EU KIDS ONLINE IV in the Czech Republic

2017-2018

Czech children and adolescents on the internet:

Report from a survey at primary and secondary schools

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the main findings from the **EU Kids Online IV project in the Czech Republic, which examined online activities and risks for children and adolescents**. The findings are based on a questionnaire survey conducted at 89 primary and secondary schools in the Czech Republic from October 2017 to February 2018. The data comes from **2,825 children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet** (which is over 99% of children in this age in schools). The sample is therefore representative for today's children at Czech schools.

In this report, the **main findings related to the following areas** are described:

- **internet usage and online activities of children and adolescents**
- **their experience with online risks**

While reading this report, it is important to keep in mind that some questions were only asked of some children, specifically from the sixth grade upwards and mostly at the age of 11-17, which is 1,986 respondents in total. Moreover, only those respondents who said they had experience with specific online risks were asked additional questions to elaborate upon the risk. Therefore, the report always indicates which children and adolescents responded to each question. A more detailed description can be found in the Methodology section.

METHODOLOGY

Sample. The data comes from **2,825 Czech children and adolescents** (51% of boys) who use the internet. The age distribution is: 25% of children and adolescents aged 9-10; 24% aged 11-12; 21% aged 13-14; and 30% aged 15-17. The mean age is 12.6 years old (SD = 2.6 years). The report provides results from weighted data (i.e., data that corresponds to the age and gender distribution of children and adolescents in the Czech population within individual regions of the Czech Republic).

Questionnaire. The findings are based on a questionnaire developed within the EU Kids Online IV international project. More information about the project is available at: www.eukidsonline.net. The understanding of the questionnaire was tested through interviews with 30 children and adolescents aged 9-16. Before the data collection, pilot testing was carried out at five Czech schools.

Sample selection. The sample was selected using a stratified proportional cluster selection. Stratas were regions (all in the Czech Republic), types of school (primary, secondary, and grammar schools), and size of the school. Within the stratum, schools were randomly selected and asked to participate in the research.

Data collection. Data collection took place from **October 6, 2017** to **February 9, 2018** at schools during school hours. Questionnaires were completed online on computers and mostly took 30-60 minutes. A trained administrator was present at each data collection to introduce the questionnaire and explain the research to the respondents. The administrator ensured that the privacy of the respondents was guaranteed when filling out the questionnaire and helped them with technical problems that might have occurred.

Ethical aspects of the research. Before the questionnaire was introduced, written informed consent of the legal representatives and the oral consent of the children and adolescents were both obtained. The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Masaryk University. Children and adolescents were guaranteed anonymity and were given the opportunity to choose the option *I don't know* or *Prefer not to say* for each of the questions, or they were allowed to skip any of the questions. For this reason, the number of answers to individual questions varies.

Graph descriptions. As some questions were only asked of older children and adolescents (6th grade and above, aged 11-17) or those who said they had had a specific experience, the report always indicates which children and adolescents responded to each question. The percentages of valid responses from the total number of respondents are always listed. They do not include respondents who did not answer or said that they did not know or preferred not to say.

More information can be found in a technical report available at: irtis.muni.cz/eukoiv

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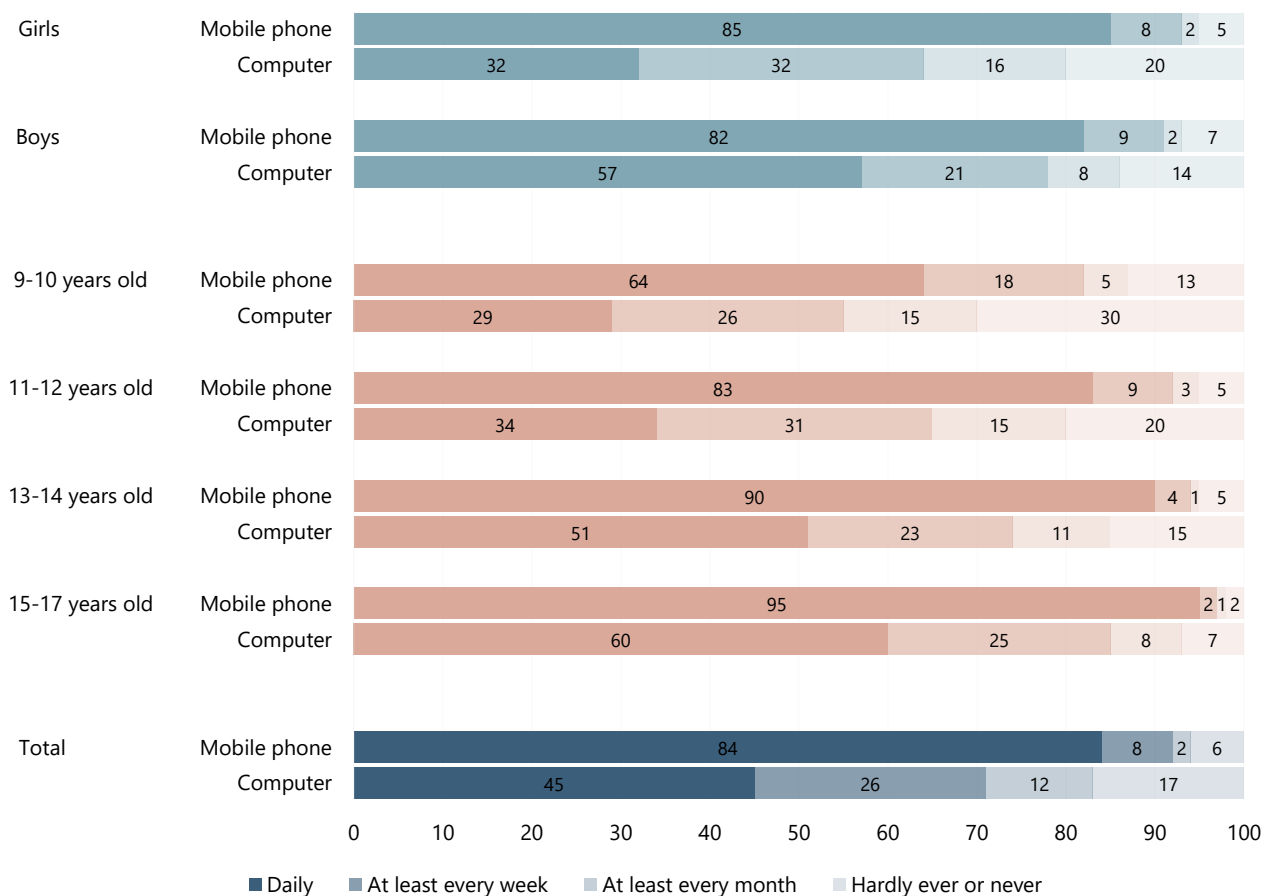M.A. et M.A. Marie Bedrošová

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INTERNET USAGE

In the questionnaire, children and adolescents were asked a number of questions related to their usage of the internet. Specifically, they were asked which devices they use to connect to the internet, what activities they do on the internet, and what is the level of their online skills.

How children access the internet

First, children and adolescents were asked about how often they go online or use the internet on a mobile phone, a desktop computer, or a laptop. Their answers are shown in Figure 1.

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Figure 1: Connecting to the internet using a mobile phone or a computer (%).

		Daily	At least every week	At least every month	Hardly ever or never
Girls	Mobile phone	85	8	2	5
	Computer	32	32	16	20
Boys	Mobile phone	82	9	2	7
	Computer	57	21	8	14
9-10 years old	Mobile phone	64	18	5	13
	Computer	29	26	15	30
11-12 years old	Mobile phone	83	9	3	5
	Computer	34	31	15	20
13-14 years old	Mobile phone	90	4	1	5
	Computer	51	23	11	15
15-17 years old	Mobile phone	95	2	1	2
	Computer	60	25	8	7
Total	Mobile phone	84	8	2	6
	Computer	45	26	12	17

■ Daily ■ At least every week ■ At least every month ■ Hardly ever or never

Question: How often do you go online or use the internet using the following devices? (a) A mobile phone/smartphone, (b) A desktop computer, laptop or notebook computer.

MAIN FINDINGS

- **Connecting to the internet with a mobile phone is more frequent** than with other devices. Daily, 84% of children and adolescents connect using a phone (vs. 45% using a computer). One-third of children and adolescents (29%) are online on their phones "almost all the time".

- Less girls (32%) than boys (57%) connect daily to the internet with a computer. Connecting daily with a mobile phone is a little more common for girls (85%) than for boys (82%).

- 13% of 9-10-year-old children "hardly ever" connect to the internet with a mobile phone and 5% of them stated they never connect with a mobile phone.

Children and adolescents were also asked about the time they spent on the internet, both during a regular weekday (i.e., school day) and during a regular weekend-day, as shown in Figure 2.

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Figure 2: The amount of time spent on the internet during *a regular weekday* and during *a regular weekend-day* (%).

■ About 7 hours or more   ■ About 4 - 6 hours   Ahout 0.5 - 3 hours   Little or no time
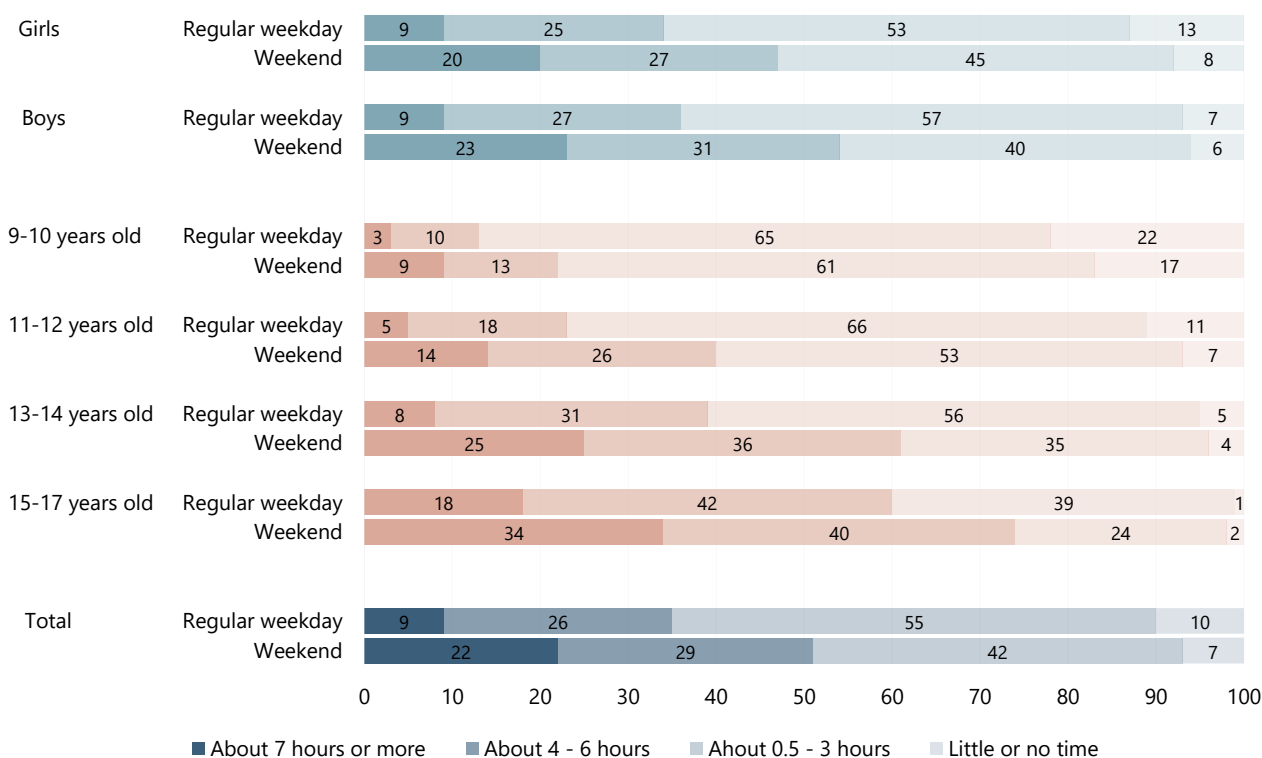
Question: About how long do you spend on the internet? (a) During a regular weekday (school day), (b) During a regular weekend-day.
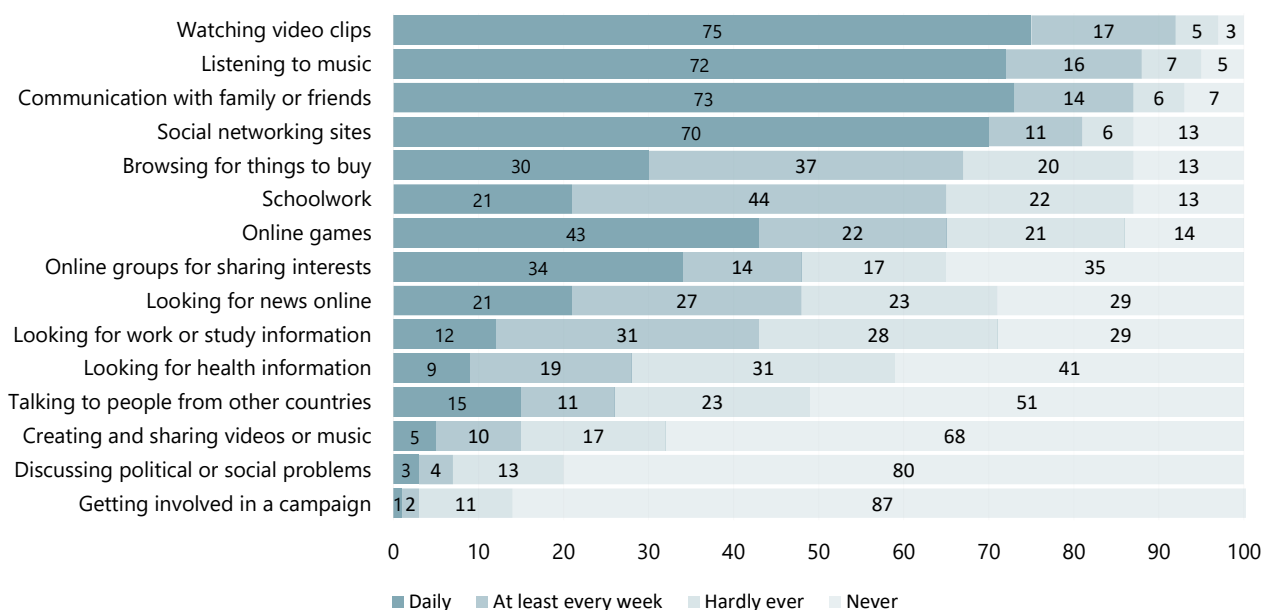
- **35%** of children and adolescents spent **4 hours and more online during a schoolday**, 9% spent 7 hours or more.

- **51%** of children and adolescents spend **4 hours and more online during the weekend**, 22% spend 7 hours or more.

- Girls and boys spend a similar amount of time on the internet.

- **Older children and adolescents are online more often**, both during schooldays and during weekends.

- Still, there are 3% among the youngest children who spend 7 hours and more on the internet during week and 9% during the weekend.

Online activities

In the questionnaire, children and adolescents were asked about their online activities. Specifically, they were asked how often they did each of the online activities described below during the previous month. The online activities of children and adolescents are shown in Figure 3, in descending order.

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Figure 3: Online activities of children and adolescents *in the previous month* (%).

Activity	Daily	At least every week	Hardly ever	Never
Watching video clips	75	17	5	3
Listening to music	72	16	7	5
Communication with family or friends	73	14	6	7
Social networking sites	70	11	6	13
Browsing for things to buy	30	37	20	13
Schoolwork	21	44	22	13
Online games	43	22	21	14
Online groups for sharing interests	34	14	17	35
Looking for news online	21	27	23	29
Looking for work or study information	12	31	28	29
Looking for health information	9	19	31	41
Talking to people from other countries	15	11	23	51
Creating and sharing videos or music	5	10	17	68
Discussing political or social problems	3	4	13	80
Getting involved in a campaign	1	2	11	87

Question: How often have you done these things ONLINE in the past month?
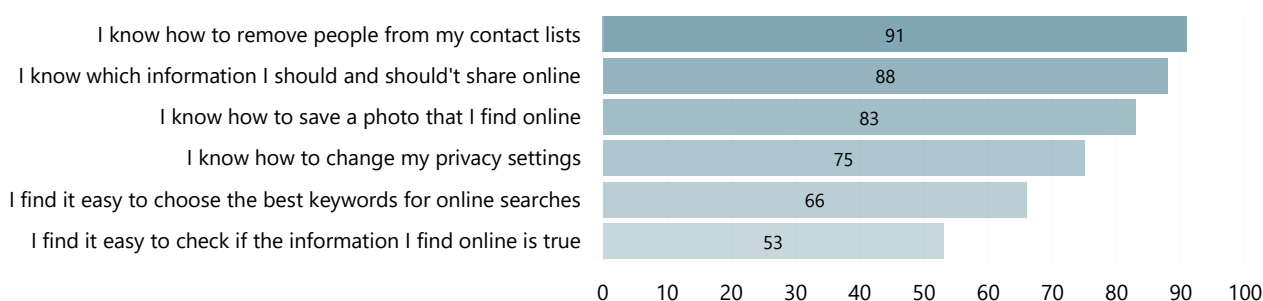
- 65% of children and adolescents used the internet for **schoolwork** at least once a week or more often.
- **Social networking sites** were visited daily by 70% of children and adolescents.
- 73% of children and adolescents used the internet daily to **communicate with their family or friends**.
- 75% of children and adolescents **watched online video clips** daily.
- 72% of children and adolescents **listened to music online** daily.
- 52% of children and adolescents had never or hardly ever searched for news on the internet.
- **Girls** more often visited social networking sites and used the internet for schoolwork, **boys** more often played games, watched the news, watched video clips, or created their own videos and music.
- Most activities are more common for **older children and adolescents, with the exception of playing online games**, which is done similarly often across all age groups.

Digital literacy

Digital literacy refers to the skills and knowledge that users have about using computers, mobile phones, and similar devices connected to the internet. Digital literacy plays a key role in reducing potential internet risks, because children and adolescents with higher digital literacy are more able to actively cope with such risks (e.g., change privacy settings, block someone). Therefore, we asked children and adolescents to evaluate their individual skills on a scale from 1 (*not true of me*) to 5 (*very true of me*). The following text and Figure 4 summarize the percentages of all children and adolescents who responded *somewhat true of me* or *very true of me*.

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Figure 4: Digital literacy skills of children and adolescents who responded that these are *somewhat true of me* or *very true of me* (%).

Skill	%
I know how to remove people from my contact lists	91
I know which information I should and shouldn't share online	88
I know how to save a photo that I find online	83
I know how to change my privacy settings	75
I find it easy to choose the best keywords for online searches	66
I find it easy to check if the information I find online is true	53

Question: On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is 'Not at all true of me' and 5 is 'Very true of me', how true are these of you?

Older children and adolescents are more experienced internet and computer users. All selected digital literacy skills increase with age. More boys (71%) than girls (60%) said that they were able to choose the best keywords for online searches, and more boys (60%) said that they were able to check if the information they found online was true (46% of girls). There were no substantial gender differences with regard to other skills.

- 91% of children and adolescents know how to **remove people from their contact lists**.
- 88% of children and adolescents know which **information they should and should not share online**.
- 75% of children and adolescents know how to **change their privacy settings**.
- Only 53% of children and adolescents can verify the accuracy of the information found online.
- More boys than girls (60% vs. 46%) know how to check if the online information is true.
- Digital literacy skills increase with age.

ONLINE RISKS

Children and adolescents may experience some potentially risky situations on the internet that may — although not necessarily — be unpleasant. As part of the questionnaire, we asked about their overall negative experiences on the internet and whether these experiences were upsetting, bothersome, or frightening.

Then, we focused on specific online risks and asked about their experiences with these risks and the perception and evaluation of these experiences. **In this section of the report, we will talk about risks, but it is important to stress that not every encounter with potential risk leads to harm, as children and adolescents may not always perceive it as something that hurt them.** Thus, we asked not only whether they encountered a risk, but also whether they perceived it as something that was unpleasant to them or somehow hurt or frightened them, and how long these possible negative feelings persisted.

Online risks examined in this report are: online aggression and cyberbullying; seeing sexual images and pornography on the internet; sexting; meeting new people; exposure to potentially harmful user-generated content; other online risks and misuse of personal data; and excessive use of the internet.

### Negative experiences on the internet

Before we address specific risks, we will describe the overall negative experiences of children and adolescents on the internet. We asked if anything ever happened online in the previous year that had bothered or upset them (i.e., they felt uncomfortable, scared, they would rather have not seen it). Those who stated that they had such an experience, were asked how often it happened, how they responded, and whether they spoke about it with someone.

Figure 5 shows that 36% of children and adolescents were bothered or upset by something on the internet in the previous year. More girls than boys reported this experience (40% vs. 31%). Differences are also apparent in age groups. With increasing age, the frequency of a negative experience also increases. This corresponds to the fact that older children and adolescents are more often online; thus,

they have a higher chance of encountering something negative on the internet. Only 23% of children aged 9-10 reported a negative experience, whereas this was the case for 50% of adolescents aged 15-17.

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Figure 5: Children and adolescents who had a negative experience on the internet *in the previous year* (%).
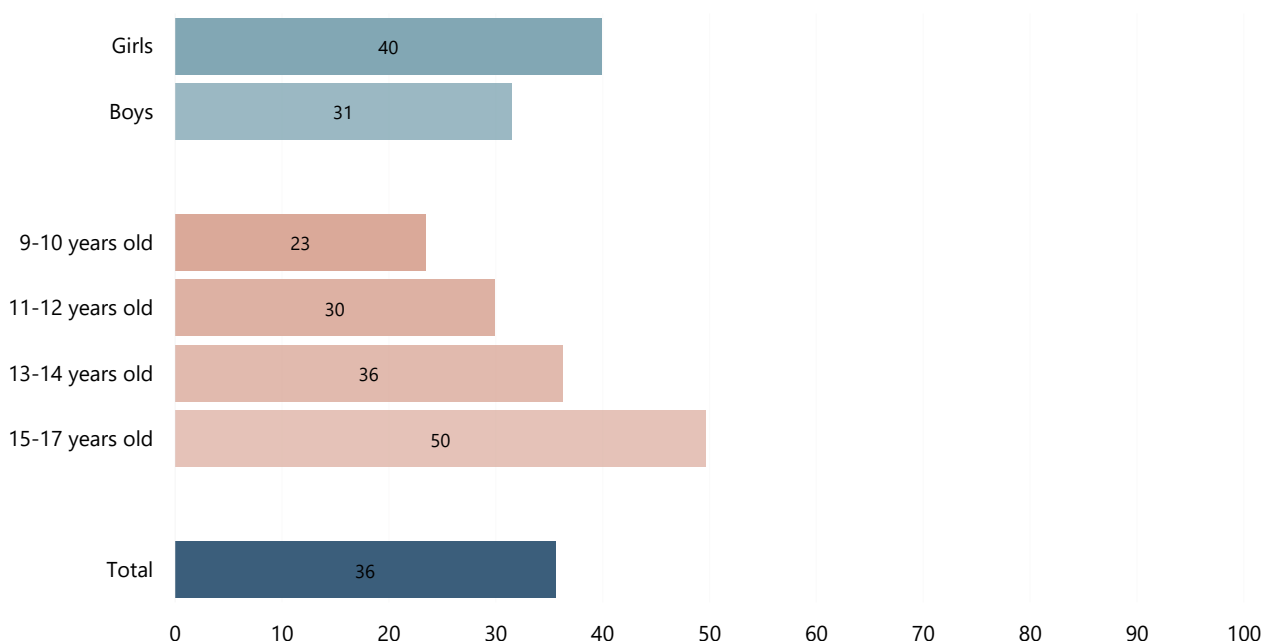

Question: In the PAST YEAR, has anything EVER happened online that bothered or upset you in some way (e.g., made you feel upset, uncomfortable, scared or that you shouldn't have seen it)?

However, it is also important to consider how common this experience is. Is it frequent or rather exceptional? Figure 6 shows this. It has turned out that only a small percentage of children and adolescents have frequently had such a negative experience — only 2% of them daily and 5% weekly or more often. For girls, the experience was only slightly higher (12% more frequently than once a month) than for boys (10% more frequently than once a month).

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Figure 6: How often children and adolescents had a negative experience on the internet (%).
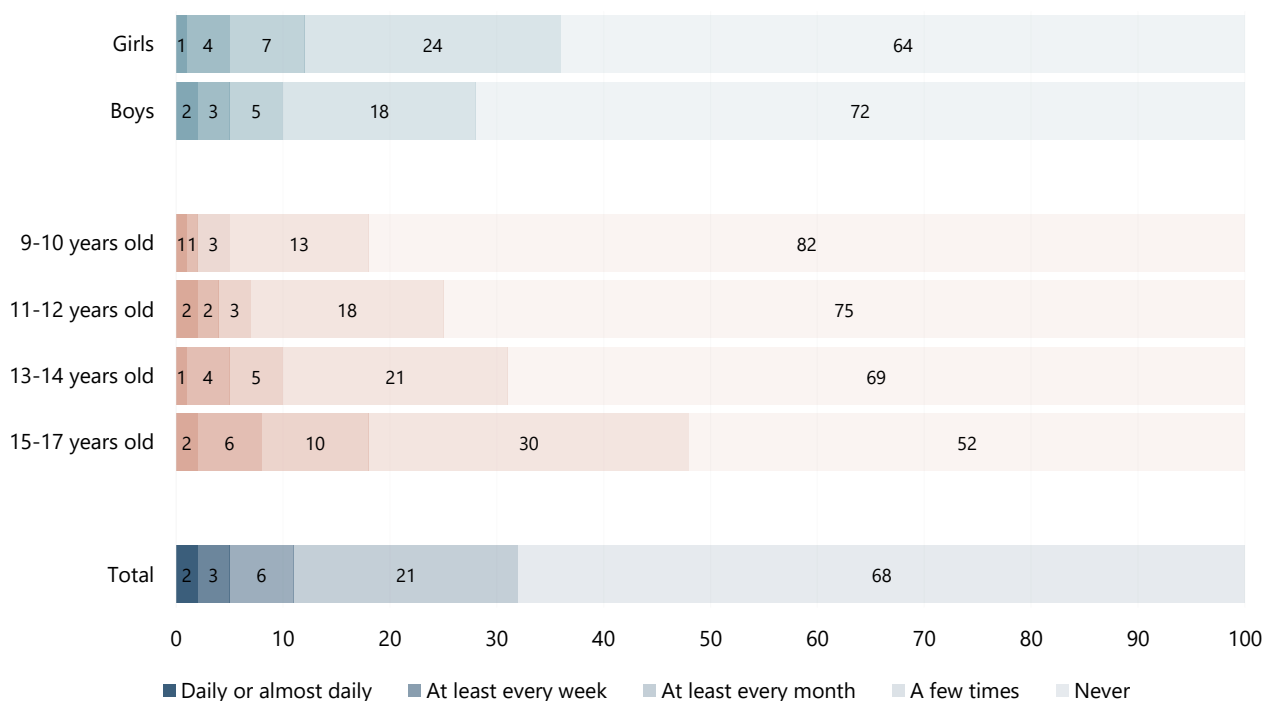
Question: In the PAST YEAR, how often did this happen?

Table 1 shows to whom children and adolescents talked about this negative experience. Most of them, across all ages, spoke to their friends (57% in total). More girls than boys talked to their friends (especially in older age groups). Twenty-eight percent of children and adolescents confided to their parents, which was more common for the younger age group (51% for boys and 39% for girls) than for the older group. About 13% overall spoke to their siblings about this experience.

A quarter of the children and adolescents (25%) stated that they did not talk to anyone. This was the case mostly for younger girls. Only 3% overall talked about this experience with a teacher and 1% with a professional (someone whose job it is to help children).

The table refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet and **who reported that they had had a negative experience on the internet in the previous year.** (36%).

Table 1: Whom children and adolescents talked to about their negative online experience *in the previous year* (%).

%	9-12 years old		13-17 years old		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
A friend around my age	48	53	53	65	**57**
My mother or father	51	39	18	21	**28**
I didn't talk to anyone	21	35	18	22	**25**
My brother or sister	25	11	10	11	**13**
Someone else	5	7	4	8	**7**
Another adult I trust	7	4	3	8	**6**
A teacher	6	2	1	5	**3**
Someone whose job it is to help children	4	0	0	1	**1**

Question: The last time something happened online that bothered or upset you, did you talk to anyone of these people about it?

Children and adolescents respond to negative experiences on the internet in a variety of ways. They might stop using the internet for a while, report the problem, or change their privacy settings. The responses to negative internet experiences are summarized in Table 2, which shows that 35% of children and adolescents closed the browser window or blocked the bothersome person. As compared to boys, more girls deleted messages from such a person. Younger children and adolescents, especially the youngest boys aged 9-12 (19%), stopped using the internet for a while in more cases than the older ones.

The table refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet and **who reported that they had had a negative experience on the internet in the previous year** (36%).

Table 2: Children's and adolescents' responses to a negative online experience *in the previous year* (%).

%	9-12 years old		13-17 years old		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
I closed the window or app	40	30	33	37	**35**
I blocked the person from contacting me	25	35	32	40	**35**
I deleted any messages from the other person	17	25	12	23	**19**
I changed my privacy/contact settings	8	11	10	22	**14**
I reported the problem online	9	10	19	14	**14**
I stopped using the internet for a while	19	13	4	9	**10**

Question: The last time you had problems with something or someone online that bothered or upset you in some way, did you do any of these things afterwards?

- **36% of children and adolescents had bothersome or upsetting negative experiences on the internet in the previous year**, but only 5% said it happened once a week or more often.
- Being bothered or upset by something on the internet was most common among **girls** and **older children and adolescents** aged 15-17.
- 57% of children and adolescents who were bothered or upset by something on the internet, **talked about it with their friends** and 28% with **their parents**. More younger children talked about it with their parents, whereas older children and adolescents talked more with their friends.
- 3% talked to a **teacher** and 1% to a **professional**.

Online aggression and cyberbullying

Online aggression and cyberbullying are some of the risks that children and adolescents may experience on the internet. We talked about bullying with regard to incidents of intentional and repeated harm to another person. Bullying is characterized by a power imbalance — the victim cannot easily defend herself or himself. Cyberbullying is a similar behaviour on the internet that happens via computers, mobile phones, or other devices that can connect to the internet. Cyberbullying must be distinguished from forms of online aggression that do not meet the above criteria; for example, rare and unrepeated incidents. For such a distinction, it will help to have information on how frequent the experience with aggression was for children and adolescents and what the harm was for them.

In the questionnaire, the aggression was defined as a situation where *children or teenagers say or do hurtful or nasty things to someone. It can often be quite a few times on different days over a period of time. This can include: teasing someone in a way this person does not like; hitting, kicking, or pushing someone around; and leaving someone out of things. When people are hurtful or nasty to someone in this way, it can happen face-to-face (in person), by mobile phones (texts, calls, video clips), or on the internet (e-mail, instant messaging, social networking, chatrooms).* Children and adolescents were asked whether someone treated them in such a hurtful or nasty way in the previous year or whether they were the ones attacking someone in this way.

The table refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Table 3: Children and adolescents who were victims of aggression at least sometimes *in the previous year* (%).

%	9-12 years old		13-17 years old		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
In person, face-to-face	16	17	21	23	**19**
Via a mobile phone or internet, computer, tablet	9	9	20	22	**15**
Some other way	6	7	5	6	**6**
Experience with any type of aggression	22	22	26	28	**25**

Questions: In the PAST YEAR, has anyone EVER treated you in such a hurtful or nasty way? In the PAST YEAR, how often did this happen in any of the following ways? (a) In person face-to-face (a person who is together with you in the same place at the same time), (b) Via a mobile phone or internet, computer, tablet, etc., (c) Some other way.

First, we will focus on the **victims** of bullying and aggression. A total of 25% of children and adolescents reported that they were victims of aggression in the previous year. In most cases, this happened face-to-face (19%); it happened a little less via a mobile phone or the internet, computer, or other device (15%); and it happened least for children and adolescents who stated that someone was behaving hurtfully or nastily to them in another way (6%). Overall, the findings showed that the experience with online and offline aggression increased with age.

We will now specifically address **online aggression** and **cyberbullying,** which are victimization by someone via a mobile phone, the internet, a computer, a tablet or a similar device. Only 2% of children have had this experience daily or almost daily, and a total of 8% had experienced it at least every month and more often — these children and adolescents probably became victims of cyberbullying and more than sporadic aggression. Ninety-two percent of children and adolescents have no experience with cyberbullying, or something similar happened to them only a few times. Experience with cyberbullying increases with age: 3% of children aged 9-10 were victims of cyberbullying more than once a month, compared to 11% of respondents aged 15-17. There were no differences between boys and girls.

Figure 7 shows that the most frequent form of attack was sending nasty or hurtful messages. This experience was reported by 82% of the victims of online aggression. Other forms of cyberbullying are less frequent. The least common is when somebody forced children or adolescents to do something they did not want to do (18%).

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet and **who reported that they were victims of online aggression in the previous year** (15%).

Figure 7: Forms of online aggression that children and adolescents experienced *in the previous year* (%).
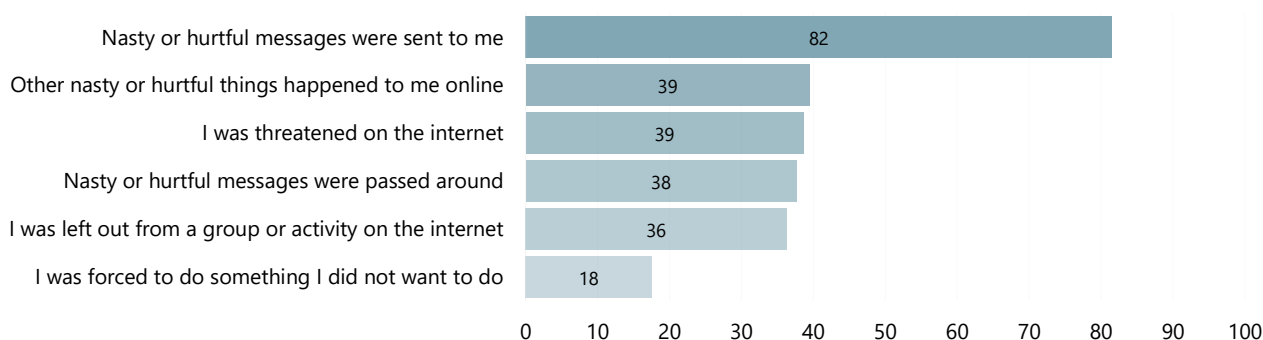

Question: Have any of these things happened to you in the last year?

This negative experience can be perceived differently in terms of the intensity of impact and the amount of time needed to cope with it. Figure 8 shows the extent to which such an experience upset its victims. Most felt at least a little upset (79%). Only 21% said they were not upset at all. Among the victims, there were more girls feeling at least a little upset (92%) than boys (67%). Similarly, there were more children aged 9-10 (96%) feeling at least a little upset than older children and adolescents (19% and more).

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet and **who reported that they were victims of online aggression in the previous year** (15%).

Figure 8: How upset the victims of online aggression felt after the event (%).
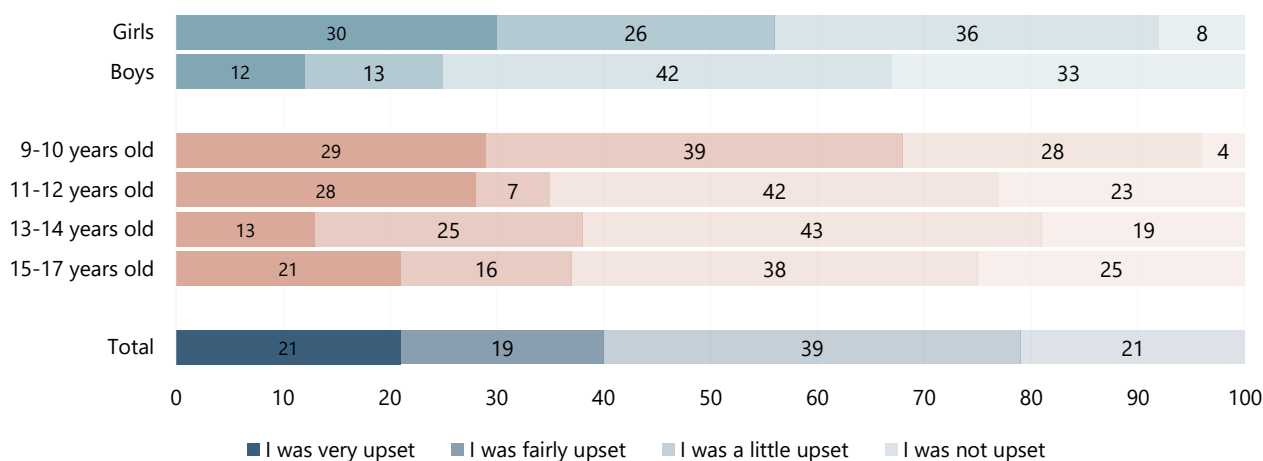
Question: Thinking of the LAST TIME someone treated you in a hurtful or nasty way ONLINE, how did you feel?

An important aspect of the negative impact of online aggression is the duration persistence of negative feelings. Among the youngest children (9-10 years old), only a small proportion (3%) felt upset for a long period of time (several months and longer) after the event. Eleven percent said they got over it straight away. However, the majority felt upset for a few days (69%) or a few weeks (18%). In contrast, more adolescents in the oldest age group (15-17 years old) reported feeling upset for a couple of months or more (13%) after the event. On the other hand, 35% said that they got over it straight away. The majority of them (53%) felt upset for a few days or weeks.

Differences are also apparent between girls and boys. Almost half of the boys got over the event straight away (47%), compared to only 16% of girls. Girls mostly felt upset for a few days (51%),

compared to 33% of the boys. In the extreme category (*I felt like that for a couple of months or more*), the proportion of girls and boys was roughly equal (13% of girls and 14% of boys).

Besides victimization, we also explored how many children and adolescents were **aggressors** in the previous year (i.e., those who treated someone else in a hurtful or nasty way as described above). As with the victims, face-to-face aggression was the most common (11% of all children and adolescents), followed by online aggression (8%), and some other way (2%). More boys than girls were aggressors, both online and offline. The highest percentage of aggressors was seen among older boys aged 13-17 (26%), which is more than twice the number of girls of the same age (11%). Most aggressors, however, said that they had treated someone else in this way only a few times. Only 4% of the children and adolescents attacked someone online or offline more often than once a month.

The table refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Table 4: Children and adolescents who said they attacked someone at least sometimes *in the previous year* (%).

	9-12 years old		13-17 years old		
%	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
In person, face-to-face	8	4	22	9	**11**
Via a mobile phone or internet, computer, tablet	3	2	19	8	**8**
Some other way	2	0	5	1	**2**
Experience with any type of aggression	10	5	26	11	**13**

Question: In the PAST YEAR, how often have you TREATED someone else in any of the following ways? (a) In person face-to-face (a person who is together with you in the same place at the same time, (b) Via a mobile phone or internet, computer, tablet, etc., (c) Some other way.

- 25% of children and adolescents said they were victims of aggression at least once in the previous year.
- 19% of children and adolescents were victims of aggression **face-to-face** and 15% **on the internet**.
- 8% of children and adolescents were victims of aggression on the internet **once a month** or more often**, 92% less often or not at all**.
- The most common form of online aggression was **sending nasty or hurtful messages**.
- Girls and younger children and adolescents were more upset by such experiences than boys and older children and adolescents.
- **13% of children and adolescents reported that they treated someone in a hurtful or nasty way**, 11% face-to-face and 8% online.
- 4% of children and adolescents attacked someone online **once a month** or more often, 96% less often or not at all.
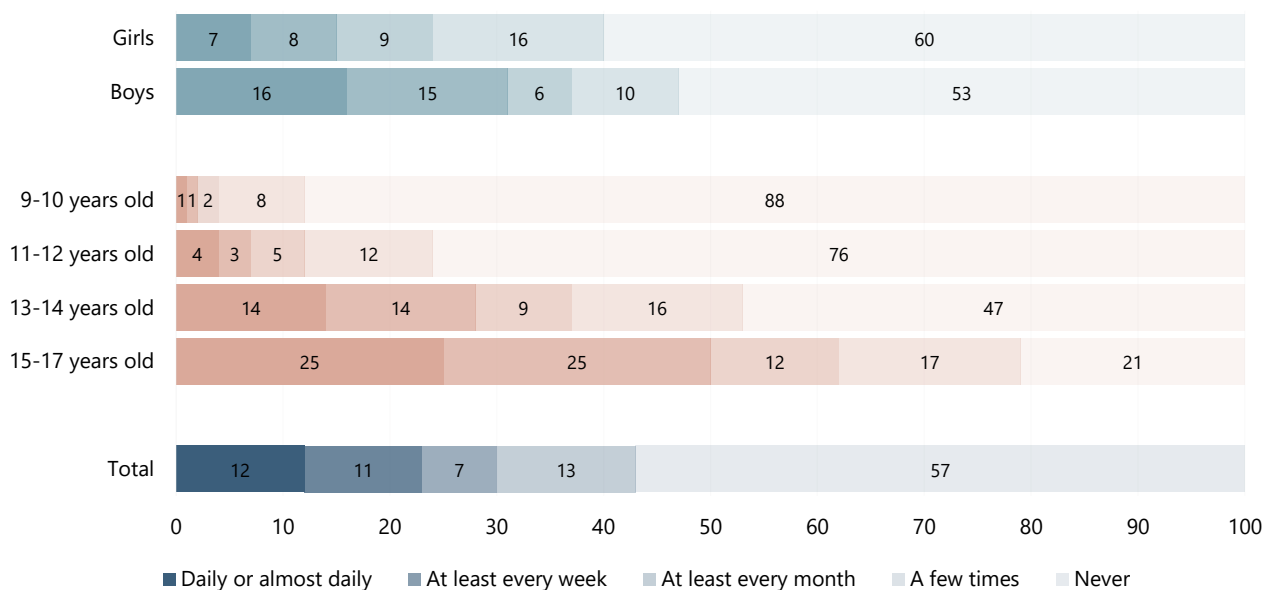
Seeing sexual images

Another potential online risk is the exposure to sexual images on the internet, and the extent to which children and adolescents are bothered by the experience. Sexual images on the internet may refer to online pornography, but it may also include other types of sexually explicit materials.

In the questionnaire, we introduced sexual images to children and adolescents as pictures, photos, or videos that *show people naked or people having sex*. We asked them if they had seen similar content on the internet, on a mobile phone, in a magazine, on television, or on a DVD (i.e., a movie). In this report, we focused only on the content that they could encounter online (using their mobile phone, computer, tablet, or other device connected to the internet), on television and in a movie.

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Figure 9: Children and adolescents who saw sexual images on the internet *in the previous year* (%).

	Daily or almost daily	At least every week	At least every month	A few times	Never
Girls	7	8	9	16	60
Boys	16	15	6	10	53
9-10 years old	1	1	2	8	88
11-12 years old	4	3	5	12	76
13-14 years old	14	14	9	16	47
15-17 years old	25	25	12	17	21
Total	12	11	7	13	57

Question: In the PAST YEAR, how often have you seen images of this kind in any of the following ways? (Via a mobile phone, computer, tablet or any other online device.)

In the previous year, children and adolescents saw sexual images online more frequently than on TV or in a movie. At least once a month, 30% of children and adolescents saw sexual images on a mobile phone, a computer, or another online device, whereas only 20% on TV or in a movie. About 12% of children and adolescents saw such content online daily, while only 2% on TV or in a movie.

The experience of children and adolescents with sexual content on the internet and on television increases with age. About 1% of children aged 9-10 encountered sexual images on a mobile phone, a computer, or a similar device on a daily basis, whereas this was the case for 25% of adolescents aged 15-17. The experience with sexual images on TV or in movies was similar for boys and girls. However, on online devices, boys encountered sexual images more (37% at least every month) and more frequently (16% daily) than girls (24% at least every month and 7% daily).

As noted above, seeing sexual images may not cause harm to children and adolescents and it may not be perceived as something that would bother or upset them. Figure 10 shows how many children and adolescents had the experience of being upset by seeing sexually explicit images on the internet in the past year. Only 5% were very upset. On the other hand, 80% were not upset (39%) or were

happy (41%). More girls than boys reported that they were upset after seeing sexual content. Similarly, younger children reported being more upset than older adolescents.

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet and **who reported that they saw sexual images on the internet at least every month or more often in the previous year** (29 %).

Figure 10: How children and adolescents felt after seeing sexual images on the internet (*at least every month or more often*, %).
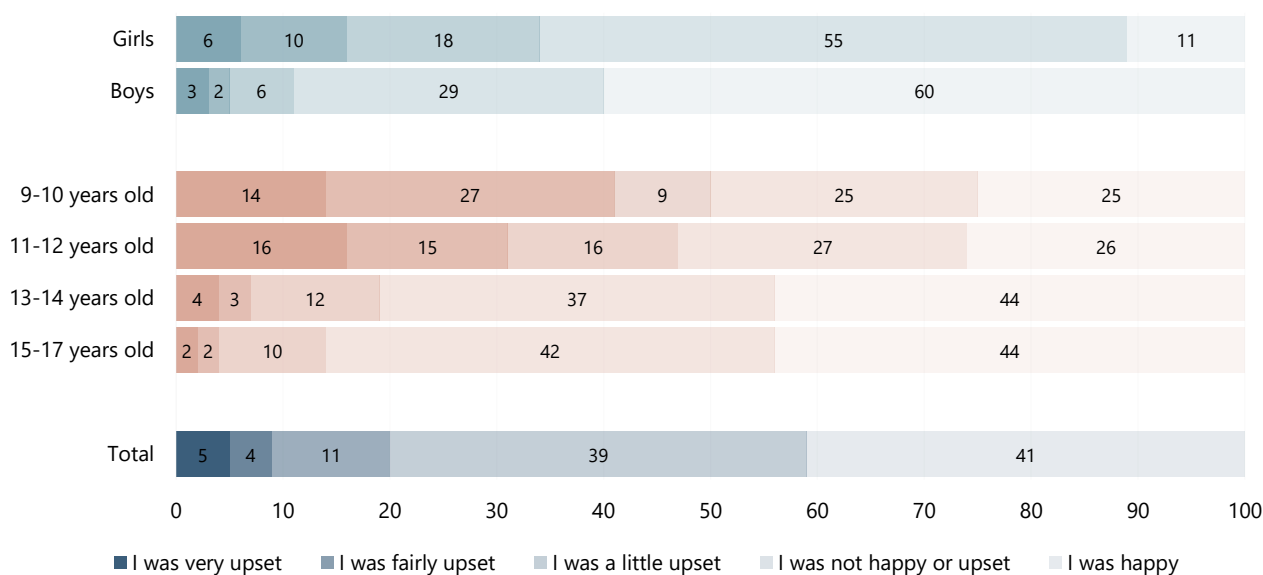
Question: Thinking of the LAST TIME you have seen images of this kind, how did you feel about it?

- 29% of children and adolescents saw sexual images on the **internet at least every month or more often**.
- **Boys** saw sexual images on the internet more often than girls, 16% of them daily, compared to only 7% of **girls**.
- **More older children** saw sexual images on the internet than younger children.
- 80% of children and adolescents who saw sexual images on the internet were not upset because of it; **5% stated that they were very upset**.

Sexting

Another online risk is sexting, which refers to sending and receiving messages with sexual content. It may not only refer to text messages, but also to pictures, photos, or videos with sexual content. In the questionnaire, we defined sexting as *when people send sexual messages or images. By this we mean talk about having sex or images of naked people or images of people having sex.*
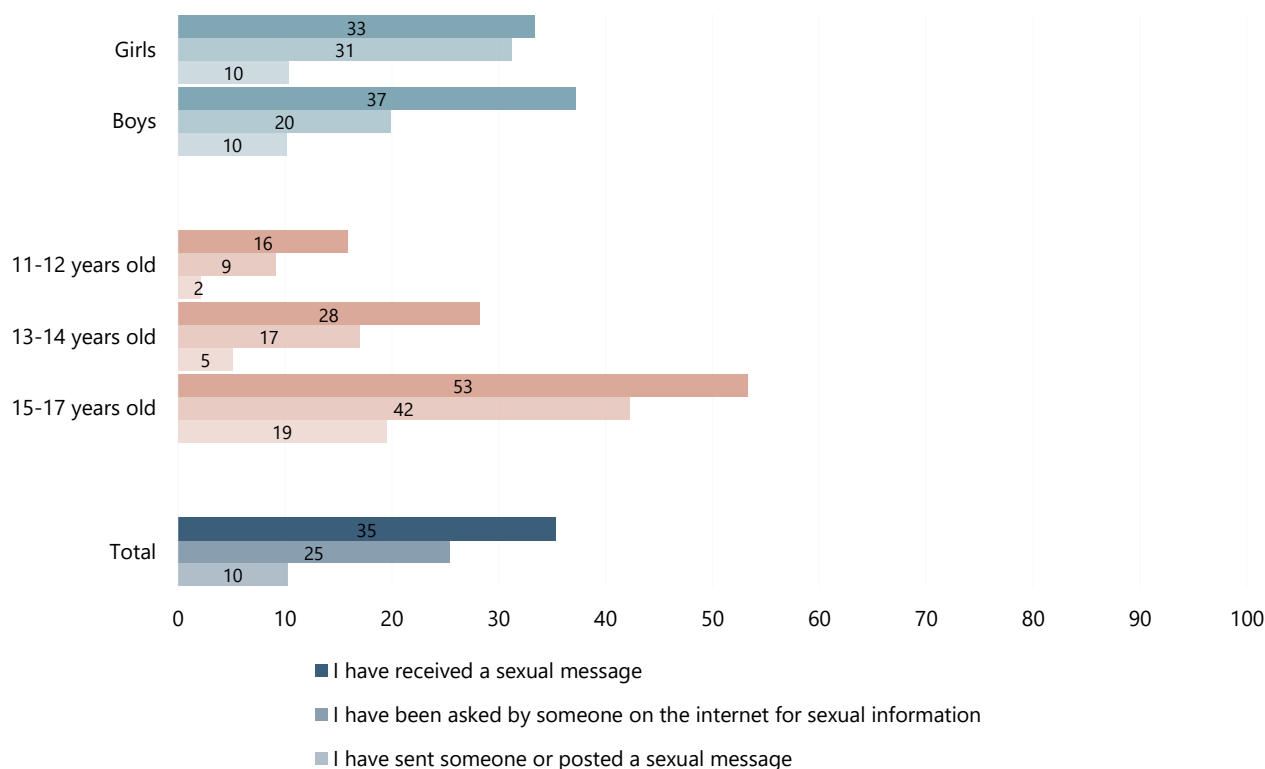
Only children and adolescents aged 11-17 were asked questions about sexting. Specifically, we asked about their experience with receiving such messages in the previous year, and their experience of sending, posting, and requesting sexual messages or intimate information. Again, we want to point out that sexting does not have to be a negative experience, as it can be a natural part of adolescence and building relationships.

The experience of children and adolescents with sexting is shown in Figure 11. Thirty-five percent of children and adolescents aged 11-17 said they had received a sexual message in the previous year. With increasing age, this experience was more common, as only 16% of children and adolescents aged 11-12 reported it compared to 53% of children and adolescents aged 15-17.

There are no major differences between boys and girls in this respect. Slightly more boys than girls received sexual messages (37% vs. 33%). However, there was a bigger difference in being asked by someone on the internet for intimate information. This happened more to girls (31%) than to boys (20%). However, only 7% of children and adolescents reported that this experience happened more than once a month, and 1% reported that this was happening daily. Ten percent of children and adolescents had the experience of sending or posting sexual messages on the internet, which was most common for the oldest age group of 15-17-year-olds (19%).

The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 11-17 who use the internet.

Figure 11: Experience of children and adolescents aged 11-17 with sexting (*at least sometimes*) *in the previous year* (%).

Girls	33 / 31 / 10
Boys	37 / 20 / 10
11-12 years old	16 / 9 / 2
13-14 years old	28 / 17 / 5
15-17 years old	53 / 42 / 19
Total	35 / 25 / 10

■ I have received a sexual message

■ I have been asked by someone on the internet for sexual information

■ I have sent someone or posted a sexual message

Question: In the PAST YEAR, have you EVER RECEIVED any sexual messages? This could be words, pictures or videos? In the PAST YEAR, how often, if ever, have you been asked by someone on the internet for sexual information (words, pictures or videos) about yourself (like what your body looks like without clothes on or sexual things you have done) when you did not want to answer such questions? In the PAST YEAR, have you EVER SENT or POSTED any sexual messages? This could be words, pictures or videos about you or someone else.

- 35% of children and adolescents **received a sexual message in the previous year**.
- 25% of children and adolescents were **asked by someone on the internet for sexual or intimate information in the previous year**.
- **Older children and adolescents** received and sent more sexual messages than younger ones.
- There were no differences between boys and girls in sending or receiving such messages.
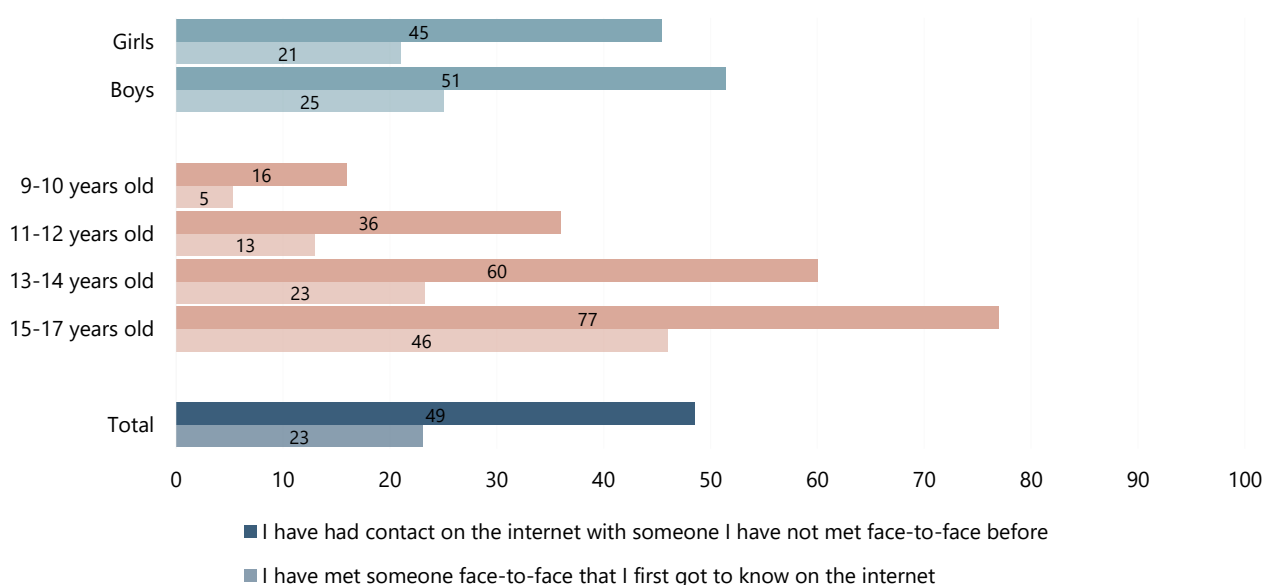- 10% of children and adolescents **posted or published** a sexual message in the previous year.

Meeting new people

In this chapter, we will describe two types of experience — communicating with unknown people on the internet and meeting people from the internet face-to-face. Both can be completely unproblematic and can entertain children or help them find friends with similar interests. But both can also have unpleasant consequences. Therefore, we asked both children and adolescents not only whether or not they had done any of these activities in the previous year, but also how they felt about it. Because parents worry about their children talking with adults, we also asked how old the person was that the child or adolescent had talked to or met. We asked all of the respondents (i.e., from the ages of 9-17).

Almost half of all children and adolescents (49%) were sometimes in contact through the internet with someone they had not met before. Twenty-three percent met face-to-face with the person they had met online, and the vast majority of them evaluated this meeting positively (78%). Slightly more boys than girls communicated with strangers on the internet (51% vs. 45%) and met someone from the internet in person (25% boys vs. 21% girls).

> The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Figure 12: Meeting with new people online and offline *in the previous year* (%).

■ I have had contact on the internet with someone I have not met face-to-face before

■ I have met someone face-to-face that I first got to know on the internet

Question: Have you EVER had contact on the internet with someone you have not met face-to-face before? In the PAST YEAR, have you EVER met anyone face-to-face that you first got to know on the internet?

Both activities are also more frequent with increasing age, which corresponds to the developmental needs of children and adolescents. Older children and adolescents meet new people online and offline more than younger ones, they learn to communicate, and they experiment more with their identity in the online world. In the youngest age group (9-10 years old), parents may be more concerned about such activities; children are, therefore, less involved in online or offline communication with unknown people. If they met someone face-to-face, they were slightly more upset afterwards than older children and adolescents, which is shown in Figure 13. Still, even among the youngest, the positive assessment of the meeting prevails (66% of them felt happy about the meeting).

> The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet and **who reported that they met someone face-to-face that they had initially met on the internet** (23%).

Figure 13: How children and adolescents felt after meeting someone face-to-face that they had initially met on the internet *in the previous year* (%).
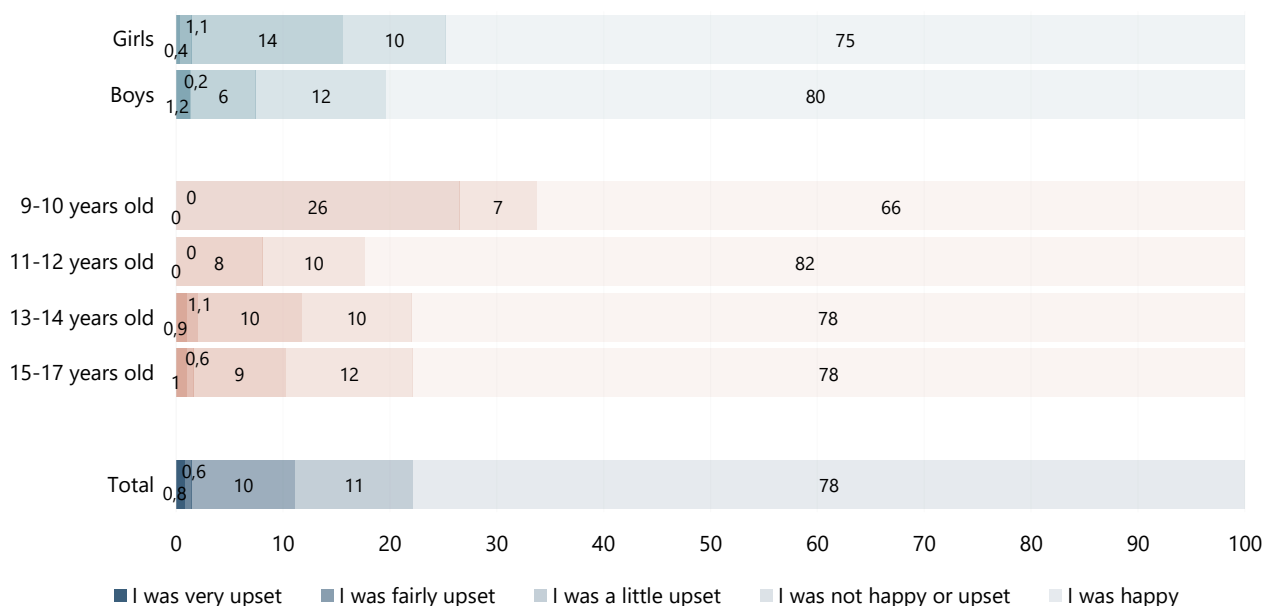
Question: *Thinking of the LAST TIME you met anyone face-to-face that you first got to know on the internet, how did you feel about it?*

As was already mentioned, 23% of children and adolescents met face-to-face with someone they had first met on the internet. Of those children and adolescents, 59% met with someone who was about the same age or a teenager older than them (27%). In 8% of the cases, they met with someone who was younger. In 7% of the cases where children and adolescents met a person from the internet face-

to-face, it was an adult. More girls (11% versus 3% boys) and more in the oldest age group of adolescents aged 15-17 (9% versus 3% in younger age groups) met with adults.

- 49% of children and adolescents **communicated on the internet with an unknown person**.
- **More older children and adolescents** aged 15-17 communicated on the internet with an unknown person (77%) than younger children aged 9-10 (16%).
- 23% of children and adolescents **met face-to-face with someone they had met on the internet**. Of those children and adolescents who met face-to-face with someone, 2% of them were fairly or very upset after the experience, 11% were not upset at all, and **78% considered it a positive experience**.
- In 67% of cases, children and adolescents **met face-to-face with someone about their age or younger**, and in 7% of cases they met with an adult.

Potentially harmful user-generated content

On the internet, children and adolescents may also encounter various kinds of harmful content that was created by other internet users on websites, social networks, or in discussions. This may include content (e.g., text, photos, or videos) that shows violence, attacks certain groups of people (e.g., people of a different nationality or sexual orientation), encourages risky activities such as drug use and being very thin, or describes ways to commit suicide. **Only children and adolescents aged 11-17** were asked about such harmful content.

Table 5 shows the experience of children and adolescents with selected types of harmful content, by age and gender. The table shows the percentage of children and adolescents who stated that they saw such content on the internet at least every month or more frequently.

Children and adolescents most frequently saw hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals (26%) and gory or violent images, photos, or videos (18%). More older children and adolescents than the younger ones saw all types of harmful content.

The table refers to children and adolescents aged 11-17 who use the internet.

Table 5: Potentially harmful user-generated content that children and adolescents encountered on the internet *in the previous year at least every month or more often* (%).

%	11-13 years old		14-17 years old		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
Hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals (e.g., people of different colour, religion, nationality, or sexuality)	11	14	37	35	**26**
Gory or violent images, for example people hurting other people or animals	7	14	22	25	**18**
Ways of physically harming or hurting themselves	9	11	23	23	**17**
Their experiences of taking drugs	4	7	25	27	**17**
Ways to be very thin (such as being anorexic or bulimic, or "thinspiration")	8	15	11	30	**17**
Ways of committing suicide	3	9	14	14	**11**

Question: In the PAST YEAR, have you seen online content or online discussions where people talk about or show any of these things?

Slightly more girls than boys encountered harmful user-generated content. The biggest difference between boys and girls was found in viewing thinspiration content (i.e., ways to be very thin) that may be related to eating disorders. Twice as many girls as boys reported that they saw such content at least every month in the previous year — 15% of girls compared to 8% of boys aged 11-13 and 30% of girls compared to 11% of boys aged 14-17.

- 26% of children and adolescents saw **hate messages** that attacked certain groups or individuals on the internet every month or more often.
- 18% of children and adolescents saw **gory or violent images** on the internet every month or more often.
- 15% of girls aged 11-13 and 30% of girls aged 14-17 saw **content concerning ways to be very thin** on the internet every month or more often, compared to 8% of boys aged 11-13 and 11% of boys aged 14-17.
- Experience with all types of potentially harmful content on the internet increases with age.

Other online risks and personal data misuse

Incidents connected to the misuse of personal data and information should also be included in this report. This may include a wide range of risks, including getting a mobile phone or computer virus, internet scams, or the misuse of a password or other personal information in order to create hurtful or hateful content. These questions were asked of children and adolescents aged 9-17.

Selected risks associated with the misuse of personal data and information are shown in Table 6. Children and adolescents most often struggled with some of their devices being attacked by a virus (21%), and less often with other forms of misuse of personal information. With increasing age, experience with all types of the misuse of personal information increases, but experience with virus attacks remains similar in younger and older age groups.

The table refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Table 6: Types of misuse of personal data and information which children and adolescents experienced on the internet *in the previous year* (%).

%	9-12 years old		13-17 years old		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
The device (e.g., phone, tablet, computer) I use got a virus or spyware	26	15	26	16	**21**
I spent too much money on in-app purchases or in online games	11	4	21	4	**10**
Somebody used my password to access my information or to pretend to be me	8	5	11	13	**9**
Somebody used my personal information in a way I didn't like	6	4	9	11	**7**
Someone found out where I was because they tracked my phone or device	4	3	7	6	**5**
Somebody created a page or image about me that was hostile or hurtful	3	2	8	5	**4**
I lost money by being cheated on the internet	4	2	8	3	**4**

Question: In the PAST YEAR, has any of the following happened to you on the internet?

More boys spent too much money on in-app purchases or in online games (11% in the 9-12 age group and 21% in the 13-17 age group) compared to girls (4%) in both age groups. More boys lost money by being cheated on the internet. However, this negative experience was reported by only a small proportion of boys (4% of children aged 9-12 and 8% aged 13-17 years) and girls (2% and 3%, respectively).

- 21% of children and adolescents had their device (e.g., phone, tablet, or computer) **infected by a virus or spyware**.
- 10% of children and adolescents **spent too much money** on in-app purchases or in online games.
- **More boys** than girls spent too much money online, specifically 21% of boys aged 13-17 and only 4% of girls of the same age.
- 9% of children and adolescents reported that someone had **misused their password**.
- 7% of children and adolescents reported that their **personal information was used in a way they did not like**.

Excessive use of the internet

The last risk of using technologies addressed in this report is the excessive use of the internet. The excessive use of the internet is when there are negative impacts on several areas of a person's life at the same time. Therefore, it is not defined by just the amount of time spent on the internet, but primarily by the impacts that excessive use has on people. In the questionnaire, children and adolescents were asked five questions corresponding to the criteria of excessive internet use established in research. It is important to note that we write about the excessive use of the internet only if one meets **all the criteria at the same time**, that is, all of these things happen to him or her often.

In our research, 7% of respondents said that they had gone without eating or sleeping because of the internet; 15% agreed that they had neglected family, friends, or schoolwork because of time spent on the internet; 13% agreed that they had felt bothered when they could not be on the internet; 20% had tried to reduce their time spent on the internet but unsuccessfully; and 22% had caught themselves using the internet although they were not really interested. These percentages describe the frequency of these experiences **at least once a week**, which corresponds to the frequent occurrence of problem behaviour.

As we have already noted, if children and adolescents experienced only one of these aspects, it does not mean that they used the internet excessively. That is why we looked at how many respondents said they were experiencing all of the above aspects at least once a week, which can, therefore, be related to the excessive use of the internet. The results are presented in Figure 14, which also shows how many children and adolescents did not experience any of these things weekly.

> The figure refers to children and adolescents aged 9-17 who use the internet.

Figure 14: Children and adolescents who experienced none, one to four, or five out of five criteria of excessive internet use (%).
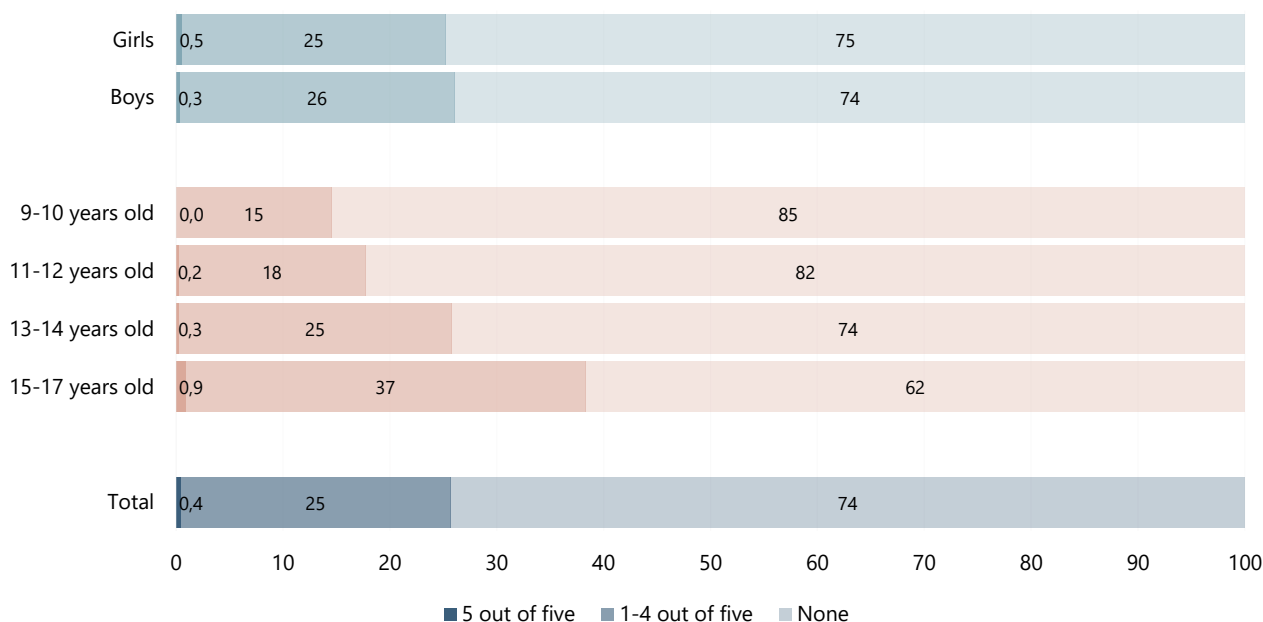
Question: In the PAST YEAR, how often have these things happened to you? (a) I have gone without eating or sleeping because of the internet, (b) I have felt bothered when I cannot be on the internet, (c) I have caught myself using the Internet although I'm not really interested, (d) I have spent less time than I should with either family, friends or doing schoolwork because of the time I spent on the internet, (e) I have tried unsuccessfully to spend less time on the internet.

It turned out that only 0.4% of Czech children and adolescents were experiencing all five factors at least weekly; only with regard to these children, can we consider the excessive use of the internet. On the other hand, 74% of Czech children and adolescents had these problems less often or not at all. The presence of at least one of these problems is most common among older children – 38% of children aged 15-17 compared to 15% of children aged 9-10. The differences between girls and boys are minimal.

- 0.4% of Czech children and adolescents can be described as **excessive internet users**.

- The factors of the excessive use of the internet are more common among older children.

- The differences between girls and boys are minimal.

- 20% of children and adolescents **unsuccessfully tried to reduce their time spent on the internet** at least once a week.

- 7% of children and adolescents **do not sleep or eat because of the internet** at least once a week.

CONCLUSION

This report summarizes the major findings about children and adolescents aged 9-17 from the Czech Republic in relation to two areas of study – internet usage and online activities; and experience with potential online risks. Potential online risks include overall negative experience on the internet; online aggression and cyberbullying; seeing sexual images and pornography on the internet; sexting; meeting new people; exposure to potentially harmful user-generated content; other online risks and the misuse of personal data; and the excessive use of the internet.

Children and adolescents access the internet mainly through a mobile phone. Eighty-four percent of Czech children and adolescents connect to the internet daily with their mobile phone (and only 45% connect daily with a desktop computer or a laptop). Considering internet usage, there are not many differences between boys and girls. The differences are mainly related to age: with increasing age, internet usage and digital literacy increase as well. Older children and adolescents are online more often than the younger ones and they also engage more frequently in a higher range of online activities. Also, they feel more competent in coping with potential negative phenomena and risks. The regular online activities of children and adolescents are diverse and include communication with others, entertainment (e.g., watching videos and playing games), but also schoolwork. Social networking sites are visited daily by 70% of children and adolescents. And 65% of children and adolescents use the internet for schoolwork at least once a week.

Internet usage and time spent online are also related to potential online risks. Those children and adolescents who spend more time online are more likely to encounter something risky. The experience with negative phenomena on the internet also increases with age. However, online risks and negative online experiences do not always have to be hurtful or upsetting. Even though older children and adolescents are generally more likely to encounter risks, they are also better equipped to cope with them, and they less often consider them to be something that bothered or upset them in a more serious way. The difference is not only related to age, but also to gender. More girls reported that they had some negative experiences on the internet that bothered or upset them.

Finally, it should be noted that internet usage involves not only online risks, but also positive experiences and opportunities. Not all children and adolescents have the same opportunities to

connect to the internet, and their digital literacy differs as well, which affects the benefits and opportunities that they can get from internet usage, whether for schoolwork or for personal development. This is also related to their ability to cope with potential risks on the internet. As has been shown in our data, not every experience with online risk means harm or a negative impact. If it is not a serious situation, some children and adolescents may actually become more experienced internet users through these situations. Some experiences can be more instructive, others might be risky. However, it is necessary to consider the wide variability of individual experiences, like the fact that the same website can be beneficial to one child and hurtful to another. It is, therefore, always crucial to take into account the whole context of the situation, as well as age, gender, and the other socio-psychological characteristics of the child.

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