

## Children And Internet

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**ABSTRACT:** The nature of children's internet use generates public anxieties which both guide and undermine research, complicating the already challenging study of children within the privacy of the home. The body of empirical work reviewed is still small, but already key questions of academic and policy significance are being addressed regarding the opportunities and dangers of internet use. Such opportunities include communication, identity and participation, and education, learning and literacy; dangers arising from exclusion and the digital divide, and from certain kinds of use relating to inappropriate or undesirable contact, content and commercialism. In each of these domains, research strengths and gaps for future research are identified. The article concludes by noting areas of theoretical consensus and uncertainty framing the research agenda in this field. In this research I have focused on the uses of internet for children, dangers of internet for children and preventive measures to control online crimes. Research also focuses on a set of recommendations for specific areas of research that can further the policy dialog regarding online safety. The study employed a mixed method approach where quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The study provides practical and scientific implications related to raise parents' and students' awareness on internet safety, explaining the role of the various stakeholders involved. Additionally, it explores the parental interest to raise their awareness on internet use and threats, as well as investigating their interest in establishing household environment safety measures in their household and a secure internet system in order to protect their children. As children's experiences worldwide are increasingly informed by their use of digital technologies, the realisation of their rights will depend on both their physical and virtual environments. Their access to, and use of, information, knowledge and resources will depend not just on their level of digital literacy, but also on the availability, safety and quality of the online content. However, the Internet can also be a place where children encounter risks such as unwanted sexual solicitation, bullying and harassment or even inappropriate marketing and advertising. The risks to their privacy from both corporations and governments need to be weighed carefully when data are collected

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from online sources. And finally, rapid change and development of the Internet will mean potentially new work environments and opportunities of which we cannot even conceive today.

**Keywords:** children, internet, digital literacy, stakeholders, sexual solicitation, bullying, harassment.

**Introduction:** The Youth Internet Safety Survey in 2005 found that most children who experience aggressive online solicitations did not mention the solicitations to anyone. CHILDREN AND INTERNET is a self explanatory topic. It defines the uses of internet for children, impact of internet on children, dangers and risks of internet and some preventive policies which were made in order to increase the online security. The three policies mainly deal with preventive measures such as legal measures, national measures, international measures, etc. The study provides practical and scientific implications related to raise parents' and students' awareness on internet safety, explaining the role of the various stakeholders involved. Additionally, it explores the parental interest to raise their awareness on internet use and threats, as well as investigating their interest in establishing household environment safety measures in their household and a secure internet system in order to protect their children. Privacy is a constitutionally protected right which emerges primarily from the guarantee of life and personal liberty in Article 21 of the constitution. Privacy has both positive and negative content. This article doesn't mean that keep your children away from internet, but, it implies how to use internet and guidance or supervision for children's online safety.

**Children And Internet:** Children and Internet, this article identifies and evaluates the emerging research agenda which focuses on children and young people. Today, our daily life is totally survive by technologies. When we talk about 'technology', we are referring to computers, digital cameras, mobile phones, including smart phones and other electronic devices. Mobile phones, which are used by people of today's scenario, are capable of accessing the internet, including social networking sites and chatrooms. Many popular games consoles also allow users to connect to the internet. The internet and mobile phones have become part of our everyday social and working lives and the majority of people have at least one computer at their homes. This advancement of technology offers a wealth of new experiences. But, we have to be aware that this advancement can be used inappropriately by children. Providing a safe environment to children requires an in-depth understanding of the types and prevalence of online risks young internet users face, as well as of the solutions most effective in mitigating these risks.

**Uses Of Internet For Children:** The internet is fast becoming trusted by both children and adults as reliable and accurate source of information. Through the internet, children now have access to an almost endless supply of information and for interaction. Most online services give children resources such as encyclopedia, current event coverages, and access to libraries and other valuable material. Education is the one of the best thing which internet can provide. There are a number of books, reference books, online help canthers, expert views and other study oriented material on the internet that can make the learning process very easier as well as a fun learning experiences.

Financial transaction is the term which is used when there is exchange of money. With the use of financial transactions, your work has become a lot easier. Now, people don't have to stand in queue.

There are various websites which provide the real time update in every field such as business, sports, finance, politics, etc.

**Opportunities For Communication, Identity And Participation:** Although children may find it difficult to articulate the value of the internet's new opportunities to communicate represent children's major interest in going online. Key question for research agenda include:

How are social networks and peer culture changing online communication becomes more commonplace?

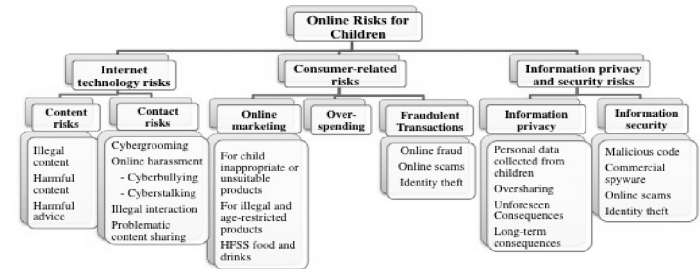
How important and for whom, are forms of identity play or online participation?

How far does online communication sustain local networks or are children developing more distant relationships?

Can the internet support children's creativity in relation to content production?

So far, few projects have examined these questions. One point of consensus is that the popular opposition between online and offline, or virtual and real, communication is inappropriate. Rather, young people integrate on and offline communication to sustain their social networks, moving free between different communication forms. This suggests that most contacts are local rather than distant, though research supportive this claim is largely qualitative. Despite the survey findings of the Home Net Projects, it seems that for all but already-isolated, the internet fosters rather than undermines existing social contacts.

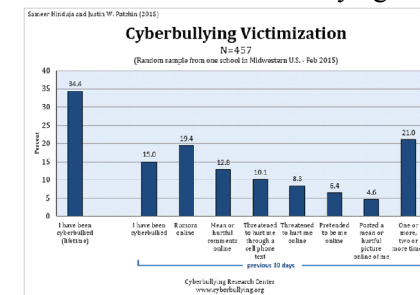
**Dangers Of Intrenet For Children**



The World Wide Web is the greatest invention since the printing press. Nothing else has so radically shaped culture, media, commerce, entertainment and communication. But with these benefits come great dangers all parents should know about.

**Cyberbullying:** In discussions of cyberbullying, repetition implies that the communication is repeated and harm is intentionally inflicted, it is not typically an isolated, one time occurrence. In internet bullying, power imbalance can be conceptualized in a variety of ways. For example, a bully might possess a greater familiarity with the internet than does the victim. The bully is also able to preserve anonymity: physical strength is not necessary to maintain power, as cyber bully is able to shield his or her identity from the victim(s) to prolonged period of time.

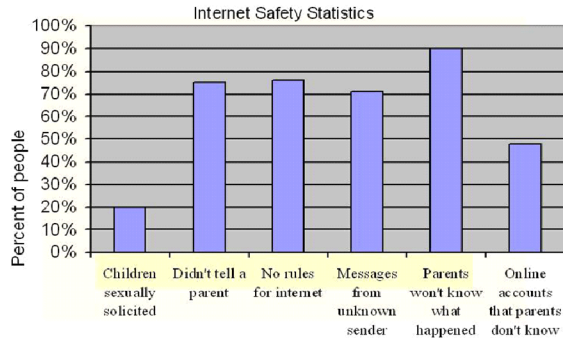
**Prevalence:** Different studies on cyber bullying tend to produce varying statistics. Researchers report figures on the percent of youth who have been victims of cyberbullying that can be as high as 72 percent or as low as 4 percent. While most studies tend to report figures between 6 percent and 30 percent, developing a more longitudinal survey method, based on a more standardized definition of bullying.



**Sexual Solicitation :** Sexual harassment include requests for sexual contact, sexual talk, sending or solicitating sexual photographs, or the disclosure of unwanted sexual information. Unwanted or accidental

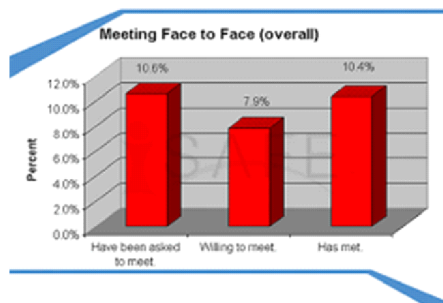
exposure to sexual content refers to any circumstances in which youth are confronted with suggestive content or sexual imagery. It all occurs due to web searches, pop-up-ads, email scams, or when youth unwittingly open problematic sites.

**Prevalence:** According to results from 2005 edition of the YOUTH INTERNET SAFETY SURVEY, 1 in 7 US youth had experienced unwanted solicitations or reported being distressed as a result of online solicitation.



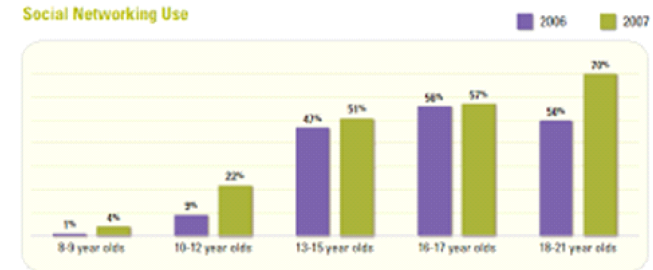
**Predators:** Predator is one who seeks to ensnare our children. The internet is a perfect place to meet new people, but some with malicious intent can use it to ‘befriend’ your child. Often a predator “grooms” a child through flattery, sympathy, and by investigating time in their online relationships. These can further turn into kidnapping.

**Prevalence:** 76 percent of predators are 26 years old or older. 47 percent offenders are 20 years old than their victims. 83 percent of victims who meet their offenders face-to-face willingly went somewhere with them.



**Social Networks:** It redefines privacy. Social networks like facebook is very popular online activity. Parents should be aware of the image their teens are projecting.

**Prevalence:** 40 percent of teens have seen pictures on social networks of their peers getting drunk, passed out, or using drugs, and half of these first saw these pictures when they were 13 years old or younger.



**Protection Of Children Online**

**The three dimensions of policies to protect children online:**The various risks to which children are exposed online raise different policy issues, and most national policies to protect children online are complex: various policies tackle different risks and many initiatives from various stakeholders co-exist at different levels. National policy measures reflect to some extent the classification of risks adopted in this report. The following discussion covers the various dimensions of child protection policy as they are implemented and pursued in most countries:

- i) multi-layered policies comprising direct and indirect policy tools;**
- ii) multi-stakeholder policies related to the various roles and responsibilities of stakeholders;**
- iii) multi-level policy mechanisms at national and international levels.**

**Multi-Layered Policies:** All countries’ approaches blend legislative, self- and co-regulatory, technical, awareness, and educational measures, as well as positive content provision and child safety zones. However, the degree to which countries rely on each of these policy tools varies. It is not at present possible to compare the effectiveness of high-level policies owing to a lack of comparable evidence to make a case for best practices.

**Legal Measures:** Most countries would subscribe to the statement that what is illegal offline should be illegal online and champion a normative approach to child protection online. In such countries, the main challenge is to enhance the compliance with and enforcement of existing instruments rather than adopt additional laws and regulations.

In a majority of countries, regulation of online content is a cornerstone of their national policy framework. It generally applies to content published on the Internet rather than to content passed on via individual data exchange. Content regulation takes a two-pronged approach: a general ban on illegal content and national regulation of child-inappropriate content up to defined age levels. The definitions of illegal and child inappropriate content are subject to national interpretation and reflect cultural and societal values.

The protection of children against consumer-related online risks is to some extent addressed through legal measures related to regulated activities. For example, in many countries online gambling cannot be offered to minors. For online marketing targeting children, countries either tend to regulate certain aspects.

**MULTI-STAKEHOLDER EFFORT:** There is a common understanding that an online child protection policy rests on the commitment and shared responsibilities of all stakeholders. It is therefore essential to identify participants and define their role.

**Governments and Public Authorities:** The adoption of clear policy objectives at the highest government level provides leadership and gives higher visibility to national policies to protect children online. It helps to engage all stakeholders and to facilitate co-ordination of efforts. Many governments have taken up online child protection at the cabinet or ministerial level. Some countries have created new bodies to co-ordinate the activities of public and private stakeholders, such as the United Kingdom Council for Child Internet Safety, or to inform government policy and advice on research projects, such as the Australian Consultative Working Group on Cybersafety. Some countries have set up new bodies, such as the children's rights ombudsman in Poland or the Hungarian Ombudsman for Future Generations, which can supplement but not replace high level government involvement. Other authorities involved include law enforcement, media regulators and classification bodies, specialised public agencies (e.g. the Turkish Internet Regulations Department), communications regulators (e.g. the converged United Kingdom regulator Ofcom), data protection authorities (e.g. Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada) and various governmental departments concerned with culture, education, youth and family. A concerted policy approach requires clear responsibilities and co-ordination among all public bodies involved.

**Children:** Children have a right to freedom of expression and of communication as laid down in Article 13 of the UN Convention on the

Rights of the Child and in countries' constitutions. It is also widely recognised that children differ in age, degree of vulnerability and/or resilience, and that some are more at risk than others. Therefore, it is commonly understood that policies to protect children online must be tailored to their needs, risks and stages of development. In many countries certain educational approaches are adapted to specific age groups and policy makers emphasize that filters such as those deployed in parental controls should therefore be customizable. There are certainly limits to the granularity and individuality that public policy can accommodate. Besides integrating Internet literacy in schools' curricula, little or no information is available on effective strategies for identifying and reaching out to categories of children who are more at risk than others, such as those whose parents cannot play the role expected of them in a policy model based on shared responsibility.

**Parents and Caregivers:** All countries' policies rest to varying degrees on voluntary measures taken by parents and other caregivers to protect children online. All countries acknowledge that parents have a special role and responsibility in the education of their child. Where government intervention in Internet content control and online activities is minimal (e.g. Canada, the United States), the role of parents is even more central. Parents have various means to assist their child and mitigate online risks, such as parental guidance and rules on when and how to use the Internet as well as technical tools such as parental control software.

**Educators and Public Institutions:** The role of educators, social workers and other trainers in children's Internet literacy is generally acknowledged, as is the need to protect children when they use online facilities of public institutions such as schools and libraries. Some countries have introduced Internet safety training for educators and started to include Internet literacy training in teachers' education (e.g. Australia, United Kingdom). In most countries, approved awareness materials and teaching resources are made available to educators (e.g. Australia, New Zealand) and can be used with students. The training of teachers and their access to suitable teaching resources is essential for a successful Internet literacy strategy. Public institutions are often required by law, encouraged or given incentives to adopt technical measures and institutional policies in order to protect children. Many non-profit private organisations work to make the Internet a safer place for children. In some countries these organisations have been instrumental in national multi-stakeholder collaboration. In many European countries national awareness centers have become significant national policy platforms.

### Multi-Level Policies

**National level:** Given the complexities of policy making in the area of protecting children online, some countries have opted for a more holistic policy framework in which national priorities are defined with a view to enhancing policy coherence. Australia's 2008 Cybersafety Plan is a good example of national strategy. It has committed some EUR 81 million over four years, among others to cyber-safety education and awareness-raising activities, law enforcement, and the exploration of a national content filtering scheme expected to become mandatory for Internet service providers. In general, governments already have in place some child protection legislation and other measures. Stocktaking exercises to provide an overview of the various public and private initiatives that protect children online might be useful to inform policy makers. Mapping the various initiatives and stakeholders would also highlight interdependencies, interfaces and feedback mechanisms. Policy development, co-ordination and management need to be sufficiently resourced, including in countries that rely heavily on market mechanisms and parental responsibility. To this end, some governments provide the infrastructure and secretariat for a national steering committee (e.g. the United Kingdom) or fund non-profit organisations (e.g. New Zealand). Better coordination can improve policy performance and create efficiencies which outweigh the initial investment.

**International Co-operation:** Countries generally consider international co-operation essential for protecting children on an inherently global medium. Beyond sharing best practices, international co-operation at the operational level has produced a number of promising initiatives which can serve as models. International co-operation at policy level as fits their mandate, membership and areas of expertise, various international bodies are involved in an international dialogue on the protection of children online, e.g. the ITU's Child Online Protection (COP) Initiative and the Dynamic Coalition for Child Online Safety in the framework of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). Policy frameworks such as that of the Council of Europe on the protection of minors against harmful content and on developing children's media literacy skills have achieved a high degree of policy co-ordination at regional level. Table 2 summarises the main initiatives of international organisations and advances in cross-border co-operation towards the protection of children on the Internet.

### Advice For Parents In Order To Secure Their Children Online

*'Start discussing online safety at an early age'*

*'If you wouldn't do it face to face - Don't do it online*

*'Teach them to beware of strangers bearing gifts'*

*'Never, under any circumstances, browse unaccompanied'*

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*'Educate early and often'*

*'Not just to tell them the rules but also to spend the time'*

*'Become friends and contacts in your child's social media'*

*'Just apply standards you adopt offline to the online world'*

*'Learn about something yourself if you don't know'*

*'Staying safe now goes beyond the old computer security issues'*

### Conclusion:

As the Internet, mobile phones and other digital media provide children and young people with many educational and social benefits it also provides them with risks. In all, for most children, online activity does not lead to harm but when it does parents need to be ready for it. Issues such as online solicitation, cyber-bullying, and identity theft are serious topics that need to be addressed online and offline. Websites such as, Commonsensemedia.org, provide educational programs for parents and families on the impact of digital media. As these issues are becoming more prevalent, school districts have begun providing meetings of how they can monitor children's internet usage. There are plenty of resources out there that parents can educate themselves on to help prevent these issues from happening. Protect your children's safety by becoming educated in these topics.

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