Social networking, age and privacy

# Details

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## Language

English

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## Type

Short report

## Topics

## Sample

EU Kids Online conducted a face-to-face, in home survey of 25,000 9-16 year old internet
users and their parents in 25 countries, using a stratified random sample and self-completion methods for sensitive questions.

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Creating a safe environment for children online

# Abstract

Social networking sites (SNS) are popular among European children: 38% of 9-12 year olds and 77% of 13-16 year olds have a profile. Facebook is used by one third of 9-16 year old internet users.

Age restrictions are only partially effective, although there are many differences by country and SNS. One in five 9-12 year olds have a Facebook profile, rising to over 4 in 10 in some countries.

The report also shows that:
-Younger children are more likely than older to have their profile ‘public’. Over a quarter of 9-12 year old SNS users have their profile ‘set to public’.
-Parental rules for SNS use, when applied, are partly effective, especially for younger children.
-A quarter of SNS users communicate online with people unconnected to their daily lives, including one fifth of 9-12 year old SNS users.
-One fifth of children whose profile is public display their address and/or phone number,
twice as many as for those with private profiles.
-The features designed to protect children from other users if needed are not easily understood, by many younger and some older children.

# Outcome

-Social networking sites are highly popular among European children (38% of 9-12 year olds and 77% of 13-16 year olds have their own profile)
-It seems that age restrictions are only partially effective
-"On sites with an age restriction, the rates of displaying an incorrect age in their profile are higher among those under than over the age limit, suggesting that ‘forbidden fruit’ is attractive" (Livingstone, Ólafsson Staksrud, 2011, p. 11)
-In most countries (15 of 25), younger children are more likely than older children to have their profiles public
-"around a quarter of SNS users communicate online with people who have no connection to their offline lives, including one fifth of 9-12 year olds across all SNS" (Livingstone, Ólafsson Staksrud, 2011, p. 11)
-"Around half of the children who use SNS say that they have included one or more of these three things on their SNS profile; their address, their phone number or the name of their school" (Livingstone, Ólafsson Staksrud, 2011, p. 11)