Risks and safety for children on the internet: the Ireland report

# Details

## Issued

2012

## Language

English

## Authors

O'Neill B.;Grehan S.;Ólafsson K.

## Type

Report and working paper

## Topics

* Social mediation
* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Content-related issues
* Risks and harms
* Wellbeing
* Online safety and policy regulation

## Sample

For the Ireland survey, a random stratified sample of 994 9-16 year olds who use the internet, together with one of their parents/carers, was interviewed between May and July 2010.

## Implications For Parents About

## Implications For Educators About

Digital citizenship

# Abstract

This report presents initial findings for Ireland from the pan-European EU Kids Online survey – a large 25 country survey conducted by EU Kids Online and funded by the
EC’s Safer Internet Programme. The questionnaire was designed by the EU Kids Online network, coordinated by the London School of Economics and Political Science.
Fieldwork was conducted by Ipsos MORI.
In what follows, Irish findings are compared with those from other countries, as reported in Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., and Ólafsson, K. (2010). Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children. Initial findings. LSE, London: EU Kids Online.

Nearly all children in Ireland go online at home (93%), much more so than at school (66%) or at a friend’s home (64%). Ireland is very high among European countries in terms of excessive internet use: 43% of Irish children say they have experienced this to some extent. The most popular activities (76% in each case) are ‘watching video clips’ and ‘playing internet games’. The next two most popular activities are ‘using the internet for school work’ and ‘visiting a social networking profile’ (58% in each case). A large proportion (67%) of children aged 9-16 think that there are things on the internet that will bother children of their age. The vast majority of parents (91%) mediate their children’s internet use in some way. This is above the European average of 87%.

# Outcome

Usage:
-Children’s (Ireland) use of the internet at home is somewhat above the European average (87% ). School or college use is much the same (66% vs. 63%).
-The use of mobile phones for internet use is above the European average (46% vs. 31%) as is going online via gaming consoles (44% vs. 26%).
-In comparison to overall European findings, daily internet use is somewhat below the European average (53% - IE; 60% - EU)
-"Irish children spend somewhat less time online than their European counterparts (61 minutes vs. 88 minutes)" (O'Neill, Grehan Ólafsson, 2011, p. 7)
-Ireland is very high among European countries in terms of excessive internet use: 43% of Irish children say they have experienced this to some extent.

Activities:
-"The most popular activities (76% in each case) are ‘watching video clips’ and ‘playing internet games’." (O'Neill, Grehan Ólafsson, 2011, p. 8)
-The average number of activities reported by Irish children of the list asked about is 5. This is below the European average of 7.1.
-59% of all 9-16 year olds in Ireland report having their own social networking profile
-39% of those aged 11-16 say ‘it is a bit or very true of them’ that they find it easier to be themselves on the internet than with people face to face
-One quarter of children aged 11-16 (23%) says they communicate online with people who they met online and who have no connection with their offline social networks.

Risk and Harm:
-"One in five (23%) say that they have seen obviously sexual images in the past 12 months, whether online or offline. This is broadly in line with the European average" (O'Neill, Grehan Ólafsson, 2011, p. 9)
-Ireland is relatively low, compared to many countries, both in terms of overall exposure to online pornography and in terms of the degree to which children are bothered or upset by what they saw when they were exposed to online sexual images
-"Bullying is experienced by a nearly a quarter of Irish children (23%), slightly above the European average of 19%. Most of this is face to face and just a small proportion (4%) has been bullied online" (O'Neill, Grehan Ólafsson, 2011, p. 9)
-The experience of ‘sexting’ in Ireland is below the European average (11% vs. 15%) and is among the four lowest countries in Europe
-Findings in relation to Irish children maintaining online contacts and for going on to meet such contacts offline are on the lower end of European findings (3rd lowest of 25 countries).
-Overall, 25% of children in Ireland have seen websites containing some form of potentially harmful user-generated content. These include sites promoting drug-taking, ways to be thin, racism or hatred, or even suicide. This is slightly above the European average of 21%

Mediation:
-The vast majority of parents (91%) mediate their children’s internet use in some way. This is above the European average of 87%
-Irish parents are also active in promoting internet safety: 72% have explained to their children why certain websites are good or bad and have suggested ways to use the internet safely.
-"Most children (87%) report some form mediation by their teachers, more in terms of rule making (91%)." (O'Neill, Grehan Ólafsson, 2011, p. 10)
-67% of children say their peers have helped or supported their internet use in at least one of the five ways asked about.
-In general, internet safety advice is received first from parents (72%), then teachers (68%), then peers (28%).