

Safer Internet Day 2016: Creating a Better Internet for All

Aims

For Safer Internet Day 2016, 1,512 young people aged 13-18 years took part in an online survey conducted by ResearchBods which explored young peoples' attitudes, experiences and responses to positives and negatives online. This particularly addressed the role of the internet in facilitating rights and promoting empowerment, while also potentially facilitating online hate.

Key Findings

- **Young people want a kind and inclusive internet:** The majority of young people (94%) said that they believe no one should be targeted with online hate because of their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity.
- **An estimated 2.1 million young people have taken positive action online** in the last year to show support for targeted groups, with liking or sharing a positive post or page and changing their profile picture being the most popular forms of positive online action.
- **Young peoples' peer groups are on the whole very positive, supportive and inclusive:** 93% said they had seen their friends posting things online that are supportive, kind or positive about a certain group (e.g., girls, LGBT people, disabled people or those of a certain race or religion). More than a third (35%) said they see this kind of behaviour all or most of the time online.
- **The majority of young people have seen something hateful on the internet in the last year:** 82% of 13-18 year old respondents said they have seen or heard something hateful about a certain group on the internet, with young people most likely to have seen online hate targeting a person or community on the grounds of religion, sexual orientation or race.
- **Young people are less likely to see their peers sharing online hate:** 35% of 13-18 year old respondents said they had seen their friends posting offensive, mean or threatening things online about people of a certain group.
- **Offensive humour is particularly common among young people:** 89% said they've seen people sharing funny things online that might be offensive to a certain group in the past year, and almost three quarters (73%) saying that they've seen their friends do this. This is more prevalent amongst boys, with 78% having seen their friends sharing funny things that might be offensive, compared to 69% of girls.
- **Young people are more likely to see hate on the internet than in any other place:** In total, 82% of young people have seen or heard something hateful on the internet, compared to 77% at school, 69% in other media and 54% face-to-face in other places.
- **1 in 4 young people said they have been targeted with online hate** because of their gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability or transgender identity.
- **Many young people are concerned and affected by online hate:** Over a third (35%) of young people said that online hate is something they worry about. Young people who had been

exposed to online hate reported feeling anger (37%), sadness (34%) and shock (30%) in response to it.

- **Online hate can have an impact on young peoples' freedom of expression:** Around 3 in 4 young people (74%) said that online hate makes them more careful about what they share online.
- **Young people do see counter speech in reaction to online hate:** 84% have seen people responding to defend a certain group that is being targeted online.
- **However, ignoring online hate is the most common strategy among those who had been exposed to it:** Most young people (55%) who had seen online hate said they just ignored it. While more than two thirds (68%) of those who had witnessed online hate in the last year said they know how to report it to a social network, in practice just a fifth (20%) actually reported online hate to the social network, app, game or website where they saw it.
- **Many young people face barriers that prevent them from taking action:** Among those who had been exposed to online hate in the last year, the majority (58%) said they wouldn't know when online hate breaks the law, and 45% said they would worry about standing up to online hate as they don't want to be targeted.

Policy Context

Safer Internet Day is celebrated worldwide and in the UK it is co-ordinated by the UK Safer Internet Centre. This is a partnership of three organisations – Childnet, the Internet Watch Foundation and the South West Grid for Learning – who are part funded by the European Commission to deliver this work. Safer Internet Day seeks to raise awareness about safe and responsible use of technology and encourage behaviour change. This is a national effort – in 2016, over a thousand organisations were involved in supporting and promoting the day across the UK.

Methodology

The survey was conducted online by ResearchBods between 8-20th January 2016 with a representative sample of over 1,500 young people aged 13-18 years old in the United Kingdom. The young teens who completed the survey are part of the SurveyBods Consumer Access panel, which has a specialist youth section enabling young people under the age of 16 to directly complete surveys.

Background

The research was commissioned by the UK Safer Internet Centre who coordinate Safer Internet Day.

Source UK Safer Internet Centre www.saferinternet.org.uk/creating-a-better-internet-for-all

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RH#91 has been produced by the UK Safer Internet Centre for the UKCCIS Evidence Group