Looking forward:
Technological and social change in the lives of European children and young people

Report for the ICT Coalition for Children Online
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BRIEF

- **Digital families** - How do parents balance between protecting children and supporting their digital participation? What help do they need?

- **Digital learning** - How are children and young people learning *through* and *about* technology at home and at school? Do parents and teachers have the skills necessary to support them?

- **Industry** - How might industry help provide tools, services and outreach to support children in safely developing 21st century skills? How can industry partner with families, educators and policy-makers?

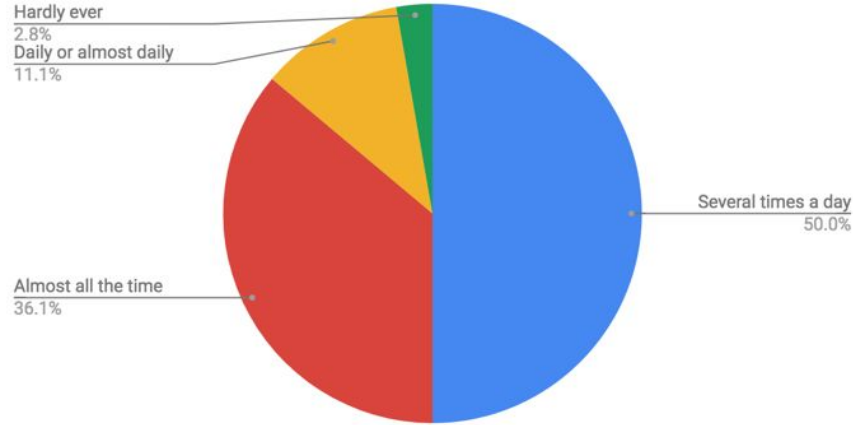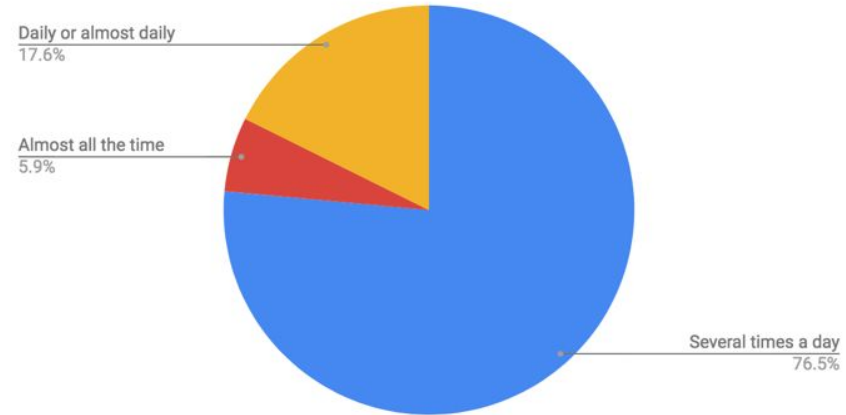# Future

Technology

Policy

Society
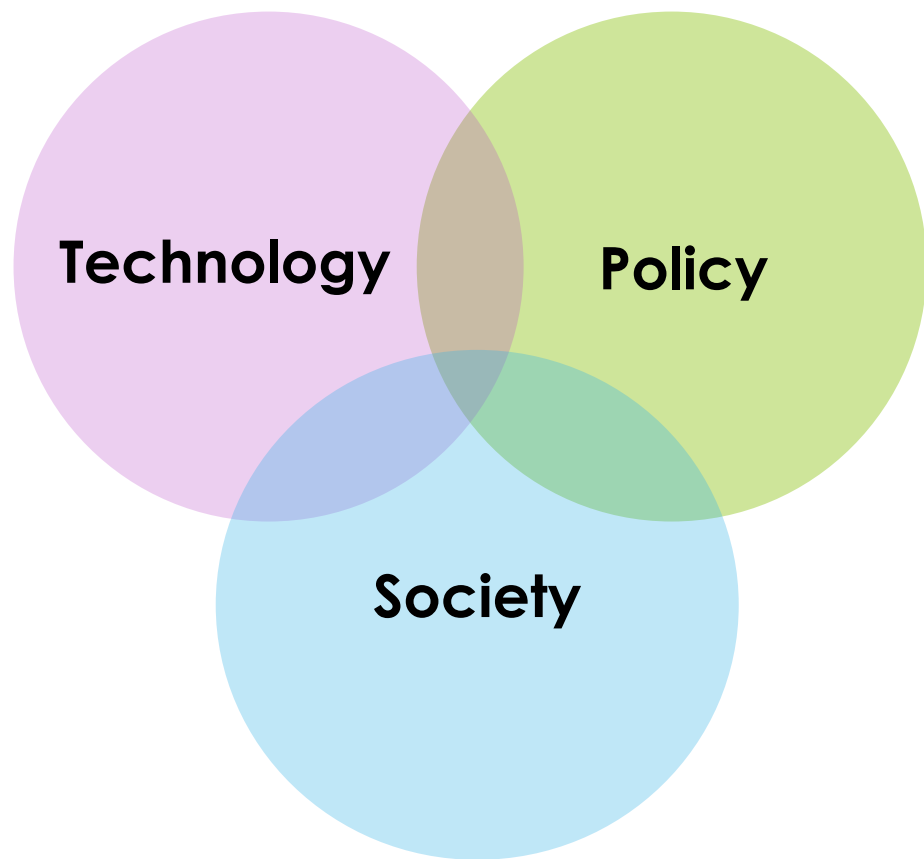
Methods

- **Literature review**
  - European emphasis
- **Stakeholder engagement**
  - Interviews
  - Presentations
- **Focus group discussions**
  - Italy (Giovanna Mascheroni)
  - Bulgaria (Mariya Stoilova)
  - Ireland (Thuy Dinh & Brian O'Neill)
  - Belgium (Verónica Donoso)
  - Germany (Claudia Riesmeyer)

Focus groups

How often do you go on the internet (at any time and on any device) YOUTH

Hardly ever
2.8%

Daily or almost daily
11.1%

Several times a day
50.0%

Almost all the time
36.1%

How often do you go on the internet (at any time and on any device) PARENTS

Daily or almost daily
17.6%

Almost all the time
5.9%

Several times a day
76.5%

Outline

- **Digital families**
  - Convenience
  - Physical health and well-being
  - Leisure
  - Keeping in touch
  - Family rules and support

- **Digital learning**
  - Digital learning at home
  - Digital learning at school

- **Industry**
  - Questions of age
  - Content
  - Positive roles for industry

- **Recommendations**

Recommendations & questions

- **What should… & what might….**

FINDING 1

- Families are and will continue to spend the substantial portion of their leisure time using digital technologies
- Parents (especially of younger children) struggle with identifying positive or educational content and services and with avoiding inappropriate or unsafe material

Finding 1

[I enjoy watching] a [vlogger] who makes videos about Bulgaria, tells about the good things, what sightseeing spots there are. (Boy, Bulgaria)

I used to sit there with him because when he starts, he opens one page, sees that other ... So he follows the thread [of links] to see in a very innocent way, but I realise that there are points that deserve attention. This is why I am always there. With my oldest [I] check, and teach him, explain to him what he is looking for. (Mother, Italy)

[About autoplay] you can turn that off but I don't know how (Mother, Belgium)

Recommendations

1. Provide easy-to-use and find services to help parents, children and educators curate & block content
2. Continued development of tech & human moderation
3. 'Educational' content needs more evaluation/vetting
4. Partnerships with educators, experts and influencers can contribute to discoverability
5. 'Kids' services for older children

FINDING 2

- Children and parents struggle with the amount of time they each spend online and want tools and support to help ensure this time is well spent

Finding 2

There are so many ways to do it. Do you do it by 7pm when the app shuts down? Or do you let the parents set a number of hours per day? Or is it the number of activities? These are some of the things we are working through and trying to get input on as well. (Industry stakeholder)

One is on the Playstation or the computer, the other one is on the laptop and the tablet, mum and dad are on their mobile. (Mother, Bulgaria)

I'm like 'Oh what did I do today? I was basically on my iPad.' And then even when I have to go to bed I'm still on my iPad, so I wish they sometimes would just automatically shut off and be like 'give yourself a rest.' (Boy, Ireland)

Recommendations

1. Transparent research in and outside of industry needed to explore whether tools are meeting their aims (& extent to which they are used)
2. Find new ways of engaging children and young people directly
3. Make guidance and tools more discoverable within products

FINDING 3

- Parents and young people are both excited about and skeptical emerging technologies, including the Internet of Things
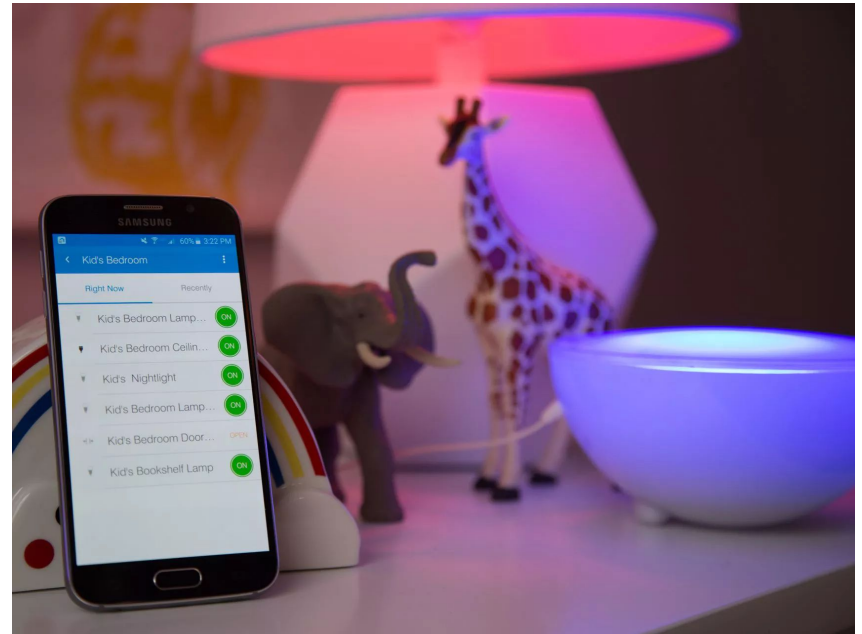
Finding 3

[Smart home devices are] practical and kind of awesome [yet they also] have a microphone in it and hear all that is said. Of course, everything can be used (Girl, Germany)

Does a teenage boy want his devices to be fully connected and registered to a zone registry?... if everyone will see everything that he surfs or his Spotify list? (Industry stakeholder)

Maybe I sound a bit old… [but if] the phone is connected to the coffee pot to make coffee… I'd hate to lose these little things in life, like making coffee. If you become more and more lazy then you lose the beautiful things that fill your day (Boy, Italy)

Recommendations

1. Emerging technologies to be used by children (whether explicitly or implicitly) need to be based on principles of privacy by design
2. Oversight measures need to be implemented for services, platforms & physical devices (including toys) used by children

FINDING 4

- Parents and young people value the ease with which they can communicate using digital technologies, especially the greater freedom and peace-of-mind this can bring
- Yet the ability to be constantly in touch also creates new pressures and anxieties.

Finding 4

In theory, it [the school platform]should facilitate situations, but practically it makes it increasingly difficult… [Parents] have to check the register, otherwise it's useless. Then they blame the teachers... but, sorry, there is the electronic register, you have to look at it! (Teacher, Italy)

It was great like for a little while…. [but] when I disconnected from that for the couple of weeks I missed out on so much over that time… see sometimes [my friends would] forget that like 'oh he's not on Snapchat I better text him about this to make sure he's available for it' and then I'd end up missing it… So it's kind of become an essential thing. I can't ignore it anymore ... but I just don't use it as regularly. (Boy, Ireland)

Recommendations

1. How might new services should disincentivize 'always on' use - establishing features that value time away?
2. What can industry/users do to in terms of evolving social practices?

FINDING 5

- Young people find ways of managing when they have difficult experiences online
- Rarely do they turn to parents, teachers or industry (e.g. reporting inappropriate content or contact) as resources to deal with these difficulties

Finding 5

Sometimes you might be going to your parents to talk to them about getting bullied on Instagram, but they don't understand the platform so they might not be able to help you much... I kind of feel like all parents should be educated to a certain level to be able to be aware and understand what happens on the internet. (Girl, Ireland)

They do nothing, You can report as much as you want but there are too many requests (Girl, Italy)

In abstract it's actually quite easy to have some strong principles. The difficulty is that every piece of content is different… sometimes a video will challenge the whole policy or how it's applied. (Industry stakeholder)

Recommendations

1. Transparency of communication about reporting (including child-friendly reporting tools)
2. Regular promotion and audits of reporting mechanisms
3. Education for parents focused on active/supportive mediation, not just restrictions

FINDING 6

- Industry has been proactive in providing services, resources and programmes to help support children's safety online, from 'parental control' tools to educational outreach
- However, the impact of these initiatives and the uptake of tools are unclear

Finding 6

I tried to use a thing before, OurPact or something like that to stick on my kid's devices so I could monitor it. But I'm quite savvy, and I just couldn't get my head around it, and then it seemed to be doing stuff on my devices that I didn't trust (Father, Ireland)

Our mother... installed an app on my phone without us knowing and now I can no longer use certain apps… It annoys me, I find it exaggerated (Girl, Germany)

We won the Eircom Junior Spiders. We got to visit Google. We got to visit Facebook. You know all those amazing things that suddenly I could just pull my children out of their classroom in Bray and suddenly they could see themselves in the context of the most privileged children in the country (Teacher, Ireland)

Safety by design guidelines

- [Child safety online: A practical guide for providers of social media and interactive services](#) - UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)
- [Industry toolkit for children's online privacy and freedom of expression](#) - UNICEF
- [Designing for children guide: Integrating children's rights & ethics into the design process](#) - developed by a group of children's media researchers and developers
- [Guide for making family-friendly videos on YouTube](#) - YouTube
- [Checklist & concrete criteria for positive content](#) - POSCON
- The [Tech and Play project](#) recommendations for apps that promote play and creativity
- [Toolkit for designing for trust, transparency and control](#) - TTC Labs
- [Ethical OS: A guide to anticipating the future impact of today's technology](#) - the Institute of the Future/Omidyar Network (not child specific)
  - Council of Europe - [Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment](#)

Education initiatives

- [Vodafone's Digital Parenting magazine](#)
- [Orange's SuperCoder scheme](#)
- [Altice Portugal's Comunicar em Segurança](#)
- [Google's Be Internet Awesome](#) Google [Family Link](#) [YouTube](#)
- The BBC has created the [Own It](#) resource
- [Deutsche Telecom - FragFinn.de](#), [TeachToday](#)
- [Facebook launched a Parents Portal](#) Facebook [Digital Literacy Library](#) [Instagram](#)
- [Telenor launched the Nätprat resource](#),
- [Telcom Italia](#) Navigare Sicuri
- Telefonica [Think Big](#) initiative
- Telia's Schools & youth [initiatives](#)
- Many companies provide safety tools and resources for young people and/or parents in their 'safety centre' including [Ask.fm](#), [Club Penguin Island](#), [KPN](#), [Telefonica](#)
- Council of Europe - [Internet Literacy Handbook](#)

Recommendations

1. How might tools move beyond 'control' to enabling approaches?
2. Transparent evaluation of tools in terms of efficacy & impact on family relationships
3. Evaluation of digital literacy interventions that goes beyond short-term outputs (longitudinal, could be coordinated b/t companies to set indicators and create a toolkit)
4. Greater coordination w/in industry (& visibility for existing programmes) to reduce duplication
5. Partnerships to provide expertise, in coordination with NGOs & educators (including SICs to outreach to parents)

FINDING 7

- Only a minority of children are engaging in creative digital opportunities, like producing their own content
- New technologies and practices, like 3D printing, VR or learning to code, are becoming more popular, but unequally accessed
- Teachers report basic challenges, such as lack of connectivity, equipment or training yet some teachers are interested in implementing emerging creative technologies.

Finding 7

There is a lot of resistance towards technology, there's a lot of fear, there's a lot of no confidence and the professional development is not there. So I think that it's just really important that we're aware of there's pockets of highly, highly effective practice taking place and there's other pockets that it's not.
(Teacher, Ireland)

One should promote the digital and, above all, knowledge in Computer Science. Because if you do not continue and do not build up on it, then the students are left behind. You see that in other countries. If you want to gain a foothold in careers of the future, then you have to know how to program.
(Teacher, Germany)

For the last 10 years I have been asking for Wifi at my school, but it is only since this year that we have a room, a place with Wi-Fi at school, but there is only WIFI at that place, nowhere else in the school.
*(Teacher, Belgium)*

e-safety at school

- *"we could all share many anecdotes of Snapchat conversations gone wrong… I could tell you experiences where teachers were taken advantage of and images of teachers and stuff would be distributed by students online, all of that." (Teacher Ireland)*

- *"In my Informatics hours in the 4th, 5th and 6th grade, I try to give as much as possible information about privacy, the consequences of what you do online and everything. But it is only my students. It is limited but they find it very interesting, everyone learns... That's really interesting and important, but I am not a specialist." (Teacher, Belgium)*

Recommendations

1. Centralized resources need to be pursued to mitigate inequality of access, combined w on-going support
2. New tools and services need to be mindful of diversity, including disability
3. Digital literacy interventions need to combine aspects of: eSafey, digital citizenship, critical & media literacy
4. Teachers need positive examples of tech use including BYOD

FINDING 8

- There is considerable confusion about why, in some countries, the adoption of the GDPR has led to a new digital age of consent
- Young people (often with parents' knowledge and support) easily circumvent age restrictions
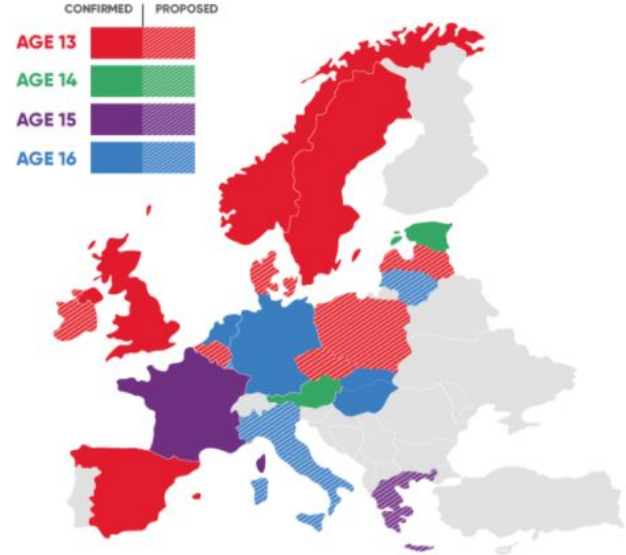
Finding 8

Many make this age limit, but nobody cares. You just change the age, then you use it anyway. That's not really effective (Boy, Germany)

Banning children under sixteen from WhatsApp is exaggerated. First because it simply takes an 'ok' to keep on using it. Also because, if used in the right way, WhatsApp is a good tool. It is not by forbidding the use of WhatsApp that you keep your child safe because then there is all the rest. If they go to www.YouPorn that's far more serious than WhatsApp. (Mother, Italy)

Recommendations

1. Rationale for age restriction needs to be more clearly communicated
2. How might we develop robust mechanisms for age-gating (including parental consent procedures) that are more robust and accessible?

DISCUSSION

Please get in touch with thoughts/comments:

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