Children’s experiences with cyberhate

# Details

## DOI

10.21953/lse.zenkg9xw6pua

## Issued

2020

## Language

English

## Authors

Macháčková H.;Blaya C.;Bedrošová M.;Smahel D.;Staksrud E.

## Type

Short report

## Topics

## Sample

This sample consists of children aged 11-17 who use the internet.

The data comes from 9,459 children with the following distribution: Czech Republic
(n = 2,368, 51% girls); Finland, (n = 763, 51% girls); Flanders (n = 1,146, 53% girls); France
(n = 759, 44% girls); Italy (n = 707, 48% girls); Lithuania (n = 551, 46% girls); Norway
(n = 765, 47% girls); Poland (n = 928, 54% girls); Romania (n = 772, 51% girls); and
Slovakia (n = 700, 52% girls)

# Abstract

We present the findings about cyberhate experiences among 11 to 17 year olds from 10
European countries: Czech Republic, Finland, Flanders, France, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. We investigated cyberhate exposure, which is the experience of encountering hateful content online but not necessarily feeling victimized by it. We revealed that:
There are large differences in the exposure to cyberhate among countries.
There are also differences in the frequency of the exposure to cyberhate.
The differences between boys and girls in the cyberhate exposure are not consistent across
countries.
In all countries, older children are more often exposed to cyberhate than younger children.

We also focused on cyberhate victimization, which is when people are and feel targeted by hateful content online. We found that:
Cyberhate victimization is much less prevalent than exposure to cyberhate content.
There are no gender differences in cyberhate victimization in most of countries.
The differences between age groups are also quite small for cyberhate victimization.

Finally, we investigated cyberhate aggression, which is when people create, post, or disseminate hateful content online. We found that:
Cyberhate aggression is less prevalent than cyberhate victimization.
There are only small gender differences in cyberhate aggression.
In Norway, cyberhate aggression only very slightly increases with age. On the other hand, in
Romania, slightly more younger children than older children reported that they acted as
cyberhate aggressors.

# Outcome

Encountering hateful content online is common among children. "In our project, between 21% (France) and 59% (Czech Republic) of children reported that they have been exposed to some hateful content on the internet" (Machackova et al., 2020, 8). There is a consistent pattern across all countries where older children report such exposure more frequently than younger children. Cyberhate exposure is not strongly related to gender.

The findings show that cyberhate victimization affects a smaller portion of children than exposure, ranging from 3% (Italy) to 13% (Poland). "Gender differences are small, with boys
and girls differing by less than 4 percentage points. In Poland and Romania, slightly more boys reported they had been exposed to some hateful content online" (Machackova et al., 2020, 14). In majority of the countries there were no significant differences related to age. However, in Poland, older children are more likely to report cyberhate victimization than younger children.

As for cyberhate aggression, "Across all countries, 8% or less children reported sending these kinds of messages or comments" (Machackova et al., 2020, 18). There are no large gender differences, any difference should be interpreted with caution due to the low prevalence of the phenomenon. As for age differences, all differences between younger and older children are less than 5%.