



**European Research on Cultural, Contextual and Risk Issues
in Children's Safe Use of the Internet and New Media (2006-2009)**

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New Project Looking at Children's Experiences, Risks and Opportunities Online



EU Kids Online, a project funded by the EC Safer Internet plus Programme, began work at the end of June. This thematic network, consisting of key researchers from 18 countries, will examine ongoing and new research being carried out across different member states into how children and young people are using the internet and other online technologies.

This three-year collaboration aims to identify comparable research findings across Europe to evaluate the social, cultural and regulatory influences affecting both risks and children's and parents' responses to them. It will chart available data, highlight research gaps and identify factors that shape the research capability of European research institutions. Finally, it will examine methodological issues relating to cross-cultural analysis in relation to the study of children's online experiences in order to develop a 'best practice guide' for future research.

Background



As the Internet and new online technologies are becoming



embedded in everyday life, pressing questions arise regarding their social implications and consequences. Children, young people and their families tend to be in the vanguard of new media adoption, benefiting from early take-up of new opportunities afforded by the Internet, mobile and broadband content, online games, peer-to-peer technologies, and so forth. However, they also encounter a range of risky or negative experiences for which they may be unprepared. These risks, the everyday contexts in which they occur, and the ways in which they are being addressed, are all subject to continual change.

To guide the development of a flexible policy framework and develop the academic agenda in this field, a rigorous, updated, context-sensitive research base is vital. The EU Kids Online project examines research carried out in 18 Member States into how people, especially children and young people, use new media. In this three-year collaboration, researchers across a diverse range of countries will collaborate, through meetings, networking and dissemination activities, to identify, compare and evaluate the available evidence.

Key questions

Key questions include:

- What research exists, is ongoing or, crucially, is still needed?
- What risks exist, for which technologies, and in relation to which (sub)populations?
- How do social, cultural and regulatory influences affect the incidence and experience of, and the responses to, different risks?
- Further, in accounting for current and ongoing research, and anticipating future research, what factors shape the research capability of European research institutions and networks?

The aim is to identify comparable research findings across Member States on the basis of which recommendations for child safety, media literacy and

awareness can be formulated.

An invitation

To be sure of identifying all relevant research findings – especially for ongoing and new research, the project members warmly invite communications from the wider community of policy-makers, practitioners and researchers in order to achieve this goal.

Charting available research

The EU Kids Online network has established an electronic repository for all European studies in this field. This searchable database, providing summary information about empirical studies, will provide a unique resource for researchers, practitioners and policy-makers working in this area. As it develops, we will be inviting people involved in new research to inform us of studies in which they are involved. At the end of the project, we will seek ways of maintaining this resource in the longer term.

Bibliography

Amongst our other plans, we have begun a bibliography of key references in this field – see the network website. Although the project brings together participants who are highly knowledgeable in their fields, it is vital that you - our audience - help us in this process, by drawing attention to any references we may have missed. This is all the more important because the references, unlike the repository, also cover publications beyond Europe.

Website and alerts

Our website, <http://www.eukidsonline.net/> will continue to develop throughout the course of the project as we add more resources. It contains information about the national contacts for EU Kids Online within each participating country, as well as links to other relevant projects and initiatives, details of our main work packages, and a list of planned deliverables. At the end of the three year project, we will host a major international conference to report our findings. In the meantime, we will keep you up to date with our regular 6-monthly electronic alerts providing updates of our progress – of which this is the first.

Update

You received this first alert because you have been in touch with us, because we know of your work, or because you have been recommended to us. If you are interested in receiving further alerts, can you register on our website – it is a very quick process. Alternatively, email Panayiota Tsatsou at P.Tsatsou@lse.ac.uk.

Please feel free to forward this message to other who may be interested. Anyone who wishes to be added to the list should email Panayiota Tsatsou at P.Tsatsou@lse.ac.uk.

And please tell us about any research, surveys or events we should be interested in! Thank you.

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