

**SAFER INTERNET  
FOR CHILDREN  
QUALITATIVE STUDY  
IN 29 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES  
NATIONAL ANALYSIS : UNITED KINGDOM**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Directorate-General Information Society and Media  
April 2007**

OPTEM  
74, chemin de la Ferme des Bois  
78950 Gambais – France  
Tel : +33 (0) 134 871 823 – Fax : +33 (0) 134 871 783  
E mail : [optem@optem.fr](mailto:optem@optem.fr)

Andrew Irving Associates  
Lloyds Bank Building  
Muswell Hill Broadway  
LONDON N 10 3RZ  
UNITED KINGDOM

## Table of contents

Introduction	3
Chapter I – Internet and Internet applications	5
I.1 Learning to use the Internet	6
I.2 Intensity of usage	6
I.3 Degree of freedom in using the Internet	7
I.4 Specific Internet applications	8
Chapter II – Mobile phone and mobile phone usage	10
II.1 Mobile phone usage	11
II.2 Degree of freedom in using mobile phones	12
Chapter III – Perceptions of Internet and mobile phone related problems and risks	13
III.1 Spontaneous mentions of problems and risks	14
III.2 Problems and risks related to specific applications	16
Chapter IV – Reactions to the presentation of six categories of problems and risks	18
IV.1 Truthfulness of information found on the Internet	19
IV.2 Potentially shocking contents	20
IV.3 Potentially dangerous contacts	22
IV.4 Bullying	23
IV.5 Deception on free of charge character	24
IV.6 Illegal downloading	25
Chapter V – Risk related information and reporting	26
V.1 Precautions envisaged by children	27
V.2 Ways of reporting envisaged	28
V.3 Attitudes towards information on problems and risks	29
Summary of results	30
Annex I Composition of the groups	34
Annex II Discussion guide	36

## **INTRODUCTION**

❖ **The European Commission** – Directorate-General Information Society and Media - **has commissioned OPTEM and its European partners to carry out a qualitative study on the subject “Safer Internet for Children”<sup>(1)</sup>.**

❖ **This study covers 29 countries** (the 27 Member States, as well as Iceland and Norway) and **it involves children :**

- Boys aged 9 to 10 years
- Girls aged 9 to 10 years
- Boys aged 12 to 14 years
- Girls aged 12 to 14 years

all of whom have the possibility to access the Internet (although not necessarily at their home place) and use it at least once per month.

❖ **It aims at improving knowledge about :**

- **Internet usage by children, as well as mobile phone usage** (by those who own a mobile phone)
- **Their on-line behaviour**
- **Their perceptions of risk and safety related questions**

The results of the study are to be used to contribute to designing the Safer Internet Programme, and to increase the impact of awareness building actions.

❖ The **methodology used is that of group discussions** – with, in each country, four groups of children (one in each of the above categories).

❖ **This report constitutes the national analysis of results of the section of the study conducted in the UK by Andrew Irving Associates, the UK permanent member of the above-mentioned network of partners.**

❖ It includes, in the Annexes

- The composition of the groups
- The discussion guide used by the moderators

(1) Study conducted under the aegis of the Framework Contract Eurobarometer “Qualitative Studies”, set up and managed by Directorate-General Communication A/4.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE INTERNET AND INTERNET APPLICATIONS**

## **I.1 Learning to use the Internet**

- ❖ How children learned to use the internet varied across the sample depending on age, family status and education.
- ❖ Parents taught internet skills to their children in all groups to some degree. However, in the boys' groups there were several who were taught by older siblings already au fait with the internet.
- ❖ Girls and boys 12 to 14 years said they were taught internet skills as part of weekly information and communication technology classes (ICT); they were also regularly allowed to use the internet in classes for coursework research.
- ❖ Girls 9 to 10 years were more likely to claim that their parents taught them how to use the internet. Access to the internet at school was generally limited to viewing teacher demonstrations and optional computer clubs.
- ❖ In contrast, a small majority of boys 9 to 10 years claimed to teach themselves. One claimed to have taught his parents how to use the internet.
- ❖ After being taught the internet basics the majority of girls 9 to 10 said they learnt more advanced techniques by themselves.

*“My mum just told me that the ‘E’ thingummybob is the internet and then I just found it out by myself.” (Girls 9 to 10)*

*“My dad just showed me how to use a computer but otherwise I found everything out for myself.” (Boys 9 to 10)*

## **I.2 Intensity of usage**

- ❖ Across the sample, most respondents said they used the internet at home every day.
- ❖ However, two boys in the 12 to 14 group only used the internet once or twice a week.
- ❖ Time restrictions were imposed upon the majority, ranging from half an hour to a couple of hours.
- ❖ Often time restrictions were imposed to allow all members of the family to have access to the internet. Some respondents mentioned that there was less restriction regarding school work.

*“I’m allowed to go on it as long as I want. It’s just my brother wanting it that stops me.” (Boys 12 to 14)*

- ❖ In one or two cases boys were restricted to encourage them to pursue other activities and not spend the evening in front of a computer.

*“I’m allowed on it before dinner, but I’m only allowed to use the computer afterwards for my homework.” (Boys 9 to 10)*

- ❖ In general, boys tended to spend more time using the internet than girls.

### **I.3 Degree of freedom in using the Internet**

- ❖ Most respondents stated that parental controls/locks prevented them from accessing certain websites; this practice was more widespread amongst the 9 to 10 year groups.
- ❖ It was suggested that many websites blocked by with parental locks use 13 years as a threshold. Therefore, many respondents in the older groups were less likely to be affected by parental locks.
- ❖ A few respondents in the younger groups mentioned that their parents were in close proximity when they were using the internet so their usage of the internet could be actively controlled if necessary.
- ❖ In the older groups respondents were less likely to be supervised when using the internet. In particular, some boys 12 to 14 had computers in their own room.
- ❖ Some younger respondents in both the boys and girls groups mentioned that some websites asked for an age to be typed in to block younger children from using them. However if the computer was not set with parental controls these blocks could be overcome by entering a false age; specifically mentioned by both groups was the online game RuneScape.

*“I’ve broken my parent’s rules. I’ve been on things that I shouldn’t and it doesn’t look like you need to be 13 to do it, It’s just like a load a people that kill one another, goblins and a little spider.” (Boys 9 to 10)*

- ❖ Sites most commonly blocked by parental controls were chatrooms and online fighting games.
- ❖ Young people felt that blocks and restrictions on access to online games were unreasonable.
- ❖ Respondents did not seem to be annoyed that limitations were placed upon their usage of the internet. Girls 12- to 14 thought that limitations on chatroom usage were reasonable as they knew this could be dangerous.
- ❖ In contrast, whilst boys 12 to 14 understood why limitations were in place, they were less concerned about any possible dangers. Often parental controls were bypassed by using the passwords of older sibling or even with permission from parents.
- ❖ A few older respondents of both genders did not have any form of parental control regarding their internet use and were trusted to use it responsibly.

## I.4 Specific Internet applications

	<b>Girls 9 – 10 */**</b>	<b>Boys 9 – 10 */**</b>	<b>Girls 12 – 14 */**</b>	<b>Boys 12 – 14 */**</b>	<b>Total */**</b>
Searching for information as a part of my school work	5/3	2/5	3/5	5/3	15/16
Searching for information on subjects which interest me/surfing for fun	6/2	2/5	6/2	7/1	21/10
Sending and receiving emails	3/3	5/1	4/3	2/2	14/9
Using instant messaging (MSN)/chatting with friends	1/3	3/3	1/7	2/3	7/16
Engage in open chatrooms	3/1	5/2	0/0	2/0	10/3
Creating my own blog/homepage and posting my own texts, photos, music on the Internet	3/1	1/2	4/2	4/0	12/5
Reading and responding to friends' blogs/homepages	3/0	4/0	2/5	5/0	14/5
Reading and responding to blogs/homepages of someone I have never met	1/0	1/1	3/0	5/0	10/1
Playing on-line games	3/4	2/5	7/0	5/1	17/10
Downloading music, films, videos, games or other files	2/1	4/1	3/2	3/3	12/7
Sharing files (music, films, videos, games or others)	3/0	4/0	3/2	2/0	12/2
Sharing photos	3/0	0/1	2/1	4/0	9/2
Downloading ring tones/images for my mobile phone	1/0	2/1	0/1	4/1	7/3
Taking part in competitions	4/0	2/0	2/0	1/0	9/0
Making phone calls through the Internet	0/0	0/2	1/0	1/0	2/2
<b>Total</b>	<b>41/18</b>	<b>37/29</b>	<b>41/30</b>	<b>52/14</b>	<b>171/91</b>

\* applications used \*\* applications used most

- ❖ Across the sample general searching for information and surfing for fun were the most common activities.
- ❖ Using the internet for school work was also very common; most respondents reported that their parents allowed them to spend more time on the internet if it was being used for school work.
- ❖ Across both gender and age groups MSN was very popular. However, it was the girls aged 12 to 14 that use it the most extensively. Reasons why MSN appealed included:
  - Its speed – the instant nature of messages
  - It was free of charge
  - The ability to speak to more than one person simultaneously
  - Its relative safety (unwanted and unknown contacts could be easily blocked.)

*“It’s free! Texts are like 10p a time. It’s like a really quick e mail so that you don’t have to keep waiting and you can reply to more than one person at a time.” (Boys 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Using open chatrooms was quite popular with children of 9 to 10 years. However, amongst the 12 to 14 groups using chatrooms was very rare.

*“So I wouldn’t like to meet up with someone. But MSN, I know if my friends are on there then I would like to go on it. But if some strange person turned up I would just log out and then probably they will have gone so I’ll just go back on.” (Boys 9 to 10)*

- ❖ Across all groups, creating blogs and looking at friends’ blogs were relatively popular activities. However, reading and responding to blogs of unknown internet users was much less popular.
- ❖ Amongst both boys and girls online games were especially popular. Respondents enjoyed the challenge of striving for the next level. Some acknowledged that some games had an addictive quality.

*“You can go on to like ones that have free games, there’s a site called ‘miniclip’ and you can play free games and there’s loads of games, there’s like over 100.” (Girls 9 to 10)*

- ❖ Downloading files was fairly popular across all groups. Most respondents downloaded music more than other types of files.
- ❖ Although all groups claimed to be aware that competitions were a bit of a con, girls were more likely to participate in them than boys.
- ❖ Amongst both boys and girls there was little/no evidence of the internet being used to make phone calls. This was not surprising given that this facility is not yet widely used within the UK.

**CHAPTER II**

**MOBILE PHONE AND MOBILE PHONE USAGE**

## II.1 Mobile phone usage

	<b>Girls 9 – 10 */**</b>	<b>Boys 9 – 10 */**</b>	<b>Girls 12 – 14 */**</b>	<b>Boys 12 – 14 */**</b>	<b>Total */**</b>
Calls	3/3	1/5	3/5	8/0	15/13
Texts	1/5	1/5	0/8	1/7	3/25
Taking photos	4/1	1/5	2/6	6/2	15/12
Sending photos	2/1	5/1	4/1	3/0	14/3
Internet	2/0	2/2	2/0	1/0	7/2
<b>Total</b>	<b>12/10</b>	<b>12/16</b>	<b>11/20</b>	<b>19/9</b>	<b>54/55</b>

\* applications used \*\* applications used most

- ❖ There were no great differences between gender or age regarding how children used their mobile phones.
- ❖ Only one boy and two girls in the 9 to 10 groups did not have their own mobile phone. One girl who did not own a mobile phone said that sometimes she used her mother's.
- ❖ The respondents who did not have mobile phones stated that their parents would not allow it :
  - Two respondents would be only be allowed to have a mobile phone when they went to secondary school.
  - Another respondent would only be permitted to have a mobile phone when her parents felt she was old enough to go out on her own.
- ❖ Across the sample mobile phone ownership was regarded as a sign of maturity.
 

*“Hardly anyone has got a mobile phone until their parents think that they’re really mature enough.” (Boys 9 to 10)*
- ❖ Often parents were paying for phone credit or children were receiving it as part of their allowance.
- ❖ All groups stated they made calls and sent texts from their mobile phones; texting was more popular than calling.
- ❖ Texting was popular because it was:
  - cheaper than calling.
  - more private

*“Because it costs more money to phone ... well, not always but if you don’t want to actually physically say it, you can just text ... I don’t know... if it’s more private, you can keep it quiet.” (Girls 9 to 10)*
- ❖ When contacting parents children preferred calling to texting; respondents stated they contacted parents because they needed something or wanted to be collected.
- ❖ Phones were mainly used to call and text freinds.

- ❖ Most respondents had camera phones and took pictures. But only a few regularly sent them onto friends via the phone network (MMS) because it was expensive. Instead many swapped photos for free via Bluetooth.
- ❖ In all groups a small minority exchanged music with friends and used the internet on their mobile phones.
- ❖ Across the sample mobile phones were rarely used for internet browsing. A combination of high cost and lack of need (if they had a computer at home) were the reasons given for not using the internet via their mobile phones. The small minority who did access the internet on their mobile phone were taking advantage of a free package as part of their contract.
- ❖ More savvy users in the boys 12 to 14 group noted that if they wanted something for their phone they would download it from their home computer for free rather than use costly internet services on their mobile.

*“I usually send music because I’ve got some music on my phone and my friends sometimes want them so I just send it to them. And it’s free.” (Boys 12 to 14).*

## **II.2 Degree of freedom in using mobile phones**

- ❖ Most respondents observed that their parents did not feel the need to limit how they used their mobile phones.
 

*“It is quite good because at the moment, for the last three months I’ve got £10 free air time, so I haven’t had to actually spend any money on it.” (Girls 12 to 14)*
- ❖ There was no mention of any limits placed on particular phone activities by parents.
- ❖ Most limitations were self imposed due to the cost of particular services: if the respondent ran out of credit it would not be topped up until the next allowance was due.
- ❖ Expensive services that respondents limited using due to cost included:
  - Downloading ring tones
  - Downloading games
  - Sending pictures via MMS
  - Using the internet
- ❖ Boys 9 to 10 seemed less aware about the cost of mobile phone services than other groups.
- ❖ One respondent in the girls 12 to 14 groups said that her mother complained if she regularly exceeded the number of calls and texts allowed in her contract.

**CHAPTER III**  
**PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE**  
**RELATED PROBLEMS AND RISKS**

### III.1 Spontaneous mentions of problems and risks

- ❖ Girls 12 to 14 spontaneously talked more about the problems and risks associated with the internet and mobile phones than the girls 9 to 10.
- ❖ Interestingly, when asked about risks associated with the internet girls 9 to 10 and both of the boys' groups spontaneously raised issues such as pop-ups and viruses rather than risks to personal safety.
- ❖ Pop ups were a problem that was experienced by most across the sample. Pop ups were treated as an annoyance and a risk to the computer rather than a risk to the individual.
- ❖ Boys 9 to 10 enjoyed playing online games and these sites often had popups associated with them. Sometimes pop ups looked like a game and encouraged users to click on a link unwittingly.
- ❖ When challenged about personal risks girls and boys' 12 to 14 and to a lesser extent boys 9 to 10 discussed a number of issues associated with MSN:
  - Unknown users could add you into their contacts. These users may only have an e-mail address with no proper name.
  - It was easy for people to make up a false address and pretend to be someone else.
  - People could hack into MSN accounts. The hacker then had access to all contact information and could talk to them pretending to be the user.
  - Supposed friends hacking into their accounts and pretending to be them

*“When you get random people on MSN who have just added you and you don't know who they are because they don't like have a name, they are just like an address, which isn't very comfortable.” (Girls 12 to 14)*
- ❖ In the boys 12 to 14 group a couple of respondents felt that their parents could check what they had discussed on MSN and so limited their conversations to less private talk.
- ❖ Boys 12 to 14 tended to feel that the risk of using the internet was not so much unwelcome problems encountered when using it, as parents finding out that they were looking at sites they were not suppose to.
- ❖ Three boys in the 9 to 10 group felt that when using the internet their older brothers were a risk because they encouraged them to look at things they should not have.
- ❖ Respondents in the girls and boys' 9 to 10 groups mentioned that internet competitions could have risks associated. Competitions could say the user had won a prize to dupe them into entering personal details.
- ❖ Awareness of problems came from a variety of sources across the sample:
  - From friends who had experienced the problems or told stories of others that had experienced them
  - From parents
  - From teachers generally and specifically in ICT lessons
  - Police talks arranged at school or social clubs
- ❖ In the girls 12 to 14 group one respondent stated that mobile phone credit could apparently be stolen if Bluetooth was switched on. She said that this could be prevented by turning off Bluetooth when not in use.

- ❖ All groups were aware that they could receive texts and photos on their mobile phones from unknown senders, either accidentally or maliciously. A few in each group had experienced unsolicited texts/photos.

*“I get texts from these people, I don’t know who they are and I didn’t send off for them. My dad says don’t text back because he had them and if you do text back they cost you like £10 a text.” (Boys 12 to 14)*

- ❖ In the girls 9 to 10 group one respondent mentioned that information about mobile phone risks was sometimes featured on the television and radio.
- ❖ All groups claimed that their knowledge of risks did not change how they used most of the internet or their mobile phones.
- ❖ However, across the sample it was felt that they were more cautious about entering competitions or trusting information contained in pop ups.
- ❖ Interestingly, girls 12 to 14 did not use chatrooms as they had learned that these could be risky whereas half of the girls’ 9 to 10 group did use them (although they were often secure and not open chatrooms).
- ❖ Both girl groups were aware that in open chatrooms they did not know who they were really talking to and they were not able to block anyone from contacting them.

*“Just the fact that you could be talking to absolutely anyone and you wouldn’t know. You can’t block people, you couldn’t stop them from saying things, you couldn’t do anything. And I didn’t actually used to understand that and I used to put my name. I don’t go anywhere near it now.” (Girls 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Generally, respondents were cautious of answering unknown mobile calls. A few in each group would not call an unknown number back in case it was a premium rate number attempting trick them into calling it.

### III.2 Problems and risks related to specific applications

	<b>Girls 9 – 10 */**</b>	<b>Boys 9 – 10 */**</b>	<b>Girls 12 – 14 */**</b>	<b>Boys 12 – 14 */**</b>	<b>Total */**</b>
Searching for information as a part of my school work	0/0	1/0	0/0	4/0	5/0
Searching for information on subjects which interest me/surfing for fun	6/0	1/4	3/1	6/0	16/5
Sending and receiving emails	0/0	2/0	2/0	2/1	6/1
Using instant messaging (MSN)/chatting with friends	3/3	2/0	3/0	4/1	12/4
Engage in open chatrooms	0/4	2/0	1/7	3/0	6/11
Creating my own blog/homepage and posting my own texts, photos, music on the Internet	3/0	2/0	2/0	2/0	9/0
Reading and responding to friends' blogs/homepages	3/0	2/0	0/0	1/0	6/0
Reading and responding to blogs/homepages of someone I have never met	2/2	2/0	5/0	1/0	10/2
Playing on-line games	0/0	1/0	1/0	4/0	6/0
Downloading music, films, videos, games or other files	1/0	0/1	2/0	3/0	6/1
Sharing files (music, films, videos, games or others)	4/0	1/0	1/0	2/0	8/0
Sharing photos	2/0	0/1	5/0	2/0	9/1
Downloading ring tones/images for my mobile phone	2/2	0/0	2/0	4/0	8/2
Taking part in competitions	2/2	0/1	3/4	1/0	6/7
Making phone calls through the Internet	6/0	0/1	2/0	3/0	11/1
<b>Total</b>	<b>34/13</b>	<b>16/8</b>	<b>32/12</b>	<b>42/2</b>	<b>124/35</b>

	<b>Girls 9 – 10 */**</b>	<b>Boys 9 – 10 */**</b>	<b>Girls 12 – 14 */**</b>	<b>Boys 12 – 14 */**</b>	<b>Total */**</b>
Calls	1/0	2/1	1/0	5/0	9/1
Texts	2/0	2/1	3/0	4/1	11/2
Taking photos	0/0	2/0	0/0	2/0	4/0
Sending photos	3/1	3/0	4/1	2/0	12/2
Internet	4/2	1/1	6/1	5/0	16/4
<b>Total</b>	<b>10/3</b>	<b>10/3</b>	<b>14/2</b>	<b>18/1</b>	<b>52/9</b>

\* applications involving problems \*\* most annoying/scary applications

- ❖ Across the sample only surfing for fun was regarded as a clear danger. Problems/risks often referred to were pop ups/adverts. Other risks using the internet were generally confined to individual experience. However, there were some similarities amongst groups and genders.
- ❖ Both of the boys groups did not rate many internet applications as particularly annoying or scary.
- ❖ Chatrooms were regarded by both of the girls groups as most scary/annoying. A majority of girls 12 to 14 and a minority of girls 9 to 10 regarded them as very risky. A few respondents in the girls' 9 to 10 group spontaneously mentioned that impostors could use chatrooms.
- ❖ However, a majority in both boy groups (only a few of whom used chatrooms) did not find chatrooms risky at all.
- ❖ Boys 12 to 14 felt there were some low level risks regarding using MSN. In contrast, girls 9 to 10 felt that MSN could involve more annoying problems (see section IV).
- ❖ Applications that involved sharing information were seen as risky by both girl groups:
  - Looking at blogs from unknown people
  - Sharing photos with unknown users. It was also mentioned that even sending photos to friends could result in someone else having access to them.
  - Purchasing ring tones and songs with a credit card or with phone credit. A number of respondents had experienced occasions where they were repeatedly charged for an item and in some cases did not receive that item.
  - A few respondents claimed that online competitions were a ruse to gain access to personal details. Entering competitions could also result in the spread of viruses.

*“Those things that say you’ve like won a plasma TV or something and when you click X to get rid of it comes up the whole screen and puts you on to their website. That’s annoying.”*  
(Boys group, 12 – 14 years)
- ❖ Both of the 9 to 10 groups did not see mobile phone applications as having problems or risks. However, both 12 to 14 groups experienced a range of problems.
- ❖ A small majority of boys 12 to 14 had problems relating to call and SMS. Often the cause was a friend borrowing their phone to send/make rude messages to get the owner in trouble.
- ❖ A majority of girls 12 to 14 regarded sending photos and using mobile internet as problematic. Problems often related to the high charges for these services.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**REACTIONS TO THE PRESENTATION OF SIX**  
**CATEGORIES OF PROBLEMS AND RISKS**

#### IV.1 Truthfulness of information found on the Internet

- ❖ The pervading opinion throughout most groups was one of scepticism: not everything on the internet was true and it could not always be trusted.
- ❖ Both girls 12 to 14 and boys 9 to 10 saw the question as referring to deceitful practices and spontaneously mentioned several that they saw as untrustworthy:
  - those asking for personal details
  - those claiming that a prize had been won
  - pop up sites enticing the user to enter details or go to a specific site
  - requests to call (often premium rate numbers) to claim prizes, etc.

- ❖ Most boys 12 to 14 interpreted the question more literally to refer to factual truth written on internet sites. In general, information / text found on sites via 'Google' search engine was presumed to be factually correct.

- ❖ However, one boy 12 to 14 admitted that he had achieved a low mark in a school project because he had used incorrect information taken from the internet. Interestingly, this did not stop him believing that most information on the internet was true.

*"I just believe facts that I read on the internet because it's come up on Google so it must be real." (Boys 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Both girls groups claimed mainly to use websites that they were familiar with. In particular, girls 9 to 10 claimed only to look at one or two very familiar sites and only occasionally browsed unknown sites.

- ❖ One respondent in the girls' 12 to 14 group observed that some particular websites could be trusted because they had a reputation to uphold.

*"If it is a well known website like BBC News you can trust it because they have to keep their reputation up." (Girls 12 to 14)*

- ❖ A minority in the girls 9 to 10 group had been given a list of websites that could be trusted by the police at a talk held at Brownies (a girls youth group).

- ❖ In all groups, friends had recommended useful and interesting secure sites to look at.

- ❖ Overall, all respondents were concerned about dubious pop ups/websites. However, they felt knowledgeable enough to avoid being tricked into entering personal information. Instead respondents were concerned that a deceitful site could load a virus onto their computer and as a consequence get them into trouble with parents.

## IV.2 Potentially shocking contents

- ❖ Several respondents in all groups had experienced pop-up pornographic images. Sometimes the pop-ups persistently re-opened when the user attempted to close them.

*“I had a rude pop u., and we just closed it straight away but it kept coming up .. it was American I think and it said ‘only \$18 a month’ to watch like rude videos, so we just closed it because it kept coming up.” (Girls 9 to 10)*

- ❖ One or two respondents from all groups claimed they had to shut their computer down when some pop ups/images repeatedly opened themselves and could not be closed.
- ❖ A minority in the boys 12 to 14 group hinted that they were actively searching for pornographic and violent images.

*“I’m told I’m not allowed to look [at rude images], but sometimes you have a little look...another time I found my older brother having a look and I just sat there and had a look as well.” (Boys 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Most girls 12 to 14 described pornographic pop-ups as frustrating and annoying rather than upsetting.
- ❖ However, another girl in the 12 to 14 group claimed that a friend had fainted when she saw a pornographic pop up.
- ❖ Discussion on this topic was somewhat more light-hearted in the girls 12 to 14 group than amongst the girls 9 to 10. The younger girls seemed to find it less amusing and were not so forthcoming when asked about this type of material.
- ❖ Likewise boys 9 to 10 were rather vague on this topic and not very forthcoming with specific examples/situations.
- ❖ Amongst boys 12 to 14 video sharing site ‘YouTube’ was cited as a popular site to look at violent images and videos. In general these images were recognised as violent, but not perceived as shocking; instead they were regarded as funny.

*“Some of the stuff they put on YouTube is quite horrible, what they do to people, but it’s still quite funny.” (Boys 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Two boys 12 to 14 suggested that they occasionally looked at violent, but funny videos with their parents.

*“I go on like YouTube and look on the videos on there. I tell my mum and dad to come and have a look, they just laugh at it and stuff.” (Boys 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Some boys 9 to 10 recalled parents disciplining older siblings for looking at shocking content. In a few cases respondents recalled being disciplined by parents for looking at sites that older brothers had encouraged them to look at.
- ❖ Respondents claimed that search engines, such as Google, sometimes brought up sites with potentially shocking content. This often happened when users were searching using words with other connotations that they were unaware of.

*“In an R.E. lesson you type in ‘Islam’ and loads of horrible pictures came up.” (Boys 9 to 10)*

- ❖ Across the sample online gaming sites such as ‘Miniclip’ were strongly associated with pop ups. Occasionally pop ups that seemed to be a game tricked the user into accessing a pornographic site.

### IV.3 Potentially dangerous contacts

- ❖ There was widespread awareness that adults could pose as children in chatrooms and on messaging sites.
- ❖ In both boys groups respondents readily recalled talks given by the police at their schools about chatrooms where adults posed as children.
- ❖ One respondent in the girls 12 to 14 group said that her school had demonstrated how easy it was for adults to pretend to be children or vice versa.

*“At my primary school they were like saying, okay come into this room and go onto this, and it was a chat room and they said ‘Hi I am Bill, I am 27’, and then next door it was a girl from our class, it was really weird.” (Girls 12 to 14)*

- ❖ A few girls 12 to 14 said they had seen a factual crime television programme about the dangers of chatrooms.
- ❖ A minority in the boys 9 to 10 group recalled a recently reported incident where a young girl had met up with a stranger she had talked to on the internet and gone missing.
- ❖ In both girl groups and boys 9 to 10 making friends with unknown and potentially dangerous contacts in chatrooms was seen as a very real risk.
- ❖ Boys 12 to 14, whilst aware of the risks, were not concerned about the dangers of chatrooms because they did not use them.
- ❖ A minority in the girls 9 to 10 group claimed they were only slightly worried about strangers in chatrooms.
- ❖ Girls 12 to 14 discussed ways of avoiding potentially dangerous people in chatrooms. Examples given included:
  - making a profile only authorised for named friends
  - using a special messaging site for children that does not allow pictures and monitors every conversation.

*“There’s a really safe website for kids who want to have MSN but their parents won’t let them, and it’s called Superheroes or something like that, and then it’s like MSN but you can’t have pictures of yourself and there’s always this man called superman on it watching what your conversation.” (Girls 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Boys 9 to 10 were less concerned about strangers online than girls. There was a general perception amongst boys that strangers in chatrooms were more likely to approach and a risk to girls rather than boys.
- ❖ Most respondents felt that if someone started asking for personal information or uncomfortable questions online they would know what to do: leave the site or inform the chatroom host.

#### IV.4 Bullying

- ❖ In all groups several respondents recalled incidences of bullying they had either experienced or heard about. When asked if they ever bullied others they hinted that they might have, but would not admit it outright.
- ❖ Both 12 to 14 groups were very aware of internet bullying; conversely the 9 to 10 groups did not talk much on this topic. It is possible that the younger groups may have more experience with internet bullying than they wanted to admit to in front of others.
- ❖ One respondent in the girls 12 to 14 group claimed that bullying was more common when she was younger.
- ❖ Two boys in the 9 to 10 mentioned that they had been teased at some point on MSN because of their hair colour and size, but did not regard it as being bullied.

*“If someone does bully you online in a chat room or MSN it’s not a big thing. If someone has called you fat or something, just leave the site.” (Boys 9 to 10)*

- ❖ Some girls 12 to 14 said that being bullied on the internet could be very upsetting.

*“I know somebody who was bullied on the internet; she got really upset because she had fallen out with her friend. They went on MSN the next night and this girl, they had each other’s contacts so this girl was like being really nasty to her and writing really bad comments, and this girl was really sad and she wanted to miss school and then she was really upset.”(Girls 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Boys 12 to 14 did not state any incidences of being personally bullied on the internet. Apart from MSN they did not use chatrooms or social network sites and felt that they were, therefore, unlikely to experience incidences on the internet.
- ❖ However, in both boy groups several examples were given about internet bullying happening to others at school, using social networking sites and MSN.
- ❖ Claims were made across the groups that MSN was regularly used to bully others:
  - sending hurtful messages to supposed friends
  - changing user names to a nasty message so all contacts could see an insult
  - Insulting somebody then pretending that another person was using their username
- ❖ Other sites, such as Pixo, could also be used to post information to bully other children.

*“Well once on Pixo, everyone had a verses page where you had to say who you thought was like the prettiest, and there was this big fight that went on because somebody had put something nasty about something else.” (Girls 12 to- 14)*

- ❖ It appeared to depend on the severity of the incident as to whether respondents confided in an adult. Some respondents were concerned that parents might make matters worse by speaking to the antagonists’ parents.
- ❖ It was generally felt that parents were more likely to be informed of serious incidents than teachers.

## IV.5 Deception on free of charge character

- ❖ Across all groups a sizable minority gave examples of when they, or their peers, had been cheated or deceived:

- Mobile phones

- Being charged twice for downloading a song
- Paying for an item (ring tone, music, etc.) that was not received
- Purchasing a game/ring tone that only worked for a limited period
- Playing an apparently free game that was actually billed for

*“Downloading ring tones and images [can cheat you] because I tried it once and paid, but didn’t get anything for my money.” (Girls 12 to 14)*

- Internet

- Free offers that encouraged the user to call to claim. Calls were then charged at a very high rate and the called was put on hold for a considerable length of time then disconnected
- Downloading music and screensavers that were advertised as free and then incurred a charge
- Winning a supposed competition that encouraged the user to enter personal information and then no prize was received.

*“I had like a wallpaper on my screen, like a screensaver and they said it was free and it was actually not because on my mum’s bill it ended up being ‘screensaver’ and my mum didn’t know what it was.” (Girls 9 to 10)*

- ❖ In the boys 9 to 10 group a few claimed items had been accidentally purchased on shopping sites due to parents’ card information being automatically stored by the website.

*“You click on things to have a look and you’ve accidentally bought them. There’s this website called play.com and everything is half price and I clicked on this game to see what it was like and it was really weird so I thought no thanks, and I clicked off and it was like, 4 days after that a delivery came saying they needed the money now.” (Boys 9 to 10)*

- ❖ In general, neither age group/gender was likely to complain to the company if they were cheated.
- ❖ However, one respondent in the girls 12 to 14 group claimed that she had written to complain to a website. When she did not receive a reply she took no further action.
- ❖ Girls 12 to 14 were concerned that they could be charged a very high call rate just to lodge a complaint.

## IV.6 Illegal downloading

- ❖ In both 12 to 14 groups downloading files without paying was prevalent. Most knew that free file downloads were generally illegal.
- ❖ Both 12 to 14 groups and some girls 9 to 10 did not think it was wrong to download music illegally.

*“I don’t really feel guilty. It wouldn’t be on the internet, if it was like really illegal they wouldn’t have it there” (Boys 12 to 14)*

- ❖ However, boys 9 to 10 felt that it was wrong to download files illegally because it was stealing. Whilst none admitted to downloading files themselves, some stated that older siblings did download files illegally.

*“I know [illegally downloading] is a bad thing to do, it’s stealing.” (Boys 9 to 10)*

- ❖ A small majority of those downloading illegally claimed to be influenced by parents or older siblings using sites to download illegally.

*“Even though Linewire is illegal I don’t think it is bad because my dad uses it.” (Girls 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Popular sites used to download illegally included:

- Limewire
- Pirate Bay

- ❖ Music files were the most popular downloaded items, but films were also popular.
- ❖ Respondents were not concerned about the effect illegal downloading could have on artists.

*“They [the artist] probably have enough money so who cares.” (Girls 12 to 14)*

*“It’s only a few songs that are being downloaded. I know it’s illegal, but I don’t think it’s bad.” (Boys 12 to 14)*

**CHAPTER V**

**RISK RELATED INFORMATION AND REPORTING**

## V.1 Precautions envisaged by children

- ❖ Boys 9 to 10 did not regard much of the preceding discussion as directly affecting them to a significant degree. By far the biggest concern regarded unwanted advertising pop ups (and viruses that could come from them). It was generally felt that there was little that could be done to prevent pop ups from occurring, but that virus scans/software could prevent a virus from developing or being accidentally downloaded.
- ❖ Both girls groups were aware they should be cautious when using the internet and mobile phones. However, girls 12 to 14 seemed more aware about possible precautions that could be taken.
- ❖ Precautions included:
  - Do not enter personal details in to any website.
  - Do not talk to anyone that is not known to you either online or on a mobile phone.
  - Only use familiar websites or those that belong to reputable companies
  - Do not click on pop ups.

*“I’d just not talk to strangers, just get off the site.” (Girls 9 to 10)*

- ❖ Across all groups it was evident that respondents using chatrooms or experiencing problems with pop ups were already adhering to precautions to some extent.

*“I used to use a chat room which was Habbo Hotel but that was ages ago, but I don’t use that any more because I found out that it is quite dangerous so I stopped.” (Girls 12 to 14)*

- ❖ In stark contrast to the other groups, boys 12 to 14 felt that they had not experienced anything that they felt to be personally shocking.
- ❖ Whilst most boys 12 to 14 had direct experience regarding specific problems discussed in the previous section they did not find them personally disturbing. Therefore, boys 12 to 14 generally felt that they needed to take little/no precautions when using the internet.
- ❖ One or two older respondents in the boys 12 to 14 group felt that the only precaution they had to take was not to get caught looking at something rude by their parent.
- ❖ Respondents claimed that they knew about precautions before the discussion group and had learned nothing new regarding the types of possible dangers or how to avoid them.

## V.2 Ways of reporting envisaged

- ❖ Across the sample it was felt that when something uncomfortable or slightly scary happened only occasionally there was no need to tell an adult. They would just delete or close the offending information.
- ❖ Depending on the nature of the problem respondents were likely more to discuss it with friends.
- ❖ If the problem persisted or if it was a very threatening message respondents of both ages would consider telling either one or both of their parents.

*“Just delete it and if it happens loads of times then I would like go mum, you know anyone sending me really random e-mails, pictures, so, but usually if it is just once I’ll just delete it and leave it.” (Girls 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Some girls 12 to 14 felt they would prefer not to cause a fuss and might possibly delay telling their parents. A minority stated that they would prefer to tell their father as he would be calmer than their mother.
- ❖ Respondents would consider reporting a concern to a teacher only if a serious incident had happened at school.

*“If it was at school and someone was threatening to kill me or something I would probably tell one of my teachers but otherwise no.” (Girls 12 to 14)*

- ❖ Respondents would only consider contacting the police if the situation was extremely serious or life threatening.
- ❖ Some girls 12 to 14 said they would like the opportunity to complain by e-mail (particularly about fake competitions), but were unsure how to do this at present.
- ❖ None were aware of any specialist organisations they could inform if there was a problem.
- ❖ Respondents were uncertain how a report button system would work or for what type of sites/problems it could be used.

### V.3 Attitudes towards information on problems and risks

- ❖ Police talks at school had already been a successful method amongst the boy groups to warn about chatroom dangers. Therefore similar talks were deemed suitable about other types of internet/mobile phone associated risks.
- ❖ Some respondents felt that ICT teachers could be helpful if they needed to learn more about problems and risks.

*“If I wanted to know more I might look it up on the internet or ask someone, like my ICT teacher.” (Girls 12 to 14)*

- ❖ One respondent in the girls 12 to 14 said she would use the internet to learn more about the problems and risks discussed. Another respondent claimed that she was completely confident in her knowledge of possible internet and mobile phone risks.
- ❖ Generally, boys 12 to 14 felt that there were only a few possible risks (mainly associated with pop ups) that related to how they currently used the internet. Therefore, they did not feel that they needed to learn more about possible dangers.

## **SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

- ❖ Across the sample the internet was used regularly. Respondents were internet 'savvy' in terms of how they used the internet and their awareness of potential risks and dangers.
- ❖ In the 9 to 10 groups a majority of respondents had parental controls installed on their computers. Amongst the 12 to 14 groups parental controls were not so prevalent; this is perhaps unsurprising as some parental lock features are designed for children under 13.
- ❖ However, across the sample more informal methods of parental control were observed. Most respondents shared a computer with their family, and parents were able to access a history of the sites their children had viewed. In some circumstances computers were located in a social area of the house (e.g. the living room), this meant that someone was around, or close by, when the child was using the computer.
- ❖ Across the sample the internet was regularly used for: school work, general browsing, MSN and online games. In both 9 to 10 groups chatrooms were a popular activity, but not in the older groups.
- ❖ The least popular applications included: file sharing, downloading ring tones and entering competitions. These applications were not used for several reasons:
  - No interest
  - Fear of catching a virus
  - Uncertain whether the service incurred a charge or was free
  - Fear of being tricked into signing up for an unwanted service
- ❖ In the 12 to 14 groups mobile phone ownership was universal. In the 9 to 10 groups a minority did not own a mobile phone or had only recently been allowed to own one. Children did not feel their parents would let them own a mobile phone because:
  - They were too young
  - Not responsible/trustworthy enough
  - Did not have a need for one
- ❖ Across the sample mobile phones were most regularly used for texts and calling friends. Less popular activities included: accessing the internet, sending photos, and downloading games.
- ❖ In general, parents did not restrict mobile phone usage. Most restrictions were self imposed by the respondent because charges for particular services (e.g. downloading) were considered too expensive. Some parents had advised their children what services were expensive to use, but not banned them from being used.
- ❖ In all groups spontaneous discussion about the risks/problems related to internet use was common. However, both 9 to 10 groups were more reluctant to talk about problems of a more sensitive/personal nature than the older groups.
- ❖ Risks/problems reflected the type of applications individuals were using. General internet browsing was considered the most problematic application because of unwanted pop ups that could contain a virus.
- ❖ In this respect, the biggest concern amongst respondents was not situations that could cause them harm or offence, but situations that could get them into trouble with their parents. Examples of concerns included:
  - Accidentally looking at a site not allowed by parents
  - Being discovered deliberately looking at a site banned by parents
  - Being tricked into signing parents up to an unwanted service
  - Accidentally downloading a virus or ad-ware that could harm the computer

- ❖ A majority of MSN users associated it with problems. Common MSN problems included:
  - being insulted by supposed friends
  - somebody sending rude messages whilst pretending to be a different user
- ❖ Interestingly, most girls 9 to 10 also considered MSN a problematic application even though they did not use it. However, their concerns reflected the problems experienced by the other groups.
- ❖ Across the sample those with older siblings, particularly brothers, were more aware of and had more experience of internet problems that concerned adults.
- ❖ In all groups factual information on the internet was more or less trusted, particularly amongst boys 12 to 14. However, across the sample all respondents were more cautious about sites/pop ups that claimed prizes had been won or encouraged the user to enter personal information.
- ❖ In all groups a majority of respondents had come across violent or pornographic images via pop ups or misspelt searches. Generally younger respondents were less forthcoming and embarrassed regarding the discussion. Older respondents were more talkative and open with examples of situations.
- ❖ In both 9 to 10 groups respondents had come across violent/pornographic imagery. Often they did not seem to understand what exactly they had seen, but they did not like it and had quickly closed the site/pop up. None of the respondents had told their parents about specific incidences, but had told their friends. Whilst they did not enjoy the images it had not changed how they used the internet.
- ❖ However, a small minority of older boys regularly looked at ‘disturbing’ imagery deliberately on sites like ‘YouTube’, or other sites recommended by friends. In these situations, whilst the imagery was shocking, they enjoyed looking at it; in some cases they looked with friends or older siblings.
- ❖ Both girl groups considered chatrooms to be very problematic/risky. Whilst the boy groups did not regard chatrooms as particularly dangerous they were aware of possible risks associated with using them. Amongst boys there was a perception that chatrooms were more problematic/dangerous for girls; this reflected recent news stories about girls running away with men they had met in chatrooms.
- ❖ The problems/dangers of chatrooms was one of the few areas that respondents recalled receiving advice about from adults. In all groups, school/social club talks from teachers or policemen about the dangers of strangers posing as children in chatrooms were top of mind. The precautions to take and how to report someone suspicious in a chatroom were well known.
- ❖ In all groups some examples of bullying on the internet were recalled. Amongst both 9 to 10 groups name calling and rudeness in chatrooms/MSN were recalled. Amongst boys 12 to 14 more serious examples were recalled, one involving an MSN incident that required teachers to write letters to parents. However, direct experiences of internet bullying were infrequent and were felt to reflect everyday life rather than being an internet specific problem.
- ❖ There was a high awareness of deception on the internet from sites claiming to offer free gifts or easy to win competitions. Respondents stated they came across such sites regularly when using/searching the internet and knew not to enter personal details. Generally deceptive sites were not considered a danger, but an annoyance.

- ❖ A majority of respondents in the older groups downloaded files, music, etc. illegally. They claimed to know which download sites were illegal, but were not worried about the possible consequences of using them, in part because siblings and parents often used the same websites.
- ❖ Respondents in the younger groups did not download illegal files and considered it to be 'wrong'/stealing.
- ❖ Respondents tended not to tell parents if they had experienced anything distressing on the internet unless instances became frequent. It appeared that children of both ages and gender were concerned that parents could exacerbate a situation rather than improve it. Children were even less likely to approach teachers.
- ❖ However, boys 12 to 14 considered themselves to be very self-sufficient and unlikely to tell parents or teachers unless a situation was particularly problematic. They were only likely to speak to parents regarding a problem that involved them personally (e.g. bullying).
- ❖ In all groups respondents knew to be cautious when using the internet. Most claimed that the discussion had not added to their existing knowledge.
- ❖ Although respondents claimed to know and follow precautions there were indications throughout the discussions that they were not always strictly adhered to.
- ❖ Although examples of where to seek further information was discussed the majority of respondents seemed fairly confident in their knowledge of risks and precautions, implying that it was unlikely they would seek further information.

**ANNEX I**

**COMPOSITION OF THE GROUPS**

	Boys group 9-10 years	Girls group 9-10 years	Boys group 12-14 years	Girls group 12-14 years
	London 19.04.07	London 17.04.07	London 19.04.07	London 17.04.07
<b>Household social level</b> (Socio-professional category of the head of household)				
Business owners, liberal professions, high-level managers	1	3	1	2
Mid-level managers	1		3	1
Office employees (non-managerial)	3	2	2	1
Manual workers	1	1	1	1
Others	1	2	1	3
<b>Places and means of access to the Internet</b>				
Home (broadband))	7	8	8	8
Home (non broadband)				
School	7	7	7	8
Internet cafes				
Others	3	3	2	5
<b>Personal ownership of computer</b>				
Yes	1	1	2	0
No	6	7	6	8
<b>Ownership of mobile phone</b>				
Yes	6	5	8	8
No	1	3	0	0

**ANNEX II**  
**DISCUSSION GUIDE**



74, CHEMIN DE LA FERME DES BOIS  
BP 13 - 78950 GAMBAIS

**SAFER INTERNET STUDY  
DISCUSSION GUIDE**  
(29.03.2007)

**INTRODUCTION**

Hello, my name is ..... and I work with ....., the research agency in charge of the study which brings us here together today.

The subject of the study is how children/youngsters use the Internet and mobile phones.

Have you a clear idea of what we are and what we do?

- Ask the children if they know the terms opinion surveys/polls and what they associate with them
- Explain to them that the purpose is to understand what people do and think – and that they should express themselves quite freely
- Reassure them that whatever they say will be dealt with confidentially – i.e. their words may be taken as examples of children's views, but without ever being associated with their names ; in particular, what a child participant says will not be repeated to his/her parents.

To start with, I will ask each of you to introduce him/herself with a few words : who you are, if you have brothers and sisters, if you have access to the Internet and how – your own computer, your parents' computer, at school, at friends', at an Internet café – and also if you have a mobile phone.

**THEME I. THE INTERNET AND INTERNET APPLICATIONS**

Let us talk about the Internet.

**I.1** Before we start discussing how you use the Internet, I would like to know how you learnt to use it.

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - Self learning or learning from others
  - From whom ? Other children (Who? friends, brothers or sisters ?), adults ? (parents, teachers, other adults ?)

**I.2** Could you tell me how and how often you use the Internet and how much time, roughly, you spend on it ?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - Regular or variable Internet usage ? What does it depend on ?

- To how much time do the children estimate their usage of the Internet (time spent on average, per day or per week)

**I.3** Can you use the Internet as you wish and as often as you wish, or do you have any limits, rules or recommendations given by your parents – or anything you think your parents would like you to do or not to do although they may not really have told you.

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - If limits/rules/recommendations/implicit rules : what are they ?
  - For each of the limits/rules/recommendations/implicit rules : perceived justification and degree of agreement
  - If no limits/rules/recommendations/implicit rules : how would they feel if they were given any?
  - Which ones would they (or not) accept/agree with ? : perceived justification and degree of agreement

**I.4** We have prepared a list with various possible uses of the Internet.  
May I ask each of you :

- To put **one green sticker** to each of the applications you use
- To put **a second green sticker** to the applications you use most
- Distribute the table.
- Let the participants fill it in.  
Check that the one sticker/two stickers system has been understood.  
Check that each participant has written in his/her first name.
- Collect the questionnaires, and quickly identify the most frequent applications.

**I.5** I can see that some applications are used more than others.  
What are you particularly interested in or do you particularly like in these Internet applications?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe : frequent applications not elicited in spontaneous reactions

## THEME II : MOBILE PHONE AND MOBILE PHONE USAGE

### II.1 Some of you also have a mobile phone.

For those of you who have one, please tell me how you use it ?

- Ask successively each of the (mobile phone owning) participants  
Let each one express him/herself freely. Then probe :
  - With whom (friends, parents, in which circumstances ?)
  - What is it most often used for (verbal conversations, SMS, other applications)

Others among you do not have a mobile phone. Can you tell me why ?

- Probe for reasons (cost ; parents' wish that their children do not have one ; others)

### II.2 Mobile phones can also be used for sending or receiving photographs (MMS), taking part in chats, or connecting to the Internet. Do you also do that ?

- Ask again each (mobile phone owning) participant
  - If he/she has already used these functions (which one(s)), what he/she gets out of it or – if not used – why?

### II.3 Do you use your mobile phone freely, as you wish and as much as you wish, or do you have any limits, rules or recommendations given by your parents – or anything you think your parents would like you to do or not to do although they may not really have told you.

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - If limits/rules/recommendations/implicit rules: what are they ?
  - For each of the limits/rules/recommendations/implicit rules : perceived justification and degree of agreement
  - If no limits/recommendations/implicit rules : how would they feel if they were given any?
  - Which ones would they (or not) accept/agree with ? : perceived justification and degree of agreement

### II.4 Here is now a short list of mobile phone uses.

In the same way as for Internet uses earlier, could you please :

- Put **one green sticker** to each of the applications you use
- Put **a second green sticker** to the applications you use most
- Distribute the table.
- Let the participants fill it in.  
Check that the one sticker/two stickers system has been understood.  
Check that each participant has written in his/her first name.
- Collect the questionnaires, and quickly identify the most frequent applications.

### THEME III. INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE RELATED PROBLEMS AND RISKS

**III.1** Besides it being something useful and pleasant, are there also problems or risks in using the Internet or mobile phones – I mean things that you don't like or find scary ?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - Types of problems/risks mentioned
  - Problems/risks related to Internet usage/to mobile phone usage
  - How are the children aware of these problems/risks  
(Personal experience ? Being warned about them ? By whom ? Another child ? Adults – which adults ? An institution/authority ?)
  - How serious do they feel these problems/risks are ?

**III.2A** Have these problems changed the way you use the Internet ?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - Limitations in (volume of) usage
  - Precautions taken ; of their own initiative/under the influence of parents

**III.2.B** Have these problems changed the way you use your mobile phone ?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - Limitations in (volume of) usage
  - Precautions taken ; of their own initiative/under the influence of parents

**III.3** Here is a table with the list of both Internet and mobile phone applications on which you put the green stickers earlier.

Please place **one red sticker** next to the applications which you feel may involve problems of any kind, and **a second red sticker** for those which you regard as most annoying or scary.

- Distribute the table.
- Let the participants fill it in.  
Check that the one sticker/two stickers system has been understood.  
Check that each participant has written in his/her first name.
- Collect the questionnaires, and quickly identify the applications most selected as involving a risk.

**III.4** Let us discuss these problems more in detail, by taking each of those which you have most mentioned.

Why do you think that this application may involve a problem ?

- Take successively each application often mentioned as involving a problem or risk, and elicit the nature and the degree of problem/risk.

## **THEME IV REACTIONS TO THE PRESENTATION OF SPECIFIED PROBLEMS OR RISKS**

I am now going to tell you about certain problems, as they are seen by adults who worry about them – and you will tell me how **you** feel about them.

**IV.1** One of the problems may be that the information you find on the Internet is not necessarily true.

How do you feel about it ? Generally speaking, do you think we can have trust in what we find on the Internet?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - What is overall the degree of credibility of the Internet ?
  - How does it compare with other sources (parents, teachers, friends, television, books...)
  - Why is the Internet more or less credible ?
  - Examples of inaccurate things seen on the Internet. What was it about ? How did you realize that it was not true ?
  - How serious is this problem/risk felt to be ?

**IV.2** Another problem that worries adults is the risk of being sent or coming across images or other contents that can be deeply shocking – than can include scenes of violence, brutal scenes, racism or pornography.

How do you feel about it ?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - Has it happened to you ? What was it about ?
  - What did you do ? Talk to someone about it ? Who ?
  - What would you do if it happened to you, or what would you advise a friend to do if it happened to him/her ? Talk to someone about it ? Who ? What practical advice would you give ?
  - Moderator : also probe how serious is this problem/risk felt to be.

**IV.3** Another risk that worries adults is that children engage in relations with a stranger with whom they have talked online – someone they have never met face to face.

Let us take an example.

X/Y is a child of your age.

He/she likes to play games or post his/her profile on the Internet, and he/she starts talking online with someone to whom he/she gradually gives personal information like his/her MSN address, his/her mobile phone number, his/her name, or where he/she lives, or starts sending pictures of him/her.

He/she thinks this person is a child of his/her age and someone really nice, but it may turn out to be someone quite different, who might encourage him/her to do things he/she should not do, or even an adult with bad intentions.

(Moderator : For boys group, use a typical masculine first name of your country (X) ; for girls groups, use a typical feminine first name (Y)).

How do you feel about it ?

➤ Spontaneous reactions

➤ Probe :

- Has it happened to someone you know ? How, in which situation ?
- Do you think it could happen to you ? How do you communicate and make friends online ?
- (If happened) What did you do ? Talk to someone about it ? Who ?
- What would you do if it happened to you or what would you advise a friend to do if it happened to him/her ?
- Moderator : also probe how serious is this problem/risk felt to be.

**IV.4** Another worry that adults have is that some children use online communication to behave badly with another child because they do not like him/her. That can be, for example, by talking about him/her on MSN without including him/her, or sending him/her anonymous nasty messages.

How do you feel about it ?

➤ Spontaneous reactions

➤ Probe :

- Has it happened to you? How, in which situation ? Have you received nasty messages ? Have you maybe sent nasty messages to others yourself ?
- Do you think it could happen to you ?
- (If happened) What did you do ? Talk to someone about it ? Who ?
- What would you do if it happened to you or what would you advise a friend to do if it happened to him/her ?
- Moderator : also probe how serious is this problem/risk felt to be.

**IV.5** Another risk that we have heard of is being cheated, for example when downloading a file which seems to be free of charge but has to be paid for, or when taking part in a competition.

How do you feel about it ?

➤ Spontaneous reactions

➤ Probe :

- Has it happened to you ? In which situation ?
- What did you do ? Talk to someone about it ? Who ?
- What would you do if it happened to you or what would you advise a friend to do if it happened to him/her ? Talk someone about it ? Who ?
- Moderator : also probe how serious is this problem/risk felt to be.

**IV.6** Another problem may be that many children download music, films, games or other contents without paying.

Perhaps this has happened to you as well : have you downloaded something without paying ?

➤ Record responses, then continue :

In many cases, this content is material which the makers (musicians for example) need to make money from to make a living and therefore should be paid for.

Are you aware of this ? What can be the consequences, do you think ? Do those children know that it is illegal/not allowed ? How do they deal with it ?

➤ Probe :

- Awareness of doing something illegal/awareness of consequences
- What did/would the child participants do in such a situation?
- How serious is this problem felt to be ?

## **THEME V. RISK RELATED INFORMATION AND REPORTING**

**V.1** When you think back about it, after our whole discussion, are there any precautions which would now feel would be useful to take in using the Internet and mobile phones – or something you would advise a younger brother or sister to do ?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - Precautions (and related risks) which the discussion has made the children (more) aware of
  - Propensity to take these precautions in reality

**V.2** If you saw or experienced something you find uncomfortable or scary, and you wanted to inform someone about it, what would be the easiest way for you to do it ?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - Talk to your parents about it
  - Talk to a teacher about it
  - Inform the police
  - Contact a specialist organisation by calling a special free-phone number
  - Contact that organisation by email.
  - Having a report button that automatically informs the relevant authorities just by clicking

**V.3** How would you like to learn more about the problems and risks related to Internet and mobile phone usage ?

- Spontaneous reactions
- Probe :
  - Propensity to learn more about problems and risks
  - Nature of information sought
  - From which types of sources/through which channels

END OF DISCUSSION.

DISTRIBUTE AWARENESS MATERIAL FROM THE NATIONAL NODES OR OTHER NGOs.