Global Kids Online

GLOBAL KIDS ONLINE

Children's rights in the digital age

With children making up an estimated one-third of internet users worldwide, living in the 'digital age' can have important implications for children's lives. Currently close to 80% of people in Europe, North America and Australia have internet access, compared with less than 25% in some parts of Africa and South Asia. But this is bound to change soon, as there is already a steady increase in internet access in the global South where most investments are taking place. The international community has recognised the importance of internet access for development, economic growth and the realisation of civil rights, and is actively seeking ways to ensure universal internet access to all segments of society.

Children should be an important part of this process, not only because they represent a substantial percentage of internet users, but also because they play an important part in shaping the internet. The internet, in turn, plays an important part in shaping children's lives, culture and identities. The many stakeholders responsible for children's safe and positive use of the internet (governments, civil society and the private sector alike) have an important task to formulate policies that are inclusive, balanced and based on solid evidence. But at present, the evidence on which such policies can rely is very scarce, especially in the global South.

Responding to evidence gaps, the Global Kids Online research project (**www.globalkidsonline.net**) was developed as a collaborative initiative between the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and EU Kids Online. Supported by the WeProtect Global Alliance, the project developed a global research toolkit that would enable academics, governments, civil society and other actors to carry out reliable and standardised national research with children and their parents on the opportunities, risks and protective factors of children's internet use. Two linked research questions drive this work:

- When and how does use of the internet contribute positively to children's lives – providing opportunities to benefit in diverse ways that contribute to their well-being?

- When and how is use of the internet problematic in children's lives – amplifying the risk of harm that undermines their well-being if they are unprotected?

Research toolkit

Global Kids Online has developed an open-access multi-method research toolkit in collaboration with country partners, experts and international advisers.

The research toolkit includes:

- Quantitative tools: for designing, carrying out and analysing quantitative research on children's online risks and opportunities.

- Qualitative tools: materials needed for conducting and analysing individual interviews and focus groups with children.

- Method guides: expert guidance and practical research advice on key issues related to researching children's online risks and opportunities.

- Adapting the tools: resources for adapting the tools to different country and research contexts.

Using the Global Kids Online research toolkit

Anyone may use the resources under the Attributive Non-Commercial Creative Commons License (CC BY-NC) crediting Global Kids Online as the source. Keep in touch with your results by emailing GlobalKidsOnline@lse.ac.uk and florence@unicef.org

For information on how to become a member of Global Kids Online, visit www.globalkidsonline.net/join

Research results

As results emerge from the use of the Global Kids Online toolkit, the latest findings on children's online access, risks and opportunities from around the world will be published.

Research results are currently available from Argentina, Montenegro, the Philippines, Serbia and South Africa. Further countries are applying to join the Global Kids Online project, and their results will be published as they emerge.

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Publications

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