

Romania

Romania is one of the countries with the most time spent online, also one of the countries where children report the fewest internet skills. Intense use, coupled with low levels of skills, is likely to lead to more risky and harmful experiences online. Not surprisingly, Romanian children report high levels of risk of being bullied online and of sending/receiving sexual messages and, subsequently, report high levels of being bothered and upset after these experiences (children at least a bit upset by the experience). Last, Romanian children aged 11-16 also experience above average data misuse.

In terms of handling bad experiences, Romanian children seem rather ill-equipped: they talk little about their harmful experiences, and they tend to adopt passive attitudes in dealing with these experiences more than other children (hoping the problem will go away by itself, stop using the internet).

Also, their risky experiences go unrecognized by their parents for bullying and sending/receiving sexual messages, while for meeting new online contacts offline, Romanian parents report not knowing if their child has gone to such meetings more than most European parents. Both parents and children express the highest need that the parents take more interest in what children do online in order to ensure their internet safety.

As one of the countries with a high use-high risk profile, Romania requires more intense adequate policy approaches: parental awareness of children's risks online needs to be enhanced, appropriate measures should be taken to increase children's self-protection and self-responsibility online, with an emphasis of children developing more digital skills and more effective coping strategies (preferably integrated into the national educational curriculum), that also stress the importance of social support (children being encouraged to talk more about their experiences online). Also, safety awareness centres should work towards disseminating information about the most prominent risks and about effective parental controls and mediation strategies, while also making them available in an easily accessible and user-friendly manner.