

The survey objective was to explore the various uses of the internet, considering the opportunities, skills, and risks among children aged 9 to 17.

Sample overview

Sample Characteristics	1200 children, aged between 9 and 17; 47% of whom are between 9 and 12		
	48% female	51% male	1% none of the aforementioned options
	73% from urban areas		27% from rural areas
	97% attend primary or secondary school		3% do not attend primary or secondary school
Sampling Method	Stratified, proportional, multistage, random sampling		
Maximum Error	2.8%		
Confidence Level	95%		
Sample Design	National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC)		
Survey Type	National Household In-Person Survey		

Preliminary findings

Digital Inequalities

- **Differences between urban and rural areas:** Rural areas report less access, ownership, parental mediation, and skills.
- **Differences between regions:** The North and Caribbean Region (Huetar Norte and Huetar Atlántica) report more significant lags in access, ownership, skills, and mediation, whereas the Central Region reports lower digital inequality.
- **Differences between age groups:** The adolescent group shows increased usage and greater skills but less parental mediation compared to the 9 to 12 age group.
- **Gender differences:**
 - Usage patterns: Boys exhibit more entertainment-oriented use, while girls lean towards content creation.
 - Digital skills: Boys show greater content creation skills.
 - Adult mediation: Girls experience higher levels of parental and teacher mediation. Girls also experience more negative situations online, particularly when receiving messages of a sexual nature.

Mobile phone usage in school settings

- Earlier and increased use of mobile phones by children within school settings was reported compared to 2018, despite institutions maintaining restrictions on the use of devices. These changes may be associated with a pandemic-induced increase in device use.

Computer ownership

- Computer ownership has decreased compared to 2018.

Primary uses

- Primary uses are centred around entertainment, learning, and communication, influenced by conditions of digital inequality. Learning-oriented usage appears to be more relevant compared to 2018.

Digital skills

- An observed decrease in digital skills is noted compared to the 2018 survey.

Caregivers and children

- Caregivers and children report similar levels of digital skills and similar problematic phone usage scores, limiting the role of caregivers in both facilitating usage opportunities and preventing risks and potential harm.

Internet use in classroom contexts

- There is minimal use of the internet for pedagogical purposes within classroom contexts. Similarly, limited teacher guidance on internet use is observed. Educational institutions do not foster digital skills or opportunities, nor do they provide sufficient support, even though research shows that systematic use in the classroom and active mediation by teachers enhance opportunities and skills.

Online risk

- 33% of children report feeling discriminated against for at least one reason (age, appearance, behaviour, or skin colour).
- 9% report they have repeatedly experienced unpleasant situations online, and 9% of these felt upset about it. The proportion was higher for girls.
- 3% have repeatedly experienced negative treatment online.
- 12% of children aged 13 to 17 claim to have received messages with sexual content. Of these, 4% originated from adults.
- 13% of children report contacting online someone they did not know in person, and 5% met this person face to face. For 1% of these children, this meeting was a negative experience, and 1% met with an adult.