Estonian youth in the virtual opinion space

# Details

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English

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Report and working paper

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## Topics

## Sample

In 2010 and 2018, within the framework of the EU Kids Online project, 1,000 internet users aged 9 to 16 (9 to 17 in 2018) participated in a survey. Additionally, the publication relies on focus group interviews (n=4) with 15-18-year-old young people (n=20). Furthermore, data from CATCH-EyoU project (15- to 30-year-old Estonian respondents, n=1,002) was also used.

## Implications For Policy Makers About

# Abstract

Estonian youth are active users of the internet: there is no significant digital stratification among them, their online activities are diverse, and the assessment of their digital skills is good. And yet, the participation of Estonian youth in community life and politics online or through social media is modest. Moreover, at times, young people are critical of the virtual opinion space. Democratic and political participation, in its narrow and traditional sense, does not attract young people and is not made any more attractive by the virtual opinion space. Instead, they are willing to contribute and participate in areas of activity close to their hearts, for example, as volunteers.

# Outcome

"The increase in internet usage due to the spread of smart phones has not led to the expected increase in digital participation; the data also do not indicate any expected growth in the near future." (Kalmus Siibak, 2020). "Generally, Estonian youth assess their digital competence as being good, but they prefer to use the digital space for interaction and entertainment rather than as an arena for social debate." (Kalmus Siibak, 2020). "Young people’s activity is partially inhibited by the lack of a polite and reasoned communication culture and the limited societal impact of digital participation." (Kalmus Siibak, 2020). "At the same time, young people often feel that it is more important to be involved in real-life citizens’ initiatives; for instance, participating in volunteer actions that address their interests." (Kalmus Siibak, 2020).