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Child experts warn of internet risks facing very young children

Clear parental guidelines are necessary to protect very young children from the risks of internet use as toddlers and pre-school aged children gain greater access to tablets and smartphones according to a new report released by EU Kids Online today.

The report, prepared at the London School of Economic and Political Science, recommends a number of measures to ensure children under eight years of age can use the internet safely.

These include the development of internet safety education packages for parents, carers and childcare centres, and the integration of default privacy protection on smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices.

“Zero to eight – Young children and their internet use” reviews a range of recent studies showing that children across Europe are going online at a younger and younger age, and argues that their lack of technical, critical and social skills may pose a greater risk than for older children.

“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. There is now a critical need for information about the online behaviour of 0-8 year olds due to the emerging trend of very young children using internet connected devices,” according to “It has not been established that children under

the internet in a safe case involving young children accessing social sites intended

and adults, such as Facebook and YouTube.”

The report recommends greater transparency regarding how data are collected, collated, used and shared via children’s apps, and the provision of opt out choices for parents and children.

It also calls for a review of user consent policies and the responsibilities of online service providers to remove risky information inadvertently posted by children and/or their parents.

For the full report, visit:

http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20%20III/PDFs/Zero_to_eight.pdf

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