DIVSI U9-Studie – Kinder in der digitalen Welt

Engl. transl.: DIVSI U9-study – Children in the digital world

# Keywords

* Children
* media usage
* internet
* media literacy

# Details

## Year

2015

## Issued

2015

## Language

German

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## Type

Report and working paper

## Topics

## Sample

First (qualitative) phase: 17 explorative interviews with parents + 3 focus groups with teachers and educators
Second (qualitative) phase: 28 ethnographic in-home interviews with families
Third (quantitative) phase: n = 1.832 parents + n = 1.029 children aged 6 to 8 (representative)

## Implications For Parents About

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

## Implications For Educators About

Digital citizenship

# Abstract

Are children allowed to access the internet (unsupervised)? Should parents let their children go on the internet at all, let alone guide them there? If yes - at what age? For how long? And: What are children actually doing on the internet?

Questions of this kind are the focus of current public discussion. The DIVSI U9 study presented here provides scientifically substantiated answers to these questions. The study focuses on children between 3 and 8 years of age. It thus offers a consistent supplement to the findings from our U25 study, which researched the behaviour of 9 to 24-year-olds in the digital world and their attitudes towards it.

The distinctive feature of this study is that children got a chance to speak. It was not just parents, educators and teachers who were interviewed. The study was conducted in cooperation with experts from the renowned SINUS Institute in Heidelberg.

We wanted to know,

...if, when and how children come into contact with digital media and the internet,
...who accompanies them,
...what skills they acquire and what skills they need,
...what role parents, but also people and institutions outside the family, play,
...what importance parents, educators and teachers attribute to the internet for the children's future and
...what opportunities and risks are perceived.

Perhaps the most important finding is that the question of "whether" has been settled in practice and is out of touch with reality. Children already move independently in the digital world. Around 1.2 million 3- to 8-year-olds are regularly online. Children who cannot read and write yet recognise corresponding symbols that enable them to call up web offers.

In general, it can be said that almost all children have a fundamental interest in digital media. Differences in income do not influence whether children use game consoles, smartphones and computers or laptops.

The DIVSI U9 study provides a variety of facts that can provide new perspectives and approaches for the development of appropriate measures.

# Outcome

Main results:
- "For young children, the internet is already gaining relevant significance in their everyday life. Even the youngest children are occasionally online; internet use intensifies rapidly from then on.
- The digital equipment of children and their access to digital media and the internet are - despite enormous income differences of the parents - not a question of money.
- Equal conditions are only necessary, but not sufficient conditions for internet access. Whether children are (allowed to) go online at all depends on the parents' digital environment, i.e. their level of digitalisation and their attitude towards digital media.
- How children interact with digital media in practice and what they do on the internet differs above all per their parents' level of formal education.
- The vast majority of parents (65 per cent) perceive opportunities in the use of digital media and the internet for their children, especially when it comes to ensuring their social participation.
- From the parents' point of view, the risks of the internet outweigh the perceived opportunities. Two-thirds of the parents of 3- to 8-year-olds forbid their children to go online.
- For parents, security issues in the context of the Internet play an increasingly important role as children get older. However, the use of concrete security measures does not increase proportionally.
- When it comes to teaching children how to use the internet competently, parents see themselves as the main responsible parties. Nevertheless, they show uncertainty when it comes to concrete challenges and (educational) decisions in the digitalised everyday life of the family." (DIVSI 2015, 16-18; translated by the coder)