How children (10-18) experienced online risks during the Covid-19 lockdown - Spring 2020

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# Keywords

* corona
* security
* safety

# Details

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## Type

Report and working paper

## Topics

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

## Sample

The target population for this study was children between 10 and 18 years of age and one
of their parents.
The data collection was conducted by the research company VALICON. Respondents were
drawn from the Valicon panel sample and panel samples of their respective partners in
each of the included countries. Based on the VALICON’s existing data (census of the age
of household members), a pre-selection of individuals with children aged between 10 and
18 was made. If the parent respondent had more than one child in the target age group
who was willing to participate in the second half of the survey, parents were advised to
invite the child who would be the next to have their birthday to participate.

## Implications For Parents About

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Creating a safe environment for children online

## Implications For Stakeholders About

# Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic impacted the lives of most children in Europe dramatically. The lockdown affecting most European countries in spring 2020 saw the sudden shift of most children's activities into the digital world. Since then, children's schooling, leisure time, social contacts, home life have mostly been conducted at home via digital media. Embracing new tools and services and spending several hours per day online changed dramatically daily schedules. The online world offers opportunities and new possibilities, substituting face-to-face interactions. However, it opens the door to well-known online risks (inappropriate content, overuse, cyberbullying, cyberhate, disinformation, misuse of personal data, cyber-risks, etc.) This report provides a snapshot of how children across Europe perceived and experienced different known online risks during the Covid-19 spring lockdown in eleven countries, and which steps parents and children took to mitigate and cope with these risks. In particular, changes that occurred in children’s online risk experiences during the Covid-lockdown, compared to the situation before the crisis, were identified.

# Outcome

Disinformation is the experience that children felt encountering and reported the
most (75%) and during lockdown, more than a third (37%) felt an increase of that
experience.
● Hate-speech is the second risk that children most reported (60%) and more than
a quarter (28%) reported to have seen an increase of hate messages that attack
certain groups or individuals (e.g people of different colour, religion, nationality or
sexuality)
● Violent or gory content follows, with more than half of children (55%) reporting
to have already seen gory or violent images online such as hurting other people or
animals, for example. A quarter of children (21%) stated a noticeable increase of
this type of experience during the lockdown compared to the previous period.
● Self-harm content shows lower figures. Nearly half of children (45%) declared
having already seen people talk about or show ways for physically harming or
hurting themselves. Nearly a fifth (18%) reported an increase of this type of
experience during lockdown.
● The cybersecurity risk of using a device that suffered from a virus or a
spyware has been relayed by nearly half of the young users (44%), a sixth (14%)
noticed an increase of the phenomenon during lockdown.
● The use of personal data in a way respondents did not like, the misuse of personal
passwords, the use of personal information with hurtful consequences were
declared as a personal experience by nearly a third of the respondents (respectively
29%, 29% and 27%). More than 1 out of ten children reported an increase of this
experience during the lockdown (respectively 13%, 13% and 12%)