43%) saying they go online in their own room.
- The age at which children start using the internet has fallen marginally. 8 years of age is now the average for the 7 countries compared to 9 years of age reported by EU Kids Online in 2011.

Online activities

- Entertainment uses (listening to music and watching video clips online) continue to be the most popular online activities for all age groups.
- 9 in 10 of all 15-16 year olds in Ireland have a profile on a social networking site. Notably, just under 40% of 11-12 year olds also have a social

networking profile despite age restrictions. There is a steep rise from age 11-12 to age 13-14 where use of social networking more than doubles.

- 8 out of 10 children who use social networking use Facebook as their main profile.
- 10% of 15-16 year olds say they use Twitter as their primary social networking platform. This contrasts with the UK where 1 in 4 children say the profile they use most is Twitter.
- Over one third of all 9-16 year olds (36%) has a profile on a media sharing platform.
- Instagram is the most popular media-sharing platform and is reported by 42% of 9-16 year olds as the media platform they use most often. This is followed by YouTube (34%).
- The notable change in what Irish children do online is they do more of everything compared to 2011. Smartphone users make considerably more use of the internet in almost every way. However, many informational, civic and creative uses are regularly undertaken only by a minority of children.
- By comparison with other European countries, Irish children (together with UK children) are more satisfied with the availability of online content.

Skills

- On average, children say they have just half (5.3) of the 12 skills we asked about, slightly below the European average of 5.9.
- Looking at differences by gender, girls claim more skills than boys. This slightly reverses the European trend where boys claim more skills than girls.
- On average, 60% of children say they know more about the internet than their parents. 59% claim to know more than their parents about using smartphones.

- A similar number claim to be able to use the internet safely (57%). Compared to 2011, Irish children have made a good progress in digital safety skills. However, 43% still say that they do not know how to use “report abuse” buttons on websites.

Risk and Harm

- Overall, 1 in 5 children in Ireland say that they have been bothered by something on the internet in the past year, a doubling of the finding reported by EU Kids Online in 2011. A quarter of 13-14 year olds and 37% of 15-16 year olds say they have experienced something that bothered them or wished they hadn't seen.
- 22% of children have experienced bullying, either online or offline. 13% of 13-14 year olds say that they have been bullied on a social networking site. Girls are more likely to experience bullying than boys (26% for girls compared to 17% of boys). 20% of girls compared to 11% of boys say they were upset by what happened.
- One of the risks that young people encounter most often is seeing potentially harmful user-generated content. 35% of girls aged 13-16 have encountered content such as hate messages, anorexic or bulimic content (14%), self-harm sites (9%); sites discussing suicide 8% and sites where people share their experiences with drugs (7%).
- 47% of older teenagers have seen sexual images in the past 12 months compared to 11% of younger children. About half of older teenagers who had seen sexual images said they were upset by the experience.
- 10% of 13-14 year olds and 22% of 15-16 year olds report having received sexual messages online. 4% report being 'very' (1%) or 'a little' (3%) upset as a consequence.
- 1 in 5 children (22%) have had contact online

with people they have never met face to face.

- As with cyberbullying, receiving sexual messages is reported more often by smartphone and tablet users, especially via SNS.
- 20% of children aged 9-16 reported seeing sexual images in the past year, online or offline – this is less than across Europe (28%) and more than in 2011 in Ireland (17%). This is more common among teenagers, and girls, who are also more likely to report being upset, or even very upset by this.

The overall level of exposure to harmful user generated content has fallen from 25% of children in 2011 to 21%.

Dependence and overdependence

Irish children still report lower levels of excessive use of the internet compared to their European counterparts.

- Overall, 11% of Irish children have experienced at least two behaviours or feelings associated with excessive internet use. Age rather than gender is the main factor associated with excessive use or overdependence.
- Children say they feel more connected to their friends through their use of smartphones. However, three quarters of Irish children feel they must be always available for contact. Children in Ireland are also more likely to say they have a strong need to check their phone for anything new.

Mediation

- Most parents are actively involved in guiding their children's internet use: suggesting ways to use the internet safely (82%), explaining why websites are good or bad (81%), suggesting ways to behave with others online (74%) or talking about what to do if something bothered

the child online (69%).

- Levels of active parental mediation are slightly lower than in 2011. However, more parents now communicate with their children about what they do on the internet (71% vs. 67%).
- Peers also offer support but mostly in a practical way, with friends helping each other to do or find something (51% overall or 81% for teenage girls).

School

Schools are an important source of internet safety information as well a place where young people can gain new digital literacy skills. Findings shows that more can be done to improve take up of internet technologies in schools.

- Overall, 76% of children say a Wi-Fi network is available in their school. 19% say there is no Wi-Fi available and while 6% said they did not know.
- Four in ten children say they are not allowed to access the school's Wi-Fi network: 6% are not allowed to use it but have hacked the password; 48% can access the Wi-Fi network with some restrictions, and just 1% is free to use it without any restrictions.
- Mediation of internet safety by teachers in Ireland is above the European average. Most teachers do suggest ways to use the internet safely (81%), explain why some websites are good or bad (77%) and talk to children about what they do on the internet.
- Mediation by teachers represents a significant increase compared with 2011. The largest increases are in suggesting ways to behave towards others online (76% up from 55%) and talked to you what to do on the internet (73% up from 57%). Teachers also seem to be relaxing rules about what young people can do on the internet at school with 72% placing restrictions down from 83%.

2. Access and use

Mobile media connected devices have greatly expanded the opportunities for children and young people to go online and access the internet beyond the confines of the home. Research has shown that the social context of internet use is a major factor in shaping children's online experiences. With mobile, 'always-on' connectivity, the locations, time spent and ways of using the internet are likely to intensify, creating new challenges for parents, educators and policy makers.

Net Children Go Mobile uses three indicators to capture the different contexts of internet access and use: location; frequency of use; and devices used to go online.

2.1 Where children use the internet

EU Kids Online reported in 2011 that the locations in which children access the internet were diversifying. Findings from Net Children Go Mobile confirm this trend. A wider range of devices and more time spent online facilitates more intensive use of the internet from more locations than is possible with a fixed internet connection. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows how often children use the internet at the locations asked about, bearing in mind that they generally use it in more than one location.

Table 1: How often children use the internet at different places

	Several times each day	Daily or almost daily	At least every week	Never or almost never
Own bedroom	22	24	14	40
At home but not in own room	25	38	27	10
At school	1	6	40	53
Other places (home of friends/relatives, libraries, cafés etc.)	3	8	36	53
When out and about, on the way to school or other places	2	6	5	87

Q1a-e: Looking at this card, please tell me how often you go online or use the internet (from a computer, a mobile phone, a smartphone, or any other device you may use to go online) at

the following locations.

Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland).

- Most internet use is in fact still at home. 63% of children report using the internet several times a day or at least once a day from home, somewhat above the European average of 59%.
- Just under half or 46% of children access the internet from their own bedroom on a daily basis, with 22% saying they do so several times a day. 40% of children say they do not use the internet in their own bedroom or a private room at home.
- Going online from school is less common (see below) and just over half (53%) say they never or almost never use the internet in school.
- Surprisingly, internet access while on the move - such as on the way to school or when out and about - is still limited. 87% of children say they never or almost never do this.

Compared with the European average, Irish children go online less often in all locations and are markedly below the average in daily access at school and when out and about.

"My home, in the living room,... I feel most comfortable...like using going on the website, just in my room" [and when out and about] "if they have it, like hotspot or Wi-Fi, I use it. But I am not really looking for it" (Girl, 13 years)

"We are not allowed to use phone at school or go online at school, at all..... I don't use it at school; I go online when I am at home" (Boy, 15 years)

Interviewer: So where is the place you feel comfortable chatting or going online? At home, at school or going around or?

Interviewee: Err in the house probably. Because like you are in the house ... and you just relax like you can.

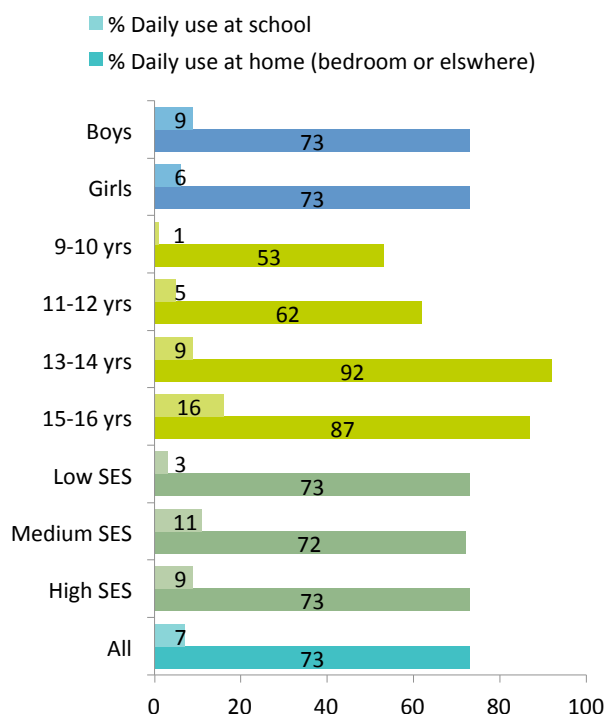
(Boy, 16 years)

"I use my iPad, my computer at home, most of the time. I can go online, can watch YouTube or playing game I have PS in my room.... At school, we only use the computer in our computer room when our teacher allow. Like my teacher, she's very into technology and we can do Math on our computer and can do it on our computer at home... No we are not allowed to use mobile phone at school, you can bring it in but keep it your locker" (Girl, 9 years)

Maybe we can do more things at school with our schoolwork. I like to have more computer lessons. We all like it, we can do more things on it like we did with our blog last year. My teacher said we can do more on it like post up more photos, write more things for our blog, we can make it the way we wanted, but I think we need to learn how to do it if we want to make it nice and more people can read it. (Girl, 10 years)

Figure 1 compares home and school access by gender, age and SES.

Figure 1: Comparison between home and school access



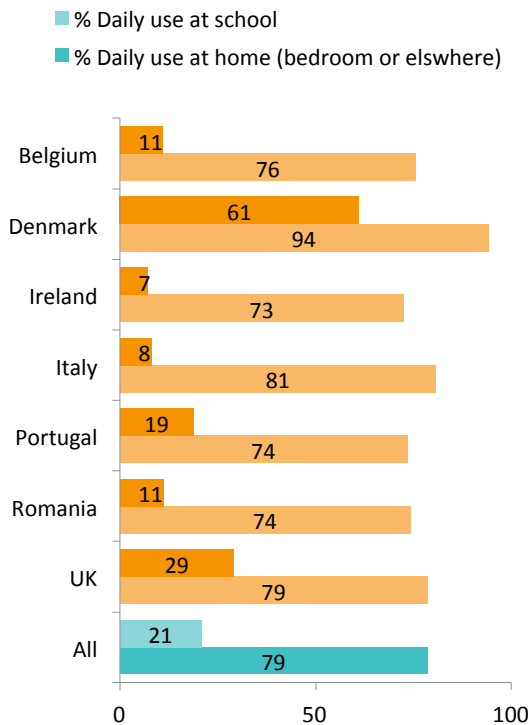
Q1a, Q1b and Q1c: Looking at this card, please tell me how often you go online or use the internet (from a computer, a mobile phone, a smartphone, or any other device you may use to go online) at the following locations.

Base: All children who use the internet.

- 73% of Irish 9-16 year olds children report using the internet daily at home and just 7% of children report using the internet in school on a daily basis. The gap between home and school internet access is particularly stark.
- Internet access also varies according to age and SES. Older children and children from higher SES homes are more likely to use the internet both at home and at school. However, there is no different in SES in accessing the internet from home.

Daily use of the internet by Irish young people remains somewhat below other European countries both at home and at school (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Comparison between home and school access in different countries

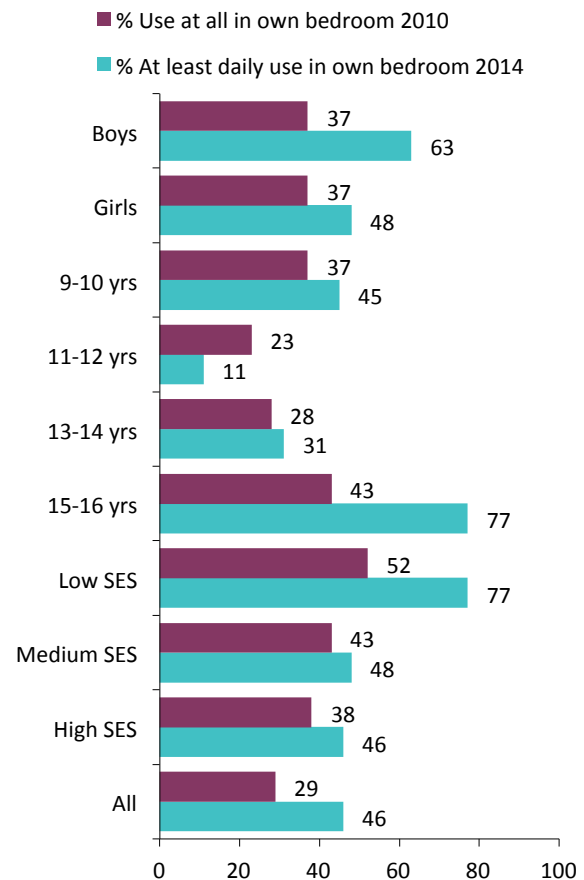


Q1a, Q1b and Q1c: Looking at this card, please tell me how often you go online or use the internet (from a computer, a mobile phone, a smartphone, or any other device you may use to go online) at the following locations.
Base: All children who use the internet.

- The finding that just 7% of children use the internet at school on a daily basis is below the United Kingdom where nearly a third (29%) use the internet every day in school and substantially below Denmark where 61% report daily use of the internet in school. Denmark stands out within the current study in terms of the integration of internet use both at home and in school.

We also compare changes in access from the child's own room with findings from 2011 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Children who access the internet in their own bedroom, comparing 2011 and 2014



Q1 a, Q1 b and Q1 c: Looking at this card, please tell me how often you go online or use the internet (from a computer, a mobile phone, a smartphone, or any other device you may use to go online) at the following locations...
EU Kids Online: QC301a: Looking at this card, please tell me where you use the internet these days.
Base: All children who use the internet. UK surveys for EU Kids Online (2011) and Net Children Go Mobile (2013)

- Overall, using the internet in the child's own room has increased with the exception of 11-12 year-olds. Internet use in the child's own room is strongly differentiated by age in both surveys. Findings for 2014 show the highest increase in daily use among 15-16 year-olds (77% vs.43%).
- Differences by SES for own room use are notable. Low SES households record the highest increase (77%) in 2014 compared to 52% in 2011.
- Gender differences are also apparent use. In 2014, boys enjoyed greater access to daily internet use in their own room compared to

girls (63% vs. 48%) while in 2011 there was no difference in 'own room' internet use.

I also have my PlayStation. I used to play a lot,...hmm I played the whole day because before, I live in the area was not good. My mom wanted me to stay at home because there no place around to go. We have no park and green area, I can't go out. I stayed home most the time and I played a lot with my PlayStation. But that was last year. Now we moved to a new place. We have a park nearby. I go out a lot. I ride my bike and I love it. I ride it everyday after school. We moved to this new place, it's good now, we can go out. (Boy, 9 years)

2.2 How children access the internet

The shift towards mobile internet use, especially the use of smartphones, is evident when we look at the devices children use to go online in each of the locations asked about.

Table 2 shows which devices children use on a daily basis to access the internet in different places.

Table 2: Devices used to go online daily at different places

	Own bedroom	At home but not own room	At school	Other places	When out and about
A desktop computer (PC)	5	14	3	1	N/A
A laptop computer	13	22	2	2	N/A
A mobile phone	9	10	1	2	1
A smartphone	28	31	4	13	9
A tablet	20	24	3	3	0
E-book reader	3	3	0	0	0
Other handheld devices	9	11	1	3	1
Games console	10	12	1	5	0
Access at least once a day	46	63	7	11	8

Q2 a-h When you use the internet these days at ..., how often do you use the following devices to go online?

Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland).

- This survey finds that smartphones are the most used device for internet access on a daily basis by 9-16 year olds in all contexts.
- In a domestic context, just under 60% use their smartphone to go online at least daily. It is also the device most used to go online in other locations.
- Other portable connected devices such as tablets are the next most used device in the home by (44%), followed by home games consoles (22%) and other handheld devices such as iPod Touch (20%).

- Nearly a third (28%) also use a smartphone for internet access in the privacy of their own room.
- Laptop computers are also used on a daily basis by significant numbers of children. 35% of children use a laptop at home compared to the 19% who use a desktop PC on a daily basis.

Table 3 shows how daily use of different devices varies by age and gender.

Table 3: Daily use of devices by age and gender

	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
A desktop computer (PC)	22	7	22	25	18
A laptop computer	19	30	36	30	29
A mobile phone that is not a smartphone	3	7	24	22	13
A smartphone	20	19	44	61	35
A tablet	29	21	24	33	27
E-book reader	7	2	3	3	4
Other handheld devices	7	10	21	16	13
Home games consoles	28	2	43	3	18

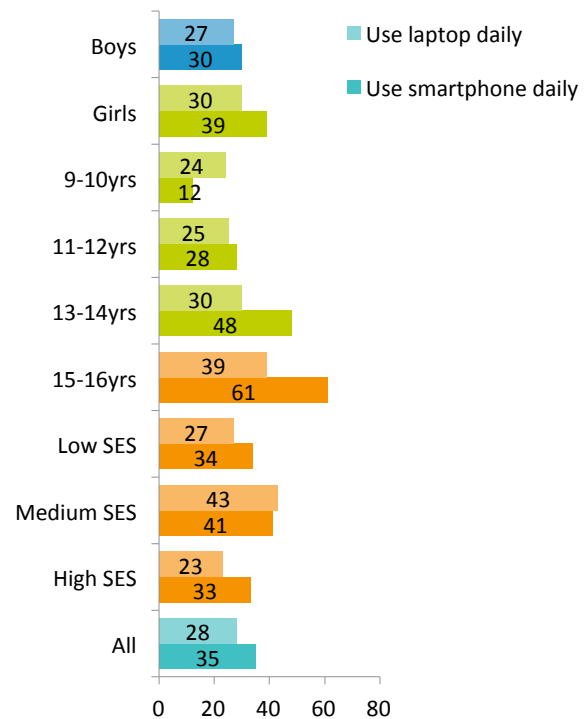
Q2 a-h When you use the internet these days at ..., how often do you use the following devices to go online?

Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland)

- Smartphones (35%) followed by laptops (29%) and tablets (27%) are the devices most used most to go online. Desktop computers now fall into joint fourth place for daily internet access along with home games consoles (18%) underlining the shift to a post-desktop ecology.
- Daily smartphone use is particularly associated with age with a notable increase in use for teenagers from 20% to 44% for teenage boys and 61% for teenage girls.
- Certain devices are seemingly highly gendered such as home games consoles which, unsurprisingly, are almost exclusively used by boys. By contrast, teenage girls use smartphones and tablets more.

Figure 4 compares the daily use of smartphones and laptop computers by age, gender and SES.

Figure 4: Daily use of smartphones and laptops by gender, age and country



Q2b and Q2d When you use the internet these days at ..., how often do you use the following devices to go online?

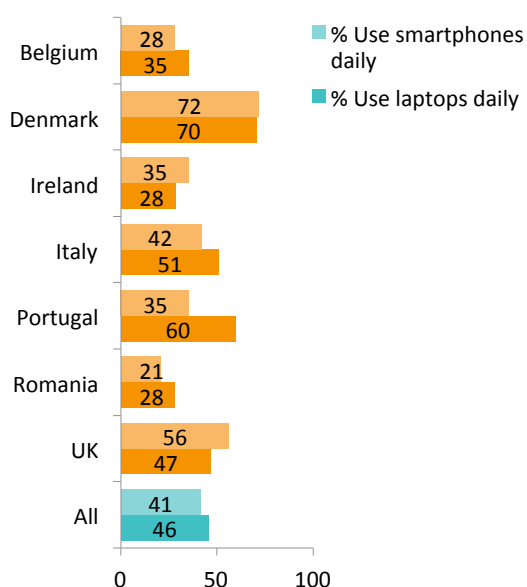
Base: All children who use the internet

- Daily use of either smartphones or laptops is differentiated by age with use for each steadily rising through each age group.
- Of the two, smartphones are the most used for daily internet use. With the exception of 9-10 year olds, all other children and young people are more likely to use their smartphones than use a laptop to go online.
- Differences by SES in daily use of smartphones are notable: children from high SES home are less likely to go online from both smartphone and laptop compared to children from middle and low SES homes.

As Figure 5 shows, variations across countries are

also evident. Overall, daily laptop use predominates. Children in Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Romania are more likely to use laptops daily while their peers in Ireland and the UK use smartphones more than laptops. Danish young people are almost equally likely to use both devices. Average daily use of smartphones of Irish children is in the middle range of the 7 countries surveyed.

Figure 5: Daily use of smartphones and laptops by country



Q2b and Q2d When you use the internet these days at ..., how often do you use the following devices to go online?

Base: All children who use the internet

I have it [smartphone] because my mom and dad can call me to check on me. Sometimes I play games on it. I can play any games I want on it. I also have a Playstation and an iPad

(Focus Group, Boys 9-10 years)

Children were also asked to estimate how much time they spent online using any device during a normal school or at weekends (Table 4) and during which part of the day they used the internet (Table 5).

Table 4: How long do you spend using the internet

How long you spend to use the internet during a	Normal school day %	Non- school day %
Just a few minutes	12	6
About half an hour	28	16
About an hour	20	22
From 1- 2 hours	22	20
From 2-3 hour	11	15
More than 3 hours	4	19
None at all	3	2

Table 5: How much time spent online at different parts of the day

How long using the internet before 9am	Before 9am %	Between 9 and 4pm %	After 9pm %
A little	17	45	28
A lot	0.4	47	14
Not at all	81	7	53
Don't know, can't remember	0.8	0.4	5

- Despite concerns about excessive use over half of children spend 1 hour or less online during a normal school day with much more time spent online at weekends. The amount of time spent online falls between half an hour and two hours for 70% of young people.
- Most online use is during the day. A minority go online after 9pm: 28% say a little and 14% say a lot.

2.3 Ownership

The use of a device and ownership do not necessarily coincide. Children normally have access to a wider range of devices than those they actually possess or have for private use. However, ownership and private use shape the quality of online experience, with children owning their own device more likely to use it intensively throughout the day.

Table shows which devices children own or have for private use, and how ownership varies by age and gender.

Table 6: Ownership of devices by age and gender

% Children who own...	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
A desktop computer (PC)	10	4	12	9	9
A laptop computer	15	19	24	31	22
A mobile phone that is not a smartphone	22	24	33	30	27
A smartphone	16	29	60	64	40
A tablet	24	24	30	32	27
E-book reader	5	5	1	7	5
Other handheld devices	18	19	33	30	24
Home games consoles	54	26	79	17	44

Q3 a-h Do you personally own or have for your private use any of these devices? By private use of a device we mean a device that only you use.

Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland)

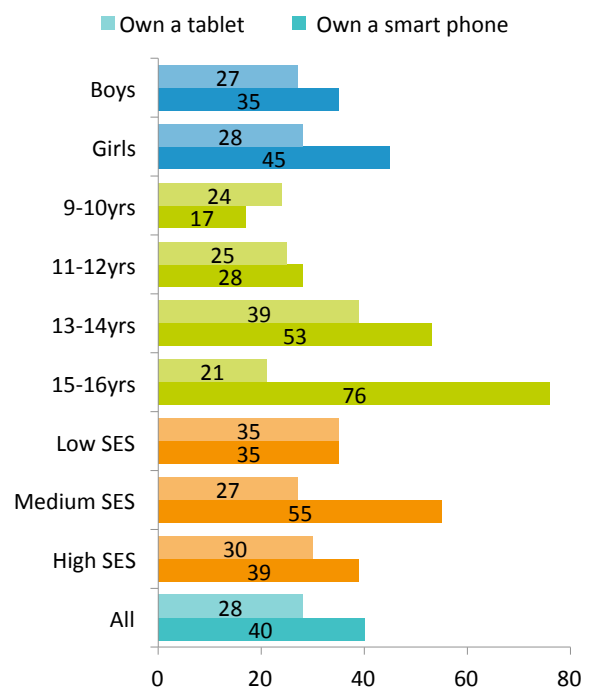
- In Ireland, a games console is the device that 9-16 year olds are most likely to own (44%), followed by a smartphone (40%), a tablet (28%) or a mobile phone that is not a smartphone (27%).
- Owning an internet-enabled device is closely associated with age. In the case of smartphones, ownership more than doubles once children become teenagers.
- Gender differences in ownership of devices are particularly noteworthy. Home games consoles are the preserve of boys with twice as many 9-

12 boys (54%) than girls (26%) owning one. A wider gap exists for teenagers (79% of 13-16 year old boys compared to just 17% of girls).

- In the case of smartphones, twice as many girls as boys aged 9-12 owns a smartphone. Gender gaps lessen for teenagers.
- Ownership of tablets and e-readers also points to the growing popularity of a variety of handheld devices for information and entertainment purposes, particularly for younger children. A quarter of 9-12 year olds owns a tablet rising to a third of 13-16 year olds. One in five 9-12 year olds owns an e-book reader.

Figure 6 shows how ownership of smartphones and tablets varies by age and gender.

Figure 6: Ownership of smartphones and tablets by age, gender, and SES.



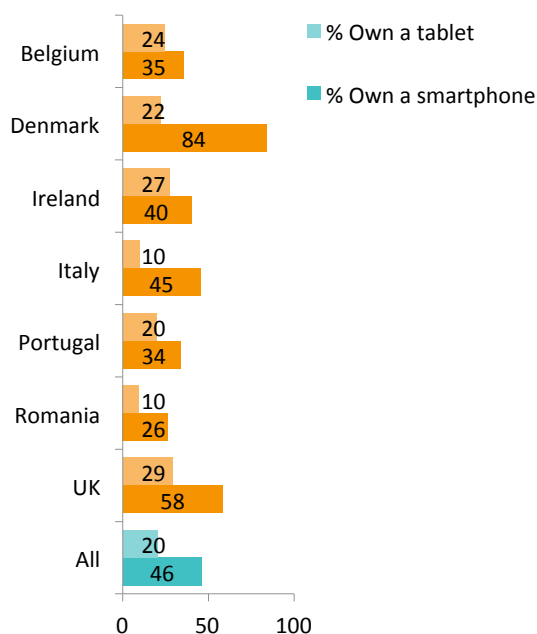
Q3 a-h Do you personally own or have for your private use any of these devices? By private use of a device we mean a device that only you use.

Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland)

- Age and gender are both factors in the ownership of smartphones and tablets. More children own smartphones than tablets overall, a feature that rises sharply in the teenage years.
- More girls than boys own a smartphone though there is little difference in ownership of tablets between girls and boys.

Figure 7 shows considerable differences by country in ownership of devices for smartphones though less so in the case of tablets. The UK, Denmark and Ireland are broadly on a par in ownership of tablets (with Italy and Romania lagging behind at 10%). A much wider gap exists in smartphone ownership ranging from 26% in Romania to 84% in Denmark.

Figure 7: Ownership of smartphones and tablets by country



Q3 a-h Do you personally own or have for your private use any of these devices? By private use of a device we mean a device that only you use.

Base: All children who use the internet

Table shows ownership of devices compared with daily use of those same devices (defined as using that device to access the internet at least daily at any of the given locations).

- Twice as many children say that they use a desktop computer at least daily to access the internet than those who say that they own such a device or have it for their private use suggesting that desktop computers are to some extent shared devices.
- A similar gap exists between ownership and daily use of laptops, likewise pointing towards their use as shared devices.
- This is not the case, however, for other devices such as smartphones, tablets and home games consoles where the percentages who say that they own the device is higher than the percentage of children who say that they use it at least daily to access the internet.

Table 7: Children who own devices and children who use devices daily by age

	9-12 years		13-16 years	
	% Own	% Use daily	% Own	% Use daily
A desktop computer (PC)	7	14	11	23
A laptop computer	17	25	28	33
A mobile phone that is not a smartphone	23	5	31	23
A smartphone	22	19	62	53
A tablet	24	25	31	29
E-book reader	5	4	4	3
Other handheld devices	18	9	31	18
Home games consoles	41	16	47	22

Q3 a-h Do you personally own or have for your private use any of these devices? By private use of a device we mean a device that only you use.

Q2 a-h When you use the internet these days at ..., how often do you use the following devices to go online?

Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland)

I have lots of technology devices in my house, I have a phone, a computer, an iPad, I have a giant TV in my room that I can watch DVD, I have Xbox 360. I also have Minecraft on Xbox too.

(Girl, 10 years)

..with my mobile phone, it's easy to put it in your pocket, you can bring it to anywhere you go, it can fit in your pocket, easy to travel. You can have music on your phone, you can use computer less, you can go on YouTube much easier than to go on the computer. That's this. And you can use the camera to take photos, you can use back camera to take pictures of yourself, you can't do that with your normal camera. Or you can't do this with the laptop. iPad is just the same as the iPhone but bigger. You can do it as well.

2.4 Age of first use

EU Kids Online found that the average age at which children start using the internet is lowering, with younger children reporting online use at an earlier age. In the Net Children Go Mobile survey, we also asked children how old they were when they started to use the internet as well as the age they were when first given a mobile phone and/or a smartphone.

Table compares the average age for children to be given access to these different devices across the seven countries in the survey.

Table 8: Age of first internet use, first mobile phone and first smartphone

	How old were you when you first...		
	Used the internet	Got a mobile phone	Got a smartphone
Denmark	7	9	11
Italy	10	10	12
Romania	9	9	12
UK	8	10	12
Belgium	8.8	10.8	13
Portugal	8.6	9.2	12.3
Ireland	9	10	12
Average	8	9	12

Q5 How old were you when you first used the internet?

Q6 How old were you when you got your first mobile phone (a phone which is not a smartphone)?

Q7 How old were you when you got your first smartphone?

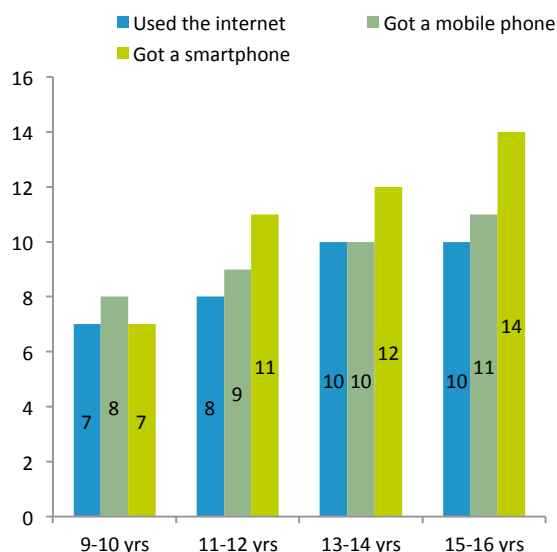
Base: All children who use the internet

- The age at which children start using the internet has fallen marginally. 8 years of age is now the average for the 7 countries compared to 9 years of age reported by EU Kids Online in 2011.
- In Ireland, there is little change with 9 years of age still the average reported for first internet use though 11-12 year olds report going online at an earlier age (Figure 4).
- The age at which children start to use smartphones is quite consistent with 12 years

(and slightly younger in Denmark) the age of first use in all seven countries.

Figure 8 illustrates the lowering age of first use of internet devices for children in Ireland. Children in the 9-10 age group now report getting a smartphone at age 7.

Figure 8: Age of first internet use, first mobile phone and first smartphone by age



Q5 How old were you when you first used the internet?

Q6 How old were you when you got your first mobile phone (a phone which is not a smartphone)?

Q7 How old were you when you got your first smartphone?

Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland)

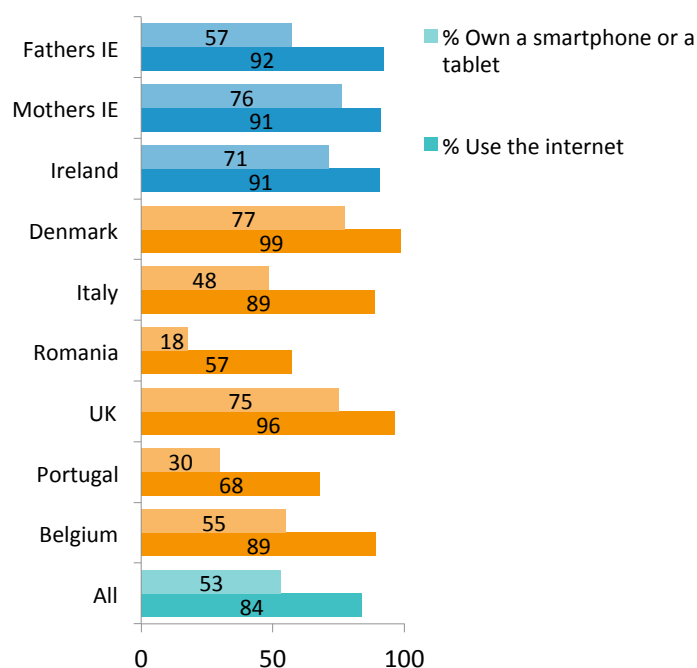
It's getting worse because now children 8-9 year old they have phones. They stick to their phone and don't do any things. They don't just have a Nokia. I didn't have my phone until I get in my first class. Now children 8 or 10 year old they have iPhones. My cousin, he's 2 years old, his mom gave him her phone and he knows how to get on the apps and he knows how to play the games on the phone. I wouldn't imagine I would know what to do when I was at his age. (Girl, 16 years)

2.5 Parental use of the internet, smartphones and tablets

Figure 9 shows on average, 91% of parents of children who are internet users in Ireland say that they are themselves internet users. By contrast, just 71% of parents in the survey said they also own a smartphone or a tablet.

In comparison with other European countries surveyed, findings for Irish parents are above average for both use of the internet (91% vs. 84%) and owning a smartphone or tablet (71% vs. 53%). Interestingly, among Irish parents, it is mothers who report more smartphone and tablet use (76% of mothers compared to 57% of fathers).

Figure 9: Parental use of the internet, smartphones and tablets



P2: Do you personally use the internet?

P3: Do you personally own a smartphone or a tablet PC that you use to connect to the internet?

Base: Parents of children who use the internet.

Table 9 compares the percentage of children who own or have for their own use a range of devices with parental internet use and ownership of mobile devices (smartphones or tablets). In general, children are more likely to own their own internet devices if their parents are also owners of mobile

devices and internet users. The exception is in relation to smartphones where children of parents who are not internet users are more likely to say that they use a smartphone.

Table 9: Children's ownership of devices, by parent's internet use and ownership of mobile devices

	Does parent have a smartphone or tablet		Does parent use the internet	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
A desktop computer (PC)	9	7	8	11
A laptop computer	22	21	23	7
A mobile phone that is not a smartphone	28	23	28	11
A smartphone	40	41	40	45
A tablet	30	20	28	21
E-book reader	5	4	4	9
Other handheld devices	27	17	25	11
Home games consoles	41	49	44	43

Q3 a-h: Do you personally own or have for your private use any of these devices? (By private use of a device we mean a device that only you use.)

P2: Do you personally use the internet? P3: Do you personally own a smartphone or a tablet PC that you use to connect to the internet?

Base: All children who use the internet and one of their parents.

My dad wouldn't know how to use a smartphone, not at all. Like one day, he went onto my Facebook page and he did not have a clue what is going on and what to do with that. He just gets on and on to other peoples' pages and did not know how to get back to my page. He's no idea what to do on the page. I don't even know how he got on to my page at the first place. (Girl, 16 years)

My parents are even worse, especially my father. He's obsessed with technology stuff. He's always on it. So he can't really tell me. (Girl, 15 years)

3. Online activities

EU Kids Online has used the analogy of a 'ladder of opportunities' to convey how young people's online activities tend to progress from basic activities such as doing schoolwork and playing games to using the internet interactively for communications and for more advanced and creative uses.¹

Previous research has show that the range of daily online activities for 9-16 year olds in Ireland fall below their European counterparts. Over half (57%) of young people, for instance, were found to not go beyond basic information and entertainment activities on the ladder of opportunities.²

In order to identity trends in daily online activities, Net Children Go Mobile also asked children aged 9-16 about the things they do online, providing an opportunity to compare with the EU Kids Online survey.³

3.1 Types of online activities

Table 10 shows how many children do each of a range of activities by age and gender.

Table 10: Daily online activities (all types of access) by age and gender

% Children who...	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Listened to music	31	32	65	78	50
Watched video clips (e.g. on YouTube, iTunes, Vimeo, etc.)	40	27	56	75	49
Visited a social networking profile	14	11	68	76	40
Checked information or satisfied your curiosity when something interested you	19	14	28	45	26
Played games on your own or against the computer	24	20	36	12	23
Used instant messaging	10	10	35	38	22
Used the internet for schoolwork	11	6	28	39	20
Downloaded free Apps	11	16	15	21	16
Downloaded music or films	5	6	19	31	15
Used file sharing sites	4	11	8	24	12
Played games with other people on the internet	11	2	28	7	11
Watched broadcast television / movie online	4	6	14	15	10
Published photos, videos or music to share with others	1	5	7	29	10
Read/watched the news on the internet	5	2	8	17	8
Published a message on a website or a blog	1	8	7	13	7
Looked up maps / timetables	5	1	7	16	7
Visited a chatroom	1	2	3	16	5
Read an ebook	6	2	3	10	5
Registered my geographical location	2		5	10	4
Used a webcam	1	8	1	6	4
Created a character, pet or avatar	2	8	2	1	3
Spent time in a virtual world	2	3	2	1	2
Bought things online	1		3	4	2
Purchased Apps	1		1	1	1
Read QR codes/scan barcodes				1	

Q9a-d, 10a-e, 11a-e, 12a-k For each of the things I read out, please tell me how often you have done it in the past month.
Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland)

¹ Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., & Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children. Full Findings*. London, LSE: EU Kids Online.

² O'Neill, B., & Dinh, T. (2012). *Digital Literacy, Digital Opportunities*. Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology, Centre for Social and Educational Research.

³ O'Neill, B., Grehan, S., & Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety for children on the internet: the Ireland report*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online.

- Entertainment uses (listening to music and watching video clips online) continue to be the most popular online activities for all age groups.
- The next most popular use of the internet is visiting a social networking site, especially so for teenagers for whom it is – with listening to music – the most reported online activity.
- Instant messaging (e.g. Skype, WhatsApp) is used daily by more than a third of 13-16 year olds.
- Using the internet for schoolwork on a daily basis is reported by one in five overall of 9-16 year olds. Among teenagers, girls use the internet more frequently for schoolwork (39%).
- Gender differences in activities undertaken are interesting: teenage girls typically do more than boys in all categories with the exception of gaming which is highly gendered and male-dominated activity.
- Activities that are typical of, though not exclusive to, mobile convergent media such as downloading free apps (16%) or using geo-location (4%), purchasing apps (1%) or reading QR codes (<1%) are practised on a daily basis by only a minority of children.

Table 11 below compares the most popular online activities done at least once in the past month with findings from EU Kids Online in order to track changes since 2011.

Table 11: Online activity done at least once in the past month compared 2011 and 2014

% children who....	2011	2014
Watched video clips (e.g. on YouTube, iTunes, Vimeo, etc.)	76	85
Used the internet for schoolwork	58	74
Visited a social networking profile	58	52
Played games on your own or against the computer	76	61
Used instant messaging	41	35
Played games with other people on the internet	30	36
Published photos, videos or music to share with others	31	39
Downloaded music or films	27	36
Read/watched the news on the internet	14	20
Published a message on a website or a blog	31	22
Used a webcam	14	15

NCGM: Q9a-d, 10a-e, 11a-e, 12a-k: For each of the things I read out, please tell me how often you have done it in the past month.

EU Kids Online: QC102: How often have you played internet games in the past 12 months? QC306a-d, QC308a-f and QC311a-f. Which of the following things have you done in the past month on the internet? (Multiple responses allowed.)

Base: All children who use the internet

With more access reported by children since the EU Kids Online survey, there has been a corresponding increase in many kinds of activities reported by children. Interestingly, using the internet for schoolwork has increased from 58% to 74% in the period while, by contrast, playing games alone or against the computer, instant messaging, visit social networking and publish message on the website have shown a decrease.

3.2. Smartphone users

An aim of the Net Children Go Mobile survey was to find out if mobile access had an impact on young people's experiences of the internet. Table 12 compares online daily activities for smartphone and non-smartphone users, to examine what difference smartphone use makes.

Table 12: Daily online activities by age and by whether child uses a smartphone or not

% Children who...	9-12 years		13-16 years		All*
	Non user	S-ph user	Non user	S-ph user	
Listened to music	27	54	61	82	50
Watched video clips (e.g. on YouTube, iTunes, Vimeo, etc.)	30	52	53	78	49
Visited a social networking profile	9	27	61	83	40
Checked information or satisfied your curiosity when something interested you	16	19	30	44	26
Played games on your own or against the computer	18	39	22	25	23
Used instant messaging	6	30	28	44	22
Used the internet for schoolwork	9	10	23	44	21
Downloaded free Apps	8	38	15	23	16
Downloaded music or films	3	17	15	35	15
Used file sharing sites	5	19	6	27	12
Played games with other people on the internet	5	14	23	12	11
Watched broadcast television / movie online	3	13	11	18	10
Published photos, videos or music to share with others	1	12	17	21	10
Read/watched the news on the internet	3	6	15	11	8
Published a message on a website or a blog	3	6	8	12	7
Looked up maps / timetables	3	2	9	14	7
Visited a chatroom	1	4	5	14	5
Read an ebook	4	4	6	7	5
Registered my geographical location		4	9	6	4

Used a webcam	4	4	1	5	4
Created a character, pet or avatar	5	8	1	2	3
Spent time in a virtual world	1	6	1	2	2
Bought things online	1			6	2
Purchased Apps		2		2	1
Read QR codes/scan barcodes				1	

Q9a-d, 10a-e, 11a-e, 12a-k For each of the things I read out, please tell me how often you have done it in the past month.

Base: All children who use the internet

* the 'All' values here refer to the average number of children who are internet users and do a certain activity on a daily basis

- Smartphone users consistently undertake more activities on a daily basis compared to non-smartphone users. This applies in all categories of online activity and for both teens and pre-teens.
- Using entertainment services (listening to music, watching video clips) as well as communication activities (visiting a social networking profile, using instant messaging) on a daily basis are reported more frequently by smartphone users.
- While further research is needed to assess the relationship between smartphone use and more intensive online activity, these findings support the view that children who use a smartphone to go online are more likely to take up online activities on a daily basis, and have thus incorporated the internet more thoroughly into their everyday lives.

I get on Facebook, twitter, YouTube. I have all accounts installed on my phone. I can check it.

(Boy, 12 years)

I say most of people would use Facebook, twitter, social networking, internet for chatting with people on Facebook instead of texting to people nowadays. It is there to ring mom and dad when needed but it's more with social networking like Facebook, twitter more than any thing else (Boy, 16 years)

*going on Facebook, taking photos, uploading photos, chatting to friends, making new friends, using Google for homework, downloading games
(Focus Group, Girls, 15-16 years)*

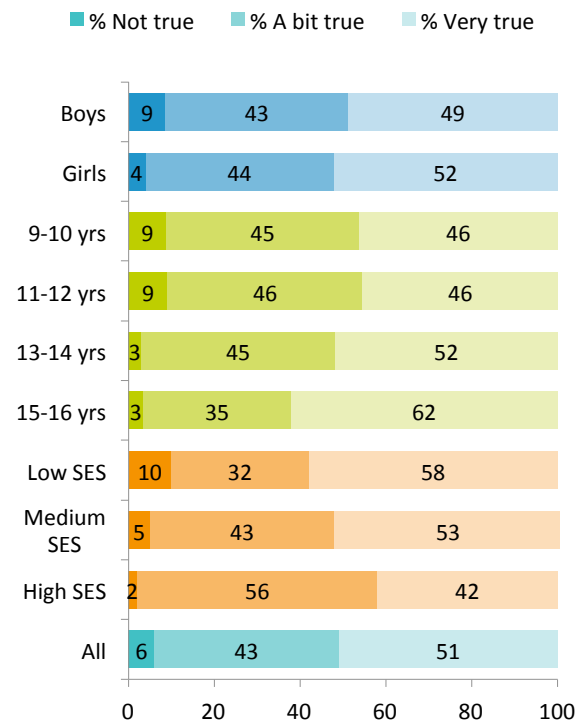
3.3 Online positive content

A concern of policy makers has been to improve the availability of positive online content designed for younger ages given that much of the content that young people access has not been specifically designed for them. The survey asked young people if they were satisfied that there were 'good things online for children their age'.

Figure 10 shows how children's perception of the quality of online content varies by social and demographic characteristics:

- Over half of children of 9-16 year-old said it was very true (51%) that there are lots of good things on the internet for children of their particular age. More than a third (43%) consider it to 'a bit true' while only 6% said it was not true.
- Nonetheless, older children are more likely to answer this question positively with 52% of 13-14 year-olds and 62% of 15-16 year-olds reporting that there were lots of good things for children of their age to do online.

Figure 10: 'There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age', by gender and age



Q47: How true are these of you?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- There is little difference by gender, though girls are somewhat more satisfied than boys (52% vs. 49%). Children from high SES homes are also less positive about the amount of good online content compared to children from the low and medium SES homes.
- Perceptions of positive online content by children in Ireland were among the highest of the 7 countries surveyed (just after UK) underlining the wider availability of English-language positive-content. The lowest rate of dissatisfaction was recorded in the UK (2%).

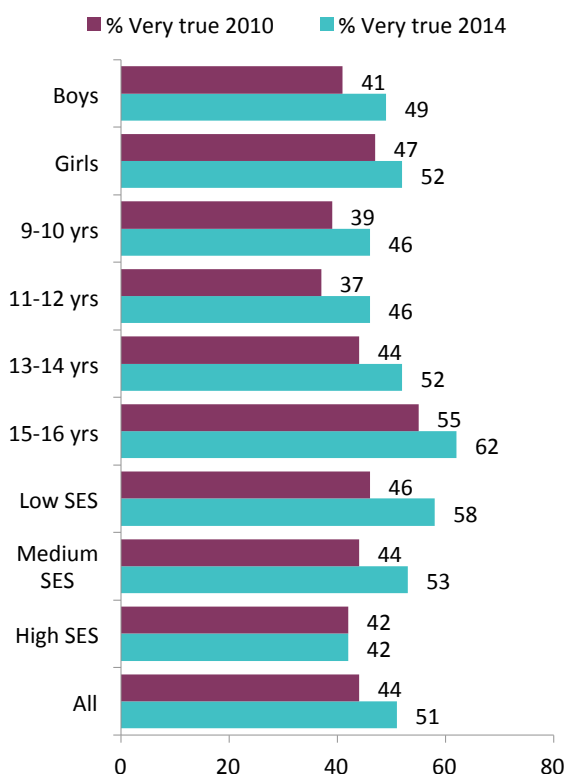
Extracts from the qualitative data echo this experience, emphasising also the ease of communications with mobile devices:

So many great things about having this, like things with video what I did, but it's not everything...., that you connected to people, you can instant message people, from everywhere, like my mom is in Chicago and my auntie, I just spoke to her last night, like face to face. And this Friday... I will be away for like 10 days and I would talk to them from Uganda, to Chicago and it can be instantly, in the old day you would have to send the letter it takes 4, 5 weeks but now with the phone, with the size of a book you can connect to everyone. In a last few years things are fast-track change. It's amazing these days how technologies have changed so much. (Boy, 16 years)

I prefer my phone, because you can ring people, text people, I can play games and having internet, like if I am in town, I can have map, I know where I am going. For iPad, I can't bring iPad with me, it's big and can't fit in my pocket. (Girl, 13 years)

Figure 11 compares findings for positive online content with EU Kids Online.

Figure 11: "There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age" comparing 2011 and 2014



NCGM: Q25c: How true are these of you?

EU Kids Online: QC319c: There are lots of things on the internet that are good for children of my age. Response options: very true, a bit true, not true.

Base: All children who use the internet

- An increase in children's satisfaction with the availability of online content across age, gender and SES is notable. In 2011, over four in ten (44%) 9-16 year-olds said they were satisfied with the online provision available to them. By 2014, this has increased to 51%.
- Age plays a bigger role compared to gender: younger children show less satisfaction than older groups. However, some differences by SES are intriguing. For example, children from low SES have become more satisfied with the online content, suggesting that as children from low SES homes use the internet more over time, online opportunities are increasingly of interest to them.

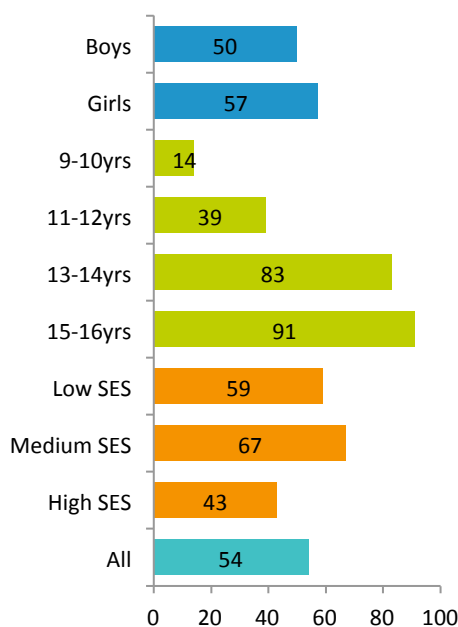
4. Communication practices

4.1 Social networking and media sharing platforms

Staying in touch with friends is an important part of young people's daily activities, online as well as offline. What happens when access to social networking services (SNS) and instant messaging is made effortless on mobile connected devices? The 'anywhere, anytime' potential for access to peers and online contacts has renewed public concerns over SNS, such as popular anxieties regarding the fragile balance between privacy and intimacy, as well as contact with people met online.

The Net Children Go Mobile Initial Findings report showed that 54% of children in Ireland have at least one profile on a social networking site. Figure 12 shows the number of children who have one or more profile on social network sites by age, gender and SES.

Figure 12: Children with a SNS profile by gender, age and SES



Q16 a-f Do you have your own profile on a social networking site(e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) that you currently use and if you have a profile/account, do you have just one or more than one?

Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland)

As shown in Figure 12, 54% of children in Ireland have at least one profile on a social networking site.

- Use of social networking sites is strongly associated with age. Fewer younger children have a profile on a social networking site. There is a steep rise from age 11-12 to age 13-14 where use of social networking more than doubles.
- Gender differences are not particularly evident though slightly more girls than boys are active on social media.
- There is also some variation by SES in the use of social networking with fewer children from high SES households reporting having a profile (43%), followed by children from low SES (59%) and medium SES (67%) homes.

Facebook is still the main platform that children are most likely use (82%) with small variations by age and gender, this finding also in line with our qualitative findings.

I had my Facebook account when I was 8 and my mom set it up for me. (Boy, 12 years)

I really want to have Facebook account, but my mom said I am too young.... The only thing I wanted now is to have a Facebook account, everyone around talks about it. (Girl, 12 years)

I have my Facebook since Fifth class but now I don't like it much. It's like you given your life to the internet. If not online it's school (Girl, 15 years)

I think it's good in general but SNS is not a great thing, too much of distraction for young people. Everyone now even young people, my cousin is only 12 and he asked me my Facebook account and he wanted to add me. I think it's too young for him but all of his class have Facebook accounts. He said he doesn't like that much but he had it because other people have it

(Girl, 15 years).

Table 13 looks more closely at the use of social networking by age in each of the seven countries in the Net Children Go Mobile survey.

Table 13: Children with a profile on SNS by country and by age

	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16
Denmark	41	81	98	99
Ireland	14	39	83	91
Italy	15	52	90	93
Romania	50	80	86	92
UK	19	35	73	88
Belgium	22	55	75	92
Portugal	26	80	88	98
All	28	57	85	93

Q16 a-f Do you have your own profile on a social networking site(e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) that you currently use and if you have a profile/account, do you have just one or more than one?

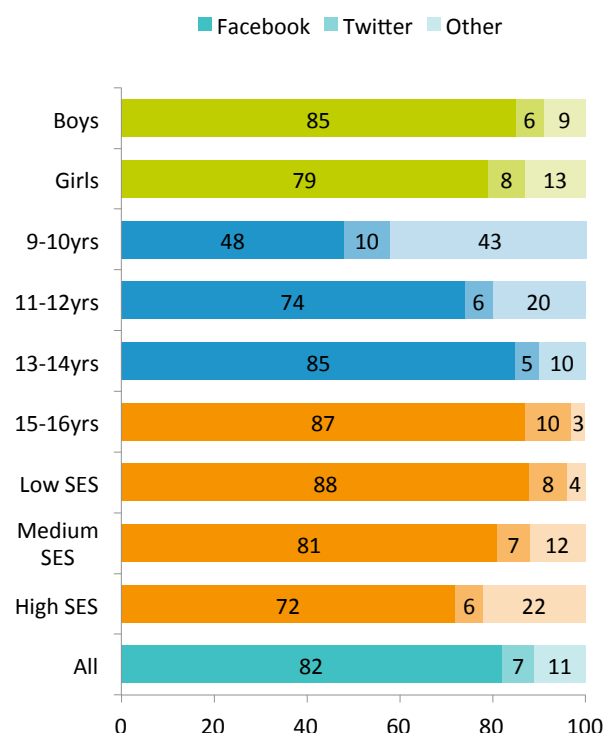
Base: All children who use the internet

- 9 in 10 of all 15-16 year olds in Ireland have a profile on a social networking site. Notably, just under 40% of 11-12 year olds also have a social networking profile despite the age restriction of 13 for most social networking services.

- The lower diffusion of social networking in Belgium, Ireland, Italy and the UK is mainly due to lower rates of underage use in these countries.
- With considerable attention given to the issue of underage use of social network sites, the evidence would suggest that such campaigns are beginning to have an effect.

Figure 13 shows which social networking profile is most used by children, by gender and age.

Figure 13: Which social networking profile is the one children use most by gender, age and SES



Q17 What social network is the profile/account that you use the most on?

Base: All children who use SNS (Ireland).

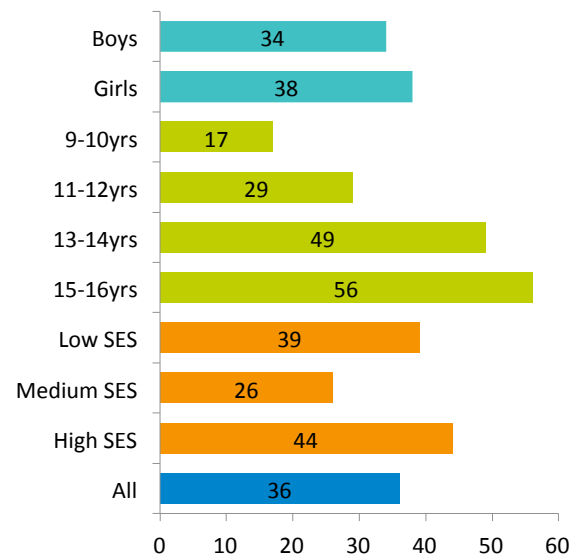
- Facebook is still the social network site that children are most likely to use with small variations by age and gender. 8 out of 10 children who use social networking use Facebook as their main profile.

- 7% of children overall and 10% of 15-16 year olds say they use twitter as their primary social networking platform.
- This contrasts with the UK where 1 in 4 children say the profile they use most is Twitter. The popularity of Twitter varies by gender, age and country, and is higher among boys (though girls in Ireland), teenagers, and especially UK children.⁴ Younger children use a diverse range of other services (not specified), presumably referring to services designed for their age group.

Given the ease with which smartphones and other mobile devices can be used to create, capture and upload media content, we also asked children if they have a profile on a media sharing platform such as YouTube, Instagram or Flickr.

Figure 14 shows the number of children with an account on one of these platforms by gender and age.

Figure 14: Children with a profile on a media-sharing platform by gender, age and SES.



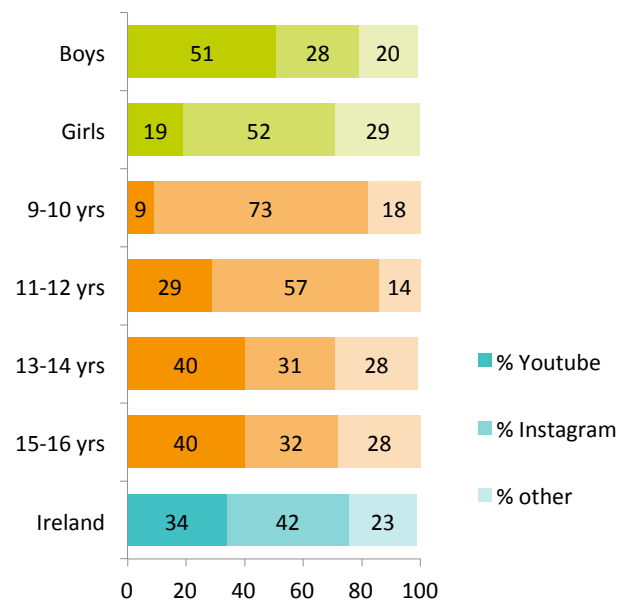
Q23 a-f Do you have your own profile/account on a media sharing platform (photo and video) such as YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, that you currently use and if you have a profile/account, do you have just one or more than one?
Base: All children who use the internet

⁴ Mascheroni, G., and Ólafsson, K. (2014). Net Children Go Mobile: Cross-national comparisons. Report D3.3. Milano: Educatt.

- Over one third of all 9-16 year olds (36%) has a profile on a media sharing platform. Use of such platforms is associated with age and rises from a third of 11-12 year olds to half of all 13-14 year olds.
- As with social networking, gender differences are slight with somewhat more girls likely to report a profile on a media sharing platform.
- There are significant differences in terms of SES regarding use of media sharing platforms.

As shown in Figure 15, Instagram is the most popular media-sharing platform. 42% of 9-16 year olds say this is the platform they use most often. This is followed by YouTube (34%). A further 25% use a variety of other media sharing services.

Figure 15: Which media-sharing platform is the account children use most, by age and gender



Q24: What media sharing platform is the profile/account that you use the most on?
Base: All children who use media sharing platforms.

- In contrast to social networking where Facebook is by far the most popular platform

(82%), there is no single media sharing platform that dominates: 42% of children report having an account on Instagram. This is followed by YouTube (34%). A further 25% use other media sharing services.

- Age differences in using media sharing are significant: for 9-10 year-olds, 7 in 10 children (73%) say they use Instagram. For 13-16 year-olds, 1 in 3 report using Instagram.
- Gender differences are more strongly marked: 51% of boys report they are likely to use YouTube compared to just 19% of girls. At the same time, 52% girls report using Instagram most compared to 28% of boys.

Our qualitative findings also highlight the popularity of Instagram and YouTube among younger children.

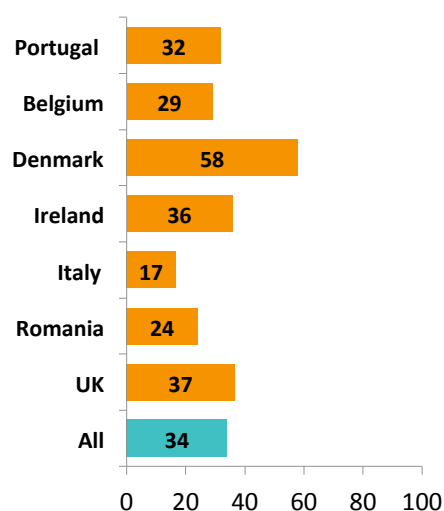
What do you do most when you go on the internet?... I go on YouTube, I watch people how they to play game. They have a lot of video games on it. There are many things on YouTube, I like to watch, I can spend long time on YouTube. (Boy, 9 years)

I got into Instagram because lot of my friends have Instagram and I went to Snapchat because some of my friends don't have account with Instagram. Also I can connect to my cousin because she doesn't have Instagram as well. It's a way I keep in touch with people. (Girl, 10 years)

I go to YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat. I use Snapchat to chat with my friends, post photos on Instagram and watch or listen to music on YouTube. (Girl, 14 years).

Ireland, as shown in Figure 16, is close to the average of the seven countries included in the survey. 36% of Irish children report having at least a profile/ account on a media sharing platform which places Ireland just above the European average (34%). By contrast, over a half of Danish children (58%) having their accounts on media sharing platforms, and just 17% of Italian children having the same.

Figure 16: Children (%) with a profile on a media sharing platform, by country



Q23 a-f: Do you have your own profile/account on a media sharing platform (photo and video) such as YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, that you currently use, and if you have a profile/account, do you have just one or more than one?
Base: All children who use the internet.

4.2. Nature of SNS contacts

The number of contacts on SNS is often taken to be an indicator of risky behaviour even if the risks themselves are overstated. Table 14 records the number of people young people are in contact with when using SNS.

Table 14: Number of contacts on SNS, by name of profile that is used the most

Number of Contacts	Facebook	Twitter	Other
Up to 10	39	44	47
11-50	27	22	27
51-100	12		13
101-300	12	11	7
More than 300	11	22	7

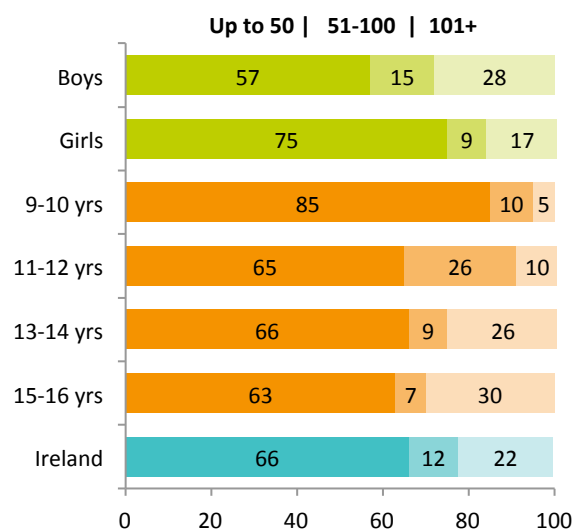
Q18: Roughly how many people are you in contact with when using [SNS profile that is used the most]?
Base: All children who use SNS.

Contrary to the assumption that young people add friends indiscriminately, some 40% of Facebook users say they have contact with a limited number of friends (up to 10) and a further 27% up to 50.

A further analysis by age and gender is presented in Figure 17.

I use Viber a lot. I use Viber more than using text messages, it's cheaper, just use the internet. I use Snapchat as well.
(Girl, 13 years).

Figure 17: Number of contacts on SNS, by gender and age

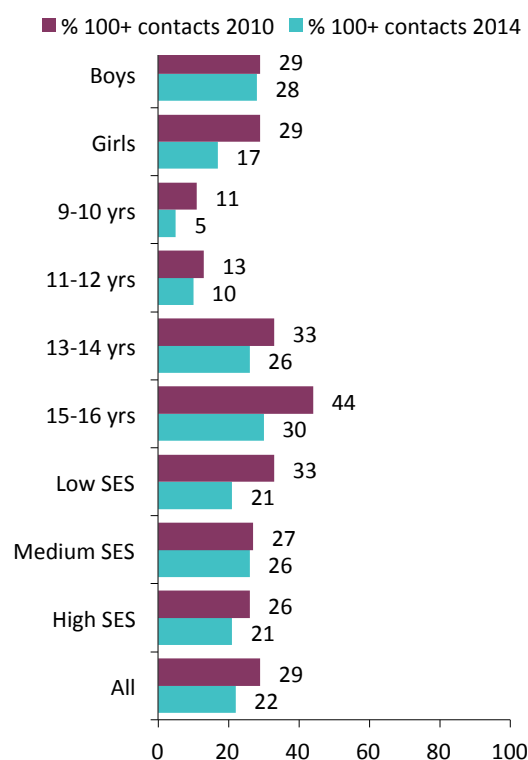


Q18: Roughly how many people are you in contact with when using [SNS profile that is used the most]?
Base: All children who use SNS

- Most children, it would appear, have relatively few online contacts. 66% of children have fewer than 50 contacts and just 1 in 5 of children (22%) have more than 101 contacts.
- Boys and older children have more online contacts than girls and the younger one.
- A comparison with other European countries shows that Irish and Danish children have fewer contacts, while the UK is about average and Romanian children have more contacts.

Figure 18 compares the number of contacts on SNS between 2011 and 2014.

Figure 18: Number of contacts on SNS, comparing 2011 and 2014



NCGM: Q18: Roughly how many people are you in contact with when using [SNS profile that is used the most]?

EU Kids Online QC316: Roughly how many people are you in contact with when using [social networking profile]?

Base: All children who use SNS.

- The overall percentage of children who have more than 100 contacts has fallen between 2011 and 2014. In 2011, nearly one third of children reported having more than 100 contacts. In 2014, this was 1 in 5 (22%).
- The reduction in children with more than 100 contacts is most marked among girls (from 29% dropped to 17%), teenagers (from 44% dropped to 30%) and children from low SES homes (33% dropped to 21%).

I can talk to friends from my old school, like I had no friends when I came to this school. I can talk to my primary school friends I can keep in touch with people you may not see, right.
(Girl, 15 years)

I don't post pictures on Facebook, on Snapchat you can have a picture but only Snapchat, but you can post photos there but people can only see it for 10 seconds and it's gone. Nobody can see it. For Facebook, I don't post photos on it, I only use Snapchat to post photos. (Boy, 12 years)

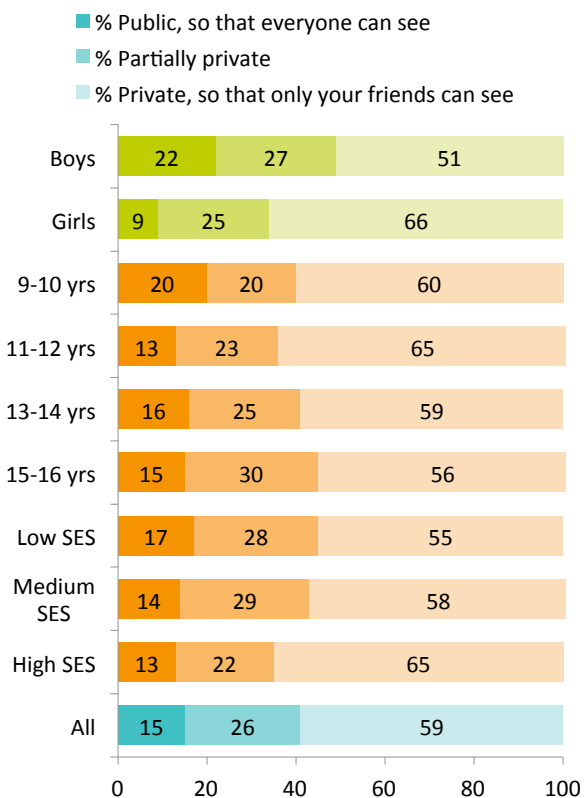
Yes there are good things like my dad, he lives in Belgium because he got a job there. We can communicate. I can talk to him via Skype and know what is happening. My sister went to France last year for college, we communicate very well. Some of my family are abroad as well. We keep knowing what is going on with them. When they come to visit us, it's good to communicate. When we can visit them. It's good for homework as well, Wikipedia is very good too. (Girl, 15 years)

4.3. SNS privacy settings

One of the main areas of concern in relation to young people's use of social networking is whether they are able to protect their personal information online or if they expose themselves to greater risks through ineffective use of SNS privacy settings.

In examining the use of privacy settings, Net Children Go Mobile asked children whether their profile was set to 'private', 'partially private so that friends of friends can see their data', or 'public'.

Figure 19: Whether SNS profile is public or private, by gender, age and SES



Q20: Is your profile set to...?

Base: All children who use SNS.

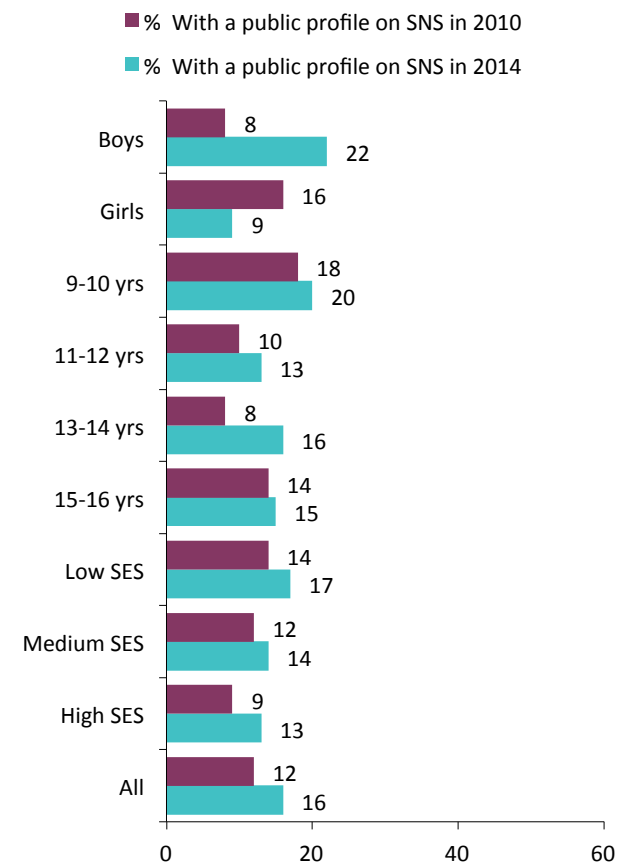
- 59% of all children with an SNS profile keep it private so that only their friends can see it. The highest percentage of children who keep their profile private (65%) belongs to children from 11-12 year-old and children from high SES home.
- Only 15% overall keep their profile public so that anyone can see. Worryingly, this is highest

(20%) for the youngest users, 9-10 years of age, though the numbers of children at this age who have SNS profile are small.

- The strongest differentiator in maintaining online privacy is gender: 66% of girls compared to 51% of boys keep their profiles set to the maximum level of privacy.

Figure 20 shows how privacy settings have changed between 2011 and 2014.

Figure 20: Public SNS profile by gender, age and SES, 2011 and 2014 compared



NCGM: Q20: Is your profile set to...?

Base: All children who use SNS.

EU Kids Online: QC 317: Is your profile set too...? Public, so that everyone can see; partially private, so that friends of friends or your networkers can see; private so that only her friends can see; don't know.

Base: All children who have a profile on a social networking site.

Compared with 2011, there has been an increase in the numbers of young people with a public SNS profile from 12% to 16%. The finding of 59% who keep their profile completely private (Figure 19) represents a fall from 63% in 2011.⁵

The biggest changes in privacy practices are recorded by boys (22% now have public profiles compared to just 8% in 2011) and among 13-14 year olds (the proportion of those with a public SNS profile has doubled from 8% to 16% between 2011 and 2014).

Table 15 shows the kind of information made available on a young person's social networking profile for all children who use SNS.

Table 15: What information children show on their SNS profile, by age and gender.

	9-12		13-16		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
A photo that clearly shows your face	58	83	83	91	83
Your last name	67	69	99	94	89
Your home address	0	0	9	5	5
Your phone number	3	5	22	2	9
Your school	11	19	84	68	59
An age that is not your age	22	14	59	54	41

Q21: Which of the bits of information on this card does your profile/account include about you?

Base: All children who use SNS

- Given that Facebook has a 'real names' policy, it is unsurprising that most children show their last name on their profile (89%). Photos need not show the child's face but most do, as 83% of children report.

- 13-16 year old boys tend to reveal most information about themselves: 84% identify their school, and 22% their phone number. Some 59% also display a false age, possibly due to the fact that they had created their profile at younger age when they have to lie about their age to be eligible to have SNS account.

Questions of age and privacy settings were also a topic of discussion in focus groups with young people.

When I was in 6th class I, like we were actually talking about cyber bullying and all, internet safety and my 6th class teacher was asked everybody in the class know how to put our Facebook on private and I put my hand up to say yes and she searched my name up on google and she put Facebook beside it and my whole profile came up. And there was actually nothing that wasn't public on my page except for my messages. We were told how to put our profile on private.

(Focus Group, Boys 11-13 years)

"And my Tumblr and my twitter I change like my password every month because people told me it's safe to do so"

(Focus Group, Boys 11-13 years)

"I put it on private, not any one, only my family can share, none of my friends can do it."

(Focus Group, Girls 11-13 years)

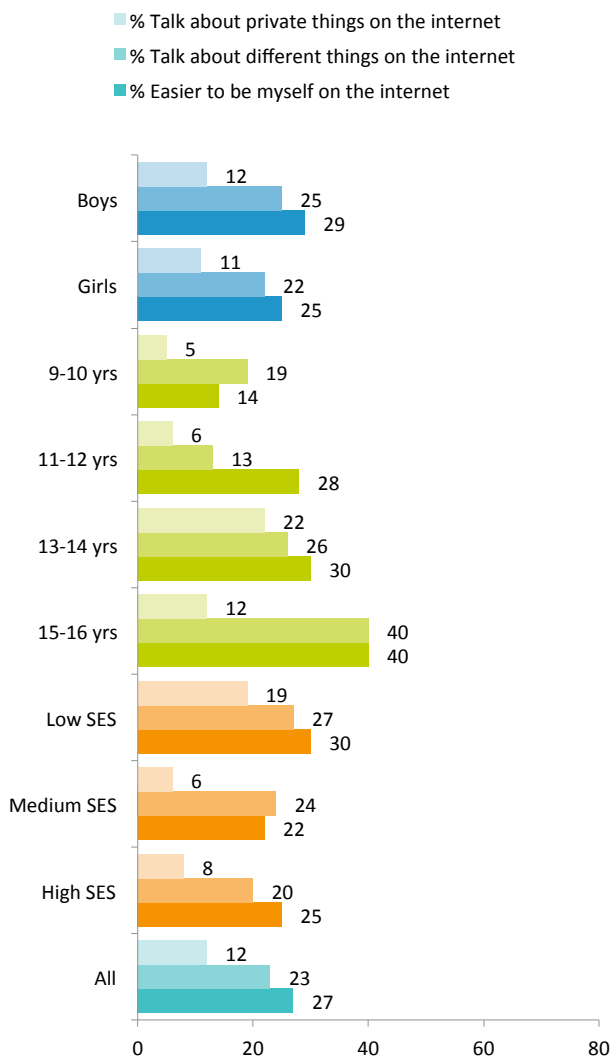
⁵ O'Neill, B., Grehan, S., & Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety for children on the internet: the Ireland report*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online.

4.4. Communication

Online communication is one of the major opportunities that the internet affords children, and one where the boundary between benefits and risk is hard to draw. It has been argued that risk-taking behaviour is associated with a particular approach to online communication (Livingstone et al., 2011).

Figure 21 examines children approach to online communication by asking them about the extent to which the internet enables them to express themselves and be able discuss private things.

Figure 21: Online and offline communication compared, by gender and age



Q47: How true are these of you?

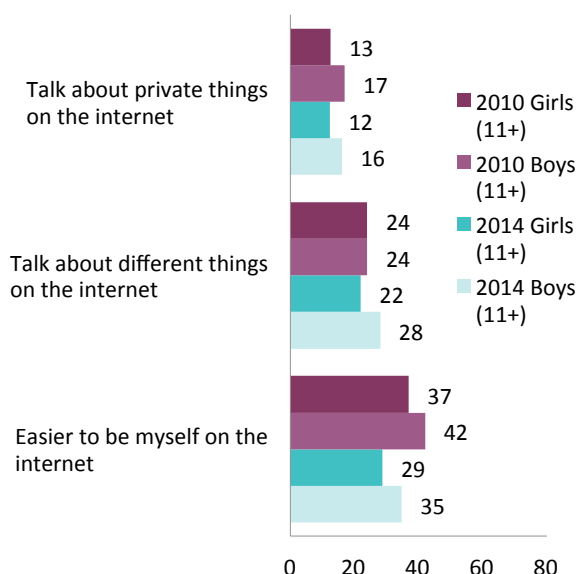
Base: All children who use the internet.

- 27% of children say it is “a bit” or “very” true of them that they find it easier to be themselves on the internet than when with other people face to face. Similarly, 23% of children say they find it easier to talk about different things on the internet though just 12% say that they talk about private things online that they do not discuss face to face.
- Gender differences in approaches to online communication are slight, while age trends are more noticeable. Teenagers, especially aged 15-16, are more likely to agree with each statement, suggesting that the internet offers a valued opportunity for different, perhaps more intimate, communication.
- SES also seems to matter: children from low SES homes are more likely to agree with each statement compared with children from high and medium SES.

Figure 22 offers a comparison of approaches to online communication between 2011 and 2014.

Compared to 2011, there appears to have been a notable decline in the appeal of online communication. Overall, the percentage of children aged 11+ who find easier to be myself on the internet has dropped from 40% to 32%. Only in the case of boys, is there is a slight increase in those who talk about different things on the internet.

Figure 22: Online and offline communication compared, comparing 2011 and 2014



NCGM: Q47: How true are there of you?

EU Kids Online: QC103: How true are these of you? Percentage who said "A bit true" or "Very true"

Base: all children who use the internet 11+

Mobile and internet communication technologies also make staying in touch much easier. As part of the survey, children were also asked about ways of being in contact with parents and friends.

Table 16: Ways of being in contact with parents

% of children in contact with parents by...	Several times each day	Daily or almost daily	At least every week	Never or almost never
Talking on a mobile or smartphone	7	24	25	44
Sending SMS or MMS	7	11	18	65
Sending emails		1	4	95
Contact on SNS		6	10	84

Q13, Q14, Q15, Q19: How often are you in contact with the following people by talking on the mobile phone/smartphone, by sending SMS/text or multimedia messages (MMS) with pictures or videos from your mobile phone/smartphone, by sending email, on all the SNS you use?

Base: All children who use each means of communication.

The mobile phone is still the preferred means to be in touch with parents: 31% of children report talking to their parents daily or almost daily, with 7% doing so more than once per day. 18% of children say they also send an SMS to their parents on a regular basis.

When it comes to being in touch with friends, SNS now is the most popular form of contact: one in three children contact friends on SNS several time a day. Overall, 70% of children use SNS to communicate with their friends daily or almost daily.

Table 17: Ways of being in contact with friends

% of children in contact with parents by...	Several times each day	Daily or almost daily	At least every week	Never or almost never
Talking on a mobile or smartphone	13	22	18	46
Sending SMS or MMS	15	23	15	47
Sending emails		3	6	91
Contact on SNS	31	39	22	8

Q13, Q14, Q15, Q19: How often are you in contact with the following people by talking on the mobile phone/smartphone, by sending SMS/text or multimedia messages (MMS) with pictures or videos from your mobile phone/smartphone, by sending email, on all the SNS you use?

Base: All children who use each means of communication at all.

However, SNS has not replaced mobile communication: 35% of children also talk to their friends daily or almost daily on a mobile or smartphone.

5. Digital Skills

‘Digital literacy’ is crucial to children’s use of the internet and essential for fostering young people’s creativity, internet safety and digital citizenship skills. Assumptions are often made about the technical skills of ‘digital natives’ yet with insufficient evidence of what digital skills children actually have. It is accepted, however that the more digitally literate children become, the more they can gain from the internet and the more resilient against online risks.

The very breadth, complexity and fast-changing nature of internet technologies makes digital literacy hard to measure. Net Children Go Mobile combines multiple measures of self-reported competence (or self-confidence), along with self-reported ability with a specific list of skills. In formulating the latter, we paid attention to the skills needed for mobile/online devices.

5.1 Self-confidence

To measure children’s self-confidence we asked them to rate themselves against a set of statements, as shown in Table 18 below.

Table 18: Self-assessment of various skills

% of children who say...	Not true	A bit true	Very true
I know more about the internet than my parents	40	26	34
I know lots of things about using the internet	16	45	40
I know how to use ‘report abuse’ buttons	43	9	48
I know more about using smartphones than my parents	41	18	41
I know lots of things about using smartphones	26	31	43

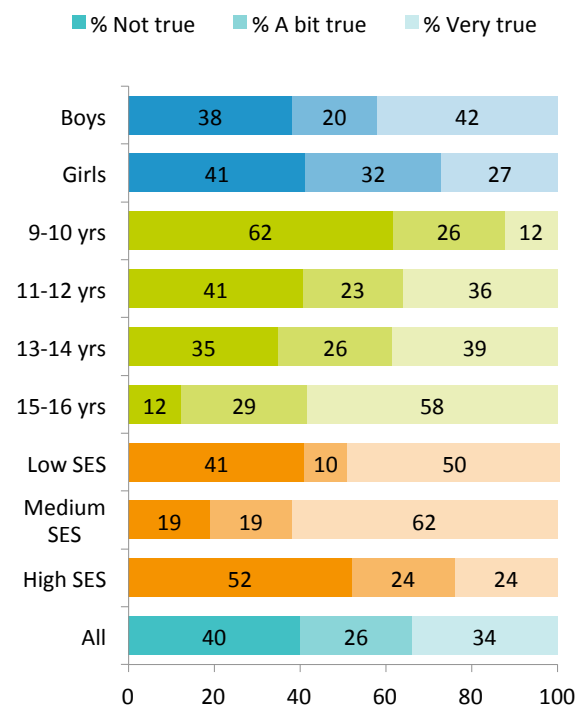
Q47: How true are these of you?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- On average, 60% of children say that they know more about the internet than their parents. 59% claim to know more than their parents about using smartphones. Four in ten children, therefore, think their parents know more about the internet and smartphones than they do.
- Self-confidence in their own internet ability is rated higher: 85% of children say that they know a lot of things about using the internet; 74% of children report the same for using smartphones.
- Self-confidence regarding safety features is lowest. 57% of children say it is “very true” (48%) and “a bit true” (9%) that they know how to use “report abuse” buttons and 43% say it is “not true”.

Figure 23 looks more closely at claims for self-reported ability about the internet.

Figure 23: ‘I know more about the internet than my parents’, by gender, age and SES



Q47: How true are these of you?

Base: All children who use the internet.

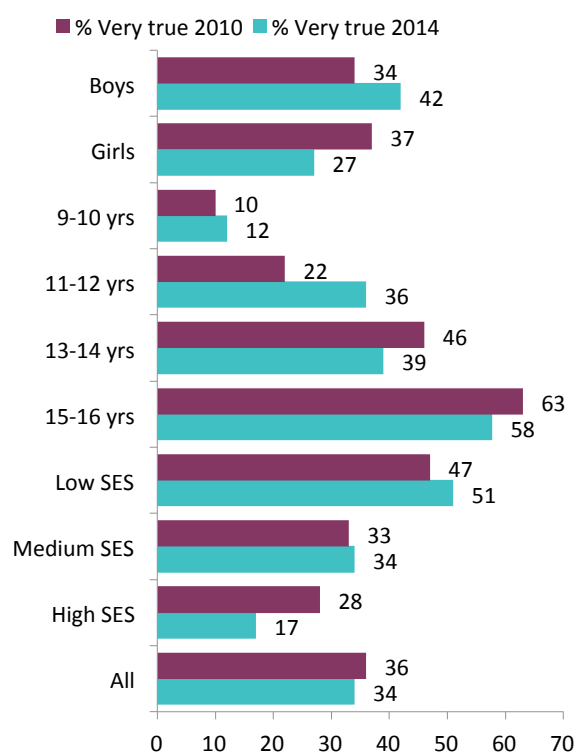
- Here the effect of age is clearly seen with a pronounced increase in relative digital

confidence from just 12% of nine to ten year olds to 58% of 15- 16 year olds saying that they know more about the internet than their parents.

- SES differences in children's self-confidence are also noteworthy: children from high SES claim less confidence in their own internet abilities compared to their parents.
- The role of gender is also prominent with more boys (42%) compared to girls (27%) saying it is very true they know more about the internet than their parents.
- It is therefore high SES homes and those with younger children (9-10 years) that parental competence (according to children) takes the lead.

Figure 24 compares findings for internet skills with the equivalent findings from 2011.

Figure 24: 'I know more about the internet than my parents', 2011 and 2014 compared



NCGM: Q47: How true are these of you?

EU Kids Online: QC319a: How true are these of you? I know more about the internet than my parents. Please answer not

true, a bit true or very true.

Base: All children who use the internet.

While there is little overall change in self-reported confidence, it is boys and children aged 11-12 who report the greatest increase. Parental knowledge itself is a factor here as more parents go line, high SES homes recording the biggest change in the period.

During focus groups, however, parents pointed out how difficult it was to keep up with constant changes in technology.

Now, they are far more than we can ever catch up ... I have my phone here and I only know a few things like call, text,..., but my daughter, she knows so many things - photos, Photoshop and other.... I have to ask her sometimes to tell me what to do on my iPad. I don't know how and from who she got it, but like other day, I ask her, she said she doesn't know, but then, she took the iPad and played with it a bit and then she gave it back to me and said "Done, Mom!" She fixed it.

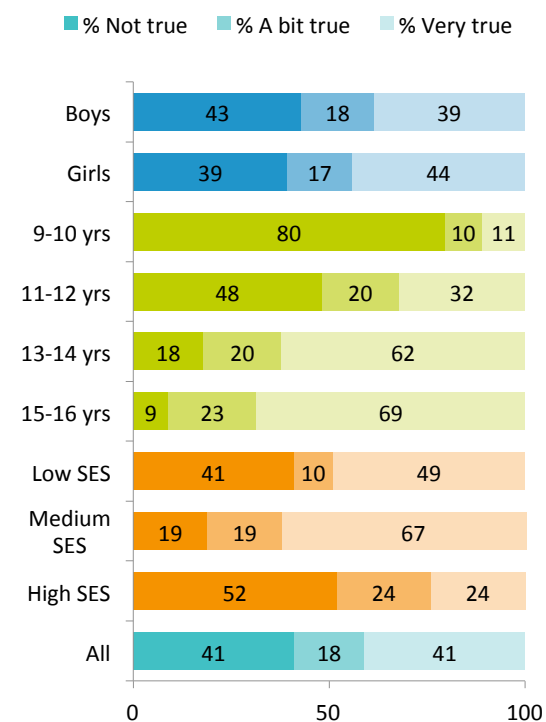
(Focus Group, Mothers of 10-12 year-olds)

Definitely I know more than she does, she knows how to use it but I know more than her. My granddad has his iPad but he uses it to read books but he never knows how to use games and other things. When he needs to download anything, either my uncle or me would help him to download it. Or he has his email and he can purchase the books we tell him how to buy a book through his email.

(Girl, 13 years)

Figure 25 examines further children's reports of competence regarding use of smartphones.

Figure 25: 'I know more about using smartphones than my parents', by gender, age and SES



Q47: How true are these of you?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Age variations follow a similar pattern as self-confidence regarding the internet use: while 21% of children aged 9-10 say it is "very true" or "a bit true" that they know more about using smartphones than their parents, this rises to 91% of 15-16 year-olds.
- Gender differences are slight though. In contrast to internet ability, girls report higher digital confidence than boys in using smartphones (44% vs. 39%).
- Again, higher parental knowledge is apparent, especially in the case of high SES homes where just 24% of young people say they know more about smartphone use than their parents.

5.2 Skills and competences related to internet use in general

Net Children Go Mobile also asked young people about specific internet skills, including internet safety skills. Table 19 shows differences by age and gender related to internet use.

Table 19: Skills related to internet use and critical understanding, by age and gender

	9-12		13-16		
% who say they can	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	All
Skills related to internet use and critical understanding					
Change filter preferences	3	13	37	35	21
Bookmark a websites	37	46	74	70	55
Compare different websites to decide if information is	25	30	49	64	41
Skills related to safety in general					
Block unwanted adverts or junk mail spam	25	32	60	63	43
Delete the record of which sites you have visited	34	48	64	57	49
Change privacy settings on a social networking profile	19	29	77	86	51
Block messages from someone you don't want to hear from	35	42	88	92	62
Block pop ups	21	38	59	61	43
Find information on how to use the internet safely	31	48	76	81	57
Communicative abilities					
Publish a comment on a blog, website or forum	19	43	77	68	50
Upload images, videos or music onto social media	28	27	85	90	55

Q26 a-c Q26 d, Q27 a-e: Which of these things do you know how to do? Base: All children who use the internet

- Interestingly, it is girls in the younger age group who claim more skills (related to internet use and critical understanding) than boys, a situation evened out or slightly reversed among teenagers.
- Basic instrumental and critical skills are still unevenly distributed: 55% of children know how to bookmark a website and only 21% of children report they know how to change filter preferences.

5.3. Skills related to smartphones and tablets

While the above skills are relevant to internet use on any platform, the survey also asked smartphone and tablet users about a further list of skills specific to those devices (Table 20).

Table 20: Skills related to use and critical understanding on smartphones and tablets, by age and gender

% who say they can	9-12		13-16		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Skills related to internet use and critical understanding					
Download apps	96	91	94	93	94
Connect to a wifi network from your smartphone	90	93	91	88	86
Have the same documents, contacts, and apps on all devices	13	27	62	66	48
Compare different apps with similar functions in order to choose the one that is most reliable	48	58	66	78	67
Skills related to safety in general					
Deactivate the function showing your geographical position	31	28	72	67	53
Block push notifications from different apps	37	36	77	84	64
Block pop ups which promote apps, games or services you have to pay for	17	42	65	56	48
Protect a smartphone with a PIN, with a screen pattern	76	86	84	99	88
Find information on how to use smartphones safely	64	52	76	91	76
Communicative abilities					
Update your status on the SNS used the most	33	54	90	94	73
Take a picture or a short video with smartphone and upload it onto social media	64	52	78	89	76

Q28 a, Q28 c, Q28 e, Q29 b: Q28 b, Q28 d, Q28 f, Q28 g, Q29 a: Q28 h, Q29 c: Which of these things do you know how to do?
Base: All children who own or have for their own use a smartphone or a tablet

Bearing in mind that smartphone users generally claim more skills than non-users, the findings also show that smartphone users are generally skilled in the use of their personal devices.

- Less common, but still claimed by 67% of children, is the ability to compare different apps. 48% of children know how to synchronise their details documents, contacts and apps. With respect to these two skills, age differences are marked. Gender variations are notable but less pronounced compared to variation by age.
- The majority of children can protect their smartphones and tablets with a passcode (88%), with small variations across age and gender.
- The second most common skill is finding information how to use smartphones and tablets safely (76%).
- Most say they can block push notifications (64%), compare and choose the best or most reliable app (67%) and deactivate the function showing their geographical position (53%).
- Younger children, however, seem to lack some of these skills for safer mobile use.

Communicative skills of smartphones and tablets users are generally higher than communicative skills of internet. However, as shown in Table 19, smartphone and tablet users still lack certain basis skills of critical understanding.

Table 21: Skills related to internet use and critical understanding, by smartphone use and by age

% who say they can	9-12		13-16		All*
	Non user	S-ph user	Non user	S-ph user	
Change filter preferences	6	18	34	37	21
Bookmark a websites	40	44	59	82	55
Compare different websites to decide if information is true	26	29	52	61	41

Q26 a-c: Which of these things do you know how to do?

Base: All children who use the internet.

* The 'All' values here refer to the average number of children who are internet users and claim these skills.

Findings from the qualitative data also confirm younger children's skills in connecting to the internet but not necessarily their ability to surf safely.

"I connected to the Wi-Fi, I know how to do it. Just turn the internet box on and I type the code. After that, I have saved the password there, it will log on when I turn it on. No need to type the password again" (Girl, 9 years)

I usually I download games, some educational games, space games, because I am interested in space. It's kind of game that you access to it, you can see the whole galaxy.... I only allow downloading free games. (Girl, 9 years)

I downloaded apps into my phone....I use the credit of the phone, my mom top up the phone for me and when I downloaded it, it will take that money from, the phone. I asked my mom when I run out of credit. It's good, it's not too expensive, it's 2.99 or 1.99 euro. (Boy, 9 years).

Table 22 compares findings for children's digital literacy and safety skills between 2011 and 2014.

Table 22: Children's digital literacy and safety skills 2011 and 2014 compared (11+)

	2011	2014
Bookmark a website	66	68
Find information on how to use the internet safely	64	70
Block messages from someone you don't want to hear from	64	76
Change privacy settings on a social networking profile	58	66
Block unwanted adverts or junk mail/spam	49	56
Delete the record of which sites you have visited	43	59
Compare different websites to decide if information is true	42	51
Change filter preferences	21	27

NCGM: Q26 a-d, Q27 a-e: Which of these things do you know how to do?

EU Kids Online QC320a-d and QC321a-d: Which of these things do you know how to do on the internet?

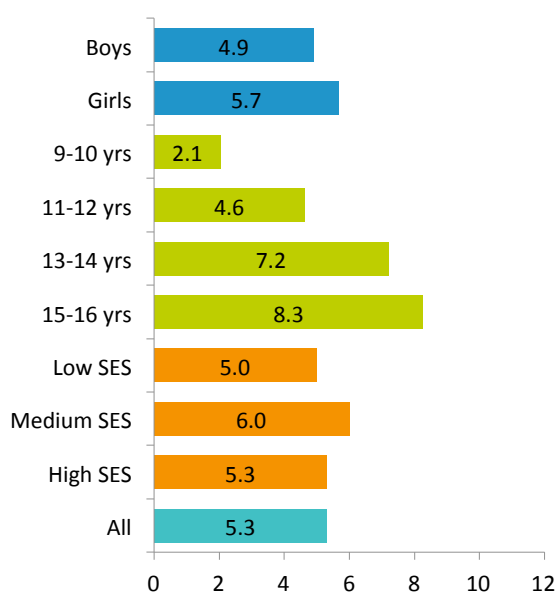
Base: All children who use the internet, age 11+

The comparison over time shows that, overall, Irish children have made a good progress in increasing their digital skills. In particular, there has been a significant increase in children's safety skills, such as, block message from someone you don't want to hear from, delete the record of which sites you have visited, etc.

5.4 Average number of skills

The previous section showed that specific skills vary considerably by age, and some cases, by gender. Figure 26 shows variations by gender, age and SES in the overall number of skills related to internet use as claimed by children

Figure 26: Average number of skills related to internet use (out of 12) by gender, age and SES.



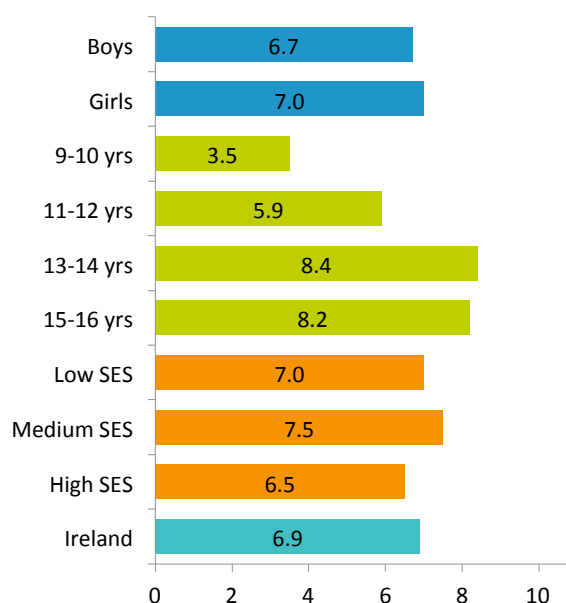
Q26 a-d, Q27 a-h: Which of these things do you know how to do? (Average out of 12 items)

Base: All children who use the internet

- On average, children say they have 5.3 of the 12 skills we asked about. This is a slightly below the European average of 5.7.
- It is interesting to note that girls, claim more skills than boys. This slightly reverses the European trend where boys claim more skills than girls.
- By contrast, the number of skills is strongly structured by age, ranging from 2.1 skills claimed by 9-10 year-olds to over 8 among 15-16 year-olds.
- SES differences are less marked with children from medium SES homes claim highest number of skills.

Figure 27 focuses on skills related to smartphones and tablets.

Figure 27: Average number of skills related to smartphones and tablets (out of 11) by gender, age and SES.



Q26 a-d, Q27 a-h: Which of these things do you know how to do? (Average out of 11 items)

Base: All children who own or have for their own use a smartphone or a tablet.

- On average, children claim more skills related to smartphones and tablets (6.9 out of 11) with a slight gender difference.
- Age differences are again considerable, but less wide, ranging from 3.5 skills claimed by 9-10 year-old to 8.2 skills claimed by 15-16 year-old.
- SES differences are minor, compared to general internet skills with children from medium SES homes claim to have highest number of skills.

6. Risk and harm

EU Kids Online, which surveyed 25,000 children aged 9-16 and their parents in 25 European countries, established the primary baseline for understanding children and young people's experiences of risk and harm. A key finding of that research is that not all risk leads to harm, and that is vital to identify which children find which risks problematic, and which are able to cope.⁶ As children's lives and the internet continue to change, it remains important to track the incidence of both risk and harm so as to identify changing patterns, practices and problems,

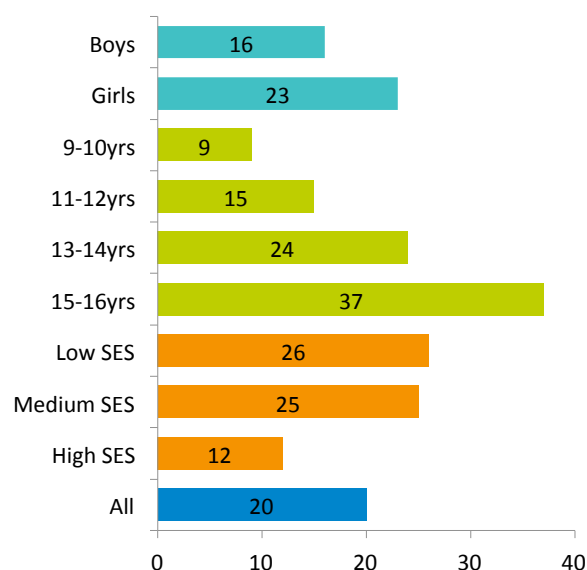
In both the EU Kids Online and the Net Children Go Mobile surveys, risks were carefully described to children in ways that could be reliably translated into different languages, without using terms often associated with media panic (e.g., pornography, cyberbullying). Having described risks to see if they had encountered them, children were asked if it had "bothered" them where "bothered" was defined as something that "made you feel uncomfortable, upset or feel that you shouldn't have seen it". A number of both closed and open-ended questions were also asked, inviting an overall subjective perception of harm from children.

6.1 Overall perception of risk and harm

Children were asked "In the past 12 months, have you seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered you in some way? For example made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it".

Figure 28 shows children's accounts of problematic experiences by age and gender.

Figure 28: Online experiences that have bothered children by age, gender and SES.



Q30 In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered you in some way? For example made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it.

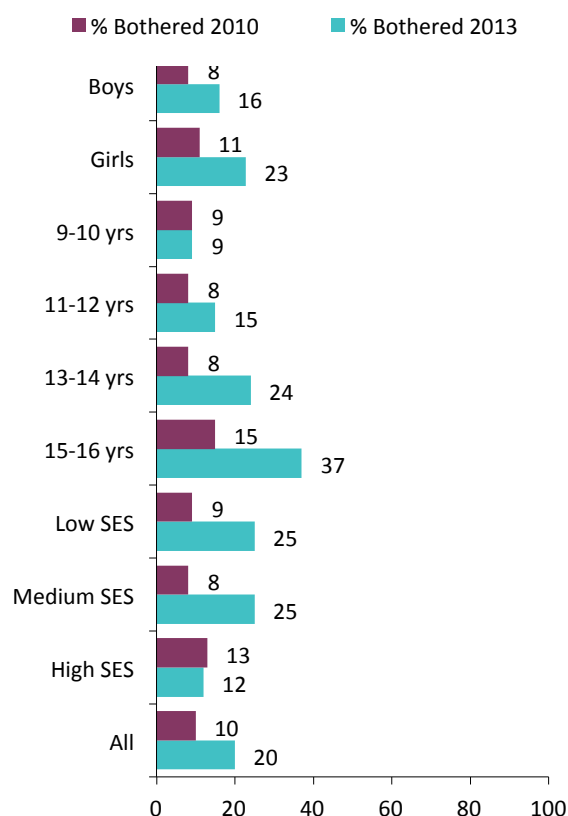
Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland).

- Overall, 1 in 5 children in Ireland (20%) say that they have been bothered by something on the internet in the past year.
- More girls (23%) report being bothered than boys (16%). The youngest children, aged 9-10 years, are the least likely to have been bothered by something online (9%) compared with older teenagers.
- A quarter of 13-14 year olds and 37% of 15-16 year olds say they have experienced something that bothered them or wished they hadn't seen.
- SES differences are noteworthy: children from lower income families are the most likely to have experienced anything on the internet which bothered them. This finding is inverted with the European finding.
- The overall finding of 20% is above the average of 17% for the 7 countries in the survey – below Denmark and Romania (39% and 27% respectively) and just above the UK (15%).

⁶ See Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Gorzig, A., & Ólafsson, K. (2011). *EU Kids Online. Final Report*. London, LSE: EU Kids Online.

While still a minority, the number of children who report having been bothered by something online has almost doubled since 2011.

Figure 29: Online experiences that have bothered children, 2014 and 2011 compared



NCGM: Q30: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered you in some way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it?

EU Kids Online: QC110: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered you in some way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it.

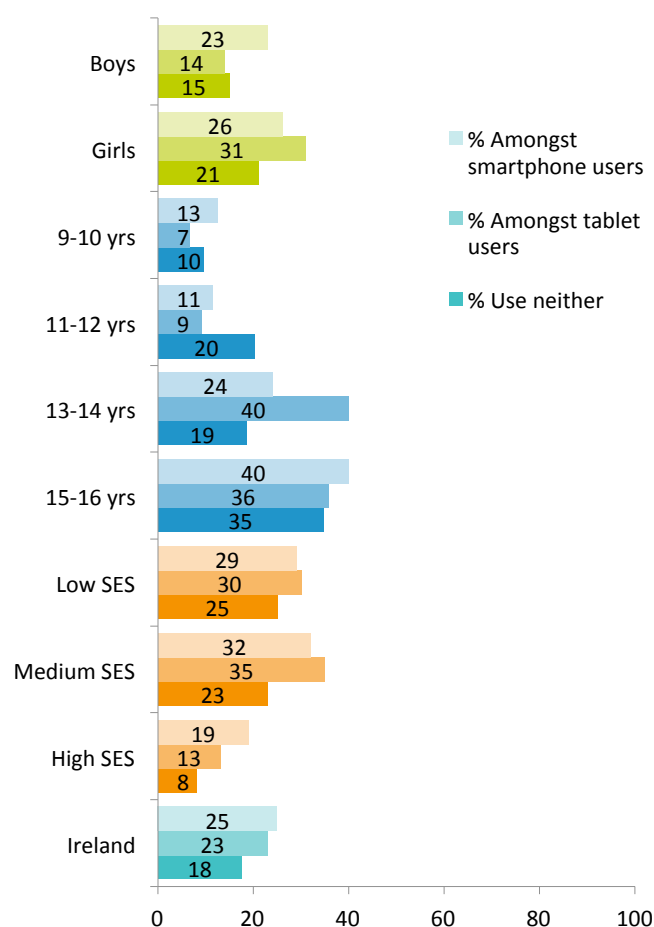
Base: All children who use the internet.

Both girls and boys report a large increase in experiences of being bothered. It is also teenagers who have experienced the most change in this regard as well as a big increase in the number of children from low and medium SES homes who claim they have been bothered. There was a slight drop in the percentage of children from high SES homes who have experienced problems online. The youngest children, aged 9-10 year-old, remain the same and are least likely to have been bothered

online.

Figure 30 shows variations in the perceptions of online risks among children who use smartphones or tablets daily, and children who do not use smartphones or tablets to go online, by gender, age and SES.

Figure 30: Online experiences that have bothered children, comparing mobile and non-mobile internet users



Q30: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered you in some way? For example, made you feel uncomfortable, upset, or feel that you shouldn't have seen it.

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Overall, there is a slight difference between children who use tablets daily (23%) and those who use smartphones daily (25%) when it comes to online experiences that have bothered them. However, both have a higher

proportion of experiences that have bothered them compared to non-mobile users (18%).

- There are significant gender variations in the general pattern: across all three categories of internet users, girls are more likely to claim they have been bothered, especially with tablet users (31%).
- Age differences are also noteworthy. Children aged 13-14 years are the most likely to have been bothered by something online (40%). By contrast, the youngest children, aged 9-10 year-old, are the least likely to have been bothered by something online, across all categories.
- Children from high SES homes are also less likely to have been bothered compared to children from low and medium SES homes.

Yes, I saw some creepy stuff, there is page call "creepy" thing, but I do not go on there. I don't really go there, I don't click on it. I guess I am not into that, that's why it doesn't happen to me, but all stuff that I all heard about but not really experience it. (Boy 13 years)

My brother told me that Facebook has this thing where anyone can post; you get it on your computer because people share it, or like it. These are real videos of like gory stuff, there was a video of a woman in Mexico and her husband cut her head off and that was being posted and shared on Facebook. (Focus Group, Boys, 9-10 years)

I feel very uneasy, not comfortable at all, I don't want to see it again, that's why I looked around and tried to figured it out how to avoid to see those, until I know how to filter it out. It always have some photos. Images appeared when I Googled things, even things do not related to it, only when I turned that filter on, I never have any issues. (Girl, 13 years)

6.2 Bullying

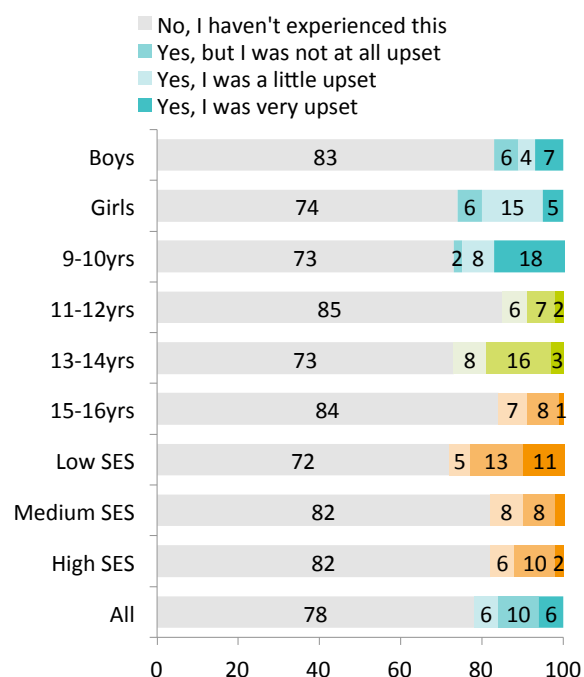
Being bullied online is one of a number of conduct risks that has attracted much attention and given rise to considerable public concern. In order to avoid any emotive connotations and maintain consistency with previous definitions used by EU Kids Online, bullying was defined in this survey as follows:

“Sometimes children or teenagers say or do hurtful or nasty things to someone and this can often be quite a few times on different days over a period of time, for example. This can include: teasing someone in a way this person does not like; hitting, kicking or pushing someone around; leaving someone out of things.”

Following this introduction, children were asked whether: *someone has acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months*. In order to gauge the severity of the impact, children were then asked how upset they had been when they experienced this conduct.

Figure 31 shows that 22% of children have experienced any form of bullying on- or offline. 16% say they were 'very' (6%) or 'a little upset' (10%) by what happened.

Figure 31: Child has been bullied online or offline in past 12 months



Q32 In the PAST 12 MONTHS, has someone treated you in this kind of way and if so, how upset were you about happened?

Base: All children who use the internet (Ireland).

- Girls are more likely to experience bullying than boys (26% for girls compared to 17% of boys). Girls are more likely to be upset by what happened: 20% of girls compared to 11% of boys say they were upset by what happened.
- The impact of age is noteworthy. The youngest age group of 9-10 years and 13-14 year olds experience the most bullying (27% in each age group).
- It is the youngest age group who report the highest rates of harm with 18% of 9-10 year olds saying they were very upset by what happened.

Bullying can occur in many ways. Table 23 shows the ways in which children have actually been bullied.

Table 23: Ways in which children have been bullied in past 12 months, by age

	Age				Gender		All
	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	Boys	Girls	
Face to face	7.1	4.5	7.8	4.5	6.9	5.5	6.2
By mobile phone calls	5			1.1	3.2	0.4	1.6
By messages sent to me on my phone (SMS, text or MMS)			1.4	1.1	0.4	0.8	0.6
On a social working site			12.9	9	1.2	9.0	5.2
On a media sharing platform			3.5	1.1	0.4	2.3	1.2
By instant messaging	4.3		2.1		3.2	0.4	1.8
In a chat room							0
By email							0
On a gaming website	6.4	0.8	0.7	4.5	2.4	3.5	3
On a question answer app/platform (e.g. Ask.fm)			1.4		0.8	0.4	0.4
By a message using Snapchat							0

Q33 If someone has treated you in this kind of way, how did it happen? Multiple responses allowed.

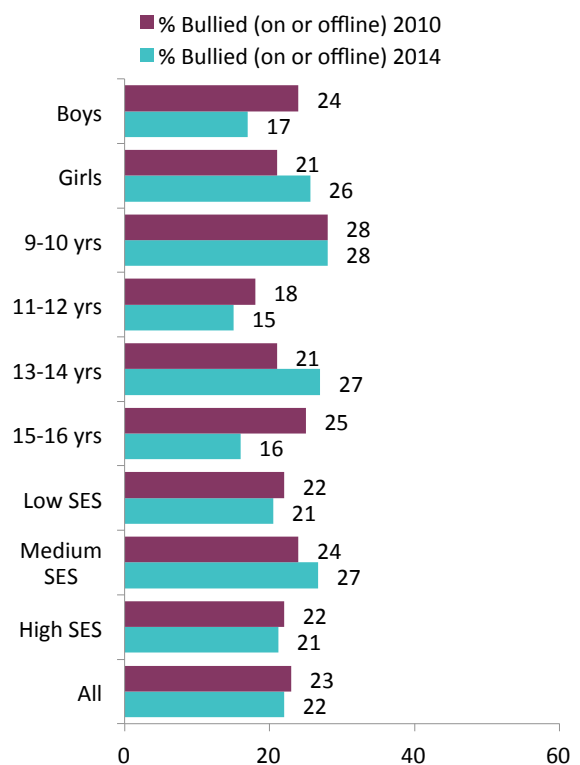
Base: All children who use the internet

- In this survey, more bullying takes place across a variety of internet locations than happens face-to-face.
- 5% of young people overall but 13% of 13-14 year olds say that they have been bullied on a social networking site. This compares with 6% of children overall who report that they were bullied face-to-face in the past twelve months.
- Gaming websites (3%), instant messaging (2%) and mobile phone calls (2%) are the other most common forms of cyberbullying.
- Age differences are notable: the youngest children aged 9-10 are more likely to report being bullied face-to-face and on a gaming website (7% and 6% respectively).
- By contrast among teenagers (13-14 and 15-16 years old) bullying is more likely to occur on a social networking platform.

- Gender differences are also noteworthy: somewhat more boys than girls report being bullied face to face, by mobile phone calls and by instant messaging. In the case of social networking, however, girls are much more likely to report being bullied.
- Despite the controversy that has attached to question and answer apps such as Ask.fm, only a small number (less than 2% of 13-14 year olds) report being bullied on such a platform.

Figure 32 presents a comparison of findings on reports of being bullied between 2011 and 2014.

Figure 32: Child has been bullied online or offline in the past 12, compared 2011 and 2014



NCGM: Q32: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, has someone treated you in this kind of way, and if so, how upset were you about happened?

EU Kids Online: QC112: Has someone acted in this kind of hurtful or nasty way to you in the past 12 months?

Base: All children who use the internet

- In 2014, the incidence of bullying overall was 23%, slightly higher than in 2011 (22%).
- There are marked changes for girls' and boys' experiences of bullying. Boys' experiences have significantly decreased while by contrast girls

have significantly increased in experience in bullying.

- The number of 13-14 year-old children who have been bullied has markedly increased in Ireland (21% vs.27%), in line with the European trend. On the other hand, there has been a big decline in 15-16 year-old group reporting being bullied.

Bullying can occur in many ways. Our *Initial Findings Report* showed that a significant proportion of bullying takes place on social networking sites. 5% of young people overall and 13% of 13-14 year olds say that they have been bullied on a social networking site. This compares with 6% of children overall who report that they were bullied face-to-face in the past twelve months.

Table 24 below presents differences in experiences of bullying between mobile (smartphone and tablet users) and non-mobile users.

Table 24: Ways in which children have been bullied in the past 12 months, comparing mobile and non-mobile internet users

% of children who say...	S-phone user	Tablet users	User neither
Have experienced any form of cyberbullying	18	12	12
In person face to face	6	9	5

Q33: If someone has treated you in this kind of way, how did it happen? (Multiple responses allowed.)

Base: All children who use the internet

Smartphone users (18%) are more likely to have experienced any form of cyberbullying than tablet users (12%) and children who do not use mobile devices (12%). However, there are small differences among different categories of internet users in the likelihood of being bullied face to face, tablets users (9%) are more likely to have experienced any form of cyberbullying than smartphone users and non-users (6% and 5% respectively).

I see it when people talked, commented over Instagram. People can be mean. I don't want to read or talk about it. I really don't text or chat back with them. I don't want to talk to those people, I just deleted people or their comments. (Girl, 13 years)

Well, it's not nice but again as I said it depends on personality. I have a strong personality, I don't have a problem to say "hey lad just take your comment down, it's embarrassing you know." They would take it down or something like this. Sometimes like you went out together and next day you see your picture posted up and/ but I wouldn't call that bullying. (Boy, 16 years)

I cried, it was an old friend, who was jealous of me that because I went to this new school and she saw I have more friends and so, she was very jealous, she said a bad things about me like "I was ugly and I wasn't spend much time with her, and I spend more time with other new friends not with her. (Girl, 13 years)

I heard a friend of friend was. ... name calling and stuff like that. I never experience it but it's like bullying, just different that they do it online. But, again, the feeling I think is the same. No one likes to be bullied either online or offline. (Girl, 15 years)

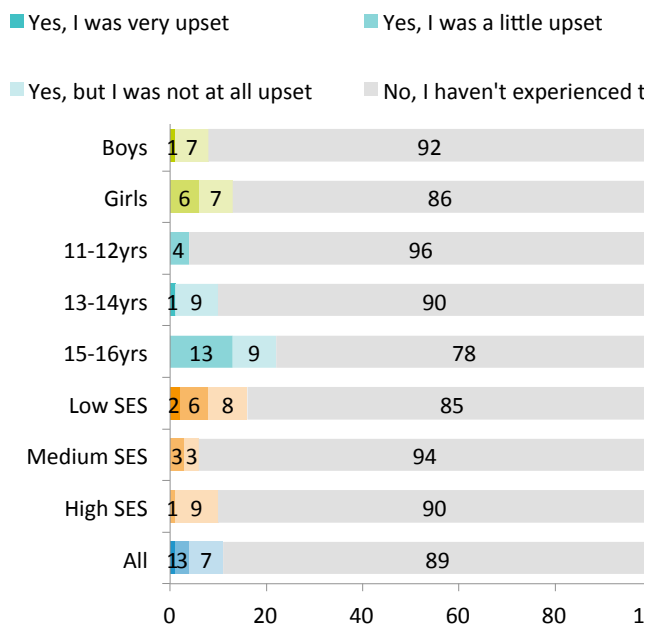
6.3. Sexual messages

Use of the internet for the exchange of sexual messages, whether in the context of a romantic relationship or more negatively as a form of cyber bullying is a topic that has received increased attention.⁷ In keeping with the EU Kids Online survey, this practice, more commonly labelled 'sexting', was defined as follows: "sexual messages or images. By this we mean talk about having sex or images of people naked or having sex. Here are some questions about this. Think about any way in which you use the internet and your mobile phone/smartphone".

For ethical reasons, this question was not asked of 9-10 years old.

Figure 33 shows how children answered this question by gender and age:

Figure 33: Child has received sexual messages online in past 12 months s (age 11+)



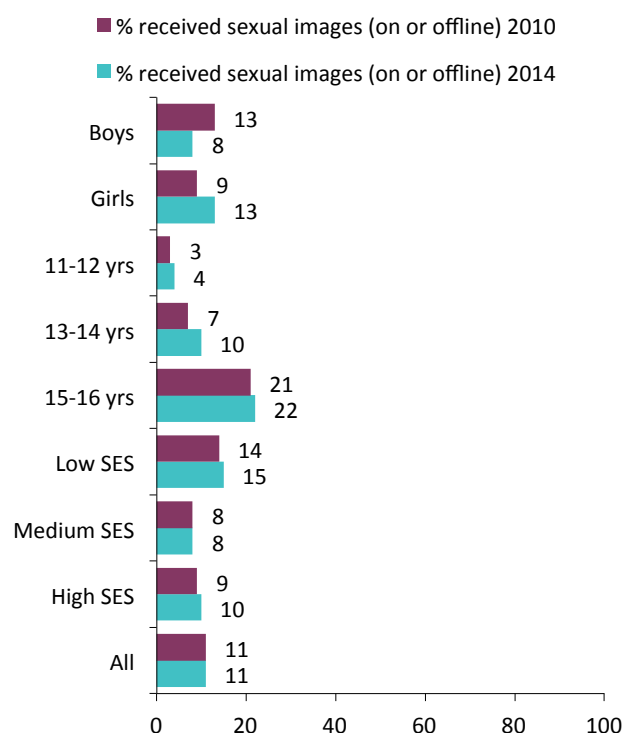
Q42 In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you received sexual messages of this kind (this could be words, pictures or videos) and if so, how upset were you about happened? Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

⁷ Lenhart, A. (2009). Teens and Sexting: How and why minor teens are sending sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images via text messaging. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2009/12/15/teens-and-sexting/>

- Overall, 11% of children have received sexual messages of any kind, and 4% report being 'very' (1%) or 'a little ' (3%) upset as a consequence. 7% of boys and a similar proportion of girls say they were not upset by the experience.
- While the numbers saying they had been upset are small, girls rather than boys were more likely to say that they had been upset by the experience.
- Receiving sexual messages increases with age: while just 4% of children aged 11-12 are likely to say they have received messages of this kind, 10% of 13-14 year olds and 22% of 15-16 year olds report having received such messages.
- SES differences in the number of children who have experienced sexting are small; lower SES children, however, seem slightly more likely to report being bothered by what happened.

Figure 34 compares findings for receiving sexual messages with 2011 EU Kids Online findings.

Figure 34: Child has received sexual images, 2011 and 2014 compared



NCGM: Q42: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you received sexual messages of this kind (this could be words, pictures or videos), and if so, how upset were you about happened?

EU Kids Online: QC167: In the past 12 months have you seen or received sexual messages of any kind on the internet?

Base: All children aged 11-16 who use the internet.

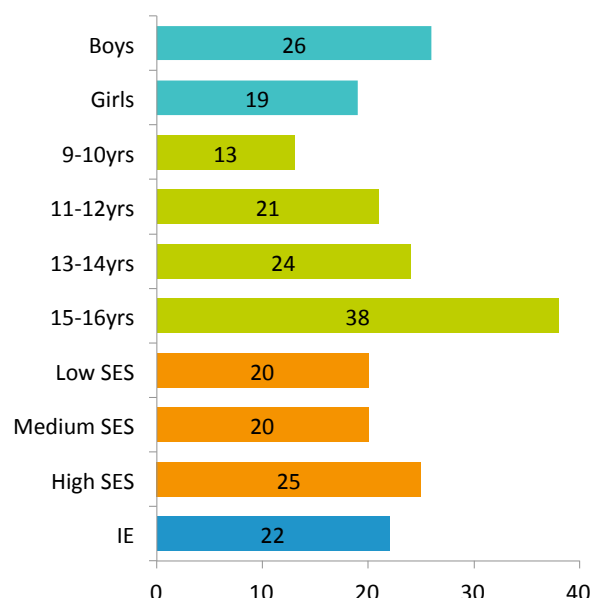
Little change has occurred since 2011. Some gender differences are noticeable with fewer boys but an increase in girls receiving such messages. There is also a small increase in the number of 13-14 year olds reporting receiving sexual messages.

6.4 Meeting new people

An area of concern for parents and carers is who their children may come into contact with online. 'Stranger danger' is one formulation of this and has led to considerable anxiety that young people's online communication may encourage them to meet contacts offline and end up being abused in a face-to face encounter. Previous research has shown, however, that the risk of harm from face-to-face contact with someone met online is low.⁸

In the EU Kids Online survey, it was revealed many children do make contact with people online they do not know offline and that this results from the inherent social nature of online communication. Net Children Go Mobile follows this approach and asked children if they ever had contact on the internet (on all platforms/devices) with someone they had not met face to face before. Figure 35 shows the number of children in Ireland who have been in contact on the internet with people they have never met face to face before, by age, gender and SES.

Figure 35: Child has been in contact with someone not met face to face before



⁸ Dedkova, L., Cerna, A., Janasova, K., & Daneback, K. (2014). Meeting online strangers offline: The nature of upsetting experiences of adolescent girls. *Communications*, 39(3), 327-346.

Q37 In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you ever had contact on the internet (on all platforms/devices) with someone you had not met face to face before? This could have been by email, chat rooms, social networking sites, instant messaging or gaming sites.

Base: All children who use the internet.

- 1 in 5 children (22%) have had contact online with people they have never met face to face.
- More boys than girls report being in contact with people they do not know offline. The age trend is also marked: contact with people met online increases with age, ranging from 13% of children aged 9-10 years old to 38% of teenagers aged 15-16.
- SES differences are also considerable, with higher SES (25%) children being more likely to be in contact with people never met before than the children from lower income families.
- Across Europe, more children than in Ireland are in contact with people they haven't met face to face (26%), with figures approaching half of all children in Denmark and Romania. Moreover, only 4% of children had gone to meet face to face and for 2% (of all children), this had made them upset

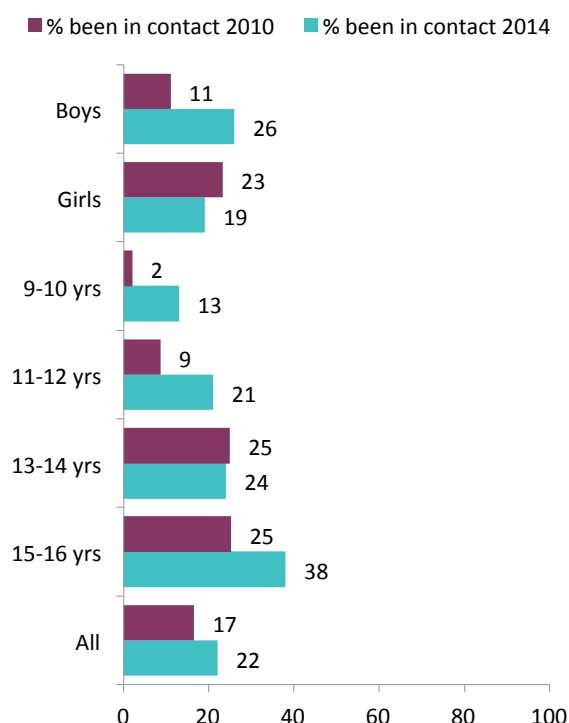
Children in interviews and focus group repeated some of the concerns associated with meeting people offline, first met online. Many had positive experiences of online contacts though none in fact had gone on to meet the person face-to-face.

I talked to them whenever I play game with them, they are nice people..... no I did not go to meet them. I don't need to. If I wanted to ask them something about games, I can just log on my PS and go to the chatroom. I don't have to go and see them at all. It's good... They are nice people. (Boy 9 years)

I heard story from my mom, she said that it can be dangerous to meet people that you don't know, she knows of the situation that people met after chat online and it turned to be very unpleasant experience. I don't know exactly what happened....but my mom said it was very bad. So that person told to everyone to be careful whenever you go to meet people offline. My mom said that can be even more dangerous for young people, because we trust people.... I wouldn't go to meet anyone I don't know, ... well, if I go with my friend, maybe....but I don't think I would go, especially if I know they are older than me. (Girl, 13 years)

Figure 36 compares findings for meeting friends online not met face-to-face with EU Kids Online

Figure 36: Child has been contact with someone not met face to face before, by gender and age, comparing 2011 and 2014



NCGM: Q37: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you ever had contact on the internet (on all platforms/devices) with someone you had not met face to face before? This could have been by email, chatrooms, SNS, instant messaging or gaming sites.

EU Kids Online: QC147: Can I just check, have you ever had contact on the internet with someone you have not met face to face before?

Base: All children who use the internet

- Findings show a slight increase on those from 2011 (17% vs. 22%). This may not necessarily be an indicator of risky behaviour, however, and should be contextualised within the context of “friending” practices and maintaining online contacts through a variety of social media.
- There are also some differences in gender and age trends. In 2014, more boys than girls report being in contact with people they do not know offline. The age trend is also marked: 9-10 year olds report much higher online friending compared to four years ago. This is followed by children aged 11-13 year old who report a doubling over their peers in 2011.

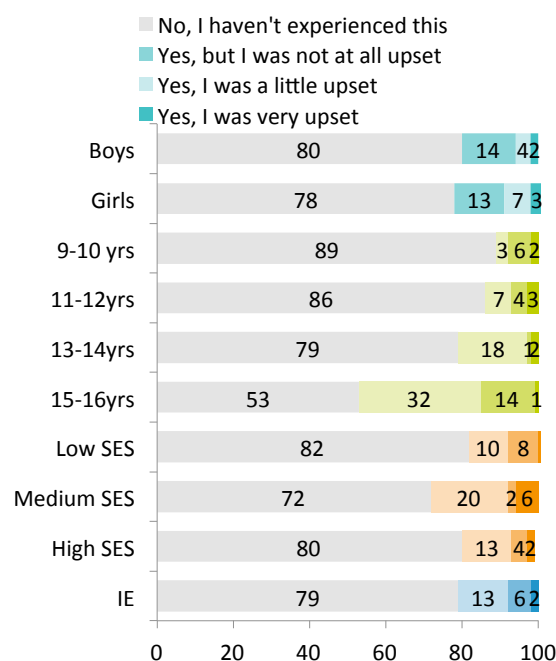
6.5. Sexual images

Previous research by EU Kids Online revealed that 1 in 4 children had come across pornographic content, and 14% have accidentally or intentionally encountered sexual images online.⁹ The data also showed that while common among boys and older teenagers, seeing sexual images is more likely to upset younger children and girls.

Drawing on the EU Kids Online methodology, questions about sexual images were introduced in Net Children Go Mobile survey in the following way: ‘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 having sex, or naked people in sexy poses.’¹⁰

Figure 37 shows how seeing sexual images on and offline varies by gender, age and country. Overall, 21% of children say that they have seen sexual images in the past 12 months, whether online or offline.

Figure 37: Child has seen sexual images online or offline in past 12 months



Q35 In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen anything of this kind and if so, how upset were you by what you saw?

⁹ Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., & Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children. Full Findings*. London, LSE: EU Kids Online.

Base: All children who use the internet age 11-16.

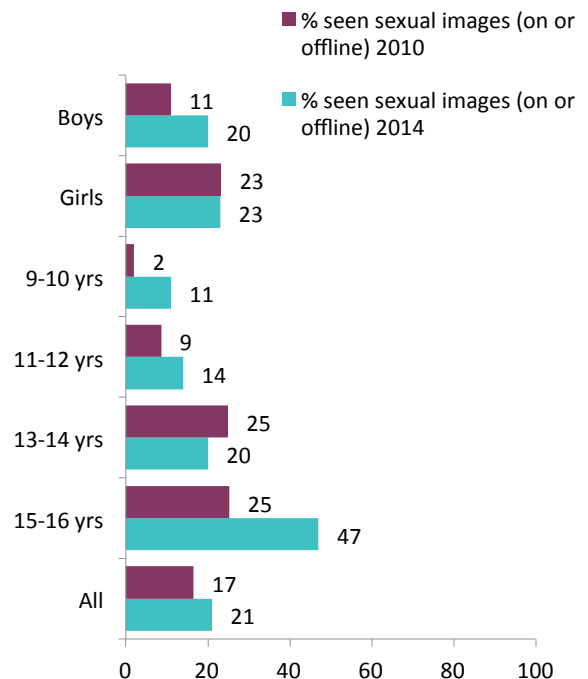
- Seeing sexual images is primarily related to age: 47% of older teenagers have seen sexual images in the past 12 months compared to 11% of younger children.
- Of those who have seen sexual content on or offline, 8% of children (or less than half of those who encountered sexually explicit images) were bothered by this experience.
- While, as we have seen, girls and boys are equally exposed to sexual images, girls are more likely to be 'very' (3%) or 'a little' (7%) upset by what they have seen.
- About half of older teenagers who had seen sexual images said they were upset by the experience. The proportion of those harmed rises with younger age groups: as many were upset as not upset among 11-12 year olds, rising to a proportion of 3 to 1 who had been upset among 9-10 year olds.

Sometimes, I see a lot for popups with sexual images, it's not pleasant. I don't really care because I just close it down and move to different part but when you go on websites and some popups with picture of young girls, hmm... with very little clothes on, or even topless, and if I sit with my brother I wouldn't feel comfortable. (Girl, 15 years)

My sister said she's seen it sometimes but she's older than me, she knows how to stop it. It doesn't bother her but she told me to avoid getting upset about it. She said, it's not a pleasant thing to see when you are not ready. ... I don't like to see it now. (Girls 15 years)

Figure 38 compares exposure to sexual images with equivalent findings from 2011.

Figure 38: Child has seen sexual images online or offline in the past 12 months, by gender and age, comparing 2011 and 2014



NCGM: Q35: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen anything of this kind, and if so, how upset were you by what you saw?

EU Kids Online: QC128: Have you seen anything of this kind [obviously sexual] in the past 12 month?

Base: All children who use the internet age 11-16.

- Overall reports of exposure to sexual images have risen from 17% to 21% in the period from 2011 to 2014.
- In 2011, the number of boys reporting exposure was less than half of girls (11% vs. 23%). In 2014, boys are still less likely to report this; however, the gap is much closer (20% vs. 23%).
- Overall, the findings are skewed by age, though less so by gender.

Table 25 outlines the different ways children and young people may be exposed to sexual content, online or offline.

Table 25: Ways in which children have seen sexual images, by age

% who say they can	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	All
In a magazine or book	1	1	1	6	2
On television, film	2	1	2	11	3
On a video sharing platform	1	2	2	8	3
On a photo sharing platform		2	1	2	1
By popups on the internet	2	3	5	14	5
On a social networking site	1	1	7	19	6
By instant messaging				1	
In a chatroom				1	
By email					
On a gaming website	5		1		2
By message sent using Snapchat	1		1	1	1

Q36: If you have seen images of this kind, how did it happen? (Multiple responses allowed).

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Most exposure to sexual images occurs via SNSs (6%), by popups on the internet (5%), follow by television, films and on a video-sharing platform (3%).
- Age is important here, as 15-16 year-olds are by far the most likely to see online sexual images, across all platforms, especially on SNSs (19%) or by popups on the internet (14%).
- In 2011, most children came across sexual images online accidentally through pop ups (6%) and on an adult/ X-rated websites (4%) and follow by SNSs (3% with 9% of 15-16 year-olds).¹¹

Table 26 shows that, in terms of sexual content, smartphone and tablet users are more likely to see

such content both online and offline. This is most likely because those with personal devices are generally older.

Table 26: Ways in which children have seen sexual images (mobile versus non-mobile internet users)

% who say they can	S-phone user	Tablet users	Use neither
On television, film	5	4	3
By Pop-ups on the internet	8	11	3
On SNSs	12	6	1

NCGM: Q36: If you have seen images of this kind, how did it happen? (Multiple responses allowed).

Base: All children who use the internet.

¹¹ O'Neill, B., Grehan, S., & Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety for children on the internet: the Ireland report*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online.

6.6. Harmful user generated content

Web 2.0 enables users to upload and share vast amounts of so-called user generated content (UGC). While much user generated content offers new opportunities for creative expression and is an essential component of digital literacy, some UGC may be harmful or age-inappropriate for younger viewers.

EU Kids Online reported in 2011 that exposure to potentially harmful content was a common experience for children though it has received less attention among policy makers and researcher than bullying, sexting, meeting strangers and pornography.

In the Net Children Go Mobile survey, we asked children: *"In the past 12 months, have you seen websites where people..."* For ethical reasons, this question was not asked of 9-10 year olds.

Table 27 presents an overview of the kinds of problematic content children have come across, and how this varies by age.

Table 27: Child has seen potentially harmful user-generated content on websites in past 12 months, by age (age 11+)

% Seen websites in past 12 months where people...	11-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Discuss ways of physically harming or hurting themselves	6	2	5	17	9
Discuss ways of committing suicide	9		5	14	8
Promote eating disorders (such as being very skinny, anorexic or bulimic)	19	11	3	21	14
Publish hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals	14	6	11	23	15
Talk about or share their experiences of taking drugs	10	2	5	9	7
Has seen such material at all on any websites	17	15	12	35	21

Q44 In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen websites where people discuss

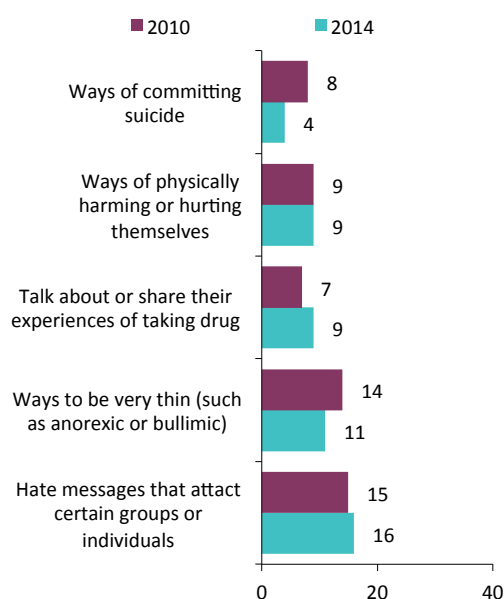
Base: All children who use the internet age 11-16.

- Overall, 21% of children report seeing potentially harmful UGC online – making this one of the most common risks that children encounter.
- The most common type of negative content which children report encountering is hate and discriminatory messages (15%) and anorexic or bulimic content (14%).
- Other forms of harmful content which young people encounter include: self-harm sites (9%); sites discussing suicide 8%; and sites where people share their experiences with drugs (7%)
- Seeing negative user generated increases with age: 16% of children aged 11-12 years have encountered one or more of the content listed compared with 23% of 13-16 year olds.
- Teenage girls report encountering harmful content the most: 35% of girls aged 13-16 have

encountered one of the forms of content listed.

A comparison with findings from EU Kids Online is presented in Figure 39.

Figure 39: Child has seen potential harmful user-generated content in past 12 months, by age (11+), comparing 2011 and 2014



NCGM: Q44: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, have you seen websites where people discuss...

EU Kids Online: QC142: In the past 12 months, have you seen websites where people discuss...

Base: All children who use the internet aged 11-16.

- The overall level of exposure has fallen from 25% of children in 2011 to 21% who report having seen websites containing some form of potentially harmful user-generated content.
- In particular, there has been a notable reduction in exposure to suicide sites (8% vs. 4%) and pro-anorexic sites (from 14% to 11%).
- Slight increases are reported for websites about drugs (from 7% to 9%) and hate messages (15% to 16%).

6.7. Other risks

Other risks asked about in the survey included a range of commercial and technical risks such as being the victim of fraud, viruses and malicious software or having one's personal information misused.

EU Kids Online data showed that 9% of children aged 11-16 had experienced one or more of the three forms of personal data misuse

Table 28 presents new findings from Net Children Go Mobile for these same risks.

Table 28: Child has had other negative online experiences in the past 12 months, by age

% who say	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	All
Somebody used my personal information in a way I didn't like	1	3		8	3
The computer got a virus	11	10	15	19	13
The mobile phone/smartphone got a virus		8	4	2	4
I lost money by being cheated on the internet	1	6	1	1	2
Somebody used my password/ my phone to access my information or to pretend to be me	2	1	3	9	3
Have experienced one or more of the above	13	13	16	21	16

Q45: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, has any of the following happened to you on the internet/on your Smartphone/mobile phone?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- 16% of children reported one or more of the negative online experiences asked about. The most common related to viruses (13%).
- Other risks were much less prevalent, the next most common of which was having one's personal information misused (3%).

- Across Europe, a computer getting a virus was the most common (21%). Someone misusing the child's personal information was less common (5%). Overall, 24% reported at least one of these problems.

In qualitative research, children also expressed concerns about negative online experiences.

People hack into my account. One time, a girl, I saw she put some pictures of mine, I asked if she posted it but she said she didn't, actually it was hacked and someone put it up, not her but it means someone did it, it's can be hacked. (Girl, 14 years).

I had a similar situation, someone uses my account, I told my mom about it and my mom managed to get my page back. I think she contact to that person or Facebook, at the end, she got my account back and she changed the password for me. (Focus group, Girls 11-13 year-olds)

The experience of online risks has in general remained the same or declined between 2011 and 2014 (Table 29) with the exception of "having seen sexual images online".

Table 29: Comparison of children's risk experiences in 2011 and 2014

	2011	2014
Seen hate messages (11+)	15	16
Visit websites where people discuss ways of physically harming or hurting themselves (11+)	9	9
Seen pro-anorexic site (11+)	14	11
Been cyberbullied	4	4
Seen sexual images online	17	22
Received sexual messages (11+)	11	11
Meet online, contact offline	4	4
Bothered or upset by something online	10	20

See previous tables and figures in this report
Base: all children who use the internet.

It is noteworthy, however, that the overall proportion of those bothered or upset by something online in the past year has doubled, indicating a lower level of resilience to problems encountered.

6.8 Responding to risks

One of the strategies that children may employ when they have a negative experience online is to talk to someone about the problem. Net Children Go Mobile asked young people how likely it was that they would talk to either parents, siblings or friends in seeking help or social support when something had bothered them on the internet (Table 30).

Table 30: How likely it is for children to talk about things that bothered them on the internet

	Very likely	Rather likely	Rather unlikely	Very unlikely	Does not apply
My father	31	22	9	26	11
My mother	45	21	6	18	10
My brother or sister	16	19	16	36	13
Other relatives	10	12	26	40	12
Friends	23	26	12	28	10
Teachers	7	13	13	53	14
Someone whose job is to help children	7	15	13	49	16
Another adult I trust	13	22	16	37	13

QC48: If you were to experience something on the internet or when you were online from different devices that bothered you or made you upset, how likely or unlikely is it that you would talk with the following people?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Most children (65%) are likely to talk to at least one person when they have a negative online experience. These include: mothers (67%), fathers (53%), friends (49%) or siblings (35%) as the sources of social support to whom children are “very” or “rather” likely to turn to.
- By contrast, the majority of children say it is “very” or “rather” unlikely that they would talk to teachers (66%) or someone whose job is to help children (62%) when they have a negative online experience

- Irish children are much more likely than the European average to talk to others (to mothers 48%, friends 26%, and teachers, near the bottom, at 7%. Indeed, most do have someone to tell when something bothers them online – although 12% apparently do not.

Table 31 shows how the likelihood of children talking to someone after a negative online experience varies according to age and gender.

Table 31: Children who are rather or very likely to talk about thing that bother them on the internet

% who say they can	9-12		13-16		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Father	53	56	52	49	53
Mother	67	77	51	68	66
Brother or sister	26	38	28	49	35
Other relatives	19	31	13	24	22
Friends	25	40	58	81	49
Teachers	22	24	19	13	20
Someone whose job is to help children	24	26	22	17	22
Another trusted adult	39	38	33	27	35
Would talk to at least one of the above	72	85	78	97	83

QC48: If you were to experience something on the internet or when you were online from different devices that bothered you or made you upset, how likely or unlikely is it that you would talk with the following people?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Younger children are more likely to talk to their parents than anyone else, with girls more likely to turn to mothers and older boys seeking support from fathers.
- The importance of parental support as the primary source of support for children decreases with age: teenagers are more likely to speak to their friends with notable variations by gender.
- Younger children are more likely to talk to their teacher, or someone whose job is to help

children than the teenager children, especially girls.

- Interestingly, teenagers (especially girls) are more likely to speak to their brothers or sisters about their negative experience online more than younger children.

If I have any problem, I speak to my mam. Yea, If I am having a problem, I will speak to her first, but many times, I don't even have to tell her, she looks at me and she already know that if I am in trouble, like she knows me, then she asked me "what's wrong?" I talked to her about everything... (Girl, 13 years)

... I talked to my brother; he's in college, two year older than me. I am friend with him on Facebook. I am not friend with my parents on Facebook. If my brother see I post something doesn't sound right. He asked me "what's going on with you?". I can talk to him.....Probably my parents asked him to keep an eye on me on Facebook, who knows... (Boy, 16 years).

7. Dependence and overdependence

Mobile media technologies have become such a feature of young people's lives to the extent that there are increasing concerns about (over)-dependence and excessive use. The notion of 'internet addiction' has been widely debated, although the lack of evidence leads most researchers to talk instead of 'excessive internet use', something that may or may not be problematic for the user.¹² Indeed rather than being addictive, the use of smartphones in particular could be described as habit forming, with usage that reflects attachment to the content the device delivers,¹³ more so since Snapchat, Twitter and WhatsApp provide a constant feeds of information leading to fear of missing out, being left out. The more those digital/online devices become part of our everyday lives – increasingly on our person and constantly attended to¹⁴ – the more important it is to conceive of a balance between the risks and opportunities.

Net Children Go Mobile avoided metrics of 'time spent' with the technology in favour of more direct questions about benefits or downsides related to mobile media use.

¹² Smahel, D., Helsper, E., Green, L., Kalmus, V., Blinka, L., & Ólafsson, K. (2012). *Excessive internet use among European children* (Monograph). London, LSE: EU Kids Online.

¹³ Vincent, J. (2006). Emotional attachment and mobile phones. *Knowledge, Technology and Policy*, 19(1), 39–44.

¹⁴ Licoppe, C. (2004). "Connected" presence: the emergence of a new repertoire for managing social relationships in a changing communication technoscape. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 22(1), 135 – 156.

7.1 Perceived benefit of use

The diverse benefits of smartphone use were the subject of one of the questions in Net Children Go Mobile. Table 32 presents responses in relation to items describing the use of smartphones for managing different aspects of everyday life.

Table 32: Benefits of Smartphone Use

	Not true	A bit true	Very true
Since I have had a smartphone I find it easier to organise my daily activities	45	39	16
Thanks to my smartphone I feel more connected to my friends	25	39	36
Thanks to my smartphone I feel more connected to my family	60	28	13
Thanks to my smartphone I feel safer	46	38	16
Since I have had my smartphone I feel I have to be always available to family and friends	42	40	18
Thanks to my smartphone it is easier to do my homework and class assignments	50	43	7
Thanks to my smartphone I feel less bored	20	50	30

Q50: How true are these of you?

Base: All children who own or have for their own use a smartphone

- Social connectivity stands out as the benefit most appreciated by young people: three quarters say it is a bit true or very true that they feel more connected to their friends with their smartphone.
- A large proportion equally say that they feel less bored because of their smartphone.
- Some 55% of children believe that smartphones help them to organise their daily activities and feels safer.

Table 33 examines responses by age and gender.

Table 33: Benefits of smartphone use, by age and gender

% who say they can	9-12		13-16		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Since I have had a smartphone I find it easier to organise my daily activities	5	3	27	18	16
Thanks to my smartphone I feel more connected to my friends	48	14	42	38	36
Thanks to my smartphone I feel more connected to my family	36	0	16	10	13
Thanks to my smartphone I feel safer	14	0	19	24	16
Since I have had my smartphone I feel I have to be always available to family and friends	41	3	22	15	18
Thanks to my smartphone it is easier to do my homework and class assignments	4	11	11	4	7
Thanks to my smartphone I feel less bored	36	24	37	26	30

Q50: How true are these of you?

Base: All children who own or have for their own use a smartphone

- Both age and gender differences are notable: teenagers are more likely to agree with each of the statements. Interestingly, younger girls do not share the same experience with regard to the feeling of perpetual contact with family and the feeling of greater personal safety.
- Social connectivity afforded by mobile communication is where the major difference between children and teenagers is played out: three times the number of younger boys than girls say smartphones facilitate a stronger connection with the peer group. Younger boys also report a higher level of feeling always available their friends and parents (41%).

The value of being connected to friends and family and of staving off boredom, are stated more often by Irish children in qualitative interviews:

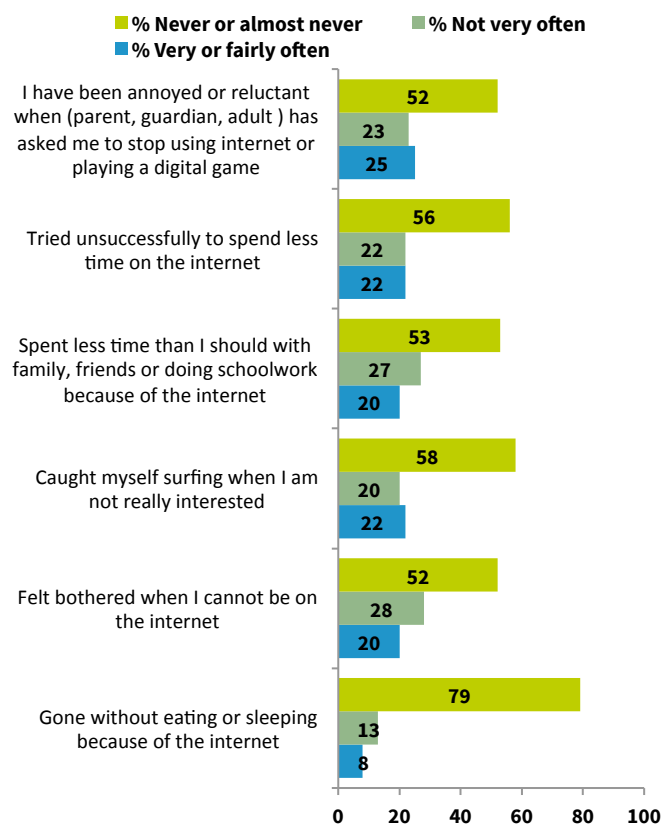
When my friend moved away, she gave me her number, so we call each other via FaceTime, this thing has on all Apple products like iPhone, iPad, iPod, I can connect to my friend and can talk to her via FaceTime. ...but at the moment I think Snapchat is ok too, But as I say I can connect to my friends, who are not live nearby through different ways, I also have fun with Instagram. (Focus Group, Girls, 9 year-olds).

I would say I never go offline, I think the term, people describe is understand differently. Like with internet connected constantly, you never go offline, if you know what I mean. Like, you always log Facebook on your phone, unless you log out and whenever you want you have to log back in but It's kind of hassle to log in and log out. But even you sit in class; you can have 10 seconds and check your newsfeed I use Facebook the most now, that you connected to people, you can instant message people, from everywhere, like my mom is in Chicago and my auntie, I just spoke to her last night, like face to face. And this Friday I am going for Concerns for 10 days and I will be away for like 10 days and I would talk to them from Uganda, to Chicago and it can be instantly, in the old day you would have to send the letter it takes 4, 5 weeks but now with the phone, with the size of a book you can connect to everyone. (Boy, 16 years).

7.2 Excessive use of the internet and smartphones

Concerns about excessive internet use or even “internet addiction” and the impact this may on children’s cognitive or social development is a subject of ongoing debate.¹⁵ In order to explore excessive internet use and to ensure comparability with the EU Kids Online 2011 survey, Net Children Go Mobile asked the same questions to measure potential conflicts with other activities that internet use may give rise to (Figure 40).

Figure 40: Excessive use of the internet among children



Q46: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, how often, have these things happened to you? Base: All children who use the internet.

- A quarter of young people report being annoyed or reluctant to leave aside a digital

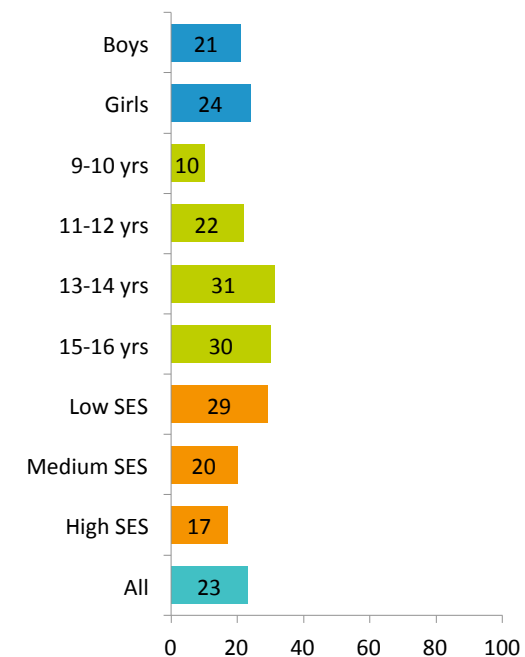
¹⁵ Kardefelt-Winther, D. (2014). A conceptual and methodological critique of internet addiction research: Towards a model of compensatory internet use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 31, 351–354.

activity.

- ‘Trying unsuccessfully to spend less time on the internet’ and ‘surfing when not really interested’ are also features that children are likely to experience ‘very’ or ‘fairly often’ (22%).
- This is followed by ‘spending less time that I should with family’ and ‘feeling bothered when I cannot be on the internet’ (20%).
- Encouragingly, eight out of ten children say they do not miss out on eating or sleeping because of their use of the internet.

Figure 41 examines responses by age and gender.

Figure 41: Child has experienced two or more forms of excessive internet use fairly or very often gender, age and SES.



Q46: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, how often, have these things happened to you? The graph shows the percentage of children who answer ‘fairly often’ or ‘very often’ to at least two of the five statements in Figure 31.

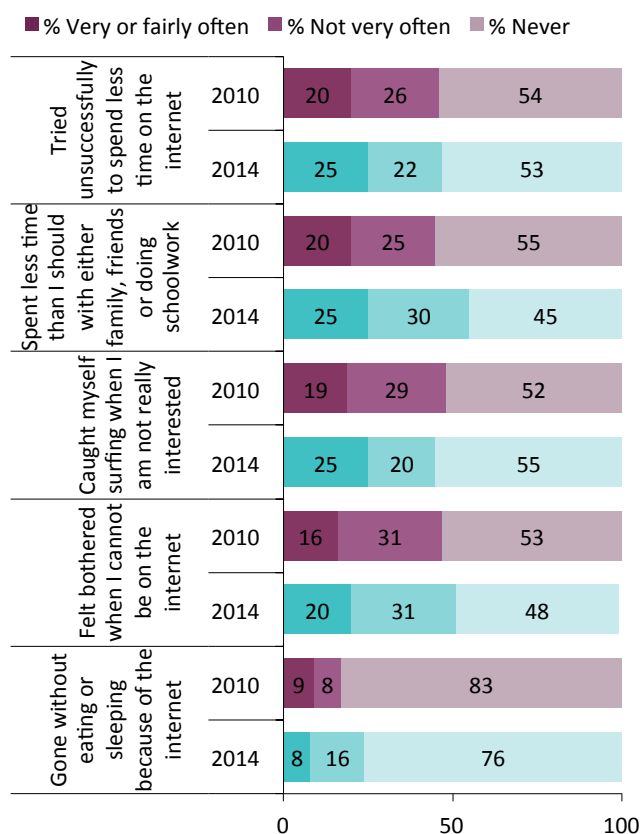
Base: All children who use the internet

- 23% of 9-16 year olds have experienced at least two behaviours or feelings associated with excessive internet use.

- While there is a small gender difference, age variations are more marked: 10% of 9-10-year-olds rising to one third (31%) of 13-14 year-olds has experienced two or more of the characteristics of excessive internet use.
- Excessive internet use varies also according to SES: children of medium or higher socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to experience two or more forms associated with excessive internet use than children of lower income homes.

A comparison with findings from 2011 is presented in Figure 42.

Figure 42: Child (%) has experienced two or more forms of excessive internet use, 2011 and 2014 compared



NCGM: Q46: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, how often, have these things happened to you?

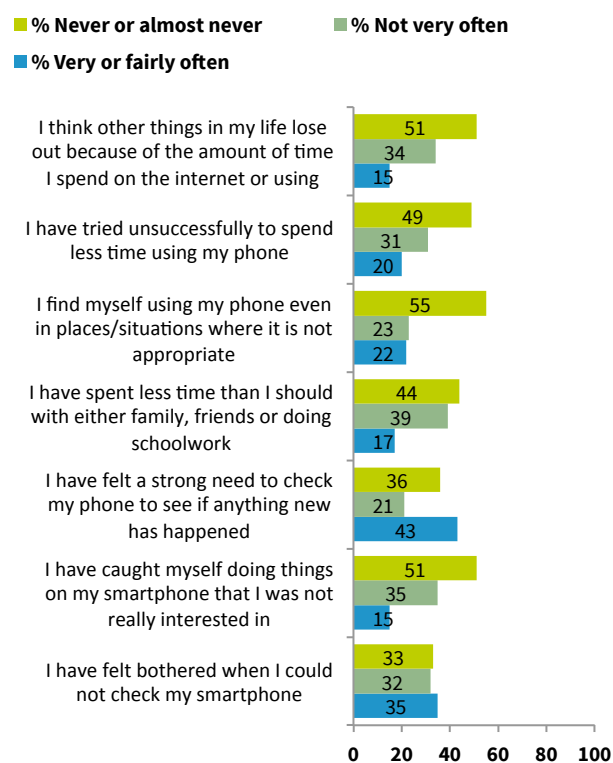
Base: All children who use the internet.

- There has been a general increase in most items related to excessive internet use in the period from 2011 to 2-14.

- 'Trying unsuccessfully to spend less time online' and 'spending less time than I should with family or friends' or 'doing homework' have risen from 20% to 25%.

When it comes to smartphones, many, children regard these as 'extensions' of their body that can be easily stored in a pocket and carried around all day long.¹⁶ Figure 43 presents findings related to 'excessive use' of smartphones among 9-16year olds.

Figure 43: Excessive use of smartphones among children



Q49: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, how often, have these things happened to you?

Base: All children who own or have for their own use a smartphone.

- Regarding smartphone use, children are much more likely to say they have difficulties limiting their use – the above graph is almost the

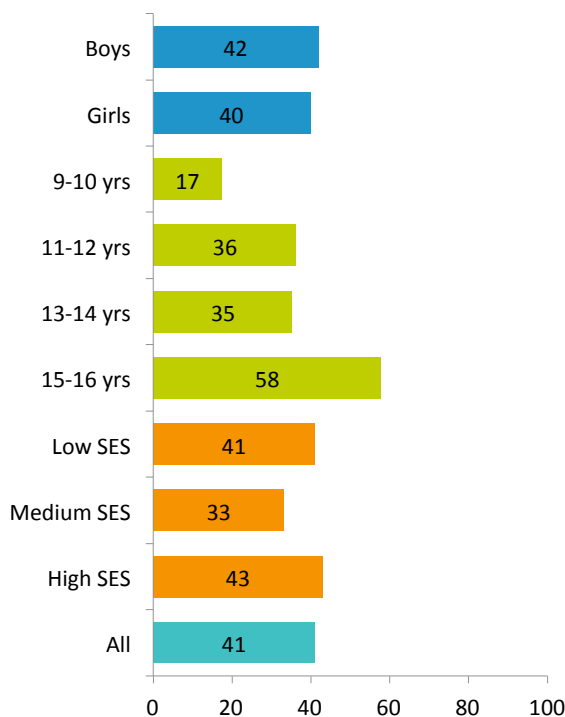
¹⁶ Vincent, J., & Fortunati, L. (2009). Electronic emotion: the mediation of emotion via information and communication technologies. *Interdisciplinary Communication Studies*, 3.

inverse of that for excessive internet use.

- Notably, over four in ten children express a strong need to keep checking their phone for anything new; three in ten feel bothered when they cannot check it.
- One in five children have tried unsuccessfully to spend less time using their phone or using the phone where it is not appropriate.

Figure 44 shows the percentage of children, out of all the children, who answer 'fairly' or 'very often' to two or more of the five experiences of overdependence, by gender, age and SES:

Figure 44: Child has experienced two or more forms of excessive smartphone use fairly or very often by age, gender and SES.



Q49: In the PAST 12 MONTHS, how often, have these things happened to you?.

Base: All children who own or have for their own use a smartphone.

- Overall, 41% have reported two or more experiences associated with dependence and overdependence on their smartphones.

- There is very little gender difference. Overdependence increases with age, with just 17% of the youngest children reporting two or more of the items measured, compared to 58% of teenagers aged 15-16.
- SES differences are less marked but noticeable, with children from high SES and low SES homes more likely to experience two or more forms of excessive smartphone use.
- These findings are lower in Ireland than for the European average (48%) and much less compared to the UK (65%), Portugal (57%) and Italy (50%).

If I am at home, I always playing, if I go out with my parents and I can't bring play station then it's fine, but I wanted to go home and play. But if we go out for a days I couldn't bring it, so I have to accept it. But, I can bring my iPad, I can watch YouTube there..... I went out to see my friends, they says "let's go to my home and we can play on my play station, we play again. (Boy, 9 years)

It's so tempting, when I hear any beep, it means one of my friends just posted something or sends a message. I just pick up the phone and checked it out, but it can go on and on. Sometimes, I don't even know I have spent a long time checking my message or new feeds. ...You don't feel the time passed, it on and on. (Girl, 15 years)

8. Mediation

Family, peer cultures and the school context are all influential sources of direct mediation of children's internet use, whose relevance has been widely recognised within policy debates. The increasing availability of mobile internet access via smartphones, tablets and laptops creates a new context in which new or different mediation strategies by parents, teachers and other adults may be required.

Parents have been especially valued for their role in regulating the benefits and risks of the internet for children, especially with regards to approaches that promote empowerment and self-regulation¹⁷ Some argue that the growing influence of peer culture in children's socialisation can also be harnessed for positive outcomes.¹⁸ The role of teachers also plays a key role in mediating children's safety. Schools are strategic sites of e-safety education as we examine in the next section. They are often heralded as having the potential to compensate for parents' low digital literacies in countries with persisting inequalities in adults' access to the internet.

Previous research has shown that Ireland has practiced high levels of restrictive mediation, including setting rules and regulating time spent online, location of use and online activities.¹⁹ Ireland is included in the cluster of countries classified by EU Kids Online as 'protected by restrictions' indicating that there is scope for developing more active forms of mediation of safety and internet use.²⁰

Four main types of parental mediation – as previously researched by EU Kids Online – are explored by Net Children Go Mobile.

These include:

- *Active mediation of internet use* where parents engage in activities such as talking about internet content while the child is engaging with it, and sharing the online experience of the child by remaining nearby.
- *Active mediation of internet safety* where the parent promotes safer and responsible uses of the internet.
- *Restrictive mediation* which involves setting rules that limit and regulate time spent online, location of use and online activities.
- *Technical restrictions* such as the use of software and technical tools to filter, restrict and monitor children's online activities.

¹⁷ Mascheroni, G., & Ólafsson, K. (2013). *Mobile internet access and use among European children: initial findings of the Net Children Go Mobile project*. Milano: Educatt.

¹⁸ Burrell, N. A., Zirbel, C. S., & Allen, M. (2003). Evaluating peer mediation outcomes in educational settings: A meta-analytic review. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 21, 7–26.

¹⁹ O'Neill, B., & Dinh, T. (2012). *Irish Kids Online: Comparing Youth and Parent Perspectives*. Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology, Centre for Social and Educational Research.

²⁰ Helsper, E. J., Kalmus, V., Hasebrink, U., Sagvari, B., & Haan, J. D. (2013). *Country Classification: Opportunities, Risks, Harm and Parental Mediation*. London, LSE: EU Kids Online.

8.1 Active Mediation of Internet Use

Table 34 shows the different forms of active mediation of internet use, as reported by children, by age and gender.

Table 34: Parent's active mediation of the child's internet use, by age and gender

Do your parents sometimes:	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Talk to you about what you do on the internet	79	79	46	77	71
Sit with you while you use the internet	48	50	16	24	36
Stay nearby while you use the internet	80	80	37	51	64
Encourage you to explore and learn things on the internet on your own	63	42	29	40	44
Do shared activities together with you on the internet	49	38	20	20	33

Q53 Does your parent / do either of your parents> sometimes...

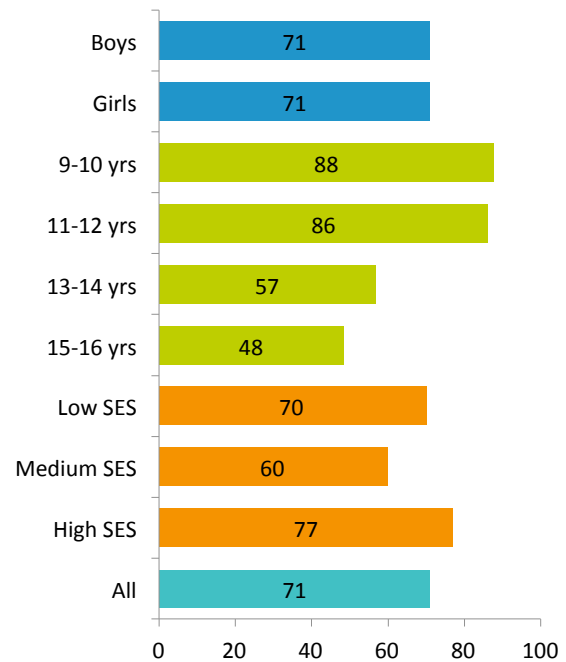
Base: All children who use the internet

- Nearly three quarters of parents talk to their children about what they do on the internet (71%), making this the most popular way to actively mediate children's internet use.
- Most children also say that their parents stay nearby while they are online (64%).
- Other strategies such as sitting with the child while he/she is online or doing shared activities are adopted by about a third of parents.
- Active mediation is structured by age, with parents engaging in considerably more active mediation of younger children's use of the internet.
- Gender differences are smaller. However, in the case of teenage girls, parents appear to be considerably more involved than with teenage boys.

Figure 45 shows the number of children whose

parents engage in at least two forms of active mediation of internet use.

Figure 45: Parent's active mediation of the child's internet use, by gender, age and SES.



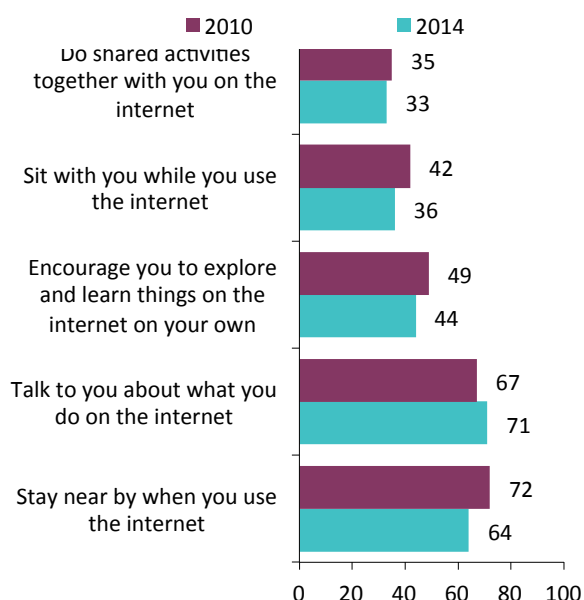
Q53: Does your parent/do either of your parents sometimes... The graph shows the percentage of children who say 'yes' to at least two of the items in Table 34.

Base: All children who use the internet

- The majority of parents (71%) engage in at least two forms of active mediation of internet use, according to their children. This is above the average European of 68%.
- Active mediation is structured by age, with parents engaging in considerably more active mediation of younger children's internet use (88% of parents whose children are 9-10 years old engage in two or more strategies of active mediation of internet use and just 48% of parents of 15-17 year-olds to do so).
- Parents' engagement in forms of active mediation varies also across SES, with parents from low or higher SES being more engaged in actively mediating their children's internet use.

A comparison with findings from 2014 is presented in Figure 46.

Figure 46: Parent's active mediation of the child's internet use, comparing 2011 and 2014



EU Kids Online: QC327; Does your parents/ do either of your parents sometimes ... (multiple responses allowed)
 NCGM: Q53 Does your parent / do either of your parents> sometimes...(multiple responses allowed)
 Base: All children who use the internet.

- Overall, there has been some decrease in parents' active mediation of children's internet use since 2011 with the exception of talking to children about what they do on the internet what they do on the internet (71% vs. 67%).
- Irish parents engage in more active mediation of internet use than in many other European countries (Denmark: 61%, Belgium: 66%, Romania: 65%).

8.2 Active Mediation of Internet Safety

Parents' mediation of children's *internet safety* is shown in Table 35:

Table 35: Parents' active mediation of the child's internet safety, by age and gender

Have parents ever done:	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Helped you when something is difficult to do or find on the internet	89	82	51	65	73
Explained why some websites are good or bad	84	86	68	83	81
Suggested ways to use the internet safely	88	82	67	86	82
Suggested ways to behave towards other people online	73	73	66	81	74
Helped you in the past when something has bothered you on the internet	49	46	37	56	47
In general, talked to you about what you would do if something on the internet ever bothered you	67	72	51	84	69

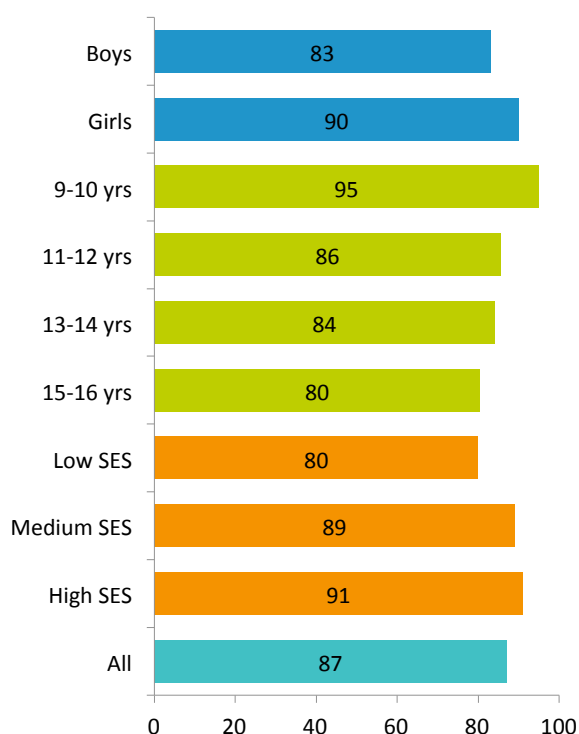
Q54 Has your parent / have either of your parents ever done any of the following things with you?
 Base: All children who use the internet.

- According to the children interviewed, most parents suggest ways to use the internet safely (82%) and explain why websites are good or bad (81%).
- Many also take an active role in suggesting ways to behave with others online (74%) or talked about what to do if something bothered the child online (69%).
- Age and gender differences are noteworthy: younger children receive considerably more support than teenagers, especially boys.
- Teenage girls, as above, in general receive more support than teenage boys.

Active mediation of internet safety by age, gender and SES is presented in Figure 47. The graph shows the percentage of children who say 'yes' to at least

two of options of internet safety.

Figure 47: Parent's active mediation of the child's internet safety, by age, gender and SES.



Q54: Has your parent/have either of your parents ever done any of the following things with you?

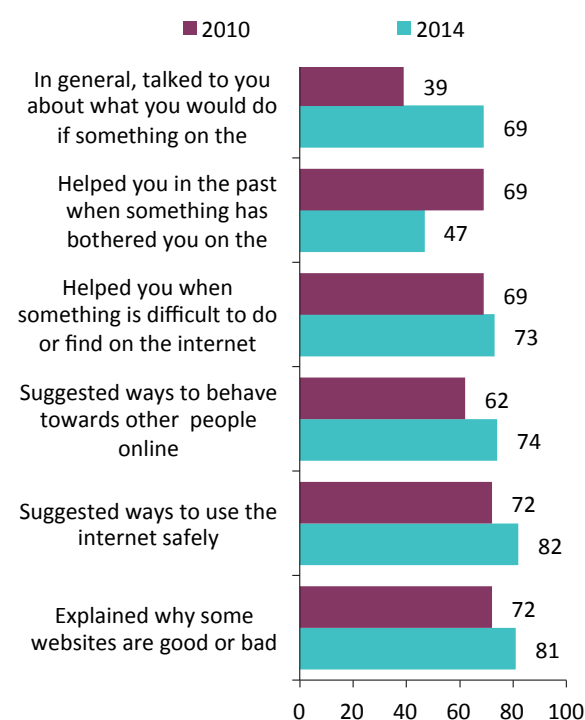
Base: All children who use the internet.

- High levels of mediation of the child's internet safety are reported. Most parents (87%) engage in two or more forms of active mediation of internet safety.
- Active mediation of internet safety is structured by age: nearly all parents (95%) of children aged 9-10 year-olds mediate their children's online safety. 80% of parents of older children teenagers also actively mediate internet safety.
- Gender variations are small, with parents of girls somewhat more actively involved.
- SES variations are slight: children from high and medium SES homes are more likely to receive two or more forms of active mediation of internet safety by their parents.

That active mediation of internet safety is also related to parents' own familiarity with the internet is confirmed by country variations. Parents in Ireland (87%) and the UK (86%) are more likely to engage in two or more forms of active mediation of children's internet safety. Active mediation of children's online safety is lowest in Portugal and Romania (68%), countries where parents are least likely to be internet users and smartphone/tablet owners compared to the other countries in the survey.²¹

Comparison with findings from 2011 is presented in Figure 48.

Figure 48: Parent's active mediation of the child's internet safety, comparing 2011 and 2014.



EU Kids Online: QC327; Does your parents/ do either of your parents sometimes ... (multiple responses allowed)

NCGM: Q53 Does your parent / do either of your parents> sometimes...(multiple responses allowed)

Base: All children who use the internet.

- By comparison with 2011, higher levels of mediation are reported across all categories:

²¹ Mascheroni, G., & Ólafsson, K. (2014). *Net Children Go Mobile: cross-national comparisons: report D3. 3.*

Irish parents are doing more than they used to in terms of actively mediating their child's internet use.

- In particular, there has been a significant increase in child-parent communication in 2014: 69% of parents talked to their children about what they would do if something on the internet bothers them online compared to 39% in 2011.
- 74% of parents also suggested ways to behave towards others online compared to 62% in 2011.

8.3 Restrictive Mediation

Restrictive mediation strategies are presented in Table 36.

Table 36: Parents restrict child's internet use, by age and gender

% not allow to...	9-12		13-16		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Download music or films from the internet	57	27	7	12	27
Watch video clips on the internet	20	10	1	1	10
Have your own social networking profile	70	55	10	6	38
Give out personal information to others on the internet	92	80	51	42	69
Upload photos, videos or music to share with others	84	58	18	9	45
Download free apps	40	10	12	2	17
Pay for downloading apps	81	64	43	51	61
Register my geographical location	87	84	48	51	69
Use instant messaging	74	57	25	21	47

Q55: For each of these things, please tell me if your parents CURRENTLY let you do them whenever you want, or let you do them but only with permission or supervision, or NEVER let you do them.

Base: All children who use the internet

- The most common forms of restrictive mediation adopted by parents relates to rules about disclosing personal information online (69%) and about revealing their geographical position (69%). 61% of children also report that they have restrictions on the purchasing apps of.
- As with other mediation strategies, restrictions apply especially to younger children across all type of activities.

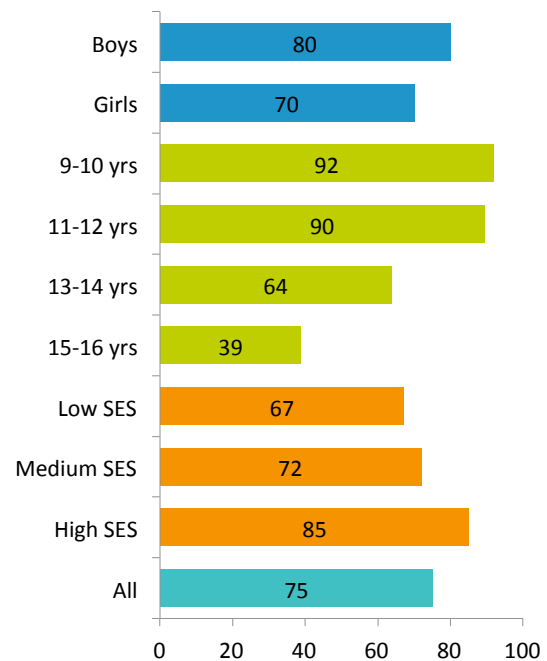
- Gender differences are noteworthy, surprisingly, younger boys are more likely to have restrictions when it comes to sharing personal information on the internet, using location tracking services and uploading photos, videos or music to share with others.

Restrictive mediation among Irish parents is generally higher than across Europe, consistent with the finding in 2011. While this is positive in terms of awareness of safety, it can also have a negative impact on children gaining the most out of digital opportunities.

My mom set up rules for me to use the iPad over the summer, because she wanted me to go out and play with my friend more. I can't use it more than 30 minutes. ...I had my twitter account before but my mom kept checking on me and then she asked me to take I off because she think it's too much for me. (Girl, 10 years)

Parents who adopt at least two forms of restrictive mediation are shown in Figure 49.

Figure 49: Parent's restrictive mediation of the child's internet use, by gender, age and SES.

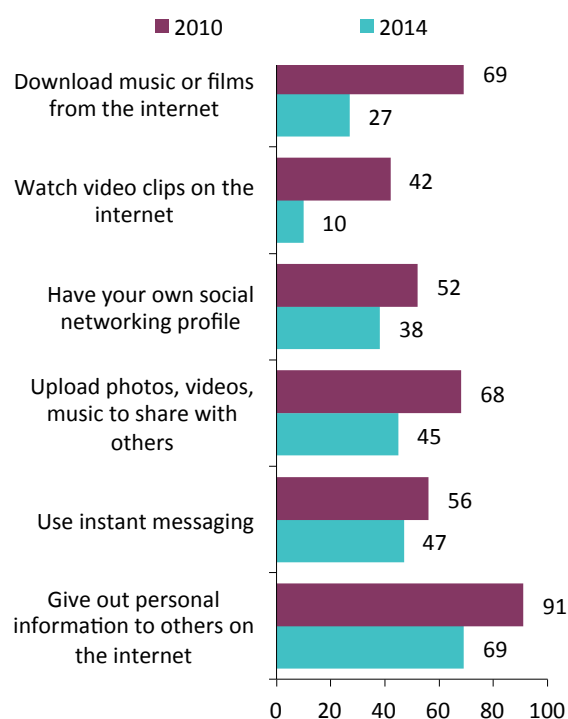


Q55: For each of these things, please tell me if your parents CURRENTLY let you do them whenever you want, or let you do them but only with permission or supervision, or NEVER let you do them. The graph shows the percentage of children who say 'can never do this' to at least two of the items in Table 23. Base: All children who use the internet.

- Restrictive mediation is less common than active mediation: 75% of parents adopt two or more forms of restrictive mediation compared to 87% who adopt at least two forms of active mediation.
- Restrictive measures are strongly structured by age: youngest children (92%) are over two times as likely to be restricted in their online activities than older teenagers (39%).
- Boys are also likely to be subject to more restrictive mediation than girls.
- SES differences in practising restrictive mediation are particularly noteworthy with children from high SES homes are more likely to have rules regarding internet use

A comparison of restrictive mediation with 2011 is given in Figure 50.

Figure 50: Parent's restrictive mediation of the child's internet use, comparing 2011 and 2014



EU Kids Online: QC328: Does your parents/ do either of your parents sometimes ... (multiple responses allowed)
 NCGM: Q55: For each of these things, please tell me if your parents CURRENTLY let you do them whenever you want, or let you do them but only with permission or supervision, or NEVER let you do them.
 Base: All children who use the internet.

My parents would tell me which photos I can post it up, or which one they said "no, you shouldn't post it because it's too personal. Most of the time I don't mind but there was one time, like last time, we are going to Greece for holiday and I was so happy and want to let people know... But my mom say no, because they will know we are not at home.... , it's not safe- she thinks. (Focus Group, Girls, 13-14 year-olds).

My parents are fine, they are not too strict, but my mom won't be happy if she sees me spend a long time on the internet, she asked me to stop, but parents there to set up the rules. (Focus Group, Girls, 9-10 year-olds).

- By comparison with 2011, overall restrictive mediation practices have reduced significantly. In 2011, the levels of restrictive mediation for children in Ireland were, in fact, the highest in Europe.²² In particular, rules regarding giving out personal information online have relaxed somewhat from 91% to 69%.

²² O'Neill, B., Grehan, S., & Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety for children on the internet: the Ireland report*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online.

8.4 Technical Restrictions

Forms of technical restriction are outlined in Table 37.

Table 37: Parent's technical mediation of the child's internet use, by age and gender

%	9-12		13-16		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of website	58	44	25	37	41
Parental controls or other means of keeping track of the websites you visit	52	50	30	41	43
A service or contract that limits the time you spend on the internet	16	14	12	11	13
Software to prevent spam junk mail viruses	67	74	57	51	62

Q56: As far as you know, does your parent/do your parents make use of any of the following for the computer that you use the MOST at home?

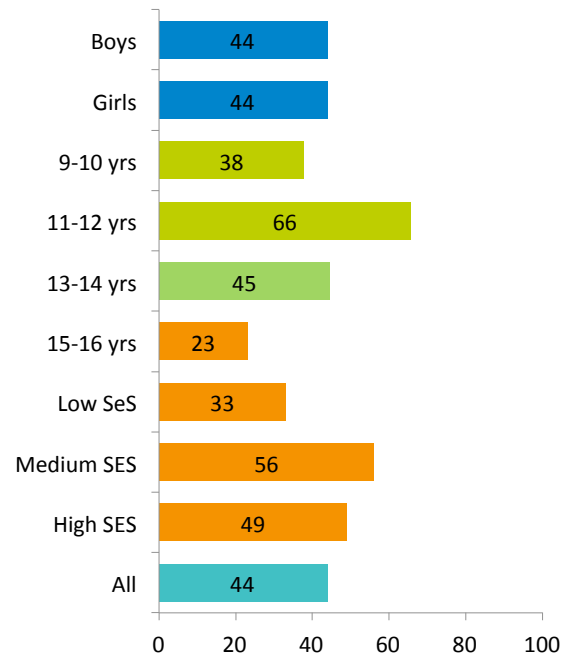
Base: All children who use the internet.

As found by EU Kids Online, technical mediation as the least favoured mediation strategy by parents.

- The most common form of parental technical mediation is software to prevent spam junk mail, viruses (62%) and follow by means of keeping track of the websites their children visit (43%).
- Parental controls are less commonly used except with younger children where some 58% of boys 9-12 say that their parents use filtering software.

As shown in Figure 51, just four in ten parents adopt at least two forms of technical mediation, according to their children.

Figure 51: Parent's technical mediation of the



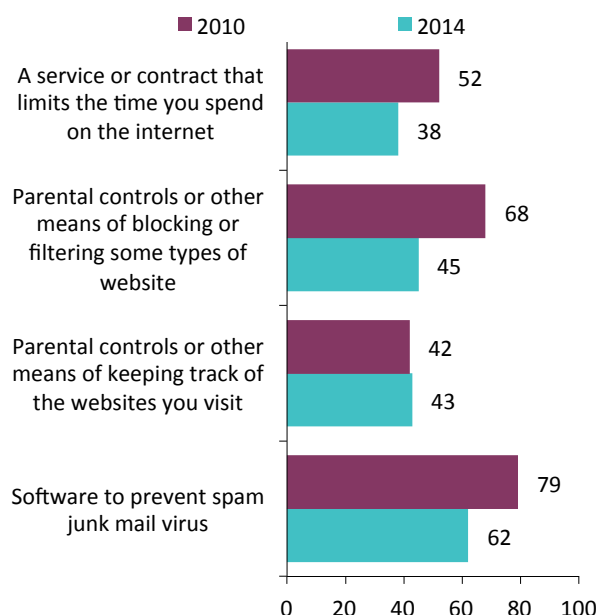
Q56: As far as you know, does your parent/do your parents make use of any of the following for the computer that you use the MOST at home? The graph shows the percentage of children who say 'yes' to at least two of the items in Table 24.

Base: All children who use the internet.

- While there is no gender difference, parents of younger children, especially those aged 11-12 years old, are more likely to adopt at least two forms of technical mediation than parents of teenagers aged 15-16.
- Medium income parents are more likely to adopt parental controls or other technical mediation of children's internet use.
- Across Europe, only 26% of children say their parents use filtering software (compared with 44% in Ireland and 48% in the UK).

By comparison with 2011, as shown in Figure 52, findings for technical mediation across all categories are lower, with the exception of keeping track of the websites children visit.

Figure 52: Parent's technical mediation of the child's internet use, comparing 2011 and 2014



EU Kids Online: QC329: Does your parents/ do either of your parents sometimes ... (multiple responses allowed).

NCGM: Q56: As far as you know, does your parent/do your parents make use of any of the following for the computer that you use the MOST at home?

Base: All children who use the internet.

When I go to bed, I put away my tablet, but my dad, normally the last one to go to bed, he would switch off the internet router, he wanted to make sure that I won't go to internet after that. (Boy, 13 years)

We are not very stupid about the internet. If sometime pops up you can block that person, like my mom and dad always hope I am not doing certain things but they wouldn't know as much as I do. Because the more hours you spend on it the more easy it is to understand and more aware of things. (Focus Group, Boys 9-10 years)

My mom has a program that when I wanted to download something, that send an email to my mom email account and ask if my mom agrees for me to download it. Most of time, my mom say it's ok. She knows that I won't download a bad thing but she always knows what I download. (FG, girls, 11-13 year-olds).

Recognising the very different platforms involved, Table 38 shows the use of technical mediation – that is parental controls and other software – to regulate children's smartphone use, by age and gender.

Table 38: Parent's technical mediation of the child's smartphone use, by age and gender

%	9-12		13-16		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of websites	21	6	13	30	19
Parental controls that filter the apps you can download	35	12	8	15	14
A service or contract that limits the time you spend on the internet	10	14	11	13	12
Software that limits the people you can be in touch with	10	4	5	9	7

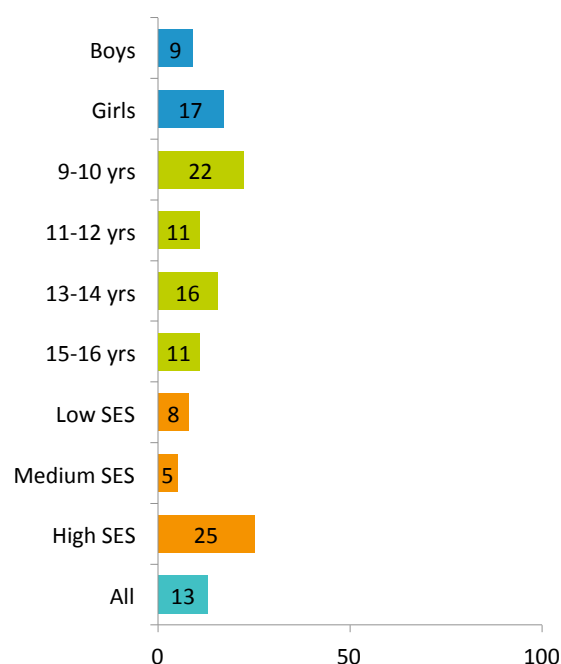
QC56: As far as you know, does your parent/do your parents

make use of any of the following for the computer that you use the MOST at home? The graph shows the percentage of children who say 'yes' to at least two of the items in Table 55.
Base: All children who use the internet

- Questions about technical mediation were also asked of smartphones. It seems that parental controls are less often used on smartphones than on domestic computers, according to children.
- Parents are even less likely to engage in any form of technical mediation to restrict activities on smartphones: none of the four strategies asked about is practised by more than one in five parents.
- Younger boys and teenager girls tend to be more restricted by means of technical tools than teenagers.

Figure 53 shows the number of parents who, according to their children, adopt two or more forms of technical mediation on children's smartphones, by age, gender and SES.

Figure 53: Parent's technical mediation of the child's smartphone use, by gender, age and SES.

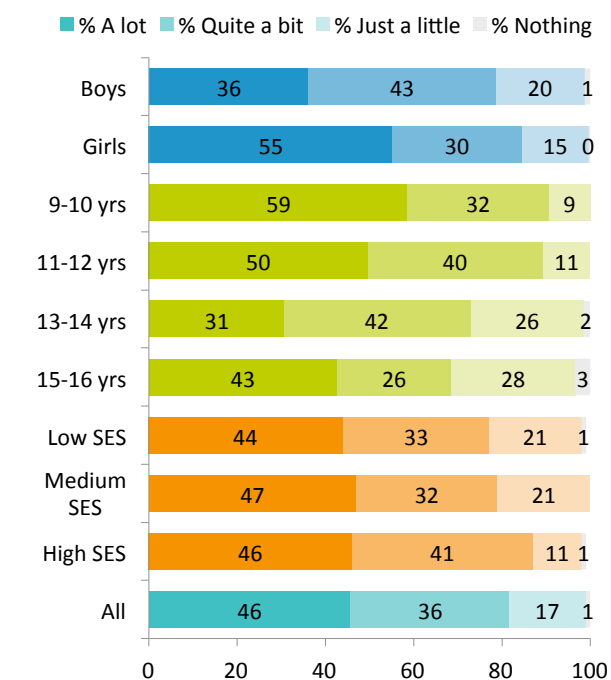


Q57: Are any of the following installed on your smartphone? The graph shows the percentage of children who say 'yes' to at least two of the items in Table 25.
Base: All children who own or have for their own use a smartphone.

- Levels of technical mediation of mobile media technologies are noticeably lower. Overall, just one in ten parents (13%) uses technical tools to restrict their children's use of smartphones.
- Age difference is marked with a substantial decline in monitoring as children grow older. While the numbers are low, one in five 9-10 year olds said their parents use technical restriction declining to one in ten for older teenagers.
- There is a noticeable gender difference as well with more girls (17%) than boys (9%) reporting forms of technical restriction.
- Both higher and lower SES children are more likely to have parental controls or any other technical mediation tool installed on their phone, compared to children from medium SES homes.

Figure 54 shows how much the child thinks their parents know about what they do on the internet, by age, gender and SES.

Figure 54: How much the child thinks their parents know about what they do on the internet, by gender, age and SES.



Q51: How much do you think your parent(s) knows about what you do on the internet? Would you say a lot, quite a bit, just a little, or nothing?

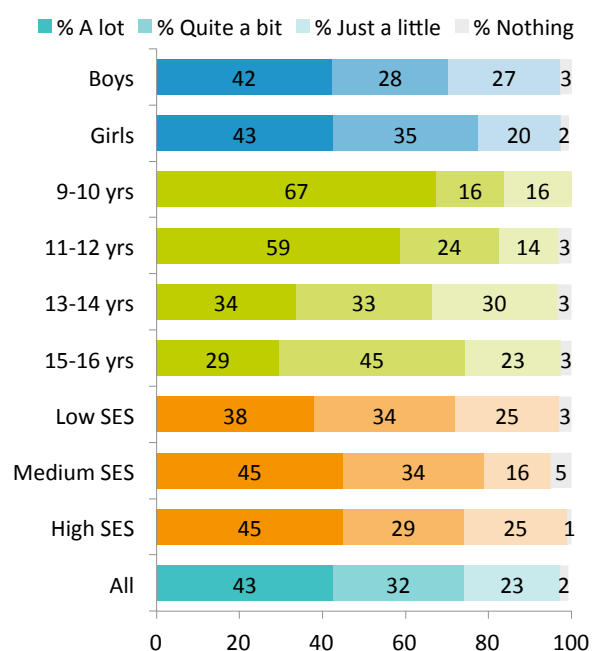
Base: All children who use the internet.

- Overall, 46% of children think their parents know 'a lot' and 36% of children think their parents know 'quite a bit' about what they do on the internet. Very few children say their parents know nothing of what they do online.
- Age variations, again, are more pronounced, ranging from 91% of 9-10 year-olds to 69% of 15-16 year-olds who claim their parents know what they do on the internet.
- There are slight SES differences with children from higher SES homes are more likely to say their parents know what they do online.
- Irish children's views are similar to those of

children in Belgium and the UK. In the other countries surveyed, children are less confident that their parents know what they do online.

Figure 55 shows how much parents know about children's smartphone use, by gender, age and SES.

Figure 55: How much the child thinks their parents know about how they use their phone, by gender, age and SES.



Q52: How much do you think your parent(s) knows about how you use your phone/smartphone? Would you say a lot, quite a bit, just a little, or nothing?

Base: All children who own or have for their own use a smartphone

- Here, a similar pattern can be observed to parental awareness of online activities. Girls, younger children and children from higher SES homes are more likely to say that their parents are aware of what they do on their smartphones.
- Overall, parents' knowledge of what their children do on their smartphones (75%) is somewhat lower than their awareness of children's internet activities (82%), suggesting that smartphones are perceived as more

private media.

My parents have to trust what I am doing because I know more about the internet than my parents and they wouldn't understand what is going on anyway....My generation would know about the technologies than my parents generation. (Boy, 16 years).

My children know more than us. I have this phone, I can use for phone, text, Facebook, that's this. When it come to my children... one is 10 year-olds and one 13 year-olds, they do all sort of things, games, apps. ...You see now, they are talking, and playing games at the same time... very multi tasks, I can't do that. (Focus Group, Mothers of 9-10 year-olds)

8.5 Peers

Support from peers is positively associated with online opportunities and digital literacy. Friends are often the main reason for taking up creative and interactive activities such as social media and blogging. Previous research from EU Kids Online shows that young people will often turn to their friends for support when they experience a problem online. The effects of peer mediation on online risky and harmful experiences are, however, less clear: EU Kids Online findings suggest that peer mediation is more likely to follow than prevent negative experiences.²³

Some of the same questions regarding forms of mediation were also asked of children in relation to support from peers.

Earlier findings show that most peer support takes the form of offering support in a practical way, with friends helping each other to do or find something (51% overall or 81% for teenage girls). By contrast, they are less likely to give safety advice or to help peers to cope with a negative online experience: just a quarter peers suggest ways to use the internet safely.

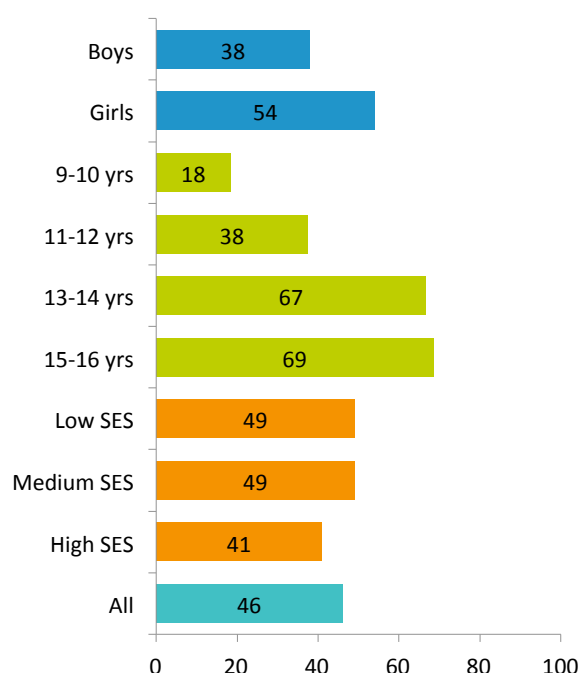
Figure 56 shows how the percentage of children who say that their friends engage in two or more forms of active mediation of internet safety varies by gender, age and SES.

- 46% of children report their peers support them by engaging in at least two forms of active mediation of internet safety.
- Gender and age differences are pronounced: girls and teenagers are more likely to receive at least two forms of peer support than boys and younger children.
- Similarly, middle and lower SES children are more likely to report being supported by their

friends in two or more ways.

- Interestingly, the Irish findings above are in line with UK findings but somewhat lower than the European average (51%), with friends supporting each other more in Romania, Portugal and Denmark.

Figure 56: Friends' active mediation of child's internet use, by gender and age



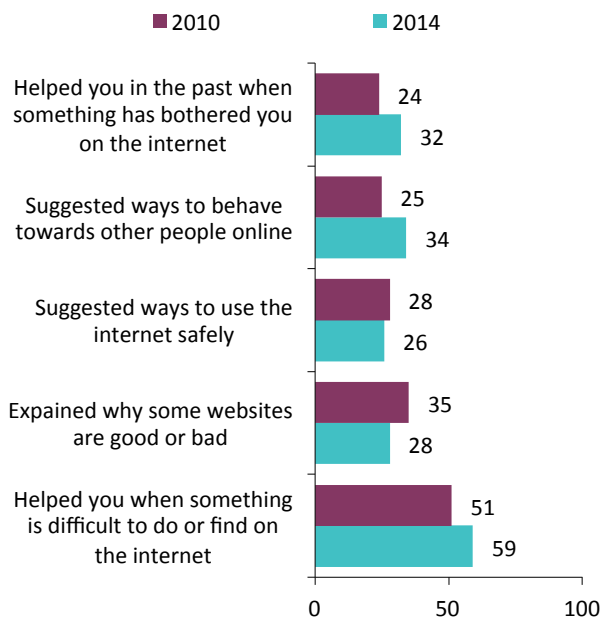
Q58: Have your friends ever done any of these things? Please say yes or no to each of the following... The graph shows the percentage of children who say 'yes' to at least two of the items in Table 57.

Base: All children who own or have for their own use a smartphone.

A comparison of peer mediation practices between 2011 and 2014 is shown in Figure 57.

²³ Kalmus, V., von Feilitzen, C., Siibak, A. (2012). Effectiveness of teachers' and peer's mediation in supporting opportunities and reducing risks online In S. Livingstone, L. Haddon & A. Görzig (Eds.), *Children, risk and safety on the internet: Research and policy challenges in comparative perspective* (pp. 245-256). Bristol: The Policy Press.

Figure 57: Peers mediation of the child's internet safety, comparing 2011 and 2014



I asked my best friend, we share everything, we talked at school and when we went home, we talked again, by phone, by messenger, Snapchat... Of course, when I have any problem, she knows it first; I talked to her and maybe after that my mom. (Girl, 14 years)

- Peer support when something has bothered the child online has increased in 2014 from 24% to 32%. Friends suggesting ways to behave online has also increased from 25% to 34%.
- There is also an increase in friends helping with something difficult online from 51% to 59%.
- Interestingly, there is a decline in friends explaining why some websites are good or bad. One might infer that, the friend's support has step further into the practical ways rather than focus on the emotional and theoretical ways.

I do like educational games; my friends tell me which games are good. So I went on the Apps store and looked for it. (Girl, 10 years).

9. Schools

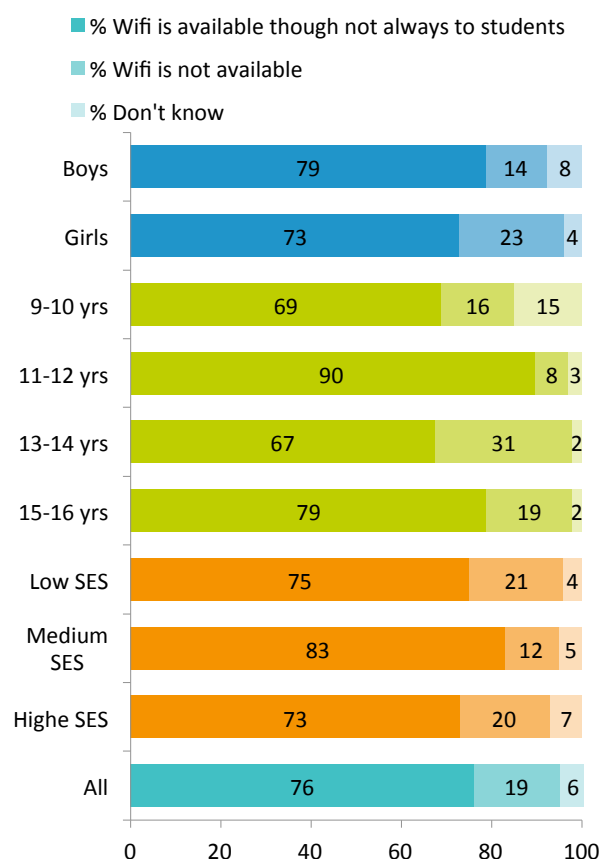
Within policy discourses, education is attributed a strategic role in providing internet safety. Schools are best positioned to reach all children, and they can introduce internet safety in a pedagogic context that allows for solid learning over time. Thus schools can complement parental mediation, even compensating for those parents who are not sufficiently informed or competent.

Consequently, schools and teachers are invested with more responsibilities and challenges than they may be prepared to address. In order to fulfil their role and promote children's digital literacy, schools need to be equipped with ICT and integrate digital technologies in the teaching and learning processes. Moreover, the introduction of internet safety in educational curricula should go beyond 'don't do' lists, as overprotective measures in schools have proven detrimental to the take-up of online opportunities. Rules for using smartphones and tablets vary greatly from school to school and appear to be tailored to particular cohorts of pupils within schools too. Misdemeanours that affect an entire year can lead to withdrawal of privileges to use mobiles and tablets during the school day. In addition to managing the awareness aspects of safe mobile phone use, teachers are also required to confiscate mobile phones and give out punishments for breaking rules. Being responsible for a child's mobile phone that is both expensive and emotionally associated with friends and family is at times more than a teacher feels they should be expected to manage.

9.1 Availability of and rules about Wi-Fi in schools

As we have seen, the number of children who access the internet every day in school varies considerably, from 61% of Danish children to 7% in Ireland and 8% in Italy. These inequalities are the outcome of different stages of the digitisation of schools and learning processes. As a measure of the technological infrastructures of schools, we asked children if Wi-Fi connectivity was available in their schools, although not necessarily accessible to students, as shown in Figure 58:

Figure 58: Availability of Wi-Fi at school, by gender, age and SES.



Q60: Is Wi-Fi available at your school, and if so, are the students allowed to use it?

Base: All children who use the internet.

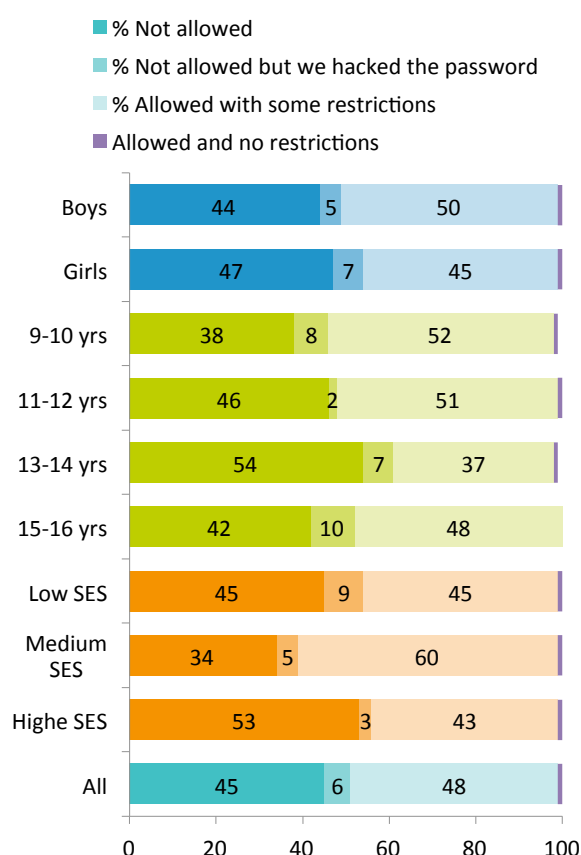
- Overall, 76% of children say a Wi-Fi network is available in their school, while 19% say it is not available and 6% do not know if there is a Wi-Fi

network available.

- Age differences are considerable. A larger proportion of 11-12 year-olds compared to other age groups confirm the availability of a Wi-Fi network (up to 90%).
- In contrast to the European trend, children from higher SES homes are less likely to have Wi-Fi networks in school.

Respondents were also asked where Wi-Fi was available if it was accessible to students. Figure 59 shows whether students are allowed to access Wi-Fi networks in school, by gender, age and SES.

Figure 59 Accessibility of Wi-Fi to students at schools where Wi-Fi is available, by gender, age and SES



NCGM: Q60: Is there Wi-Fi available at your school, and if so, are the students allowed to use it?

Base: All children who say Wi-Fi is available at school

- Overall, four in ten children say they are not

allowed to access the school's Wi-Fi network; 6% are not allowed to use it but claim to have hacked the password; 48% can access the Wi-Fi network with some restrictions, and just 1% are free to use it without any restrictions.

- There are slight SES and gender variations with girls more likely to be denied access to Wi-Fi but, at the same time, slightly more likely to access it with fewer restrictions. On the contrary, boys are more likely to be granted access with some restrictions, and to have hacked the password.
- Access to Wi-Fi in schools varies according to age, with over half of teenagers (54%) not allowed to access the school's Wi-Fi network compared to 38% of 9- to 10-year-old and 46% of 11-12 year-olds.

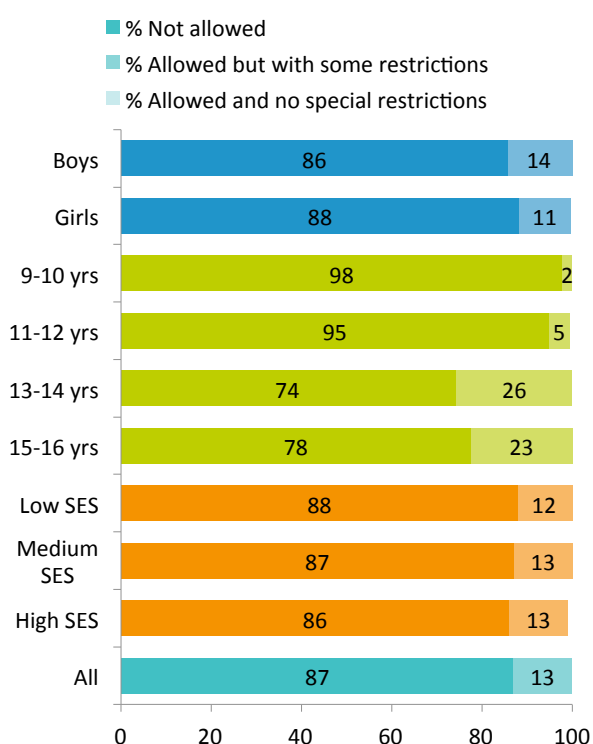
Our school has Wi-Fi, but it's only for teachers, we don't have a password. ... It's good if we can access to the Wi-Fi sometimes, like when waiting for the next class or in our break. (Focus Group, Girls, 11-13 year-olds).

One of our teachers, home economic, has an account with twitter, sometimes she lets us use the tablet to do our projects and she put the password in for us to use. But it's the only teacher let us use the Wi-Fi, but for our school project. (Focus Group, Girls, 11-13 year-olds).

9.2 Use of internet and smartphones in school

Smartphone use in schools also tends to be regulated, as shown in Figure 60.

Figure 60: Rules about smartphone use at school, by gender and age



Q61: Are students allowed to use their smartphones when at school?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- 87 % of children are not allowed to use their smartphone at school, 13% of children say they can use it with some restrictions. There is no case of children reporting that they can use their phones with no restrictions in school.

Most restrictions apply to younger children, aged 9-12. For 12-16 year-olds, a quarter say they are allowed to use smartphones with some restrictions.

Uses of the internet and smartphones are outlined in Table 39.

Table 39: Use of the internet and smartphones at school

	Several times each day	Daily or almost daily	At least every week	Never or almost never
Use the internet to do research for school assignments	1	19	49	31
Collaborate with other students over the internet	1	5	13	80
Use smartphone for assignment in class		1	3	95

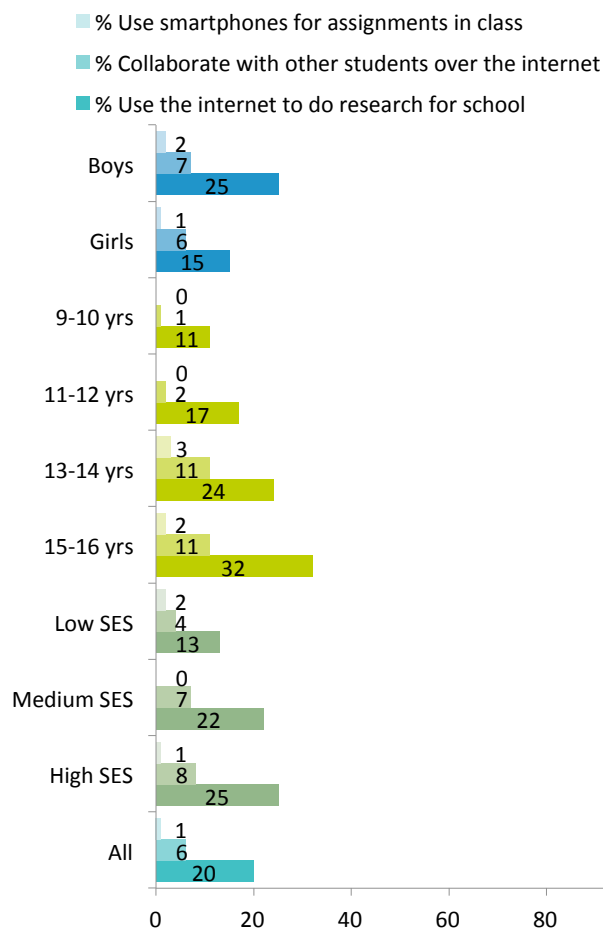
NCGM: Q62: If you think about your school how often do the teachers want students to do these things?

Base: All children who use the internet.

- 69% of children say they use the internet for schoolwork, assignments at least weekly
- 20% of children use the internet at least weekly to do research for school assignments and collaborate with other students.
- Smartphones as revealed above are rarely used for assignments in class (4%).

Figure 61 shows how the number of children whose teachers promote every day the use of the internet and smartphones for school assignments varies by gender, age and SES.

Figure 61: Students who use the internet or smartphones daily at school, by gender, age and SES



NCGM: Q62: If you think about your school, how often do the teachers want students to do these things?
Base: All children who use the internet.

- Use of the internet or smartphones for schoolwork increases with age and is much more common among secondary school than primary school children.
- Boys are much more likely to be encouraged to use the internet and smartphones for school related activities than girls.
- SES variations are also considerable, with a big gap between children from lower and higher SES homes in the use of the internet for school work. The gap is smaller, if non-existent, for the other two activities, which are very low in every category.

9.3 Teachers mediation and learning opportunities.

Teachers' mediation of internet say is outlined in Table 40.

Table 40: Teachers' active mediation of the child's internet safety, by age and gender

Have teachers ever:	9-12 years		13-16 years		All
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Talked to you about what you do on the internet	66	82	67	76	73
Helped you when you found something difficult to do or find on the internet	52	57	53	49	53
Explained why some websites are good or bad	74	87	75	74	77
Suggested ways to use the internet safely	72	86	78	88	81
Suggested ways to behave towards other people online	65	75	75	91	76
Made rule about what you can do on the internet at school	53	77	80	82	72
Helped you in the past when something has bothered you on the internet	22	20	19	30	23
In general, talked to you about what you would do if something on the internet ever bothered you	51	62	59	75	61

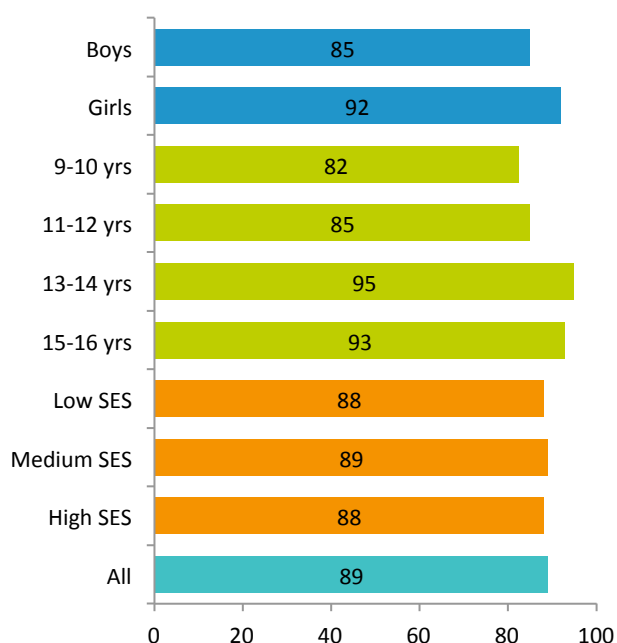
Question 59: Have your teacher ever (Multiple responses allowed)

Base: All children who use the internet.

- Most teachers (81%) do suggest ways to use the internet safely; 77% explain why some websites are good or bad 77% and 73% talk to children about what they do on the internet.
- Teenage girls, whether as a result of negative experiences they have had online, or because of their more active role in social networking, again receive more support than teenager boys.
- Nine in ten teenage girls say that teachers have suggested ways of behaving towards others online.

Figure 62 shows how teachers' mediation – measured by the number of teachers who engage in at least two activities – varies by age, gender and SES.

Figure 62: Teachers' active mediation of child's internet use, by gender and age



Q59: Have any teachers at your school ever done any of these things? The graph shows the percentage of children who say 'yes' to at least two of the items in Table 58.

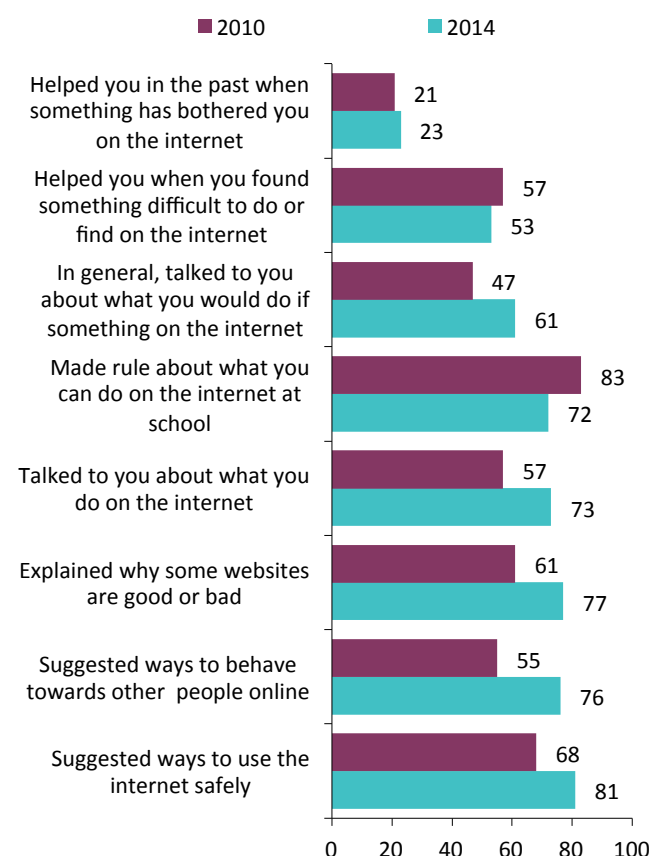
Base: All children who use the internet.

- Overall, 89% of teachers engage in two or more activities to mediate students' internet use.
- Gender differences can be observed, with girls experiencing higher levels of mediation compared to boys.
- Teachers' mediation increases with age with teenagers receiving more mediation.
- There is no SES difference when it comes to teachers' mediation of the use of the internet and smartphones in school.

You can bring the phone to school but keep it your locker, you can't use it, if you get caught, teacher will take it away for a week and you have to pay 20 euro. I know many still use during the break, they take risks to have a fine. (Focus Group, Girls, 11-13 year-olds).

Mediation of internet safety by teachers are 15-25% higher than the European average (with only one exception in helping when something difficult to do). Moreover, these figures represent a significant increase compared with 2011 as shown in Figure 63.

Figure 63: Teachers mediation of the child's internet safety, comparing 2011 and 2014



- The largest increases are in suggesting ways to behave towards the people online (was 55%, now 76%) and talked to you what to do on the internet (was 57% and now 73%).
- As evidence of a less restrictive approach, 'making rules about what you can do on the internet' has also declined somewhat from 83% to 72%.

10. Conclusions

According to the EU Kids Online country classification, Ireland belongs to the category of countries where children are ‘protected by restrictions’, experience relatively low levels of risk, and where internet use is largely restricted to practical activities.²⁴ Among many other questions, this report asks whether this situation has changed.

Access and use

Table 41 provides an overview of locations of use, age of first internet use, online activities and skills by age, and mobile versus non-mobile internet use.

Table 41: Summary of children’s access, use, activities and skills, by age

-% who say they can	Age				All
	9-10	11-13	13-14	15-16	
Daily internet use at home (bedroom or elsewhere)	53	62	92	87	72
Daily internet use at school	1	5	9	16	7
Has a profile on SNS	14	39	83	91	54
Has a profile on media sharing platform	17	29	49	56	36
Daily contact with parents on SNS	5	4	4	12	7
Daily contact with friends on SNS	24	58	78	79	70
Age of first internet use	7.2	8.1	9.5	10.3	8.6
Average number of skills related to internet use	2.1	4.6	7.2	8.2	5.3

For the exact questions, see earlier sections and definitions at the end of this chapter.

Base: All children who use the internet

The technological environment is changing rapidly, for children as well as for adults. Mobile devices to access the internet have become more prevalent, and it is perhaps no surprise that the most popular

device used by children to go online is the smartphone. Meanwhile, use of the desktop PC has halved since the EU Kids Online survey, but there is still considerable use of larger screen devices, as shown by the fact that use of laptop computers is second only to the smartphone.

It is interesting that most of children’s online access continues to be from the home, given that the smartphone has become so popular.

This might seem a little strange in that we call the predecessor to the smartphone, a ‘mobile’ phone, and some of the concerns about the risks associated with this new device were about “mobile access” – that it might allow children to access the internet outside the home, making parental monitoring more difficult. However, children similarly used of mobile phones at home, in part because the device was a personal and private one.

Despite being the device most likely to be used on the move, smartphones are mainly used at home, more often in the privacy of the child’s own bedroom. As detailed above, 72% of Irish children use the internet daily at home: domestic access to the internet (in own bedroom or elsewhere at home) increases with age, rising from 53% of 9-10 year-olds to 92% of younger teenagers.

Mobile internet users are much more likely to use the internet at home every day (93% for smartphone users and 95% for tablet users) than children who don’t use smartphones or tablets to go online (52%). These findings suggest that the internet is more thoroughly embedded in the lives of children who have access to mobile devices to go online. Second, the home is still a strategic site for raising awareness about online risks and for promoting safer, more responsible uses of the internet.

Table 42 summarises children’s access, use, activities and skills, comparing mobile and non-mobile users.

²⁴ Helsper, E. J., Kalmus, V., Hasebrink, U., Sagvari, B., & Haan, J. D. (2013). *Country Classification: Opportunities, Risks, Harm and Parental Mediation*. London, LSE: EU Kids Online.

Table 42: Summary of children's access, use, activities and skills, comparing mobile and non-mobile users

% Daily use of mobile devices	S-ph user	Tablet user	Neither	All
Daily internet use at home (bedroom or elsewhere)	93	94	52	72
Daily internet use at school	15	13	3	7
Has a profile on SNS	81	60	40	54
Has a profile on media sharing platform	52	49	22	36
Daily contact with parents on SNS	11	9	1	7
Daily contact with friends on SNS	85	63	58	70
Daily internet use at home (bedroom or elsewhere)	93	94	52	72
How old when first used the internet	9.1	8.0	8.6	8.6
Average number of skills related to internet use	7.0	5.8	4.2	5.3

For the exact questions, see earlier sections and definitions at the end of this chapter.

Base: All children who use the internet

The main change to note in children's online activities is that they simply do more of everything online compared to a few years ago. Furthermore, Irish children are more satisfied with the available online content than in other countries.

Gender differences in access and use are noteworthy. As they grow older, girls are more likely than boys to go online using laptops and tablets and other handheld devices while boys still favour game consoles. This was also strongly reflected in our qualitative interviews.

Skills

- On average, children claim half (5.3) of the 12 internet skills we asked. This is a slightly lower than the European average (5.9).

- The average number of skills is strongly structured by age, ranging from two skills claimed by 9- to 10-year-olds to over eight skills among 15- to 16-year-olds.
- In the period since the EU Kids Online survey, levels of internet skills, including safety skills have increased. However, compared to other European countries, they remain close to the average. In general, smartphones users claim to be more skilled.

From this brief overview of data on access, use, activities and skills, we can conclude that these findings support the 'usage hypothesis': the more children use the internet, the more opportunities they take up and the more skills they develop. Smartphone and tablet users use the internet more, both at home (as well as in all the locations asked about), are more likely to engage in the activities we measured and claim nearly twice as many skills as children who don't use mobile devices to go online.

Risk and harm

Online risky experiences do not necessarily result in harm, as reported by children. For the purpose of comparing and summarising the findings presented throughout this report, Table 43 reviews the incidence of risk online by age for each of the risks included in the survey.

- The most common risk of children's internet use is contact with someone not met face to face before (23%), but this has decreased compared to 2011 (28%).
- Almost as common is being treated in a hurtful or nasty way on or offline (bullying) which accounts for 22%. Incidence of bullying in Ireland has not increased since the EU Kids Online survey and remains close to the European average. However, cyberbullying is now more prevalent than face-to-face bullying (13% now compared to 4% before), and this occurs most commonly on SNS.
- Overall, 1 in 5 children in Ireland (20%) say that

they have been bothered by something online in the past year (20%). This is double the percentage (10%) reported by 9-16 year olds in the EU Kids Online survey.

- Smartphone and tablet users are more likely to report being bothered or upset by something online.

Table 43: Summary of children's negative online experiences, by age

% who say they can	Age				All
	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	
Treated in a hurtful or nasty way online or offline	27	15	26	16	22
Experienced any form of cyberbullying	16	2	20	13	13
Treated others in hurtful or nasty way online or offline	21	9	11	13	14
Treated others in hurtful or nasty way using internet or mobile phones	7	5	5	11	7
Received sexual messages (only 11+)	-	4	10	22	11
Had contact with someone not met face to face before	13	21	24	38	23
Gone to a face to face meeting with someone only met online before	5	2	2	6	4
Seen sexual images online or offline	11	14	20	47	21
Seen any type of harmful user-generated content on websites	-	16	17	35	21
Have had other negative online experiences	13	13	16	21	16
Excessive internet use (two out of five items)	10	22	31	30	23

For the exact questions, see earlier sections and definitions at the end of this chapter.

Base: All children who use the internet

- Overall 20% of children said they had seen or experienced something on the internet that had bothered them.
- Seeing sexual images (online or offline) (17% to 21% of 9- to 16-year-olds) has also increased but is still below the European average (28%). In 2011 traditional mass media were more common channels for encountering these

images, but now SNS is as common a source of pornography, follow by video, TV.

- The percentage of children who have met someone online who they had not met offline has declined (from 28% to 23%), and that figure is lower than the European average (26%). The proportion of children who go to a meeting offline with a person they first met online is very small (4%), and there were few cases where the child described this encounter as upsetting.
- As regards other risks, children now encounter more negative user-generated content than in 2011 (from 12% to 16%). However, this is much lower than the European average of 25%.
- Overall, since 2011 some risks have increased and others have decreased. In responding to risks in general, Irish children are much more likely than the European average to talk to others about problematic experiences. However, some 17% of Irish children do not tell anyone.

Table 44: Summary of children's harmful experiences online, by age

% who say they can	Age				All
	9-10	11-13	13-14	15-16	
Have seen or experienced something on the internet that has bothered them	9	15	24	37	20
Treated in a hurtful or nasty way online or offline and been upset	26	8	18	9	16
Received sexual messages and been upset (only 11+)	-		1	13	3
Gone to a face to face meeting and been upset	5		1		2
Seen sexual images and been upset	8	7	2	14	8

For the exact questions, see earlier sections and definitions at the end of this chapter.

Base: All children who use the internet

- As already noted in the EU Kids Online survey, bullying is still the most harmful risky experience: 17% of children (out of 22%) who have been bullied on- or offline claim they have

been 'very' or 'a bit' upset.

- Sexual risks are the second most upsetting of harmful online experiences though less than half of the children who have seen sexual images and of those who have seen sexual content of any kind (on and offline) have been bothered.
- Last, meeting online contacts offline is the least common risky experience. The findings show that younger children seem more vulnerable to harmful consequences, and that the transition from pre-adolescence to adolescence marks a time of increased bullying. Teenagers are more vulnerable to sensitive issues.

(Over) Dependence

Irish children are still far below the European average in terms of excessive use of the internet. Overall, 11% of Irish children have experienced at least two behaviours or feelings associated with excessive internet use. There is little gender difference though age is an important factor.

While children embrace mobile technologies more, and are more positive about their benefits (especially for keeping in touch with friends), smartphones clearly have their downsides too. Excessive use of smartphone is one example with 41% of Irish children reporting two or more experiences associated with dependence and overdependence. Moreover, a significant number of children reported pressure to be always available for contact through these devices, and more children are also now reporting a range of negative consequences.

Parental mediation

Table 45 summarises findings in relation to parental mediation.

- The findings suggest that Irish parents engage more in active mediation of internet safety (87%), making it the most common intervention by parents and much higher than

the European average (77%).

- This is followed by restrictive mediation of internet safety (75% compared to European average 65%) and active mediation of internet use (71% compared to 68% European average).
- Technical restrictions are still the least favoured form of mediation at 44%. This is similar to the UK, where parents are more likely to engage in all the types of mediation.

Table 45: Summary of mediation, by age

	Age				All
	9-10	11-13	13-14	15-16	
Active mediation of internet use by parents	88	86	57	48	71
Active mediation of internet safety by parents	95	86	84	80	87
Restrictive mediation of internet safety by parents	92	90	64	39	75
Technical mediation of internet safety by parents	38	66	45	23	44
Active mediation by friends	18	38	67	69	46
At least one person very likely to talk to if bothered	63	63	62	72	64

For the exact questions, see earlier sections and definitions at the end of this chapter.

Base: All children who use the internet

Compared to the EU Kids Online data (2011), overall, there has been some reduction in parental mediation practices across all different types of mediation.

Peer mediation

Almost, one in two children say they receive support from their friends when something happens to them online. 64% are very likely to talk to at least one person when they have negative online experiences.

Overall, 46% of children had supported those interviewed when they could not do or find something on the internet. It seems that the chief form of support is of a practical nature, helping

their friends to do things online. That said, 32% of children reported they were also helped by their peers when something bothered them. This is not as high as help from parents to deal with a problematic online situation (47%). However, qualitative data have shown that in many cases children would rather turn to peers than parents, so the fact that a third of peers have at some point been a source of such support is important.

Compared to the EU Kids Online data (2011), overall, there is an increased level of peer mediation with the focus on the practical techniques or situation, such as: suggesting ways to behave online or ‘helped you when something bothered you in the past’.

School

76% of Irish schools have Wi-Fi, according to children, but 45% say they are not allowed to use it at all, while 48% of children say they are allowed to use it with some restrictions. While this is similar to a range of other countries in the survey, the fact that in Denmark 56% can use Wi-Fi without any restrictions shows country-specific variation in how internet access is controlled at school level.

Smartphone use is even more restricted in Ireland, with 87% of children saying they are not allowed to use the smartphone in schools (again compared to the 0% who can use smartphones without restrictions and 13% who can use smartphones with some restrictions). This is the highest level of smartphone restriction compared to other European participants in the survey.

With regard to teacher mediation, in many ways teachers are as supportive as parents helping with and providing guidance about the internet. Compared to 2011, there is an increased level of teacher support across different types of mediation. In comparison to other countries, Irish teachers still do considerably more than the European average (89% vs. 69%).

However, there are number of exceptions which showed the reduction in teacher practices, for example, in making rules about what to do on the

internet, or talked to you what to do on the internet.

Recommendations

The Net Children Go Mobile project has outlined ten main policy recommendations²⁵:

1. Wider use of mobile devices has made young people's internet use a much more private experience with less direct parental supervision. Therefore, parents, more than ever, need to communicate with children about their online experiences.
2. Industry and other stakeholders can help to create safer and better internet experiences for young people by ensuring that supports such as content classification, age-appropriate privacy settings, and easy and robust reporting mechanisms on mobile devices and services, are widely available.
3. Parental control tools for smartphones and tablets can help parents create a safer online environment for their children, especially the youngest ones. In order to enhance their uptake and effectiveness, parental controls need to be user-friendly and flexible in terms of settings and functionalities, and tailored to children's needs, so as to be perceived as helpful resources rather than invasive tools.
4. It is important to encourage children to seek support when dealing with unpleasant online experiences. While many do talk to someone when they encounter a problem online, one in three children still do not ask for help.
5. Given that children are more comfortable with mobile and online communication, the development of safety apps that promote an active dialogue between parents and children should be encouraged.

²⁵ Barbovschi, M., O'Neill, B., Velicu, A., & Mascheroni, G. (2014). *Policy recommendations*. Net Children Go Mobile. <http://www.netchildrengomobile.eu/>

6. Parents need to be made more aware of the potential risks of underage social networking. They should be encouraged to supervise their children's SNS use and to take into account the child's age and agency. Nearly a third of 9-10 years and 3 out of every 5 11-12 year olds has a social networking profile, despite age restrictions. Many do so with the permission of parents and without restrictions or constraints.
7. Schools and teachers have a vital role to play in engaging children in online safety. By integrating mobile media use into learning activities, schools could promote more positive and safer uses of these devices.
8. Many children still lack basic safety skills: 2 out of every 5 children do not know how to use a report button while 3 out of 5 children do not know how to block spam. Similarly, two thirds of younger children do not know how to block unwanted contacts. It is crucial therefore that digital literacy be integrated into the primary school curriculum to ensure that all children receive training in safety skills.
9. Bullying remains the risk that causes most harm. Adolescents now report more bullying through SNS and phone calls than face-to-face. Despite evidence that children are more aware of the dangers of online harassment, more needs to be done to promote safer and more responsible uses of mobile communication.
10. Younger children are usually not fully aware of commercial risks: while they are sensitive to in-app purchases, they are less concerned about the misuse of personal data for customisation and marketing. Operators, industry, and content providers should promote a 'user-centric' approach to mobile privacy and more transparent payment procedures (especially for in-app purchases).

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