Combining innovative methodological tools to approach digital transformations in leisure among children and young people

# Details

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## Type

Report and working paper

## Topics

## Sample

10- and 12-year-old children living in the European Union and the United Kingdom participating in the third wave of Children's Worlds database – i.e., 32,179 children.

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

Τhis report presents the major findings from work package 4, where the aim is to understand the interplay between leisure and socialisation among children and young people, as presented through ICT use in everyday life. The findings from this study explore the ways in which ICT is an integral part of children’s social everyday life. Children and young people’s everyday leisure practices are transformed through ICT usage, exploring the potential benefits of ICT in leisure as well as the harmful elements. This study also provides insights on intergenerational communication.

# Outcome

"Questions of inequality in terms of access and connectivity were mostly raised by participants in Romania, where some children, especially those from rural or low-income families, who seem to share some of their devices with their siblings. Sharing devices was also reported in other countries, especially with the younger children."
Smartphones seem to be the most important device for children and young people, around which digital capital revolves, the age of acquiring one’s first smartphone is considered a kind of a milestone.
Communication with friends is through digital media. Children communicate with their friends every day through chatting or calling, using different apps, where the reasons range from practical reasons, such as exchanging information about school or doing homework together, arranging meetings, to social reasons."
Games are a significant part of all children’s lives among the five countries participating in our research.
Playing online games with strangers is generally experienced as different from playing with friends. There appears to be an agreement on how to behave while playing with strangers: communication while playing is reduced compared to when playing with friends, the content of that communication is restricted to non-personal information
Online activities, including gaming, have a strong element of socialisation. Maintenance of friendships, particularly during lockdowns, was made possible thanks to digital media
Ultimately, screen time seems to be an issue for (almost) all families in (almost) all countries. In Norway, however, screen time is less of an issue, as the parents accept it as a way of being social and spending leisure time, while the children report having a perceived entitlement to screen time if they fulfill other obligations, such as schoolwork and participation in other leisure activities.
In most cases, children describe specific rules, such as no games or content for people above 18 years, not spending too much money on gaming, no cell phone on the table, no cell phone right before going to sleep or right after waking up etc., as well as different amount of screen time according to schooldays and weekends. Another crucial point is parents’ monitoring of children’s online activities.
The impact of the pandemic meant that the children and young people had to stay all day in their homes and occupy themselves mainly with ICT instead of getting out to see their friends. ICT was an important social arena." (p.5-6)