

UK CHILDREN GO ONLINE

End of Award Report

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SUMMARY

As UK households gain access to the internet, the growing significance of the internet in everyday life raises questions for social scientists and policy makers. The UK Children Go Online (UKCGO) project (www.children-go-online.net) was designed to contribute new qualitative and quantitative findings on how 9-19 year olds are accessing and using the internet to inform theory, research and policy. Key themes sought to balance an understanding of online opportunities and risks, examining how each relates to the other.

The project adopted a child-centred approach, also seeking the views of parents to complement or contrast with those of children in building up a picture of domestic internet use. The research design included three phases:

- ❑ Phase 1: 14 focus groups conducted with 9-19 year olds around the UK, together with nine family visits and a children's online advisory panel.
- ❑ Phase 2: A national, in-home, 40-minute face to face survey of 1511 9-19 year olds, together with a self-completion questionnaire to 906 parents of the 9-17 year olds.
- ❑ Phase 3: 13 focus group/paired-depth interviews, together with children's online panel and five interviews with youth website producers.

Given the sensitive nature of the questions asked, the research formulated a careful ethics policy (see www.children-go-online.net). Research highlights are as follows:

- ❑ Nearly all children and young people (98%) have used the internet: 75% of 9-19 year olds have accessed the internet from a computer at home, and school access is near universal (92%); 36% have more than one computer at home, 24% live in a household with broadband access; and 19% have internet access in their bedroom. Access platforms are diversifying, yet socioeconomic differences in the extent and quality of access persist, as do age and gender differences in the extent and quality of internet use. Indeed, the project identified a wide range of ways in which different groups of young people are using the internet.
- ❑ Looking beyond the idea of a binary divide, a continuum of digital inclusion is hypothesised, separating those for whom the internet offers a rich, engaging and stimulating resource and those for whom it remains narrow and unengaging, if occasionally useful. In this respect, the project contributes to ongoing research linking the digital divide to broader concerns over digital – or social – exclusion and inclusion, adding a new and distinctive focus on children and young people.
- ❑ Several methods explored children and young people's experience of undesirable forms of content and contact. For example, although more than half have seen pornography online, this was mostly unintentional and, interestingly, resulted in mixed responses. Some are unconcerned, some are disgusted or upset. Risky forms

of contact are also commonplace: one third of 9-19 year old daily and weekly users have received unwanted sexual or nasty comments online or by text message; 46% have given out personal information online, 30% have made an online acquaintance, and 8% have met an online acquaintance face to face. Again, following up these experiences with children reveals a range of responses, depending on age, gender, personality, family communication, etc, inviting a careful and contextualised response to online risks by policy-makers.

- ❑ A further theme was education and learning. Findings show that the internet has become a key information resource to support school work but that, despite their being widely identified as 'experts', 'the internet generation', children continue to struggle with the internet. A range of online competences were explored, from acquisition of specific skills to broader questions of critical literacy (e.g. evaluation of the trustworthiness and reliability of websites). Internet literacy emerges as an important player in the balance, struck differently in different households, between online opportunities and risks.
- ❑ Parents were found to be highly ambivalent regarding the internet, introducing it at home to support their child's education, but then anxious about the accompanying risks. Their expertise was found to lag behind that of their children, resulting in a series of misunderstandings which affect parental support for and regulation of children's internet use. Several project outputs analysed the complex relations between parental and child expertise and family dynamics in the home.
- ❑ Generally, parents seem to underestimate the risks their children experience online. On the other hand, it appears that children underestimate the rules and regulatory practices their parents attempt to implement. Parental anxieties may contribute to making domestic regulation ineffective, while children's enthusiasm for the internet (and for maintaining their online privacy) results in some risky behaviours. The challenge for policy intervention is considerable, and several dissemination activities and project outputs have been concerned to develop ways forward with policy makers, industry representatives, police, government departments (including the Department for Education and Skills and the Home Office), regulators (e.g. Ofcom), children's charities and parenting groups.
- ❑ Young people are primarily excited by the internet as a communication medium, and they relish making skilful choices about communication, comparing email/instant messenger/text etc in terms of intimacy, embarrassment, privacy and cost, even preferring mediated to face-to-face communication. Most online communication is with local friends and they show little interest in contacting strangers. Despite popular expectation, the research did not find that online communication particularly encourages online participation in civic or public spheres. Indeed, an emergent theme of the project was young people's disaffection not only with political participation in general but with the hope the internet could change things. Rather, they were sceptical of the online invitation to 'have your say', leaving such participation to those already interested in, rather than drawing in those new to, political or civic concerns.

The research findings have been widely disseminated through several launch events for research users, and through the mass media, , invited policy presentations, project reports to non-academic research users, and a series of particular policy or industry initiatives or outcomes, as detailed in the final report. Academic dissemination has followed, with 30 articles/book chapters published or in press, a series of keynote lectures to national and international conferences, and a monograph in progress (contracted by Polity Press).

MAIN REPORT

1. BACKGROUND

As UK households gain access to the internet, the growing significance of the internet in everyday life raises questions for social scientists and policy makers. Public discussion is moving beyond the initial hyperbole of high hopes or moral panics, as a complex picture emerges of the diverse ways in which people use this new technology (see 3, 23, 30¹), suggesting in turn a range of ways in which the internet is socially shaped and socially embedded within the practices of everyday life (2, 4, 22).

Young people are the target of a range of policy initiatives designed to realise the benefits of the internet while minimising the potential risks. These are often developed, of necessity, in the absence of rigorous empirical data, making an informed assessment of access, attitudes, skills and uses essential. The research literature similarly is shifting from asking about access to asking about use, particularly regarding the quality, meaning, diversity and consequences of internet use across different contexts (1). Further, many have called for a continuing effort to identify emerging themes and issues regarding children's internet use.

2. OBJECTIVES

The *UK Children Go Online* (UKCGO) project was designed to contribute new qualitative and quantitative findings on how 9-19 year olds are accessing and using the internet, focusing on four key themes:

1. Access, inequalities and the digital divide
2. Undesirable forms of content and contact
3. Education, informal learning and literacy
4. Communication, identity and participation

Specific objectives were to:

1. Provide in-depth qualitative data on the emerging place of the internet in children and young people's lives.
2. Provide detailed, national survey data documenting the extent and nature of understandings, practices and contexts of internet use among 9-19 year olds and their parents.
3. Target original empirical research on key policy-relevant domains, drawing out timely policy recommendations.
4. Ensure that children's own voices are heard in public and policy debates.
5. Develop our theoretical understanding of household adoption and appropriation of the internet.

¹ All numbers in the text refer to references listed under 'Outputs'.

It is judged that the research objectives have been met successfully. The findings have advanced understanding of each theme and, additionally, of their interrelations (Objectives 1 and 2; see 'Results').

Analysis was structured to ensure prompt dissemination of headline findings to research users, with academic publications following after (see 'Outputs'). Theoretical work (Objective 5) comprises several articles in press and a book contracted by Polity Press (in preparation).

Objective 4 was met through the children's online advisory panel, the multimedia presentation of findings (including audio-recordings of children's voices), active dissemination to parent groups, police, charities, internet service providers, public policy groups, etc.

The project underwent minor changes to the anticipated timetable, starting three months later than anticipated, with ESRC permission, to recruit the research officer, and was then delayed by a few weeks ensure a satisfactory survey sample. Additionally, some changes to the original design are explained below.

3. METHODS

The project was designed with two overlapping phases, qualitative (16 focus groups) and quantitative (child plus parent surveys of 1000 internet users and 500 nonusers), together with a children's advisory panel. This was modified somewhat as follows:

- ❑ By the time the survey was commissioned, most children had experienced the internet, making for few nonusers. It was judged more productive to survey all 1500 using a common questionnaire, branched for non/low/medium/high users, to capture gradations in access and use.
- ❑ Some resources were retained for focus groups and interviews with website producers following the survey.
- ❑ Recruiting an offline children's advisory panel proved difficult, and so an online panel was drawn schools, previous focus groups and panels maintained by children's charities, permitting participation from young people across the UK in a non-threatening environment. The panel met daily over a two week period (1-2 hours each evening) in a private, secure chat room and message board area on LSE's WebCT service (in 2003 and 2005).

The final research design was as follows (see 'Annex' and Reports 1, 2 and 5):

- ❑ *Phase 1:* 14 focus groups conducted with 9-19 year olds around the UK, these consisting of a semi-structured discussion in secondary schools and post-16 colleges, and a mind-mapping exercise in primary schools (Summer 2003). Nine family visits (following up those from a previous project) combined separate parent and child interviews with in-home observations of internet use (2003/4). The children's online advisory panel informed the survey design (2003). All interviews were audio-taped, fully transcribed and analysed using Nvivo.
- ❑ *Phase 2:* A national, in-home, 40-minute face to face survey of 1511 9-19 year olds and 906 parents of the 9-17 year olds, using Random Location sampling across the UK. The design was informed by the qualitative research, the User Advisory Panel and other comparable surveys (SAFT, PEW, etc). The fieldwork was conducted by BMRB via multi-media computer-assisted personal interviewing

(CAPI) with children, including a 'private' self-completion section for sensitive areas of questioning, plus a paper questionnaire completed by their parents (January-March 2004). Both questionnaires were piloted prior to fieldwork. The dataset was cleaned and then analysed using SPSS and AMOS.

- *Phase 3:* 13 focus group/paired-depth interviews combining semi-structured discussion with website evaluation and observations of internet use (Autumn 2004). The children's online panel focused on emerging findings (2005). Five interviews with youth website producers were conducted. Interviews were recorded and analysed as above.

4. ETHICS

A range of experts were consulted (LSE Ethics Panel, BMRB, Market Research Society, guidelines from BPS, BSA and Children's Charities) before drawing up a project ethics policy (see www.children-go-online). In brief, all participants, plus the parents of under 18's, signed an age-appropriate 'informed consent' form outlining project aims, use of data, anonymity, etc.. Particular attention was paid to the section of the questionnaire completed by children in private.

All families received internet safety information form Childnet-International to address any later concerns. BMRB's quality-check interviews with 10% of respondents reported few or no problems. Participating schools and the family visit sample received the project's final report.

5. RESULTS

The main findings for each key area of the research are briefly summarised here (also see numbered outputs).

Access, inequalities and the digital divide

Nearly all children and young people (98%) have used the internet: 75% of 9-19 year olds have accessed the internet from a computer at home, and school access is near universal (92%); 36% have more than one computer at home, 24% live in a household with broadband access; and 19% have internet access in their bedroom. Access platforms are diversifying, with children' having computers (71%), mobile phones (38%), digital television (17%) and games consoles (8%) with internet access. Socioeconomic differences are sizeable: 88% of middle class though only 61% of working class children have accessed the internet at home.

Use is fairly frequent: 9-19 year olds are divided between daily users (41%) and weekly users (43%); however, some make low (13%) or no (3%) use of the internet. Of these, 47% of low/non-users say that they lack access, 25% are not interested, 15% don't know how to use it, and 14% lack the time. Most 9-19 year olds are online for less than an hour – still less than they watch television or listen to music: 19% spend about ten minutes per day online and 48% between half an hour and one hour.

Of 9-19 year olds who go online daily or weekly, 90% use it for school/college work, 94% for information, 72% to send emails, 70% to play games, 55% to send instant messages and 45% to download music. Further, 44% look for information on careers/education, 40% look for products/shop online, 26% read the news and 21% use

chat rooms. Some use it for less-approved activities: among 12-19 year olds who go online daily or weekly, 21% admit to copying schoolwork, 8% claim to have hacked, 5% visited a dating site, 4% have sent a hostile/bullying message and 2% visited a gambling site (Reports 1 & 2).

Undesirable forms of content and contact

The risks of undesirable content

More than half have seen pornography online (57% of 9-19 year old daily and weekly users), mostly unintentionally: 38% of 9-19 year old regular users have seen a pornographic pop-up advert while doing something else, 36% have accidentally found themselves on a porn site when looking for something else, and 25% have received pornographic junk mail. Parents and children agree that the internet is more likely to expose children to pornography than are television, video or magazines. Further, 22% of 9-19 year old daily and weekly users who have accidentally ended up on a site with violent or gruesome pictures, while 9% have found a site hostile or hateful to a group of people.

However, the survey and, especially, the focus group findings reveal mixed responses to online porn: more than half claim not to be bothered by it, but a sizeable minority are upset or disgusted. Interestingly, 45% of 18-19 year old internet users who have seen any pornography (on/offline) think they were too young to have seen it when they first did.

The risks of online communication

One third of 9-19 year old daily and weekly users have received unwanted sexual (31%) or nasty comments (33%) online or by text message, though only 7% of parents are aware that their child has received sexual comments and only 4% that their child has been bullied online. Also important is the frequency with which children divulge personal information online: 46% say that they have given out personal information to someone that they met online; further, 40% say that they have pretended about themselves online.

Although most children are aware, from media coverage, of the risks of meeting people they don't know, 30% have made an online acquaintance, and 8% say they have met face to face with someone whom they first met online. Nonetheless, follow up questions reveal that the vast majority told a friend or parent and, generally, went with a friend to the meeting, resulting in few less than positive meetings.

Multivariate analyses show that social-psychological factors, family communication patterns and gender all play a role in the interaction risks that are taken by teens online (29). While online psychological characteristics of the teens affect the frequency of online communication and of having online friends, offline confidence influences whether they look for personal advice or meet people offline. Offline family communication patterns and parental attitudes towards the internet and other media also had an impact on communication online by young people.

Education, informal learning and literacy

The internet has become a key information resource to support school work, and 60% of pupils regard the internet as the most useful tool for getting information for homework. Nonetheless, the research has identified a range of ways in which children struggle with the internet (6). Children and young people encounter some difficulties with searching, critical evaluation and a range of online skills, partly because they have received only patchy educational support (30). They lack key skills in evaluating online content: 38% of pupils aged 9-19 trust most of the information on the internet, and only 33% of 9-19

year old daily and weekly users have been taught how to judge the reliability of online information. Indeed, many (30%) have not received lessons on using the internet.

While the qualitative work suggests that young people prefer to learn about the internet informally, through trial-and-error, it is of concern that a sizable proportion has received little guidance on safety, reliability and searching – most notably the youngest and oldest groups. Indeed, the 18-19 year olds consistently show lower access, use and skills, compared with 16-17 year olds and younger teens, reflecting both their later introduction to the internet and their reduced access after leaving school. The 9-11 year olds reveal a greater desire to learn certain skills (e.g. webpage creation) than seems currently supported in schools.

Although most parents have acquired internet access at home in order to support their children's education, their attitudes are highly ambivalent towards this both-beneficial and risky, difficult technology. Interestingly, parents still think that books are most likely to help their child do better at school (82%), followed by the internet (73%) or the computer (40%).

Communication, identity and participation

Young people are more excited by the internet as a communication medium, with internet (instant message, email, chat) and mobile phone (talk, text) used mainly to contact local friends. They make skilful choices about communication, comparing the characteristics of different channels in terms of intimacy, embarrassment, privacy and cost, often preferring mediated to face-to-face communication. Generally, whether for passing time, making arrangements, getting advice, gossiping or flirting, the phone and text messaging are preferred over emailing or instant messaging. So, while 53% of email, IM and chat users think that talking to people on the internet is less satisfying as talking to them in real life, almost half have a different view.

Most online communication is with local friends. Being in constant contact is highly valued, and they show little interest in contacting strangers. 25% of 12-19 year old daily and weekly users say they go online to get advice. Interactive uses of the internet are popular: 44% 9-19 year old weekly users have completed a quiz online, 25% have sent an email or text message to a website, 22% have voted for something online and 17% have sent pictures or stories to a website. Further, 54% of 12-19 year olds who use the internet at least weekly have sought out sites concerned with political or civic issues.

Interestingly, many visit only one or two civic sites, and they take little further action; similarly, not all their websites are uploaded or maintained; the implication is that youthful participation online is enthusiastic but often short-lived, and it seems that many lack the motivation to participate (16, 17). Focus group discussions suggest that it is when the institutional structures (school, family, peers) that shape young people's daily lives support civic participation that young people feel enabled to engage with the civic or public sphere, on or offline (24).

Cluster analysis identified three groups of teenagers - interactors, the civic-minded and the disengaged - each of which is distinctive in its social context and approach to the internet. Drawing on insights from audience reception research, the project addressed attempts to engage youth through civic sites, analysing interviews with website producers and teenagers to contrast the aim of providing a youthful public sphere online with the difficulties of enhancing young people's political efficacy (11, 28).

Indeed, website producers stress 'being heard', but for young people, 'having your say' is not the same as 'being listened to', and many are critical of the online invitation to participate (24). This is partly because, as the qualitative research suggests, they are

constructed by adult society less as citizens with rights and responsibilities than as citizens-in-waiting.

Interrelating the themes

Access and use

Access strongly influences, though does not wholly determine, use. Multivariate analyses show that middle class teenagers, those with home access and those who have spent more years online tend to use the internet more often, spend more time online per day and, consequently, have greater online skills. Parents' experience of the internet matters: daily users have parents who use the internet more often and are more expert than less frequent users (Report 4). While inequalities across households are largely socioeconomic, within households age, gender and generation matter. Age trends are evident across all aspects of access and use while gender matters more for certain kinds of use, though less so for overall amount of use (6, 15, 18).

Looking beyond the idea of a binary divide, a continuum of digital inclusion is proposed. Gradations in frequency of internet use are found to map onto a progression in the take-up of online opportunities among young people (from basic through moderate to broad and then all-round users), with demographic, use and expertise variables all playing a role in accounting for variations in the take-up of online opportunities (27). Indeed, it seems that a new divide is opening up between those for whom the internet is an increasingly rich, engaging and stimulating resource and those for whom it remains a narrow, unengaging, if occasionally useful, resource (Report 5).

Balancing opportunities and risks- the role of internet literacy

Boys, older teens and middle class children experience a broader range of online opportunities and risks (26). A striking finding from multivariate analysis of the survey findings is that online opportunities and risks go hand in hand: the more children and young people experience the one, the more they also experience the other, and vice versa. Importantly also, internet literacy positively influences the breadth of both online opportunities and risks experienced. Indeed, not only do the most skilled young people fail to avoid online risks, but their risky encounters increase with increased use – though perhaps these young people are more able to deal with the risks. Additionally, parental rules and practices were found to indirectly increase both opportunities and risks if, and only if, they increase children's amount of use (and literacy).

Indeed, internet literacy emerges as an important mediator in the balance, struck differently in different households, between online opportunities and risks. Certainly children are gaining valued social status through their internet-related expertise, facilitating some reverse socialisation as children help parents use the internet (16). For example, only 12% of parents consider themselves 'advanced' users compared with 32% of children. Young people's range of internet literacy skills, while leaving much scope for development, is found to mediate the effectiveness of their use and, therefore, the opportunities they take up (Report 4). Further, path analysis techniques suggest that some forms of participation, especially interactivity and creativity, are encouraged by the experience of using the internet, thus gaining internet literacy (interest, skills, confidence, etc.), although other forms of participation (e.g. visiting civic websites) depends primarily on demographic factors (more older, middle class girls) (Report 3; 12, 24).

Regulating the internet at home

The research identified significant gaps in understanding between parents and children (in internet expertise, in awareness of risks and in acknowledgement of domestic regulation implemented) which impede effective regulation of children's internet use

within the home (19, 21). For example, most parents claim that they directly support their child on the internet, but their children are less likely to report this. Similarly, most parents ban their children from giving out personal information, yet only half of children recognise this rule and, further, half have given out such information (Reports 2 & 4; 26).

The research also shows that children are adept at evading regulation, suggesting a game of strategy and tactics played out between parents and children. Where policy positions regulation as a buffer against the impact of external harms, this is shown to be fallible, even undermining the 'democratic' family. It seems that negotiation and trust, rather than authority and rules, are hallmarks of the changing family, and this makes the internet attractive to children precisely as a means to express their identity, autonomy and privacy apart from their parents (2, 25). One result is that relying on parents to implement effective domestic regulation is problematic, not because parents are unwilling or incompetent but because this is a difficult task given the realities of everyday family life. The research shows that simple parental bans on certain online activities are ineffective and that more subtle regulation can have unpredictable effects. Generally, if parents exert tight controls over their children's online activities, this seems to undermine children's freedom and privacy to explore and express themselves online, albeit also reducing the risks, while if they loosen these controls, children encounter more online risks but also more opportunities.

The qualitative work, followed up by the survey, revealed a range of ways in which children and young people value and protect their privacy online, more from their parents than from commerce (20, see also 8, 10): 63% of 12-19 year old home users have taken some action to hide their online activities from their parents, and 69% of 9-17 year old daily and weekly users say they mind their parents restricting or monitoring their internet use. Theoretically, this raises interesting questions regarding the demarcation of the public/private boundary at home (10, 25). In policy terms, it raises problems for parental guidance and regulation. Further, the research identified a series of challenges for parents in managing their children's internet use – the greater internet expertise of children (18% of parents say they don't know how to help their child use the internet safely), the privacy of internet use, confusion over filtering (only 15% of parents say they can install this), and the difficulty of implementing clear rules.

6. FUTURE RESEARCH PRIORITIES

New questions arise as ICTs converge (television and internet, mobile and web, etc), altering domestic practices, challenging parental authority and expertise and stimulating new uses. This research project has stressed the importance in future research of hearing from children directly, comparing the experiences of children and parents, triangulating qualitative and quantitative data and informing theory in relation to the digital divide, literacy, participation and online risks.

The final report outlines research priorities to further academic and policy goals. Given the pace of technological and market developments, these include continuing to track and understand children and young people's access to and use of the internet (fixed and mobile), in relation to both opportunities and risks. Inequalities and digital exclusion will continue to demand research effort; especially for specific subgroups that require dedicated projects (disabled children, ethnic minorities, very young children, etc).

Project findings reveal the importance of researching websites/content so as to enable children's active participation online and improve their safety. Comparisons would be

fruitful between low/narrow users and those who are gaining creative, participatory or even socially inappropriate skills. Other priorities include research on critical and consumer literacy, children's privacy protections and designing effective safety awareness messages for children, parents and teachers.

7. ACTIVITIES

Project advisory panels

The User Advisory Panel met face-to-face in January, May and September 2003, June 2004 and February 2005, with regular email consultation in between. Members were:

- ❑ Karin Sieger - Director of Research & Analysis, AOL UK
- ❑ Camille de Stempel - Director of Public Policy, AOL UK
- ❑ Andrea Millwood Hargrave – Research Director, BSC/ITC
- ❑ Stephen Carrick-Davies – Chief Executive, Childnet-International
- ❑ John Fisher – Chief Executive, Citizens Online
- ❑ John Carr – Internet Advisor, NCH - Action for Children
- ❑ Alison Preston – Senior Research Associate, Strategy and Market Research, Ofcom
- ❑ Andrew Carruthers – Policy Executive, Content & Standards, Ofcom

The Children's Panel met for two periods over a full week 2003 and 2005 (comprising daily chat room logs and a series of linked message board contributions).

Public launch of findings

Survey findings launch: this took place in July with speeches/reception to an invited audience of 30+ representatives of the internet industry, children's charities, educators, content providers, law enforcement, parent representatives and government departments.

Final report launch: this presented an integrated account of the main findings together with policy recommendations, to 50+ senior user-community representatives in April 2005.

Press coverage: launch events and project reports were accompanied by press releases. The research was widely disseminated in the media (see list of over 120 reports in 'Society Today'), including the Today Programme, BBC1 Lunchtime News, BBC Evening News, BBC Breakfast News, GMTV Breakfast Bulletin, ITV News Online, the Guardian, Daily Mail, Metro, New Statesman, Higher Education Chronicle and many other international, national and local news reports.

Keynote/plenary presentations given by Sonia Livingstone on the project include:

- ❑ Information, Communication & Society Conference, Oxford Internet Institute, 2003
- ❑ EC's Safety Awareness, Facts and Tools Conference (SAFT), Stockholm, 2003
- ❑ Launch Conference, Centre for the Study of Childhood and Youth, University of Sheffield, 2004
- ❑ National Association of Advisors on Computers in Education Annual Conference, Scarborough, 2004
- ❑ Digital Generations: Children, young people and the media, Conference, Institute of Education, London, 2004

- ❑ Finnish Convention on Communication Research, Helsinki, 2005
- ❑ British Sociological Society's conference, Young People and New Technologies, Northampton, 2005
- ❑ Association of Internet Researchers Annual Conference, Chicago, 2005
- ❑ Conference, Safety & Security in a Networked World Conference, Oxford Internet Institute, 2005
- ❑ 9th Nordic Youth Research Information Symposium, Stockholm, 2006

Additionally, the research was presented at around 30 academic seminars and conferences in the Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UK and USA (see 'Society Today' database).

Talks by Sonia Livingstone to user-community include:

- ❑ Wise Kids Conference for EU Safer Internet Day, Cardiff, 2004
- ❑ Promoting Mobile & Internet Safety conference, London, 2004
- ❑ e-Society & Yahoo conference, Where is the internet going? London, 2004
- ❑ Communications Regulation and Low Income seminar, Ofcom, London, 2004
- ❑ Presentation to the Home Office Internet Task Force, in the presence of the Home Secretary, Charles Clark, MPs and task force members, London, 2005
- ❑ Cumberland Lodge Conference, Childhoods today, Windsor Great Park, 2005
- ❑ 'Children's media' presentation to BBC senior managers/specialist staff, 2005
- ❑ Westminster Media Forum, presentation on media literacy, 2005
- ❑ Protecting Children from Online Abuse, Capita conference, London July 2005

Workshop hosted:

'Qualitative, longitudinal research on families and technology', LSE, December 2004.

Additional activities, directly or indirectly resulting from the project, include:

Sonia Livingstone was invited to serve on:

- ❑ Home Office Internet Task Force Sub Group on Research Issues, and the Sub Group G 'Internet Safety Content Agent' Steering Committee (2005-6)
- ❑ Steering Committee, DFES' project to develop the DirectGov for Kids website (2005-6)
- ❑ Media Literacy Research Forum for Ofcom
- ❑ Conference committee, Voice of the Listener and Viewer's Annual Conference on Children's Media (Nov. 2005).

She has been appointed Vice-Chair of the Internet Watch Foundation (2004-), and has conducted related consultancies for Vodafone Group (2004) on parental safety advice for mobiles, for Atticmedia/Culture Online/Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2004) on developing a creative website for children, and for Ofcom on media literacy.

8. OUTPUTS

The project website (www.children-go-online.net) contains project details and the six UKCGO projects, available for downloading; all were circulated electronically to a wide list of contacts (academic, industry, policy, public), and published versions of Reports 1

(750 copies), 2 (1000 copies) and 6 (1000 copies) have been widely circulated. Nearly 50 organisations have set up links to the project website.

Report 1 *UK Children Go Online: Listening to young people's experiences* (2003, October).

Report 2 *UK Children Go Online: Surveying the experiences of young people and their parents* (2004, July).

Report 3 *Active Participation or Just More Information? Young people's take up of opportunities to act and interact on the internet* (2004, October).

Report 4 *Internet Literacy among Children and Young People* (2005, February).

Report 5 *Inequalities and the Digital Divide in Children and Young People's Internet Use* (2005, April).

Report 6 *UK Children Go Online: Final report of key project findings* (2005, April).

Publications for non-academic audiences

- ❑ Livingstone, S. (2004). Interview for 'Media Literacy: Future proofing the viewer experience'. *Policy Tracker*, #1.
- ❑ Livingstone, S. (2004). What is media literacy? *Intermedia*, 32(3), 18-20. September.
- ❑ Livingstone, S., and Millwood Hargrave, A. (2004). *Response to the Consultation on Ofcom's Strategy and Priorities for the Promotion of Media Literacy*. London: Ofcom.
- ❑ Livingstone, S. (in press). Computers and the Internet. *The Chicago Companion to the Child*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ❑ A multimedia presentation highlighting key findings, shown on several academic/policy occasions.

Academic publications

- (1) Livingstone, S. (2003). Children's Use of the Internet. *New Media and Society*, 5(2), 147-166.
- (2) Livingstone, S. (2003). Mediated Childhoods. In J. Turow and A. L. Kavanaugh (Eds.), *The Wired Homestead*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- (3) Livingstone, S. (2004). Media Literacy and the Challenge of New Information and Communication Technologies. *Communication Review*, 7, 3-14.
- (4) Livingstone, S. (2004). The Challenge of Changing Audiences. *European Journal of Communication*, 19(1), 75-86.
- (5) Livingstone, S. (2004). Internetkompetenz – Entwicklung und Grundzüge. In J. Lauffer (Ed.), *In 8 Sekunden um die Welt: Kinder, Jugendliche, Familien*. AJZ-Druck & Verlag.
- (6) Livingstone, S., and Bober, M. (2004). Taking up Opportunities? Children's uses of the internet for education, communication and participation. *E-Learning* 1(3), 395-419.
- (7) Livingstone, S. (2004). Children Online: Consumers or citizens? *ESRC/AHRB Cultures of Consumption Working Paper Series*.
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Datasets

The following datasets have been submitted and accepted by the Essex Data Archive:

- ❑ Quantitative: (1) Children's survey, (2) Parents' survey
- ❑ Qualitative: (1) Family observations, (2) Focus groups, (3) Paired depth interviews

9. IMPACTS

Findings of the UKCGO research project have informed a range of initiatives including:

- ❑ Public safety campaign materials developed by the Virtual Global Taskforce
- ❑ Educational materials distributed to all UK secondary schools, as developed by Microsoft (including a summary of the project findings)
- ❑ The DfES' Parents' Online Guidance
- ❑ Children's Charities' Coalition for Internet Safety's (CHIS) digital manifesto on 'Child Safety Online'
- ❑ Development of the Government's Connexions' Epal website
- ❑ Childnet-International's Kidsmart Parent Seminars
- ❑ BBC New Media's Kids ID project
- ❑ BT's Digital Divide research
- ❑ Ofcom's work on assessment/promotion of media literacy
- ❑ USA's Office of Electronic Government and Technology report
- ❑ France's Internet Rights Forum research

UK Children Go Online reports have been requested by Government (HO, DfES, DCMS, Office for National Statistics) and related bodies (Becta, Connexions, Hansard, DirectGov, EU Safer Internet Action Plan, New Zealand Ministry of Education, Conservative Party, Nesta Futurelab), police constabularies, schools, parent organisations (e.g. Parents Online, National Family & Parenting Institute), children's charities (e.g. Unicef, Save the Children, NSPCC, Barnardo's, ChildLine, NCH, Childnet International, NCB, Kidscape, Children's Rights Alliance), broadcasters and regulators (e.g. BBC, BFI, BBFC, ICRA, IWF, Ofcom), internet/mobile service providers (e.g. AOL UK, Cable & Wireless, Intel, Wanadoo, Vodafone) and filtering services (e.g. Cyberpatrol) and new media companies (e.g. Intuitive Media, Cimex Media, Atticmedia).

ANNEX: RESEARCH SAMPLES

The UKCGO children and young people's survey sample (N=1,511)

Age	9-11 years (N=380), 12-15 years (N=605), 16-17 years (N=274), 18-19 years (N=251), Don't know (N=1)
Gender	Boys (N=842), Girls (N=669)
SES	AB (N=264), C1 (N=418), C2 (N=407), DE (N=422)
Region	England (N=1,228), Wales (N=69), Scotland (N=166) Northern Ireland (N=48)
Ethnicity	White (N=1,336), Non-white (N=171), Not stated (N=4)

The UKCGO parents' survey sample (N=906)

Age	18-24 years (N=5), 25-34 years (N=134), 34-44 years (N=470), 45-54 years (N=209), 55+ years (N=42), Not stated (N=46)
Relation to child	Mothers (N=659), Fathers (N=232), Other (N=10), Not stated (N=5)
SES	AB (N=167), C1 (N=254), C2 (N=257), DE (N=228)
Region	England (N=719), Wales (N=42), Scotland (N=109), Northern Ireland (N=36)
Ethnicity	White (N=841), Non-white (N=63), Not stated (N=2)

The UKCGO family visit sample

Family	Age of child	Gender	Area	Location	Social grade	Family type
1 'Ted'	18	Male	Town	Surrey	B – Middle class	Couple, single child
2 'Anisah'	15	Female	City	London	C2 – Skilled working class	Couple, one older brother and sister
3 'Megan'	12	Female	Suburb	Essex	C1 – Lower middle class	Couple, one older brother
4 'Jane'	18	Female	Rural	Surrey	C1 – Lower middle class	Couple, one older brother
5 'Poppy'	16	Female	City	London	B – Middle class	Couple, one older brother
6 'Eve'	13	Female	Town	Surrey	C1 – Lower middle class	Couple, one younger sister
7 'Simon'	13	Male	Town	Surrey	C1 – Lower middle class	Couple, one older, two younger sisters
8 'Wilf'	13	Male	Rural	Hertfordshire	C1 – Lower middle class	Couple, one younger brother
9 'Daniel'	20	Male	City	London	B – Middle class	Couple, single child

Note: The age of the child was recorded at the time of the return visit.

The UKCGO focus group sample (phases 1 and 3)

School	Type	Size	Area	Location	Social grade	Achievement	Age	Date	N
A	Primary	97	Rural	Hertfordshire	Mixed	Above av.	10-11	July 2003	8
B	Secondary	369	Town/rural	Derbyshire	Middle class	Above av.	12-13	July 2003	8
C	Secondary	928	City	London	Working class	Above av.	14-16	July 2003 Dec 2004	8 + 6
D	Secondary	1,148	Town	Essex	Mixed	Above av.	13 14-15	July 2003	14
E	Post-16	2,010	Town	Essex	Middle class	Slightly above av.	16-17	July 2003	10
F	Post-16	2,911	City	Greater Manchester	Working class	Below av.	17-19	June 2003	7
G	Primary	501	City	South Yorkshire	Working class	Average	10-11	Nov 2004	8
H	Secondary	763	City	South Yorkshire	Working class	Below av.	14-15	Dec 2004	5
I	Primary	178	Town/rural	Oxfordshire	Mixed	Above av.	10-11	Dec 2004	8
J	Secondary	1,343	Town	Oxfordshire	Mixed	Above av.	14-15	Dec 2004	6

Note: School information came from the most recent OFSTED inspection report and compared with National Average Performance levels (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Children's online panel

Pseudo-nym	Age	Location	Panel year	Pseudo-nym	Age	Location	Panel year
'Anne'	15	Essex	2003	'Oliver'	17/18	Kent	2003/4
'Colin'	15	Essex	2003	'Greg'	15	Essex	2004
'Milly'	15	Essex	2003	'Lucy'	13	Cambridge	2004
'Caroline'	15	Essex	2003	'Tai-Tai'	15	Yorkshire	2004
'Amil'	15	Essex	2003	'Kacy'	15	Essex	2004
'Manu'	18	London	2003	'Kathleen'	15	Essex	2004
'Rosie'	13	Derbyshire	2003	'Eileen'	15	Essex	2004
'Bethany'	14/15	London	2003/4				

Interviews with website producers (Summer-Autumn 2004)

Name	Organisation	Website
Lindsay Jackson	DfES	www.need2know.co.uk
Alun Francis	Greater Manchester Connexions	www.epal.tv
Tanya Eddowes	Childnet Academy	www.childnetacademy.org
Rebecca Shallcross	BBC Children's Online	www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc & /cbeebies
Sarah Dain	BBC Teens	www.bbc.co.uk/teens