

Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes - Children

Aims

Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes is an annual Ofcom report providing detailed evidence on media use, attitudes and understanding among children and young people aged 5-15; media access and use among children aged 3-4 and parental attitudes and approaches to mediating children's media use. Research was conducted in 2014 and where possible findings are compared with data from previous years. This Research Highlight presents the results from the report which relate to the analysis of data on children's media use.

Key Findings

Changes in children's media consumption

- **Seven in ten children aged 5-15 now have access to a tablet computer at home...**
- Children's access to a tablet computer at home has increased from 51% to 71% for 5-15s since 2013. In addition, use of a tablet computer at home has increased by 20 percentage points since 2013 for children aged 5-15 to six in ten (62% vs. 42%) and by 11 percentage points for children aged 3-4, to four in ten (39% vs 28%).
- **...and children are almost twice as likely to go online using a tablet**
- Four in ten children aged 5-15 go online using a tablet computer, almost twice as many as in 2013 (42% vs. 23%), while two in ten children aged 3-4 go online using a tablet (20% vs. 12% in 2013). Tablets are now the second most likely device, after laptops/netbooks, to be 'mostly' used by 5-15s to go online.
- Children in each age group are more likely than in 2013 to use a mobile phone to go online (36% vs. 27% for 5-15s). Among 12-15s, the mobile phone is the second most likely device to be 'mostly' used to go online, after laptops/ netbooks, with tablets coming third.

Use of different media devices and social media sites

- **Older children prefer mobile phones for social activities**
- Among 12-15s who go online, the mobile phone is the most popular device for social and creative activities such as: arranging to meet friends (71%); messaging friends (53%); looking at photos posted online (47%); and sharing photos they have taken (45%).
- The mobile phone is also the device 12-15s are most likely to miss. Almost two in five say their mobile would be the device they would miss the most, nearly twice as many as say they would most miss the TV set (37% vs. 18%).
- YouTube is also popular and among those who watch TV channels and YouTube channels, a quarter of 12-15s (25%) and three in ten 8-11s (29%) say they prefer to watch YouTube.

Knowledge and understanding about online information

- **There is some evidence that children are getting better at judging whether online information is true**
- Compared to 2013, it appears that both 8-11s and 12-15s are less likely to believe that all the information that they see on websites used for school work or homework is true (20% vs. 36% for 8-11s and 16% vs. 30% for 12-15s), or that all the information found on news sites or apps is true (12% vs. 26% for 8-11s and 8% vs. 18% for 12-15s).
- Over half of 12-15s agree that some sites listed by a search engine will be truthful while others may not be (52% vs. 45% in 2013). Although one in five 12-15s still believe that if a search engine lists a result it must be truthful, this is less likely than in 2013 (20% vs. 32% in 2013).
- Compared to 2013, children aged 12-15 are also less likely to say that all or most of the information on social media sites or apps is true (21% vs. 30%) and three in four 12-15s who go online (77%) agree that most people behave in a different way online to when they talk to people face to face. These findings indicate an increase in critical awareness of the truthfulness of online content as well as a level of understanding of how accurately people might present themselves online.

Policy Context

The Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes report provides information on trends in the media and usage patterns of children and young people, including their potentially risk-taking behaviour, to help policy stakeholders identify which elements of media literacy to develop and promote.

Methodology

The report draws primarily on the Ofcom Children's Media Literacy Tracker, a large-scale quantitative survey based on in-home interviews with children aged 5-15 and their parents/carers and with parents of children aged 3-4. 1,660 interviews with parents and children aged 5-15 were conducted in April/May/June 2014 along with 731 interviews with parents of children aged 3-4. Questions are tailored to the age of the child and so not all questions are asked of each age-group. The report was published in October 2014.

The report also includes analysis of children's television viewing habits sourced from BARB, the UK's television measurement panel and comScore data on most-accessed websites by children aged 6-14 (2012, 2013 and 2014). The slides, data tables, questionnaire and other resources are on the website.

Source www.ofcom.org.uk/medialiteracyresearch (published October 2014)

Research Team Saville Rossiter-Base/Ofcom

Contact information Emily.keaney@ofcom.org.uk Alison.preston@ofcom.org.uk

RH#76 has been produced by Ofcom for the UKCCIS Evidence Group

<http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/research>