A framework for children's participation in online environments

# Details

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## Topics

## Sample

221 Children, 7 Parents, 7 teachers

## Implications For Parents About

* Parental practices / parental mediation
* Parental digital literacy
* Parenting guidance / support

## Implications For Educators About

## Implications For Policy Makers About

# Abstract

Online environments are an essential part of children’s everyday lives today. The purpose of this study is to increase parents’, teachers’, educators’ and decision-makers’ knowledge about children’s use of online environments and the opportunities and risks in them. The objective of the study is to develop a framework for children’s online participation by exploring different dimensions of children’s participation in online environments. These dimensions are the reasons, practices and perceived effects of children’s online participation. The study is multidisciplinary in nature and its basis is in social childhood studies.
The empirical part of the study was conducted in 2010–2012 in Finland. The study was conducted in four phases. The first research question, “what are the reasons for children’s participation?”, was answered by exploring the online discussion of the members of the Finnish Children’s Parliament. Altogether 61 children participated in the discussion, with 566 postings. The second research question, “what are the practices of children’s online participation?”, was answered by conducting a survey which had 126 participants. Moreover, a deeper understanding of the practices was achieved by conducting interviews with 21 children aged 11 to 15. The third research question, “what are the perceived effects of children’s online participation?”, was answered by conducting and analyzing interviews with 13 children aged 11 to 13, and with 7 parents and 7 teachers. Content analysis was used as an analysis method.
According to the results of the study, children participate in online environments mainly to socialize with others. In the online discussion, the members of the Finnish Children’s Parliament also showed a willingness to participate in and influence global issues, such as children’s well-being in poor countries. In virtual worlds, children play, create virtual persona, communicate with others, perform commercial activities, express themselves, participate in community activities and organize activities. Children, parents and teachers perceived many positive and negative effects in online environments that can be seen as opportunities and risks. The perceived effects included learning and socialization, a sense of community and empowerment, antisocial behavior and the threat to security.

# Outcome

"Children participate in online environments mainly to socialize with others. Children, parents and teachers perceived many positive and negative effects in online environments that can be seen as opportunities and risks. The perceived effects included learning and socialization, a sense of community and empowerment, antisocial behavior and the threat to security"