

FAQ 11: Is it okay to interview parents as informants on their children?

What's the issue?

income, education, or some combination thereof) and so findings regarding inequalities or exclusion cannot be obtained. The solution is to sample schools in more and less advantaged neighborhoods. Hence, for example, the Mediapro project, which surveyed 9120 9- to 19-year-olds in nine countries, used a stratified sample of schools which researchers conducted a pen-and-paper survey (www.mediapro.org)

A researcher's experience

The SAFT surveys interviewed both children and parents, using the same questions for each. Where children and parents gave fairly similar answers (e.g. 31% of children and 21% of parents said the child did instant messaging), the 'truth' may be taken to lie in between. But where answers were different (e.g. 56% of children but only 8% of parents said the child downloaded music), it was clear that relying on parents to provide reliable information about children was insufficient and misleading. Furthermore, significant findings emerged precisely from these discrepancies. For example, since 64% of children said their parent never sat with them when they went online, while only 11% of parents said they never sat with their child, one can conclude both that children may be 'saving face' by under-reporting how often a parent

child under 17. Thus, not only does this survey of children