



Overview and Background

More children and young people around the world are using the internet and mobile technologies in their daily lives and children in Ghana are no exception. While many opportunities for learning, recreation, play and socialization are provided by these new technologies, access to these technologies also increase the risks for abuse and exploitation of vulnerable groups, especially children and young people.

This survey was intended to collect information on access, usage, user habits, risk and opportunities as regards online media among children of 9-17 years.

The trigger for the research was the need for evidence of the scope, nature of the opportunities and risks as well as the dynamics of the use of the internet by children in Ghana to inform policy and programme intervention. Moreover, the existing information had gaps in scope, and focuses on only certain aspects of the subject matter.

The study was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Communications, The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry for Gender Children and Social Protection and supported by UNICEF.

Survey Approach and Methodology

The Global Kids Online Research methodology was adapted for the study. It employed both quantitative and qualitative techniques for data collection.

The study targeted children 9-17 years, parents/guardians, internet service providers and relevant Policymakers and Opinion Leaders from the government and Civil Society knowledgeable about issues under study. The study targeted and achieved a total quantitative sample of 3000 respondents – 2000 children and 1000 adults.

Key Findings

- ☐ Children predominantly access the internet at home and through mobile devices. 8 in 10 People (children and parents/guardians) access and use the internet from home. Group discussions found that children prefer going online at home because they don't have to pay for it. Mobile phones are preferred devices because of the portability, easy to use and accessible at home
- ☐ Children feel there are lots of things on the internet that are good for them but there are also harmful ones.

Access and Barriers



8 in 10 children /adults access the internet from home mostly on mobile phones



6 in 10 children face some form of barriers in accessing the internet

Online Practices



7 in 10 children use the internet for learning



Only 2 in 10 children use safety options seen



Facebook is the most visited platform



6 in 10 children had a social networking profile



Some Risky Child Online Practices

- ☐ About 4 in 10 children have made contact with someone on the internet they had never met face to face before.
- ☐ 2 in 10 have met someone face to face that they first got to know on the internet.
- ☐ 1 in 10 children send a photo or video of themselves to someone they have not met face to face.

Negative Online Experiences

- ☐ About 3 in 10 children have experienced something that bothered or upset them while online.
- ☐ About 2 in 10 children have been treated in a harmful way or in way they didn't like while online. These are mostly boys and urban residents
- ☐ 4 in 10 children have seen sexual images while online. These are mostly boys and urban residents.

Coping Mechanisms and Support

- ☐ 5 in 10 children that have experienced things that upset or bothered them while online talk about it to a friend of the same age.
- ☐ Only 2 in 10 will talk to their parent or sibling,
- ☐ 1 in 10 will talk to a teacher
- ☐ 1 in 10 will not talk to anyone about it.

Parental Mediation and Support

- ☐ Only 2 in 10 parents/guardians are confident that their children can cope with upsetting things online
- ☐ About 3 in 10 parents/guardians are confident of offering support to their children to cope with upsetting things online.
- ☐ The most common and preferred source of information and advice on how to help and support children was the media

Recommendations

- ☐ Interventions to sensitize and teach children on responsible and safe online practices including what and who to share personal information with and who to add as a friend (and available safety options) will be required.
- ☐ Children mostly use the internet at home, so parents/guardians have a significant role to play in supporting, mediating or monitoring without limiting the rights of children and benefits of using the internet.
- ☐ The survey shows that there is still limited use of the internet at school, interventions to increase and improve this will be required.

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