Млади у свету интернета

Engl. transl.: Youth in the world of the Internet

# Keywords

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* opportunity and risks

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## Sample

3,786 students, 3,078 parents, and 1,379 teachers
17 primary schools and 17 secondary schools on the territory of Serbia. The sample is random, stratified by region (Belgrade, Sumadija and Western Serbia, Southern and Eastern Serbia, Vojvodina), size of town/village (over 100 000, between 50 000 and 100 000, between 20 000 and 50 000 and below 20 000), and type of school (primary schools, and general and vocational secondary schools). Three age groups of students were covered: students attending the 4th form of primary school (mostly aged 10), students of the 6th-8th forms of primary school (aged 12-14), and students of the 2nd-4th form of secondary school (aged 16-18).

## Implications For Parents About

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Industry

# Abstract

T he holders of this research are the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, UNICEF Office in Serbia, and Telenor. The research was conducted by the expert team from the Institute
of psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. The research is part of the project “Stop Digital Violence“
implemented by these partners, initiated within the programme “School Without Violence – Towards a Safe and Enabling
Environment for Children“.
The research was conducted during the month of November 2012, in 17 primary schools and 17 secondary schools on the
territory of Serbia. The sample is random, stratified by region (Belgrade, Sumadija and Western Serbia, Southern and Eastern
Serbia, Vojvodina), size of town/village (over 100 000, between 50 000 and 100 000, between 20 000 and 50 000 and below
20 000), and type of school (primary schools, and general and vocational secondary schools). Three age groups of students
were covered: students attending the 4th form of primary school (mostly aged 10), students of the 6th-8th forms of primary
school (aged 12-14), and students of the 2nd-4th form of secondary school (aged 16-18). The research was conducted in the
form of a poll.
There was a total of 3,786 students, 3,078 parents, and 1,379 teachers polled. For 2,897 students we also had the data
provided by a parent, and so we were able to compare these students’ replies with their parents’ replies.
The questions posed within the questionnaires are classified into three thematic sections: the first section refers to the
availability and utilisation of digital technologies, the second to risks, while the third section questions focus on digital
violence: on the prevalence and characteristics of various forms of digital violence and on the reactions to digital violence.
The final versions of the questionnaires for students were created after a trial test and discussions with students.
The questionnaires were anonymous. Students and teachers filled out the questionnaires at school, while some parents
completed the questionnaires on school premises and others at home.
The results of this research show that the utilisation of digital devices and the Internet is widespread among students in
Serbia, as well as that the availability and frequency of this utilisation increases as students grow older. While in the 4th form
of primary school 84% of students have mobile phones, 94% of senior primary school students own mobile phones, and in
secondary schools only 1% of students did not have them. Over 90% of students from the sample use computers, whereas
60% of them own computers. Among the students polled, the Internet is not used by 17% of students in the 4th form, 6.5%
of senior primary school students, and 3% of secondary school students. There are no significant differences in the Internet
use between boys and girls, regardless of their ages. Children of the youngest age from smaller places use the Internet
somewhat more rarely than children from larger places, but this difference does not exist among children of older ages.
Therefore, one may say that in this case the Internet does not create a “digital gap“ between children from smaller and from
larger places, but it gradually levels the differences related to the place size as children grow up.
Student activities on the Internet may be classified into three groups: finding information, fun, and communication. Students
usually use the Internet to visit social networks (every day or almost every day 69% of senior primary school students and
81% of secondary school students), and then to watch videos, series, and films (every day or almost every day 50% of senior
primary school students and 62% of secondary school students), and to surf the Internet (every day or almost every day
35% of senior primary school students and 49% of secondary school students). The majority of students of the 4th form
of primary school use the Internet to play video games (95% of students), while watching videos, series, and films is in
the second place (85% of students). The following Internet activities are practiced by the smallest percentage of students:
reading and writing blogs, visiting forums, and exchanging emails.
The ranking order of frequency of certain activities, obtained based on replies given by students, highly correlate to the
ranking order obtained based on parents’ assessments. Teachers’ assessments were less accurate and depended on the
computer knowledge of individual teachers: those who have better computer skills provided better assessments. As for
the frequency of certain types of activities, parents consistently underrated the frequency of all the child’s activities on the
Internet, whether related to education, fun, or communication, while teachers overrated the relative frequency of playing
video games, and underrated the relative frequency of surfing and studying.
When it comes to students’ exposure to risks on the Internet, 62% of senior primary school students and 84% of secondary
school students were exposed at least once to an Internet risk in the past year. The basic forms of risky behaviour are
sharing personal data, communication (through messages or in chat rooms), and meeting strangers in person. The most
frequent risky behaviour in both age groups was accepting friendship invitations from strangers on social networks (43%
of senior primary school students and 71% of secondary school students). More than one fourth of senior primary school
students (28%) and more than half of secondary school students (56%) stated that once or several times in the past year they
communicated with strangers in chat rooms, and some of them even accepted to meet in real life persons they met online
(6% of senior primary school students and 15% of secondary school students).
Among the students polled, the number of those who stated that they had exposed their peers to some form of Internet
risk is much smaller (between 10% and 15% -the number of these students is somewhat higher among primary school
students than among secondary school students). It was usually a question of hiding the identity when communicating
online, opening and using someone else’s account or profile on a social network without the consent of its owner, posting
photos or videos, and insulting comments.
The exposure to risks is directly linked with the time spent on the Internet. Boys are more often involved in risky communication
than girls (they expose themselves and others to risks more frequently). There was a high correlation between risky behaviour
and exposure to digital violence (r=0.40). Older students and girls are more interested in getting the information on online
risks and manners of protection than younger students and boys. Students prone to risky behaviour are also more prone to
expose others to risks. Students who are more prone to risky behaviour are also more prone to digital violence.
Just like the frequency of utilisation digital devices and the frequency of risky behaviour increase with age, the frequency
of digital violence and the number of students involved in it are also increased in the same way, and online bullying is more
and more dominant compared to bullying by mobile phone calls and texting. In the past year, one fifth of students of the
4th form of primary school was exposed at least once to digital violence (19% of them were victims of violence over mobile
phones, and 12% of them were victims of online violence). One third of senior primary school students experienced at least
once some form of digital violence (32% of them over mobile phones, and 39% online). Among secondary school students,
there are even more of those (as much as two thirds of them) who experienced at least once some form of digital violence
(42% were harassed by mobile phones, and 56% online).
Half of the total number of students who said they had experienced digital harassment later state that such behaviour did
not upset them at all. Such experiences, in our opinion, don’t cease to be cases og digital violence, because the students
recognize the one’s intent to hurt them, even this intent was unsuccessful. In the majority of cases, students know who
bullied them – these are usually their peers, but the number of those attending their school and the number of those who
do not is almost the same.
In situations when students are victims of digital violence, they usually ask their peers for help, and then their parents (usually
junior students), while they address their teachers very rarely (only 1% of students).
Students are more willing to admit to having been victims of digital harassment then to harassing others. The fact that they
have harassed others by means of digital media was admitted by 10% of students of the 4th form, 28% of senior primary
school students, and 33% of secondary school students. Boys and students who are less successful at school were somewhat
more likely to digitally harass others.
It has been established that there is a significant link between victimisation and bullying, as well as the involvement in
digital violence and the involvement in classic forms of violence. Students who were exposed to digital violence were at the
same time more likely to be digitally violent themselves (r=0.42 at the youngest age and r=0.49 at older ages) (because of
the sample size, all correlations greater than 0.05 were statisticlaly significant at the lavel of 0.01). Also, there was a strong link between traditional and digital violence. Children who were victims of traditional violence were also victims of digital
violence more often (r=0.22 at the youngest age and r=0.31 at older ages), just like children prone to traditional violence
were also digitally violent more frequently (r=0.36 at the youngest age and r=0.33 at older ages).
Among the students polled, there were also those who were witnesses of digital violence (17% of students of the 4th form of
primary school, 23% of senior primary school students, and 30% of secondary school students). In such situations, students
behave differently: some show peer solidarity (they teach victims how to protect themselves digitally, they advise them to
report cases of violence to their parents, they offer support and understanding), some are passive observers (do not want or
do not know how to help), and others oppose attackers and protect victims in an unconstructive way (using threats, physical
force, etc).
Almost two thirds of the students polled state that their parents have poor computer and Internet skills compared to their
children (children from other European countries assess that their parents’ competencies are better), and therefore they do
not see them as partners in digital communication. Almost to half of the students polled (more often to girls than to boys)
parents impose rules of Internet use (they limit the time they spend online and the types of their online activities) and apply
the technical measures of protection, while the other half of the students (at least as far as their parents are concerned) have
unlimited online time and do not get any advice on the way they should use the Internet. However, according to the results
of this research, harassing of others is linked to the parental monitoring, but this link is weak.
As for adult digital competencies, parental self-assessments usually match their children’s assessments. As much as 40% of
parents assess themselves as digitally incompetent (14% of them do not use computers or the Internet, 25% of them know
only some basic things). Approximately the same number of parents is insufficiently informed about the problem of digital
violence. However, 71% of parents wish to be more informed about digital violence by the school.
Compared to the parental ones, teachers’ digital competencies are higher (5% of them do not use computers or the Internet,
23% of them have basic skills), but this is not the case when it comes to being informed about digital violence.
Both the parents and the teachers believe that the school does not do enough to prevent digital violence and that one of
the measures should be to introduce clearer rules of Internet and mobile phone use in the school environment (almost two
thirds of the teachers supports the prevention of mobile phone use at school). Both the parents and the teachers agree in
their assessments of the importance of the role of the school in the prevention and solving of the problem of digital violence,
and also in the attitude that the school alone cannot do much regarding this issue, but that it is necessary to coordinate the
activities of all the participants in the education process.

# Outcome

"The results of this research show that the utilisation of digital devices and the Internet is widespread among students in Serbia, as well as that the availability and frequency of this utilisation increases as students grow older. Student activities on the Internet may be classified into three groups: finding information, fun, and communication.
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