As crianças e a internet em Portugal: perfis de uso

Engl. transl.: Children and the internet in Portugal: usage profiles

# Keywords

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# Details

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## Topics

## Sample

Students from compulsory education (4th, 6th and 9th grades), both public and private. Non-random sample of 60 schools, corresponding to 180 classes (3049 respondents), stratified according to the type of education (public or private), region and socioeconomic characteristics of the locality.

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

# Abstract

On the basis of a questionnaire survey carried out among Portuguese children, this article aims to characterise their possession and usage of the internet. The survey ascertained that the children can be grouped under four distinct user profiles — “confirmed cybernauts”, “applied students”, “inveterate gamers” and “beginners” — and demonstrates that these profiles are highly conditioned by variables such as a child’s sex and age and his or her parents’ educational levels and socio-professional categories. These profiles also correspond to different forms of parental mediation and different representations regarding the internet.

# Outcome

“The democratization of internet access is a notable fact in Portuguese families with children of school age. Despite the narrow margin of excluded people at the entrance (20% of the total sample), having internet at home has become a given fact in everyday household ”(Almeida, A., Alves N., Delicado A., 2016: 25) .

The “ability to move to other levels of proficiency and sophistication is far from randomly distributed in social terms - and that is why is growing the thesis that today the inequalities between groups of children reproduce not so much between 'having' or 'not having', but, above all, in the modalities and qualities of using technology. It is true that children are among those who lead the adoption and use of ICT; but not all children - only and precisely those whose social background is favored. Their different contexts of life count and technology is differently acquired, appropriated, disseminated, adopted and used by them. Our results contribute to the deconstruction of what many refer to as technological triumphalism” (Almeida, A., Alves N., Delicado A., 2016: 25).

“There are children who have positive representations about the Internet, in general, seeing it as a window of opportunity (recognizing the risks at the same time), alongside others with more skeptical and fearful views of the dangers online. Starting from a typology of practices, four user profiles were built that constitute unique arrangements for communicative, educational, playful or other practices. The 'confirmed cybernauts' (omnivores in their uses, with particular emphasis on communicative practices) make up a quarter of the sample; 'applied students' (for whom educational practices stand out) account for 23%, while 'inveterate players' (where the weight of playful practices stands out) account for 20% and 'begginers' (with low rates in all categories ) account for 21%. These four groups differ from each other not only because they are associated with certain sociodemographic contexts, but also with certain internet usage patterns ”(Almeida, A., Alves N., Delicado A., 2016: 25-26).

1. Confirmed cybernauts: “older children and boys stand out; the children of entrepreneurs and managers. They use the internet for longer and continuously; learn to use it solo, are characterized by ‘cumulative’ and ‘autonomous’ browsing, visit all types of pages, communicate with all types of interlocutors and speak to ‘strangers’; they have a computer and internet in their room, they are hardly supervised by their parents, they have already arranged meetings with strangers, they are very enthusiastic in the appreciation they make of the advantages of the internet (even though they identify risks and limitations that it imposes on their daily lives)” (Almeida, A. Alves N., Delicado A., 2016: 26).

2. Applied students: “above all, younger children and girls, coming from more qualified professional groups in the younger segments and the reverse in the older age segments. They learn to use the computer and the internet with their parents, perform a 'suggested navigation', are the ones who least interact on social networks and use the educational pages the most, communicate little with friends, colleagues or siblings and more with their mothers; they are subject to surveillance and parental control, they reveal that they were ‘afraid’ online” (Almeida, A., Alves N., Delicado A., 2016: 26).

3. Inveterate players: “especially boys, up to 13 years old, with an overrepresentation among the children of administrative workers; in older ages, parents with higher education levels stand out; are clearly focused on recreational practices (playing online), are characterized by “hesitant browsing” and are very centered on video-game sites, have an internet connection from the bedroom, are poorly watched and, like the 'confirmed cybernauts', they have already arranged meetings with strangers and are proving to be great defenders of the advantages of the internet” (Almeida, A., Alves N., Delicado A., 2016: 26).

4. Begginers: “girls and younger children stand out; daughters of scientific and technical professionals (who, however, dominate in all profiles); parents teach them to navigate, they are distinguished by 'hesitant browsing', they register low visit rates on all types of pages, through the internet they communicate with peers, siblings and other family members (verifying the minimum levels of contact with parents and strangers), are subject to parental control and revealed to have felt 'fear' online ”(Almeida, A., Alves N., Delicado A., 2016: 26).

“The profiles are not stored in incommunicable drawers: they can give rise to patterns of articulation over time. Progress has the mark of the context and it happens especially with children from favored backgrounds: from begginers and applied students, as they grow up, turn into convinced cybernauts and inveterate players" (Almeida, A., Alves N., Delicado A., 2016: 26-27).