

Digital Parenting: An Evaluation

Aims

The aim of the evaluation was to examine parents' and professionals' responses to the Digital Parenting magazine, and its impact on parents' knowledge and behaviour.

Key Findings

- Both professionals and parents liked the look, format and content of the magazine. The breadth of the magazine and tone were felt to work well in communicating messages in a balanced way.
- Demand for the magazine was high; 93% of surveyed parents and 98% of surveyed professionals said they would like distribution of the magazine to be continued.
- Magazines are a preferred resource for many parents due to their 'flickability', portability, ease of use and ability to provide highly relevant information without specific knowledge of the topics being sought.
- Professionals viewed the magazine as a high quality resource that encourages discussion among parents, and between parents and children. It was also perceived to increase parents' grasp of technology and safety, and inform them how to keep children safe online.
- 88% of professionals in the field of internet safety thought the magazine was better than other resources they had come across.
- 80% of parents had read all or part of *Digital Parenting*. 56% reported they would keep it for reference, and most had already given it to others to read (50% to partners, 18% to children, 8% to grandparents, 6% to friends).
- 79% of parents reported being more knowledgeable as a result of reading the magazine. They specifically welcomed new knowledge about sexting and privacy, clear advice on how to manage technological interventions, and discussion about normal amounts of time for children to spend gaming and age appropriate behaviours.
- 60% of surveyed parents had taken action as a result of reading the magazine. The majority had talked with a partner, their children or their children's teacher.
- Almost one in ten surveyed parents reported having installed parental controls as a result of reading *Digital Parenting*.
- Professionals perceived that the overwhelming majority (82%) of parents they knew had little confidence in dealing with their children's internet use. In comparison, 92% of parents reported they knew what their children did online. However, 51% reported having learned something they did not know before about the technology their children used as a result of reading the magazine.
- Parents in the sample had a very positive view of the opportunities provided by internet use, citing education (97%), creativity (98%), play, work skills, and friendship as benefits for children.

- Only 11% of parents reported their children as having bad online experiences (e.g., bullying, viewing pornography), though this likely to be an underestimate of their frequency given that children do not report all negative events to parents.
- The evaluation concluded that *Digital Parenting* was a successful, warmly welcomed resource that provided information in a format that other resources did not. It was perceived to offer professionals and parents information, ideas, advice and guidance on children and technology. This prompted positive discussions, increased their knowledge and confidence, and enabled one in ten to take action over parental controls.

Policy Context

The evaluation examined theory and research that had influenced the production of the *Digital Parenting* magazine, and the consistency between the magazine and knowledge of effective practice in public health campaigning.

Methodology

The evaluation of *Digital Parenting* was commissioned by Vodafone. A mixed methods approach was taken to obtain user views. This included a quantitative survey data, individual interviews and focus groups. 104 professionals and 1004 parents were surveyed, 17 professionals were interviewed and two focus groups were held with parents.

Background

This evaluation was funded by Vodafone.

Source

http://www.theparentzone.co.uk/sites/default/files/Digital%20Parenting%20An%20Evaluation%20-%20VL_0.pdf

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