



- **12% of European 9-16 year olds say that they have been bothered or upset by something on the internet.** This includes 9% of 9-10 year olds. However, most children do not report being bothered or upset by going online.
- **Risks are not necessarily experienced by children as upsetting or harmful.** For example, **seeing sexual images and receiving sexual messages online** are encountered by one in eight children but they are generally not experienced as harmful except by a few of the children who are exposed to them.
- **By contrast, being bullied online** by receiving nasty or hurtful messages is relatively uncommon, experienced by one in twenty children, but it is the risk most likely to upset children.
- **Further, only 1 in 12 children have met an online contact offline, and also this risk rarely has a harmful consequence, according to children.**
- Boys, especially teenagers, are more exposed to sexual images online, while teenage girls are slightly more likely to receive nasty or hurtful messages online. However, **girls are generally more likely to be upset by the risks they experience.**
- The survey asked about a range of risks, as detailed below. Looking across all these risks, **41% of European 9-16 year olds have encountered one or more of these risks.**
- **Risks increase with age:** 14% of 9-10 year olds have encountered one or more of the risks asked about, rising to 33% of 11-12 year olds, 49% of 13-14 year olds and 63% of 15-16 year olds.

## Pornography

- **14% of 9-16 year olds have in the past 12 months seen images online that are “obviously sexual –**

## Meeting online contacts offline

- The **most common risky activity** reported by children online is communicating with new people not met face-to-face. **30% of European children aged 9-16 who use the internet have communicated in the past with someone they have not met face-to-**



confidence, resilience and **digital citizenship skills among children.**

- **Industry efforts** to support positive content as well as internet safety should be improved. Technical tools to support blocking, reporting, filtering should also be a cornerstone of industry child protection policy with a need to increase awareness of such mechanisms and to improve their accessibility and usability to aid better take up by parents and children.
- **Children** should also be encouraged to assume responsibility for their own safety as much as possible with a focus on empowerment, emphasising responsible behaviour and digital citizenship.
- Since many children do not report encountering the risks asked about, with even fewer having been bothered or upset by their online experiences, future safety policy should target resources and guidance where they are particularly needed – especially for **younger children** who are online. Indeed, a ne(22 Tw,e )T8.46 -1.34 TD.2039 Tw[polic]-840(y fic)-840un iss (22 Tw,



upset by something online in the past year – this

- The main misuse of personal data experienced by UK children is when someone has used their password or pretended to be them (10%). Some have had personal information used in a way they did not like (4%). These percentages are similar to the European average.

## Parental mediation

While 70% of UK 9-16 year olds go online daily or almost daily, the same holds for just 59% of their parents – this breaks down as around 63% of parents of 9-12 year olds and 55% of parents of 13-16 year olds.

### How do UK parents manage their children's internet use?

- Most notably, the survey shows that parents and children agree to a high degree in their accounts of parental mediation.
- Most UK parents talk to their children about what they do on the internet (74%), making this, as in Europe generally, the most popular way to actively mediate children's internet use.
- Parents do considerably more active mediation of younger children's use of the internet – including talking to them, staying nearby, encouraging them or sharing internet use. But one in ten parents (11%) never do any of these things.
- Explaining why websites are good or bad (73%), suggesting how to use the internet safely (71%), and helping when something is difficult to do or find (73%) are all common strategies of parental safety mediation - the UK is near the top of ranking of countries in terms of parents actively mediating their children's safety.
- 87% of UK children say that they are either not allowed to do some of a list of online activities (disclose personal information, upload, download, etc.) or that restrictions apply, and younger children face more restrictions.
- Monitoring strategies are adopted by over half (55%) of UK parents, making this fairly common and yet the least favoured strategy by comparison with positive support, safety guidance or making rules about internet use (as in Europe generally).
- 54% of parents block or filter websites and track the websites visited by the children (46%), according to their children - these findings are far higher than in Europe generally, coming at the top of the country ranking for use of filters.

- Both children and parents consider parental mediation helpful to some degree. Over two thirds of children (74%) say it helps a lot or a little.
- 90% of parents are confident that they can help their child if something that bothers them online.
- However, 56% of children think that parental mediation limits what they do online, 13% saying it limits their activities a lot.
- Three quarters of UK children (74%) do not simply ignore parental mediation, this being above the European average (64%). However, 20% say they ignore their parents' mediation a little and 6% of children say they ignore their parents mediation a lot.
- 23% parents think it likely that their child will experience something that bothers them online in the next six months.
- 14% of children (and 21% of 9-10 year olds) would like their parents to take more of an interest in their internet use, while 45% of parents think that they should do more in relation to their child's internet use.

## Other forms of mediation

### In addition to parents, other sources, including teachers and friends, may support children's internet use and safety.

- 93% of children say their teachers have been involved in at least one of the forms of active mediation asked about. This is substantially higher than the European average of 73%.
- One in ten children who use the internet has received no guidance or advice from their teachers.
- Friends are likely to mediate in a practical way,



service providers (32%), the child's school (28%), websites (22%) and traditional media (18%). In the UK, traditional media appear much less important than in Europe generally (32%).

- One in ten parents (10%) say that they don't want further information on internet safety, especially parents of 15-16 year olds. But the majority would like more.

## Conclusions

**It may be hazarded that the very considerable efforts put into raising awareness and improving safety online for UK children in recent years are bearing fruit.**