

Germany

EU Kids Online has categorised Germany as a ‘low use, low risk’ country. This finding is consistent with the earlier classification based on earlier empirical evidence (see Hasebrink et al. 2009). Lower use of the internet goes along with a comparatively low level of digital skills. Although, according to these results, on average children in Germany use the internet less and encounter less risk than their peers in other European countries, the patterns of social and individual influences on risk and harm are quite the same as in other countries; this means that many of the general recommendations that have been developed on the basis of the European sample also hold for this country.

With regard to specific observations that have been emphasised during the stakeholder meetings in Germany, one aspect is the fact that as a rule parents in Germany overestimate the risk and harm their children experience on the internet. Combined with the low level of digital skills one can conclude that German parents should be encouraged to realise the positive aspects of the internet and to support their children in discovering the opportunities provided by the internet.

Recently the political discourse on safer internet issues in Germany has got an important new platform. In 2010 the Federal Ministry of Families, Seniors, Women, and Youth has initiated a multi-stakeholde