Zero to Eight: Young children and their internet use

# Details

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## Language

English

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Report and working paper

## Topics

* Social mediation
* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Risks and harms
* Learning
* Literacy and skills

## Sample

As a major part of its activities, EU Kids Online conducted a face-to-face, in home survey during 2010 of 25,000 9-16 year old internet users and their parents in 25 countries, using a stratified random sample and selfcompletion methods for sensitive questions

## Implications For Parents About

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Creating a safe environment for children online

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

EU Kids Online has spent seven years investigating 9-16 year olds’ engagement with the internet, focusing on the benefits and risks of children’s internet use. While this meant examining the experiences of much younger children than had been researched before EU Kids Online began its work in 2006, there is now a critical need for information about the internet-related behaviours of 0-8 year olds. EU Kids Online’s research shows that children are now going online at a younger and younger age, and that young children’s “lack of technical, critical and social skills may pose [a greater] risk” (Livingstone et al, 2011, p. 3).

This report critically reviews recent research to understand the internet use, and emerging policy priorities, regarding children from birth to eight years old. Key findings are as follows:
-Over the last five to six years there has been a substantial increase in internet usage by children under nine years old.
-Children under nine years old enjoy a variety of online activities, including watching videos, playing games searching for information, doing their homework and socialising within children’s virtual worlds. The range of activities increases with age.
-Video sharing sites are popular with children in this age group and are one of the first sites very young children visit.
-There is an emerging trend for very young children (toddlers and pre-schoolers) to use internet connected devices, especially touchscreen tablets and smartphones.

# Outcome

-"The one thing we know for sure about 0-8 year olds’ internet use is that children in this age group are increasingly going online" (Holloway, Green Livingstone, 2013, p. 25)
-Devices, such as smartphones and tablets are baby and toddler-friendly.
-"Contemporary parents seem to see value in allowing younger children to use digital technologies, which is why internet use in the 0-8 age group is growing so rapidly" (Holloway, Green Livingstone, 2013, p. 25)
-While children this age (up to 8) are known to play games online, they are also completing their homework, watching video clips, chatting with friends and using social network sites
-"It has not been established that children under nine years old have the capacity to engage with the internet in a safe and beneficial manner in all circumstances, especially when it comes to this age group socialising online, either within ageappropriate virtual worlds or as
underaged participants in sites intended for teenagers and adults (Facebook, YouTube etc)" (Holloway, Green Livingstone, 2013, p. 4)