UKCCIS
UK COUNCIL FOR **CHILD INTERNET SAFETY**

Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes – Parental Mediation

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 parental mediation.

Key Findings

Parental concerns and mediation

- Parents of 5-15s are most likely to be concerned about online content (28%), mobile (27%) and television content (25%), followed by gaming content (22%), with relatively few concerned about radio content (7%).
- Parents of 3-4s are most likely to be concerned about TV content (22%), online content (18%) and gaming content (15%), followed by radio content (4%).
- Around a quarter of parents of 5-15s (23%) and 18% of parents of children aged 3-4 have concerns about pre-watershed television content, offensive language and sex/sexually explicit content are the concerns most likely to be mentioned.
- Around one-third of parents of 5-15s who go online are concerned about their child downloading viruses (36%) or giving out details to inappropriate people (34%). Around three in ten are concerned about their child being bullied (30%) or the content of the websites their child visits (28%).
- Around a quarter of parents of 5-15s who go online are concerned about their child damaging his or her reputation (26%), whom their child may be in contact with online (26%), or their child seeing content online which encourages them to harm themselves (25%).
- Around one in five parents of 5-15s are concerned about their child sharing inappropriate or personal photos or videos with others online (22%), their child potentially being a cyber-bully (21%), or about any illegal online sharing or accessing of copyrighted material (19%).
- When we categorise concerns into the groups 'content', 'contact' and 'conduct', half of parents of 5-15s (50%) have any conduct-related concerns, 45% have any contact-related concerns and 36% have any content-related concerns.
- Around one in five parents of 5-15s whose child plays games are concerned about gaming content (22%) with a similar proportion of parents whose child plays games online concerned about whom their child might be gaming with through their device (23%).
- Parents of 5-15s use a combination of approaches to mediate their child's access and use of online content and services, including: using technical tools; regularly talking to their children about managing online risks; supervising their child; having rules (about access to the internet and/or behaviours while online).
- The majority of parents whose child goes online at home or elsewhere (95%) use at least one of these approaches, and one in three (33%) use all four. A very small minority (5%) do not mediate their child's internet use in any of the ways mentioned above, rising to 11% for parents of 12-15.
- Parents have access to a range of technical tools to help manage their child's online access and use. Of the 13 technical tools that we asked about in the survey, we identified eight technical tools that could be used by parents with home broadband, and were not specific to mobile devices. This includes: content filters (either home network-level filters provided by an ISP or parental control software set up on a particular device used to go online, such as Net Nanny or MacAfee Family protection); parental controls built into the device; PIN/passwords; 'Safe Search'; YouTube safety mode; time-limiting software; and anti-spam/antivirus software.
- 84% of parents of 5-15s with home broadband are aware of one or more of these tools and more than half use any of them (56%). Two-thirds of parents (65%) with a broadband internet connection at home are aware of content filters and one-third (32%) use them (21% use network-level home filters and 20% use parental control software).

- Around four in ten parents of 5-15s say they do not use these tools because they prefer to talk to their child and use other methods of mediation, while a similar proportion say it is because they trust their child to be sensible/ responsible. Around one in five parents (20%) who are aware of each tool but do not use it, say it is because the child is always supervised/ there is always an adult present.
- Six in ten parents of 5-15s (58%) who go online say that they talk to their child at least every few months about managing online risks, with this being more common for 8-11s and 12-15s than for 5-7s. Among those who say they talk to their children about these risks, over half of parents of 12-15s say they talk to their child about age-inappropriate content, contact with people only known online, and sharing too much information.
- More than eight in ten parents of 5-15s (84%) who go online say they supervise their child when online in any of the four ways we asked about: being nearby and checking what they are doing, asking what they are doing, sitting beside them and watching/helping them, or checking the browser or device history. Supervision is more likely among parents of younger children and ranges from 72% for 12-15s to 97% for 3-4s.

Mediation strategies by gender
- Parents of girls aged 5-7 are more likely than parents of boys to have controls on their TV service that restrict access to particular channels or types of programmes or films until a PIN number or password is entered (55% vs. 45%). Parents of girls aged 12-15 with TV controls are more likely than parents of boys to say they use one particular control: blocking films depending on their age rating (29% vs. 15%).
- Parents of girls aged 12-15 are more likely than parents of boys to say they have looked for or received information or advice about managing online risks from any source (76% vs. 65%).
- Parents of girls are more likely to check social media activity (73% vs. 61%) and to say that they usually supervise their child online by asking about what they have been doing online (46% vs. 34%). They are more likely to say they have talked to their child about talking to or meeting people they only know online (60% vs. 51%), about being bullied online/ cyberbullying (55% vs. 42%), or about sending inappropriate personal pictures to someone they know (38% vs. 29%).
- Over a third (36%) of boys aged 5-15 who play games online play against someone not known to them who is playing elsewhere, compared to 19% of girls. However, controls are more likely on fixed games consoles for girls aged 12-15 than for boys (32% vs. 21%).

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.

RH#77 has been produced by Ofcom for the UKCCIS Evidence Group

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