

EU Kids Online - Bullying

Aims

The EU Kids Online Project aims to enhance knowledge of European children's and parents' experiences and practices regarding use of the internet and new online technologies, informing the promotion of a safer online environment for children.

Key Findings

Main messages

- 93% of 9-16 year old internet users in Europe have neither bullied nor been bullied online. Those who have bullied or been bullied online are more vulnerable psychologically or from their socio-demographic background.
- Bullying, and having been bullied online mostly go hand in hand. Around 60% of those who bully have been bullied by others. Bullying and being bullied by others mostly occur through similar modes. Of those who have bullied others offline, 57% have been bullied, though only 10% were bullied online. Of those who have bullied others online, a similar number have been bullied (58%) but 40% online.

Prevalence

- Across Europe, 6% of 9-16 year olds who use the internet report having been bullied online while only half as many (3%) confess to have done so.
- Girls, younger children and those from a low socio-demographic background report more often being victims of bullying and less often to bully others than boys, older children and those with a higher socio-demographic background.
- Of those who say that they have bullied others online (3%), one third (1%) also say that they themselves have been bullied online and among those 5% who state that they have been bullied online, 1 in 5 admits to also having bullied others online – bullying and being bullied online are not two distinctive phenomena but go hand in hand.
- There are three bullying groups – (i) those who bully, (ii) those who have been bullied and (iii) those who have both experienced bullying and bullied others.

Bullying and vulnerability

- Three measures of psychological vulnerability were applied to respondents.
- Sensation seeking
 - The three bullying groups show higher sensation seeking compared to those neither having bullied nor having been bullied online. Those who have bullied or are bullies and victims are higher in sensation seeking than those who are bully victims but not bullies.
- Ostracism
 - Those who have been bullies, bully victims or both (bullies and victims) show higher ostracism than those who experienced neither. Further, bully victims show higher ostracism than bullies.

- Taken together, these findings suggest that psychological difficulties are associated with both online bullying and victimisation, sensation seeking with online bullying, and ostracism with victimisation from online bullying. Moreover, those involved in online bullying show overall a higher psychological vulnerability than those not involved in online bullying.

Responses to bullying

- Around 40% of those who have not bullied say they “tried to fix the problem” while this response was given by about 10% less (~30%) among both the offline and online bullies.
- Less than 10% of those who have not bullied “felt a bit guilty about what went wrong”. However, this response increased by at least half (+5%) among offline and online bullies.
- 1 in 3 who had bullied others online said that they try to get back at the other person when being bullied online.

Policy Context

Policies for the promotion of a safer internet are based on an understanding of risks and risk-taking behaviour. The EU Kids Online Project provides a vast array of quantitative data relating to the online behaviour of children and young people in the UK. An understanding of broad trends in patterns of risky use of the internet and new online technologies is essential for the development of evidence-based policies for the promotion of safer internet use.

Methodology

In this large-scale quantitative study, the survey was administered face-to-face at home to a random stratified sample of 25,142 children aged 9-16 who use the internet, plus one of their parents, during Spring/Summer 2010 in 25 European countries.

Background

The UK survey was conducted as part of a larger 25 country survey conducted by the *EU Kids Online* network and funded by the EC's Safer Internet Programme.

Source: www.eukidsonline.net

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