Patterns in internet use among children and adolescents in Romania

Engl. transl.: Patterns in internet use among children and adolescents in Romania

# Keywords

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# Details

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## Sample

The sample on Romania consists of 1041 children with ages between 9 and 16 years whereas 51 per cent are boys.

# Abstract

Drawing on the work of Hasebrink et al. (2011) the purpose of this paper is to identify patterns in children’s online use by classifying them based on the types of opportunities taken up online. This classification will allow us to examine if children in Romania report differences in Internet usage. The following variables were used to form clusters: duration of use, range of activities, number of risky online activities, and type of activities. Additionally, age and gender were considered in order to distinguish between younger and older users. As previous studies argued (Fizesan 2012), some activities may enhance the benefits of going online thus they are labelled opportunities (e.g. the provision of own-language creative or playful content, or a lively community of people who share one’s hobby). On the other hand, some activities may enhance the likelihood of harm from going online and for that reason they may be labelled risks (e.g. the ready availability of explicit pornography or the activities of people who are aggressive, racist or manipulative). For comparison purposes, based on the previous cluster analysis conducted by Hasebrink et al. (2011) across EU we decided on the six clusters solution. The description of the cluster follows the work of Haserbrink et al. (2011) and highlights the specificities for Romanian children.

# Outcome

"The description of the clusters follows the work of Hasebrink et al. (2011) highlighting the specificities for Romanian children. “Low use, low opportunities/or risk” (Cluster 1) users are characterized, as the name suggests, both by a small amount of online use and a small range of activities. Moreover, children belonging to this group are the youngest within all six groups and are using the Internet mostly for playing and school work. It is, also, the largest group among all six. “Low-use, gaming/or entertainment oriented” (Cluster 2). This is quite similar to cluster 1, with low levels of opportunities taken up or risks encountered. The relevant difference is given by higher values for the duration of use. These users are also very young and, apparently, their use is not gainful. 7 per cent of the total sample is part of this group. “Learning–oriented” (Cluster 3) children, compared to those from the first two clusters, have a bigger range of activities, exploring all types of activities with a focus on school work and entertainment (e.g. watching video clips and playing online). These children also report a moderate use, spending in average 106 minutes online on a typical day, boys being more likely to belong to this group. A quarter of Romanian children are characterized by this cluster. “Moderate-use, entertainment, and communication-oriented” (Cluster 4). Compared to Clusters 1–3, users in this group have shifted their focus to content and communication based activities. These children are older and spend more time online, undertaking almost nine activities. This cluster accounts for 15% of children, placing it as the third largest user group among Romanian children. “High-use, social networking oriented” (Cluster 5) users are about 13 year old and are higher risk-encounters, spend longer time online, report high levels of social networking and other participatory activities. One in ten children belongs to this group in Romania. "