The Internet of Toys: A Report on Media and Social Discourses around Young Children and IoToys

# Details

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## Authors

Mascheroni G.;Holloway D.

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## Topics

* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Risks and harms
* Online safety and policy regulation

## Sample

203 commentaries and 47 advertisements

## Implications For Stakeholders About

## Other Stakeholder Implication

Advertisers

# Abstract

# Outcome

"The most frequent type of toys mentioned during the 2016 Christmas season were ‘app-enabled mechanical toys’ (e.g. drones, toy cars and robots) that figured in almost half of the articles, followed by ‘toys based on voice and/or image recognition’ (mentioned in 46 per cent of the articles) and ‘screenless smart toys for younger children’ that appeared in 13 per cent of the articles... The less represented types were ‘Augmented Reality head-mounted displays’ (mentioned in just one article) and ‘health-tracking toys or wearables’ and ‘puzzle and building games’ (each of these types being mentioned in 7 per cent of the articles)." (Velicu Lampert, 2017; p. 15).
"In particular, negatively framed toys were those based on voice and/or image recognition... 79 per cent of the articles in which they were mentioned having a negative tone, 8 per cent a mixed tone, and only 10 per cent a positive tone." (Velicu Lampert, 2017; pp.15-16).
"These findings are not surprising as the main news over the collection period was triggered by the #toyfail campaign of the Norwegian Consumer Council, in which My Friend Cayla played the main role." (Velicu Lampert, 2017; p.16).
"Among the toys that were framed most positively in commentaries were the so-called ‘toys-to-life’ (e.g. Skylander figures or Lego Dimensions). Most of the articles covering this kind of toy have an overall positive (56,5%) or mixed tone (26%). ‘Educational’ smart toys, like ‘puzzle and building games’ (e.g. Osmo and Lego Fusion), were also mentioned in
articles with an overall positive (43%) or mixed (28.6%) tone. In 14% of the articles, this toy category was presented in a negative or neutral tone." (Velicu Lampert, 2017; p. 17).
"Among the toys clustered into the “Other newer Internet-connected toys” category, six out of nine were mentioned in articles with an overall positive tone, two in articles with a negative tone and one in an article with mixed tonality. These toys included a haptic response soft toy which gave hugs and a soft toy with a screen-based face with which children can play games and/or interact with the toy." (Velicu Lampert, 2017; p. 18). "Ninety per cent of the articles on ‘toys based on voice and/or image recognition’ reported at least one risk, while only 16 per cent of these articles mentioned at least one opportunity. The second type of toys especially associated with risks was ‘health-tracking toys or wearables’: 54 per cent of the articles reported at least one risk, such as radiation from Bluetooth or WiFi connections. The toys that were most associated with opportunities were ‘puzzle and building games’ (79%), and screenless smart toys for younger children (56%). Seven out of nine articles were about ‘other newer Internet-connected toys’ and also clearly linked to having at least one opportunity (78%)." (Velicu Lampert, 2017; p. 18).
"The analysis shows that the coverage of risks overall (not merely privacy), as compared to the coverage of opportunities, was slightly more with a total of 101 (50% of 202 stories) than opportunities with a total of 94 (47%)." (Holloway, Milosevic Jorge, 2017; p. 28).
This research "reveals that the most interest in Internet-connected toys, (as testified by the number of articles found in the news media, debates or posts on mummy blogs or social media), was observed in Germany (58), Portugal (31), Italy (28), Austria (19), Finland (18), Australia (15), Romania (12), Serbia (6), Lithuania (5), Slovenia (5), Spain (4) and Malta (4)." (Liubiniene Milosevic, 2017; p. 24). "In Lithuania, Malta, Serbia or Slovenia, the media coverage was scarce, and the interest among children for IoToys was also much lower." (Liubiniene Milosevic, 2017; p. 24).