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EU Kids Online: Project well underway

Since our first newsletter in September 2006, the 18 teams collaborating in EU Kids Online have worked to identify new and recent empirical research projects conducted in Europe regarding children's experiences, risks and opportunities online. See our project [flyer](#) and [website](#) for more information.



The website includes our searchable online data [repository](#) which contains information about over 200 separate research projects. To discover what empirical research has been conducted in this field, please visit the repository.

Based on the projects indexed in the repository, the EU Kids Online network is currently drafting three reports for September – more information below.

Network members have been active in establishing national advisory boards to support EU Kids Online, presenting research at conferences and seminars and, most important, designing and conducting new and much-needed research in this field. Some of these activities are highlighted below.



To support this work, we reissue our invitation to researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. Do let us know of any relevant research or research-related activities that impact on questions of children and young people's use, risk and safety online, to ensure that our work is as comprehensive and up to date as possible. Please contact us at P.Tsatsou@lse.ac.uk

Three forthcoming reports

D1.1 Data Availability

What research has been conducted already, and what are the key gaps in the evidence base? This report will show that:

- The empirical research available is very uneven across Europe. In some countries, there is little on the Internet in general, while in others, internet access and use has been researched but little is yet known of Internet safety and risk.
- Topical issues change over time (e.g. chatrooms are now receiving less attention, partly because children use them less).
- Moreover, different disciplines in different countries have different research interests and agendas.
- Interestingly, the various risks (i.e. regarding contact, content, commercialism and privacy) receive similar attention across different ages – researchers or funders do not seem to be more worried about some age groups than others.
- Overall, there is less research on younger children, despite the fact that the age of Internet access is falling. Partly, there is more data on older teenagers because they are included in surveys of the general population.

D3.1 Three country comparison

Comparing findings across diverse countries is no easy task. Next year, EU Kids Online will compare findings across all 18 countries in the network. This summer, the network is trialling a comparative framework for just three countries - Poland, Portugal and the UK – in order to develop a robust analysis of all participating countries thereafter.

- This includes the development of a systematic typology of risks, which will then be used also in our other work packages.
- National reports from these three countries, produced for EU Kids Online, reveal that the media coverage of internet risks is very different, with much more popular concern expressed in the UK than in Portugal or Poland and, therefore, correspondingly greater parental awareness of risks, as shown in surveys.
- This in part reflects the considerable activities of NGOs in the UK combined with the

organisational framework provided by the Home Office Task Force for Child Protection on the Internet.

D4.1 Methodological Issues Review

How should research on children, use, risk, safety and online technologies be conducted? What methodological insights are emerging in these overlapping research fields? To inform our Best Practice Guide, to be published in Summer 2008, EU Kids Online is now producing a literature review that discusses key methodological insights, dilemmas and lessons.

- Four intersecting areas are addressed - the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods, specific methodological issues as they relate to children, emerging techniques for researching online technologies, and strategies for addressing the thorny questions that arise when comparing findings across countries.
- Although one outcome will be a classification of methods now being developed for studying the internet, it is clear that most research on children and the internet adapts or uses familiar methods, conducting research offline (e.g. surveys of children) in a traditional manner.
- Equally, although specialised methods have been developed for working with children, it seems that these are little used in current research.

New research on its way

- In the UK, Leslie Haddon is researching British children's use of mobile telephony, including how this is used in conjunction with the Internet, and Sonia Livingstone is interviewing teens about their use of social networking sites.
 - Guest member Professor Dafna Lemish, from Tel Aviv University, will present her latest research findings to the next EU Kids Online workshop in Warsaw in June. She has just completed a survey of Israeli children and teenagers, based on the UK Children Go Online survey.
 - The Portuguese team was invited to join in a representative research project by the regulator, ERC (Communication Regulatory Entity), which is examining access and uses of different media (traditional and on-line) by the Portuguese population, including children and people from social minorities.
 - The Greek representative of EU Kids Online, Dr Lisa Tsaliki, has started planning an online survey of mobile phone use in Greece.
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A quick overview of some of our other activities

- The Bulgarian team participated in a conference on the project “Children in the Net”, thus launching a publicity campaign for safer use of the Internet.
- National advisory panels have been established in Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the UK. These provide useful feedback for the project and help us to maintain a channel with some of the main stakeholders in this field. In some of the other participating countries (e.g. Bulgaria), meetings with individual agencies have taken place as part of the consultation process.
- Uwe Hasebrink, Elisabeth Staksrud and Sonia Livingstone presented research from the [SAFT](#) and [UK Children Go Online](#) projects to a stakeholder event held for the German launch of EU Kids Online, at the University of Hamburg in December 2006.
- EU Kids Online director Sonia Livingstone has presented the EU Kids Online project to several events, including the UK’s National Family and Parenting Institute’s Conference, ‘Happy Families?’, the ESRC E-Society workshop, The Internet in Britain, to the IPPR Conference on Access, Participation and Communication: Young people and the use of new media technologies, and the London E-Safety Conference for Head Teachers and Directors of Children’s Services. See www.eukidsonline.net for presentation slides.
- On March 15, the Dutch team published a new book on the digital generation called *Nieuwe Links in het gezin* (New Links in the family). This involved interviews with 1,500 teenagers and 1,100 parents on digital literacy, online communication and internet safety. The book, and an English summary, is available at www.scp.nl.
- The UK coordinator has advised the EC Safer Internet plus Programme on the design of new qualitative research into children’s online activities in Europe.
- Several members of EU Kids Online have been invited to participate in the forthcoming EU Media Expert Seminar, ‘More trust in contents – the potential of co- and self-regulation in digital media’, to be held in Leipzig in May 2007. Sonia Livingstone’s abstract for the conference is on the [EU Kids Online website](#).

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day, led by [Insafe](#), was held with great success on 6 February 2007. EU

Kids Online participated in Insafe's international blogathon, and arranged supporting activities in several countries. The resulting media coverage was somewhat uneven in different countries, but here are some examples of the interest it provoked:

- In Portugal, several main radios, TV news channels and popular magazines carried interviews with the EU Kids Online representative including, on February 6th, a two hour discussion with key agencies on the most important countrywide radio civic forum.
- In Spain, many of the TV and radio stations began their news broadcasts, mainly regional but also national, with the information from and interviews with the Spanish team of EU Kids Online, providing publicity for the English (www.eukidsonline.net) and Spanish websites (www.ehu.es/eukidsonline) and helping raise awareness of safety issues.
- In Slovenia, journalists from national and other radio stations as well as newspapers interviewed the EU Kids Online representative, and the Slovene press agency published the press release on their website, resulting in coverage for EU Kids Online on TV, radio and in various newspapers and magazines.
- In the UK, interviews about the project appeared in a leading newspaper and a weekly paper aimed at higher education. Safer Internet Day activities received less coverage as in some other countries perhaps because internet safety and risk has already been heavily publicised, while in some other countries this is a new debate.

Update

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