Webwise 2017 Parenting Survey

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Summary of Findings

The *Webwise 2017 Parenting Survey* is a collaboration between Webwise, the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre, and the National Parents Council Primary (NPC). Parents on the NPC mailing list were surveyed regarding attitude to online risks and safety. 1274 responses were received, covering digital parenting issues for children aged 0-18. Comparison with findings of the 2012 *Survey of Parental Attitudes* was used to highlight relevant trends in parental attitudes.

The survey addressed 4 main topics: 1) Strategies for digital parenting; 2) Attitudes towards children's internet use; 3) Concerns about online risks; and 4) Appropriate age for social networking.

Strategies for digital parenting

- Parenting approaches towards children's use of the internet continue to be a mix of 'restrictive' and 'active' mediation.
- Restrictive approaches include: setting time limits (73%); use of parental controls and filters (39%); as well as monitoring (52%) and supervision (34%).
- 68% of parents who responded also use 'enabling' or 'active' strategies including regularly talking with their children about what they do online. This is an increase from 62% since the 2012 *Survey of Parental Attitudes*.

Attitudes towards children's internet use

- While three quarters of parents (74%) believe using the internet is important for their child's education, only a quarter (25%) believe that the benefits of the internet outweigh any risks for their child.
- Parents are quite confident about their own abilities and only 16% say their child knows more about using the internet than they do. Yet, just a third say they can protect their children when they are online.
- 53% are confident of their ability to monitor their children's use of the internet. But 40% also acknowledge that it is easy for their children to use the internet without the parent knowing.
- Parents' confidence in monitoring what their child does online has declined from 67% in 2012 to 53% in 2017.

Concerns about internet risks

- 45% of parents say the risks to children of using the internet outweigh the benefits. This is a sharp increase on 25% in 2012.
- Exposure to pornography (71%) and cyberbullying (70%) remain prominent risks cited by parents just as they were in 2012.
- Four main risks stand out in equal numbers as the most serious concerns for parents: Cyberbullying; Spending too much time online; Online grooming or sexual exploitation, and Accessing pornographic content.
- The ranking of top parental concerns remains the same irrespective of the age of the child. Some parental concerns increase with the child's age (e.g. accessing pornographic content and damaging their reputation) while other concerns diminish as the child grows older (e.g. online grooming and sexual exploitation).

- The concerns that worry parents the most are those that pose a direct threat to the child, e.g. cyberbullying and online grooming, despite the fact that actual incidence is rare.

The right age for social media

- 36% of the parents surveyed stated that 13 years and over was the appropriate age for a child to have a social media account, reflecting the current age restriction that applies to most social media platforms.
- 42% of parents would be in favour of raising the current age threshold for social networking from 13 years of age; 36% would retain it as is and 15% would be in favour of lowering the age limit.

Recommendations

In order to help their children to get the most out of going online, parents need dedicated support and guidance in relation to digital parenting and internet safety. Currently, many of the resources related to this topic are of a one-size-fits-all type. Some of the policy implications arising from the findings in this report include the following:

- Parents need more information and advice targeted to the age and needs of their children in order to help them in supporting their children's online use
- There is a need for a national one-stop-shop where parents and professionals working with children can go to get advice that is appropriate to the needs of their children.
- Advice for parents is mainly focused on risk and harm encouraging them to adopt policing and monitoring roles.
- There is very little advice presenting the benefits offered by the internet. More support is needed for parents if they are to help their children use technology for learning, building relationships and having fun.
- Parents need resources to help them to use their digital expertise to positively engage with their children.
- There is an ongoing need for a robust and up-to-date evidence base that measures children's online behaviour and the related risks.

Methodology

This report presents findings from an online survey of subscribers to the National Parents Council Primary mailing list. The survey was conducted during the first two weeks of January 2017. A questionnaire was circulated to all members of the list on the 3rd January 2017 (n = 7490). The survey was closed on 14th January 2017. A total of 1274 respondents completed the survey with a total response rate of 17%). 13 cases had missing data and these were excluded from the analysis, and thus this report is based on the 1261 valid cases.

The questionaire was based on the Survey of Parental Attitudes undertaken in 2012 by Webwise and the NPC. Comparisons with findings from the 2012 survey are included for comparison purposes.

Definitions

The definition of child in this report follows the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which defines child as "a human being below the age of 18".

Limitations

Limitations of the study arise from the convenience nature of the sample employed which is not generalizeable to the whole population. The findings presented in this report are intended as representative of parental attitudes and digital parenting concerns as identified solely by respondents to the Webwise NPC questionaire.

Introduction

Using the internet is today an everyday occurrence for Irish children of all ages. According to the *Net Children Go Mobile* project[1], children are going online in ever increasing numbers, using a very diverse range of devices. The wide use of smartphones and other handheld devices has also made internet use a more mobile and private experience. This has also made parental supervision more difficult.

However, as reported by *Net Children Go Mobile*, the home is still the place where children are most likely to go online. Internet access while on the move - such as on the way to school or when out and about – is still well below that of going online at home. Children are also going online at a younger and younger age. Advances in touch-screen technologies mean that children can use the internet before they can type or spell. For parents, this creates a whole new range of challenges.

Research suggests that a combination of parenting strategies – using technical tools, agreeing boundaries with children, and modelling good behaviour – is likely to be the most effective in promoting positive use of the internet by children.[2] Correspondingly, there is a need to support a diversity of approaches. Impartial, up-to-date information from parenting experts, educators, and mental health professionals is important. So too are parental controls and information and advice for parents on how best to use them.

Parents also need to adjust their approach to mediation of their children's internet use according to the age, abilities, and interests of their children. Adopting restrictive measures may be good at shielding children from risks – and may be appropriate at a younger age – but it also limits their access to the many benefits digital technologies offer and does little to build resilience.[3] Parents' own behaviour is also important: parents can have a positive impact on their children's use and enjoyment of the internet by modelling balanced digital habits themselves.

Guidance for effective digital parenting has emphasised the importance of maintaining a dialogue with children about the risks and the benefits of the online world. It is vital that parents talk to their children about the risks of cyberbullying, online pornography and risks of online sexual exploitation. However, they also need to have conversations with their children about the healthy and balanced use of technology to build friendships, learn, and have fun. Regular conversations on these topics will help promote balanced and healthy digital habits. To do this effectively, parents also need support.

Past advice for parents has focused on limiting the amount of time children spent online. Notably, the American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP) recommended no screen time before the age of two and no more than two hours a day thereafter. Focusing on the quantity of screen time is no longer seen as relevant. Technology now plays an important part in all aspects of children's lives. It is, therefore,

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[1] O'Neill, B. & Dinh, T. (2015). Net Children Go Mobile: Full findings from Ireland. Dublin: Dublin Institute of Technology

[2] Eastin, M. S., Greenberg, B. S., & Hofschire, L. (2006). Parenting the Internet. *Journal of Communication*, *56*, 486–504.

[3] Duerager, A., & Livingstone, S. (2012). *How can parents support children's internet safety?* Available at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/42872/

more appropriate for parents to think about when screens are used, what they are being used for, and whether this is having a positive or negative impact on the wellbeing of their child?

In 2016, the AAP issued new guidelines recommending that parents develop a family media plan that takes into account the health, education and entertainment needs of each individual child as well as the whole family; and then follow the family media plan together, revising it when necessary.[4] Approaches that rely on measuring screen time and comparing against a plan are likely to be difficult to follow through, especially in families that rely on professional childcare. A better approach is to strive for a healthy balance between time spent online and other activities.

Recently, media discourse about children and the internet has been dominated by concerns about 'internet addiction', digital 'detoxes', and 'fake' news. Against this background, it is not surprising that parents are concerned about the impact of spending too much time looking at screens and accessing unreliable information. It is possible that there is a symbiosis at play here and that media reports might give rise to parental concerns that are not well grounded in actual risk of harm. However, more research is needed to guide this debate and there is an urgent need for a robust and up-to-date evidence base that measures children's online behaviour and the related risks.

Finding ways to help parents support their children's internet use is good for children, homes, and communities. But it is important that parents are not left on their own in this task. Governmental agencies, civil society groups and industry also have a vital role to play in providing supports for parents. Webwise and the National Parents Council Primary, part of Ireland's Safer Internet Centre,[5] work together to raise awareness and provide resources for parents in dealing with issues relating to internet safety. The *Survey of Parental Attitudes* for Safer Internet Day 2017 provides an opportunity to reflect parents' concerns in this important debate.

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[4] 'American Academy of Pediatrics Announces New Recommendations for Children's Media Use', https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Announces-New-Recommendations-for-Childrens-Media-Use.aspx
[5] http://www.internetsafety.ie/website/ois/oisweb.nsf/page/siiproject-en

1. Parenting Strategies

The value of engaging in their children's internet use is something recognised by most parents. Whether this means sharing positive online activities together or, more negatively, imposing restrictions on what children can access or limiting the amount of time spent online, there are a number of different strategies that parents can employ to guide and support their children's online.

Parents were asked in the *Webwise 2017 Parenting Survey* which of a number of different strategies they employed in relation to their children's internet access. Table 1.1 lists the findings according to the age of the child.

Table 1.1: Do you have any rules or do anything about the access your child has to the Internet?

Parenting Measures	0-4yrs	5-8yrs	9-12yrs	13-17yrs	All
They can only access the Internet from a public space in the home - e.g. the living room or kitchen, not their bedroom.	56%	58%	54%	45%	54%
Use software filters to block access to inappropriate websites.	34%	40%	43%	32%	39%
Regularly check what they are doing online by viewing browser history files/emails/other records.	44%	49%	58%	55%	52%
Regularly talk to child about what they do online.	51%	62%	79%	78%	68%
Restrict the length of time they can spend online.	74%	74%	75%	70%	73%
Only permit use of the Internet when supervised/not on their own.	49%	42%	24%	15%	34%
Don't have any rules or restrictions governing child's Internet access.	3%	3%	4%	6%	4%

Main findings:

- Most parents employ a number of approaches to mediating their children's' use of the internet. Almost all the parents surveyed (96%) undertake some form of mediation in governing their child's online activities.

- The most commonly cited intervention is to restrict the length of time children can spend online. Three quarters of parents (73%) say they do this.

- At the same time, a majority of parents (68%) regularly talk to their children about what they do online. For 9-12 year olds and for teens, this rises to 79% and 78% respectively.

- A little over one third of parents (39%) use filters to block access to inappropriate websites. This has remained constant since the last survey in 2012.

- One third of parents (34%) only permit the use of the internet by their children when they are on their own. This compares with 49% of parents in 2012.

- At the same time, over half of parents (52%) say they regularly check their children's browser history, emails, and other records.

In the five years since a survey of this kind was last carried out, there has been a shift away from strategies that involve the direct supervision and monitoring of children when they are online. Just over half the parents surveyed (54%) say that their children can only access the internet from a public space in their home e.g. they can go online in living room, not their bedroom. In 2012, this was the most common measure in place is to mediate access to the internet (76.1%). This is primarily as a result of the fact that children are much more likely to use a personal device than a home PC to go online.

The most significant increase is in relation to limits on the time children are allowed spend online. This has become the most common strategy employed by parents with almost three-quarters saying they do this (73%), regardless of the age of the child. In 2012, just over two-thirds used this approach.

Encouragingly, most parents (68%) regularly talk to their children about what they do online. It is notable that parents of 9-12 year old children are most likely (79%) to talk regularly with their children about what they do online. As children are going online at a younger and younger ages, it is important to encourage and support parents of younger children to adopt this practice.

2. Parental Attitudes

Parental attitudes towards children's internet use, taking into account both the risks and the opportunities of the online world, and parents' confidence in their ability to provide guidance and support, is an important basis of digital parenting. How parents respond to their children's use of communications technologies will be informed by their own experiences and beliefs regarding its benefits.

In the survey, parents were asked to state their agreement with a number of statements relating to their perceptions of online opportunities as well as their own abilities to protect their children while online.

Figure 2.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements in relation to your child?
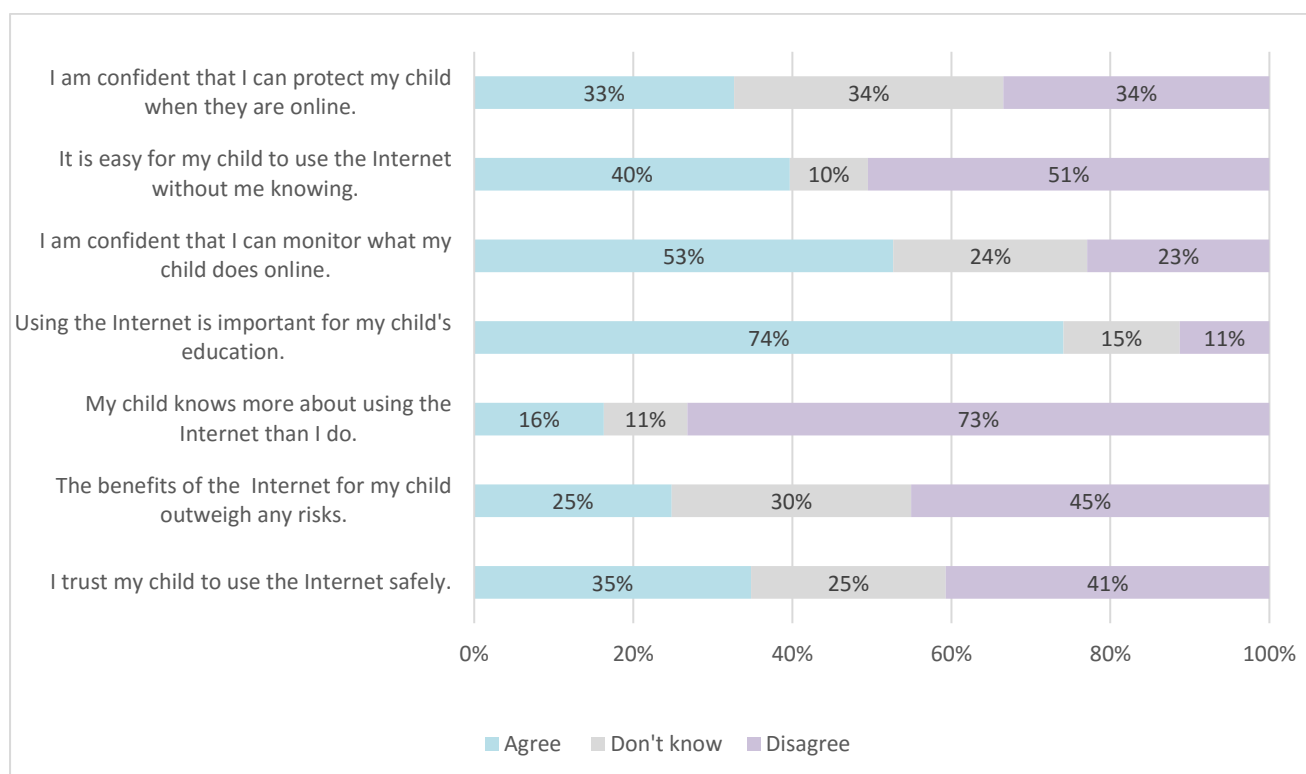
Main findings:

- Three quarters of parents (74%) believe using the internet is important for their child's education.
- At the same time, only a quarter (25%) believe that the benefits of the internet outweigh any risks for their child. A third of parents (30%) are undecided while 45% disagree that its benefits outweigh the risks.

- Just one third of parents (35%) say they trust their child to use the internet safely. This is a decrease from 50% in 2012.
- Despite the fact that parents are more likely to be digitally literate (only 16% say their child knows more about the internet than they do), only a third (33%) say they feel confident that they can protect their child when they are online.
- Just over half (53%) are confident that they can monitor what their child does. This is a decrease from the finding of two-thirds (67%) in 2012. 40% also say that it is easy for their child to use the internet without them knowing.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show the breakdown of responses for parents aged 0-4 years, 5-8 years, 9-12 years and 13-17.

Table 2.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements in relation to your child?

	0-4 years			5-8 years		
	Agree	**Don't Know**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Don't Know**	**Disagree**
I trust my child to use the Internet safely.	25%	25%	49%	30%	23%	47%
The benefits of the Internet for my child outweigh any risks.	23%	27%	51%	23%	27%	50%
My child knows more about using the Internet than I do.	8%	6%	85%	12%	9%	79%
Using the Internet is important for my child's education.	74%	12%	14%	75%	13%	12%
I am confident that I can monitor what my child does online.	61%	20%	20%	56%	24%	21%
It is easy for my child to use the Internet without me knowing.	27%	10%	62%	33%	11%	56%
I am confident that I can protect my child when they are online.	34%	36%	30%	34%	34%	31%

Parents of children under the age of 8 express the following attitudes:

- For parents of younger children, a similar small proportion of parents (23%) say the benefits of the Internet outweigh any risks.
- Despite its drawbacks, three quarters say using the Internet is important for their child's education.
- Trust in their children's ability to use the internet safely rises with age – as does the fact that children can more easily go online without their parents knowing.

Table 2.2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements in relation to your child?

	9-12 years			13-17 years		
	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree
I trust my child to use the Internet safely.	40%	26%	34%	46%	26%	28%
The benefits of the Internet for my child outweigh any risks.	25%	32%	43%	29%	34%	38%
My child knows more about using the Internet than I do.	20%	13%	67%	33%	13%	54%
Using the Internet is important for my child's education.	76%	15%	10%	72%	16%	12%
I am confident that I can monitor what my child does online.	48%	27%	26%	41%	27%	32%
It is easy for my child to use the Internet without me knowing.	46%	11%	44%	55%	10%	36%
I am confident that I can protect my child when they are online.	28%	35%	37%	27%	32%	41%

For parents of children aged 9-12 and for parents of teenagers, aged 13-17, some shifts in parental attitudes is evident:

- Trust in children's ability to use the internet safely rises with age, from just 30% for 5-8 years to 40% for 9-12 year olds and 46% for teenagers
- Attitudes towards the benefits of the internet remain negative: just 25% of parents of 9-12 year olds and 29% of parents of teens say the benefits on internet use outweigh the risks
- Parents' confidence that they can protect their children online declines from 34% for parents of 5-8 year olds to 28% of 9-12 year olds and 27% of parents of teens
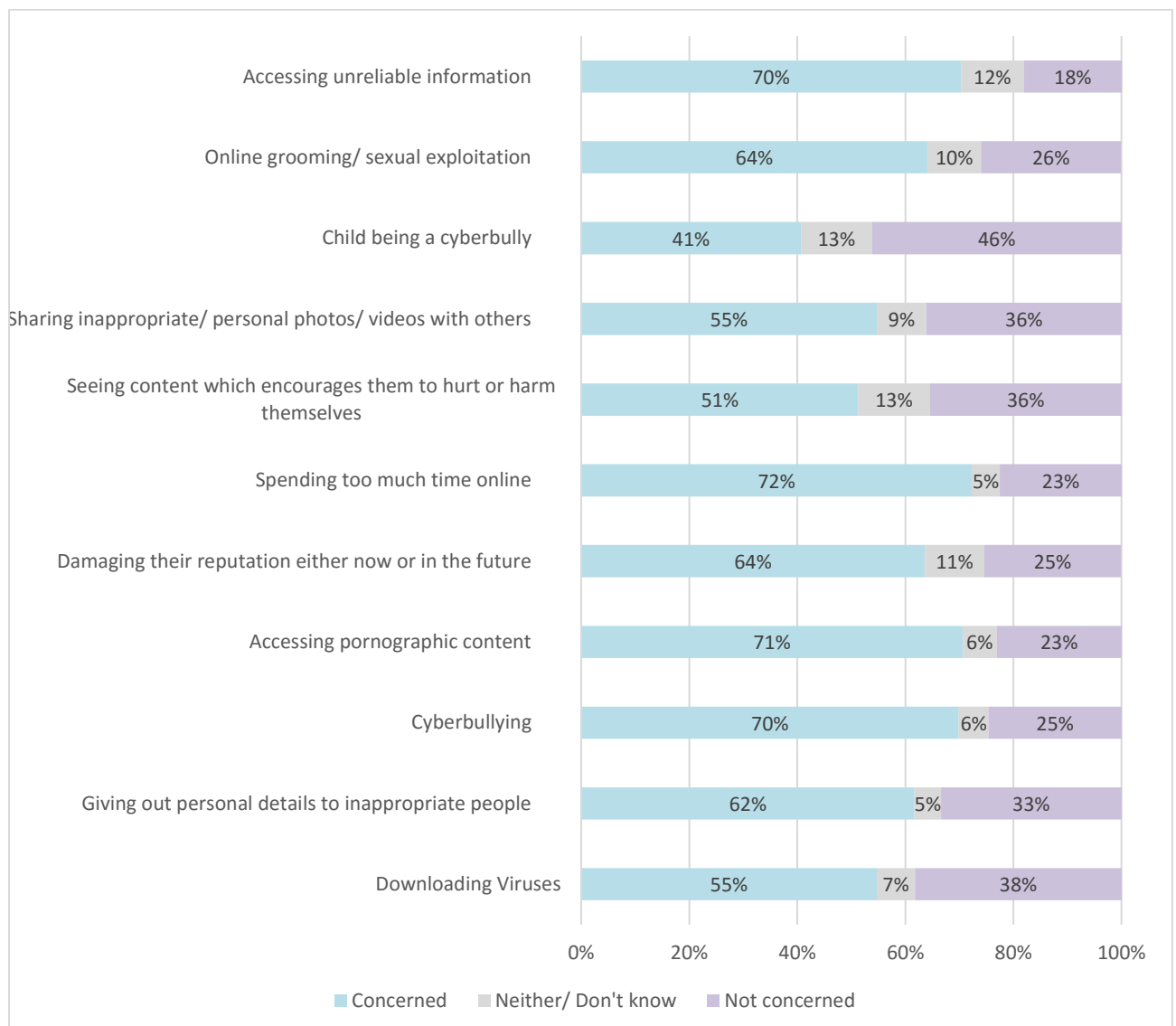- Similarly, parents' ability to monitor what their children are doing online declines with age

Overall, mixed sentiments are expressed here in relation to the benefits of the internet according to parents. On the one hand, it is widely recognised as important for their child's education. However, there is little confidence that the benefits outweigh the risks. This negative sentiment is not caused by any lack of technical knowledge. Most parents are in fact saying they know as much or more about using the internet than their children and at least half are confident they can monitor what their child does online. Rather, It is a question of mixed feelings about the balance to be struck between opportunities and risks. And in this instance, parents are divided in equal numbers as to whether they feel confident they can protect their children online.

3. Parental Concerns

Concerns that parents may have about the risks that children can encounter online are the among the key determinants of parental attitudes towards the internet and the consequent strategies they employ to keep their children safe online. Whether such concerns are well grounded in fact is a matter for further research. In this instance, the objective was to find out which among a number of known risks parents were most concerned about and which they felt were the most severe.

Parents were asked in the survey to list the extent to which they were concerned about potentially harmful aspects associated with children's online use.

Figure 3.1: Please tell me the extent to which you are concerned about these possible aspects of your child's online activities?

| Aspect	Concerned	Neither/ Don't know	Not concerned
Accessing unreliable information	70%	12%	18%
Online grooming/ sexual exploitation	64%	10%	26%
Child being a cyberbully	41%	13%	46%
Sharing inappropriate/ personal photos/ videos with others	55%	9%	36%
Seeing content which encourages them to hurt or harm themselves	51%	13%	36%
Spending too much time online	72%	5%	23%
Damaging their reputation either now or in the future	64%	11%	25%
Accessing pornographic content	71%	6%	23%
Cyberbullying	70%	6%	25%
Giving out personal details to inappropriate people	62%	5%	33%
Downloading Viruses	55%	7%	38%

Main findings:

- 'Spending too much time online' is the most commonly mentioned risk by respondents to the survey. 72% of parents said they were concerned by this aspect of their child's internet use.
- This is followed closely by 'Accessing pornographic content' (71%); 'Cyberbullying' (70%) and 'Accessing unreliable information' (70%)
- 'Damage to a child's reputation' is also a significant concern for parents (64%).

The most common concern is not always the gravest so parents were also asked to name the one concern that worried them the most.

Figure 3.2: Which of the following concerns about your child's use of the internet worry you the most?
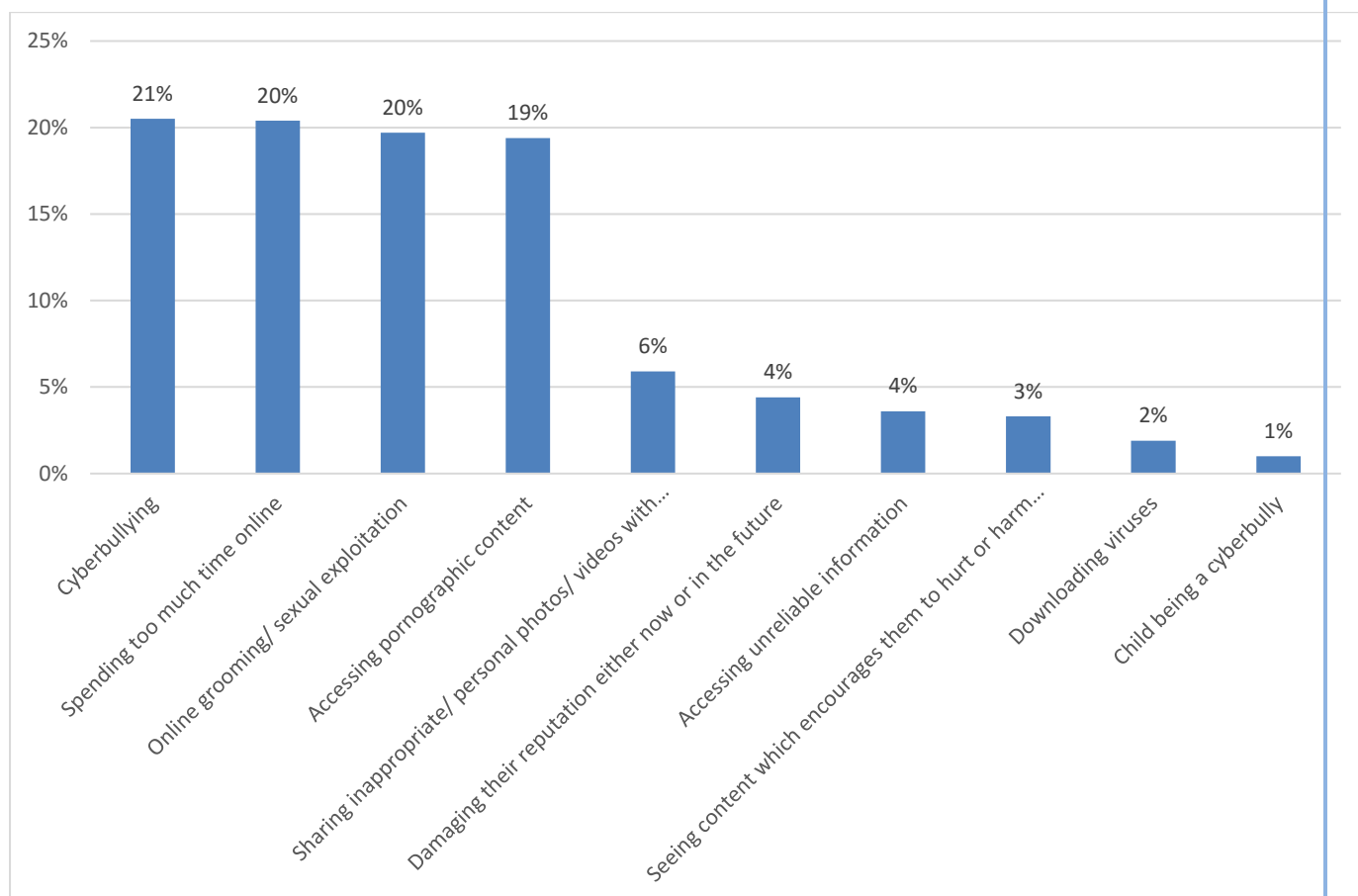
Four main risks stand out in equal numbers as the top concerns for parents:

- Cyberbullying (21%);
- Spending too much time online (20%);
- Online grooming or sexual exploitation (20%), and

- Accessing pornographic content (19%).

The following table shows the above results broken down by age of the child.

Table 3.1: Which of the following concerns about your child's use of the internet worry you the most?

Parental Concerns	0 - 4 years old	5- 8 years old	9- 12 years old	13 - 17 years old	All Parents
Cyberbullying	17.9%	19.8%	22.9%	21.5%	20.5%
Spending too much time online	23.1%	19.9%	17.5%	21.2%	20.4%
Online grooming/ sexual exploitation	22.8%	20.4%	19.8%	14.1%	19.7%
Accessing pornographic content	17.9%	19.8%	20.6%	21.5%	19.4%
Sharing inappropriate/ personal photos/ videos with others	4.6%	6.2%	6.5%	6.7%	5.9%
Damaging their reputation either now or in the future	3.5%	4.1%	4.4%	6.4%	4.4%
Accessing unreliable information	4.6%	3.1%	3.1%	3.2%	3.6%
Seeing content which encourages them to hurt or harm themselves	2.6%	3.7%	2.7%	2.6%	3.3%
Downloading viruses	2.3%	2.3%	1.7%	1.3%	1.9%
Child being a cyberbully	0.6%	0.9%	0.8%	1.6%	1.0%

It is interesting to note that the ranking of main parental concerns remains the same irrespective of the age of the child. It is the case that some of the concerns of parents increase with the child's age (e.g. accessing pornographic content and damaging their reputation) while other concerns diminish as the child grows older (e.g. online grooming and sexual exploitation). It is also notable that the concerns that worry parents the most are those pose a direct threat to the child, e.g. cyberbullying and online grooming. This is despite the fact that actual incidence has been found in other research to be rare.[6]

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[6] O'Neill, B., Grehan, S., & Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety for children on the internet: the Ireland report*. LSE, London: EU Kids Online.

4. Appropriate Age for Social Networking

The age at which children should be permitted to have a social media account and to participate in online social networking is a dilemma for many parents. Social networking sites are very popular among children in Ireland as elsewhere. According to EU Kids Online, at least a third of Irish children aged 9-12 are active on social networking sites, despite age restrictions.[7] Similarly, 82% of teens, aged 13-16 use social networking. For many parents, choosing when to allow their children use social media presents a difficult choice between allowing their children socialise online with their friends and peers, and ensuring they protected from the potential harm that children may face through online social interaction.

In this survey, parents were asked the question: 'At what age do you think it is appropriate for your child to have a social media account (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter.)?'

Figure 4.1: At what age do you think it is appropriate for your child to have a social media account (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter.)?
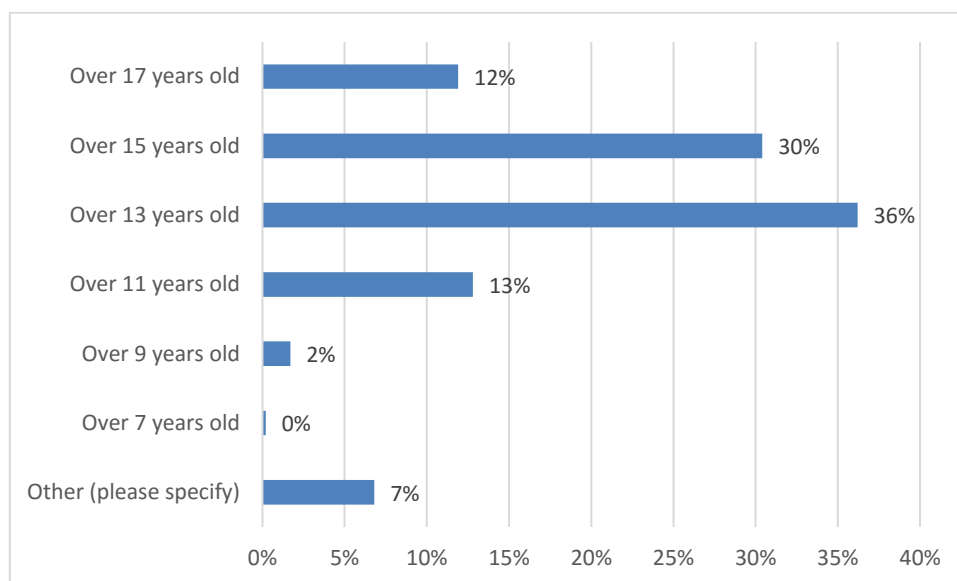

Main findings:

- 36% of the parents surveyed stated that 13 years and over was the appropriate age for a child to have a social media account, reflecting the current age restriction that applies to most social media platforms.
- A further 30% stated that 15 was a more appropriate age. 12% would raise the age to 17 years and older.

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[7] Livingstone, S., Ólafsson, K., & Staksrud, E. (2011). *Social Networking, Age and Privacy*. London, LSE: EU Kids Online.

- A smaller proportion (13%) stated that 11 years was an appropriate age.

Based on these findings, and taking into account the current age limit of 13 years that applies to most social media platforms, overall 42% of parents would be in favour of raising the current age threshold; 36% would retain it as is and 15% would be in favour of lowering the age limit.

Figure 4.2: At what age do you think it is appropriate for your child to have a social media account (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter.)?
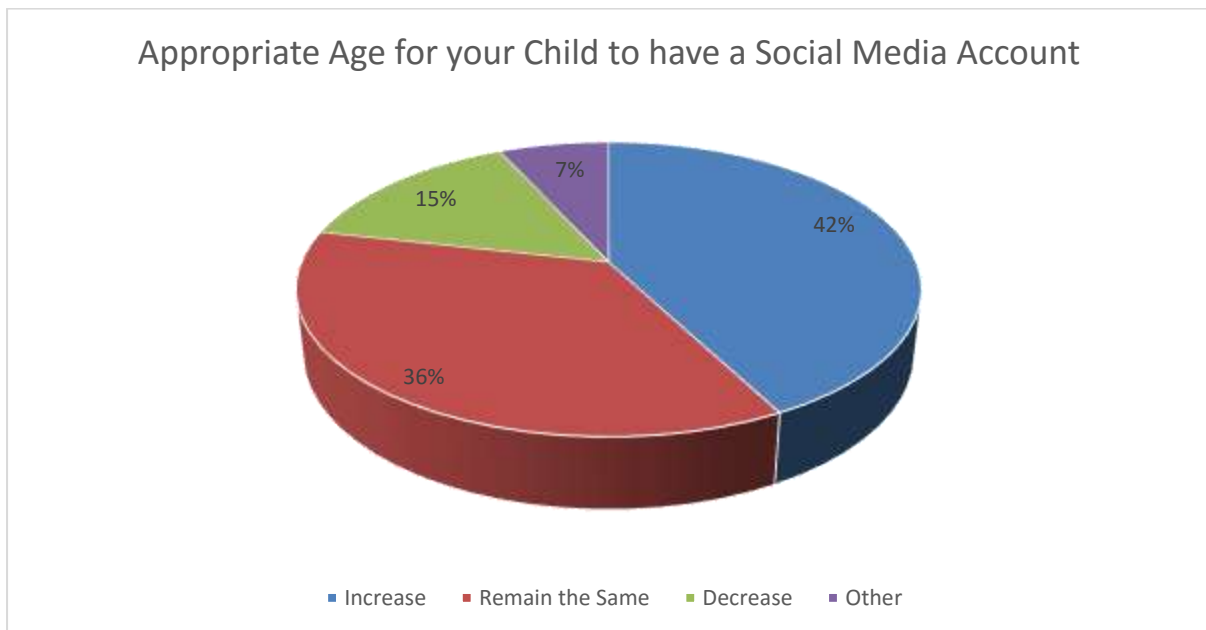
The age at which children may be allowed to open a social media account without their parent's consent has been the subject of recent public debate following the adoption of a new EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The new Regulation sets the age of consent to 16 by default while Member states have the option of adopting a lower age, between the ages of 13 and 16. To this end, the Department of Justice and Equality hosted a consultation on the 'digital age of consent' for services offered to children online, including social media with the objective of bringing a proposal to Cabinet later this year, ahead of the new EU Regulation due to come into full force in 2018.

Conclusion

Parents, as shown by the findings of this short survey, adopt a number of approaches to actively engage in their children's online activities, keeping an open dialogue – as policy makers have long advocated – about what they do online. They have a range of concerns, however, particularly about the time children spend online, resulting in the setting of time limits for internet use as one of the main intervention strategies.

It is interesting to note that few parents believe the benefits of the internet outweigh its risks, reflected in further concerns about cyberbullying, accessing pornography and potential damage to their child's reputation. And yet, at the same, most clearly recognise that using the internet is important for their education. Navigating this uneasy balance requires confident, digital parenting, something that only a minority of parents express, according to the findings in this study.

Accordingly, there is clearly scope for and a gap that needs to be filled in terms of more support for parents in taking this important responsibility. Currently, many of the resources related to the parenting skills needed to help maintain positive online experience are of a one-size-fits-all type. More age-specific guidance is needed, particularly given that children from the earliest age are exposed to digital technologies and online connectivity.

Notwithstanding the limitations of this survey, based on a convenience sample of 1261 parents, there are some important policy implications regarding the needs of parents as the primary providers of support in the home where most internet use takes place. In summary, these include the need to support:

- Parents with more information and advice targeted to the age and needs of their children in order to help them in supporting their children's online use.
- There is a need for a national one-stop-shop where parents and professionals working with children can go to get advice that is appropriate to the needs of their children.
- Advice for parents is mainly focused on risk and harm encouraging them to adopt policing and monitoring roles.
- There is very little advice presenting the benefits offered by the internet. More support is needed for parents if they are to help their children use technology for learning, building relationships and having fun.
- Parents need resources to help them to use their digital expertise to positively engage with their children.
- There is an ongoing need for a robust and up-to-date evidence base that measures children's online behaviour and the related risks.

About the Authors

Lorleen Farrugia is a PhD Candidate at the University of Malta researching children's understanding of online risks. She has researched young people and self-disclosure on Reality TV as part of her Master's Degree in Youth and Community Studies. Lorleen has been a member of the EU Kids Online Network since 2012, and she is also a member of the Maltese Safer Internet Centre BeSmartOnline! Advisory Board. Lorleen is currently a visiting researcher at the Dublin Institute of Technology.

Simon Grehan is the Internet Safety project officer with Webwise, the internet safety initiative of the Professional Development Service for Teachers. Simon is actively involved in researching children's use of the internet, tracking emerging technologies and raising awareness of the risks associated with their use since 2004. He is part of the EU Kids Online Research Network and has published research on children's online behaviour and the emerging risks for Irish children on the internet. He was a member of the Anti-bullying Working Group established by the Department of Education and Skills and was commissioned by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment to write a short course on Digital Media Literacy as part of the new Junior Cycle framework.

Brian O'Neill is Director of Research, Enterprise and Innovation Services at Dublin Institute of Technology. He is a member of the *EU Kids Online* Management Team and leads the network in Ireland. He is a member of Ireland's Internet Safety Advisory Committee (ISAC) and chaired the Internet Content Governance Advisory Group, reporting to the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. He is a member of the Safety Advisory Board of Ask.fm and the Twitter Trust & Safety Council.

Webwise is the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre. It is part of the PDST Technology in Education, which promotes and supports the integration of ICT in teaching and learning in first and second level schools. The PDST Technology in Education is a section of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST).

Appendix – The Survey

1. How many children aged 0-17 are there living in your household?

* 2. To which of the following age groups do the children in your household belong?

- 0 - 4 years old
- 5 - 8 years old
- 9 - 12 years old
- 13 - 17 years old

* 3. Do you have any rules or do anything about the access your child has to the Internet? Choose all the strategies you use from the list below. (If you have more than one child, keep in mind the child closest to 10 years old when answering this question.)

- They can only access the Internet from a public space in the home - e.g. the living room or kitchen, not their bedroom.
- Use software filters to block access to inappropriate websites.
- Regularly check what they are doing online by viewing browser history files/emails/other records.
- Regularly talk to child about what they do online.
- Restrict the length of time they can spend online.
- Only permit use of the Internet when supervised/not on their own.
- Don't allow child to have his/her own social networking profile on services like Facebook or Snapchat.
- Don't have any rules or restrictions governing child's Internet access.
- Other (please specify)

* 4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements in relation to your child? (If you have more than one child, keep in mind the child closest to 10 years old when answering this question.) ?   Agree   Neither/Don't know   Disagree

- "I trust my child to use the Internet safely."
- "The benefits of the Internet for my child outweigh any risks."
- "My child knows more about using the Internet than I do."
- "Using the Internet is important for my child's education."
- "I am confident that I can monitor what my child does online."
- "It is easy for my child to use the Internet without me knowing."
- "I am confident that I can protect my child when they are online"

* 5. Please tell me the extent to which you are concerned about these possible aspects of your child's online activities? (If you have more than one child, keep in mind your child closest to 10 years old when answering this question.) - Very concerned   fairly concerned   Neither/ Don't know   Not very concerned   Not at all concerned

- Downloading viruses

- Giving out personal details to inappropriate people
- Cyberbullying
- Accessing pornographic content
- Damaging their reputation either now or in the future
- Spending too much time online
- Seeing content which encourages them to hurt or harm themselves
- Sharing inappropriate/ personal photos/ videos with others
- Child being a cyberbully
- Child being a cyberbully Not at all concerned
- Online grooming/ sexual exploitation
- Accessing unreliable information

* 6. Please tell me which of the following concerns about your child's use of the internet worry you the most? (If you have more than one child, keep in mind your child closest to 10 years old when answering this question.)

- Downloading viruses
- Giving out personal details to inappropriate people
- Cyberbullying
- Accessing pornographic content
- Damaging their reputation either now or in the future
- Spending too much time online
- Seeing content which encourages them to hurt or harm themselves
- Sharing inappropriate/ personal photos/ videos with others
- Child being a cyberbully
- Child being a cyberbully Not at all concerned
- Online grooming/ sexual exploitation
- Accessing unreliable information

* 7. At what age do you think it is appropriate for your child to have a social media account (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter).

- Over 7 years old
- Over 9 years old
- Over 11 years old
- Over 13 years old
- Over 15 years old
- Over 17 years old
- Other (please specify)

8. If you have more than one child and use different strategies to protect each of them when they are online, please tell us what you do differently?