

Media Literacy Guide for Parents



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Media
Literacy 
Guide for
Parents

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Foreword, Introduction & Consortium



FOREWORD

Media Literacy Guide for Parents.

This Guide has been created in the framework of the Erasmus+ project Media Literacy for Parents, one of the first projects specifically targeting parents and their own media usage as well as showing them ways and possibilities of educating their children to become confident, responsible and informed media users.

The project follows up on studies showing that the main target group of media and/or digital literacy programs are mainly children and youngsters but that the influence of their family surroundings as well as their peers largely outweighs the impact of such programs generally deployed at school. It is therefore important to train and empower parents to be able to fulfil their role as primary educators of their children also in this domain, an aspect the European Parents' Association (EPA) has been advocating for since its foundation in 1985 when digital issues did not yet figure so prominently on the agenda.

The consortium consists of six partners from six different countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Poland) and various backgrounds (national NGOs, European networks and companies).

They have all brought in their unique experiences in the fields of adult training, parental representation, digitalization, media creation and cyber security to create a training program, a web application and this guide to support parents.

The objective is to help them in their quest for keeping their children safe online on the one hand but to make it possible that they can fully participate in modern society including in learning opportunities, in democratic processes and leisure and cultural activities on the other hand, as digitalization can also facilitate self-expression, foster active forms of citizenship, and enhance creative communication.

We wish all users a fruitful read and we are happy to receive your comments and suggestions for improving any of the elements created.

Vienna, September 2021

INTRODUCTION

Media Literacy, or the lack thereof, seems to be a rather new phenomenon when we look at all the publications and studies that have emerged during the past two decades. It has however been a much discussed topic ever since the invention of print and even more so with the establishment of regular newspapers in the 19th century as well as later on with radio and television broadcasting. So some of the questions that parents are faced with today are actually rather old issues as for example the distinction between correct and incorrect information – today better known under the heading of “fake news” – but also (cyber)bullying or harassment of any sort as well as “hate speech” have been around for a while.

The same is true for parental efforts to protect their children against any of this mischief and state or ecclesiastical authorities to keep their citizens or followers away from undesired or even dangerous content in the eyes of their governing bodies. The latter we tend to call censorship and there are huge discussions on whether and how this is also true for parental control on their children’s online activities.

That is why a major focus in this guide will be on the communication between parents and children and the co-creation of rules and regulations which by experience also have a better chance of being respected if children feel ownership in these agreements.

The guide is divided into five different sections which can be read and used separately. In each section you will find some basic information and links to further resources. They also contain some very practical hints and tested recommendations as well as piloted activities.

Last but not least, you will find an introduction to the WebApp that has been developed and which can be used as a complement to this guide and to the training course as well as a great way to find out more about media literacy by participating in quizzes, watching recommended videos, reading articles and following tips and recommendations.

We encourage you to take part in the Moodle training course and enhance your digital competences to help develop those of your children and to promote Media Literacy among your peers, friends and relatives.



Background

Although Media Literacy education has developed during recent years, it is usually only directed at young people and does not address the needs of parents who are responsible for supporting their children's media literacy. Parents in particular can help their children to develop a moderate use and a healthy behavior regarding internet usage and to recognize the existing dangers that they may face online. Nevertheless, in EU-27 only a small number of initiatives aimed at parents have been developed so parents still have only limited knowledge in media usage and feel insecure or unable to support their children.

Aim

MeLi Parents aims to resolve the policy gap regarding the limited media literacy initiatives targeting parents by creating a training programme and supporting tools for media literacy education addressed specifically for them, with the aim of enhancing their skills and knowledge on media usage. The training programme in particular will assist them in acquiring some technical knowledge on how to use digital media and be engaged in their children's online activity.

Approach

The project resulted in the following tangible results:

- Training program: Media Literacy for parents
- Web App ML4P
- Media Literacy Guide for Parents

Innovation

The innovation of MeLi Parents lies in the creation of new training material and tools on media literacy specifically meant to empower parents. The modules are based on research carried out in partners' countries, addressing in this way real problems that parents confront. The training material is delivered through a web app in the form of activities and interactive

resources. The app sends notifications to parents through email/ SMS, providing them with resources and activities that enable parents to practice alone or with their children media literacy, while at the same time allowing them to evaluate the training content.

www.meli4parents.eu

PARTNERS MAPA PASJI



The Map of Passions Foundation was established in 2016 in Poland. Our mission is discovering local treasures. We are active in four main domains of activities: 1) QUESTS- Explorer Expeditions are unmarked trails which may be chosen to discover local history, culture and nature, and solve riddles hidden in rhymed clues; we operate more than 600 quests (www.questy.org.pl); 2) The cultural heritage of places which we protect, document and promote on regional and national levels; 3) "Space for senior citizens" - activation, integration and education of senior citizens; 4) Educational programmes implemented internationally within Erasmus+ programme.

www.mapapasji.pl

E-BUSINESS ACADEMY



E-business Academy is a private educational and consulting organisation specializing in adult education in the field of entrepreneurship, e-business and e-marketing, as well as life and business coaching, e-business and e-marketing consulting activities. Along with

the classical and established principles and methodologies, we also apply in our work completely new scientific psychological methods and tools such as Neurographica, symbolic metaphorical cards, etc. Our main goal is to empower a new creative way of thinking and help small business owners, self-employed people and individuals with specific skills and hobbies to go online, to present themselves and use all the advantages of the digital technologies in the best possible way.

www.e-businessacademy.eu

EMPHASYS



The Emphasys Centre, was established in 1998, and operates as an Education, ICT Training Centre and Research Centre approved by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth. It is staffed with a strong team of professionals which includes experts in ICT, Psychology, Sociology, Education, Law, Economics, Business, Human Rights, Languages, Communication, Architecture and Graphic Design. Emphasys offers its services to a diverse portfolio of public and private organizations, as well as professionals and individuals from all ages and backgrounds.

It is organized in 4 inter-related departments. The Education Department which offers validated and accredited IT courses, such as the GCE A' Level Computer Science for students entering HEIs or the European Computer Driving License (ECDL) for professionals, while providing Career Counseling Services.

The ICT Training Department includes two fully equipped units: the STEAM Unit and the EU Training Unit. The EU Unit focuses on the provision of a wide selection of Erasmus+ KA1 Learning Mobility Courses for EU professionals and citizens. The STEAM Unit is fully equipped with high tech tools in order to offer project-driven related courses to young people combining Robotics, 3D Design and Printing using the Craftbot+ 3D Printer, and Coding through Video Game design using state of the art Virtual Reality Headsets such as the Oculus Rift S guided with 'Lego Education Trainer' instructors.

Most of the courses follow the 4C approach of Lego Education “Connect – Construct – Contemplate – Continue” where learners are presented with a challenge that is open-ended which places them in the position of solution-seekers.

The Research Department works with several organizations on EU projects under a number of funds (e.g. Erasmus, AMIF, AAL) in the field of education and training while also providing managerial support for EU projects to schools and NGOs. Over the years it has built a strong local and international network, utilized in the promotion of EU projects and initiatives.

The Software Development Department is involved in the design, development, pilot-testing and evaluation of various e-learning tools, platforms, websites, applications and assessment portals etc. based on the needs of the various project being implemented by the organization.

Emphasys is a member of the European Digital Learning Network (DLEARN) together with 25 other organizations from Europe aiming to promote the digital agenda of Europe and part of the consulting group for the Digital Agenda of Cyprus.

www.emphasyscentre.com

EUROPEAN DIGITAL LEARNING NETWORK – DLEARN



The European Digital Learning Network – DLEARN – aims to embrace the challenges brought by the digital revolution in terms of digital skills mismatch, toward an inclusive digital society. 47% of Europeans are not properly digitally skilled – yet in the near future 90% of jobs will require some level of digital skills and numerous opportunities in terms of jobs that are going to shape the labour market. Our aims are characterized by 4 key-words: SHARE, CONNECT, MULTIPLY, ENHANCE. DLEARN is a collector of practices and ideas, gathering diverse organizations in Europe to reflect, think and trigger new initiatives, toward the valorisation and the enhancement of digital learning.

www.dlearn.eu

EUROPEAN PARENTS' ASSOCIATION - EPA



EPA was founded as a NGO in 1985 in Milan to promote collaboration between schools, parents' associations and other educational communities through Europe. Through the years EPA has become an umbrella association for national and regional parents' associations and federations of parents associations in Europe which together represent more than 150 million parents.

Main objectives are:

- To promote and advocate for the active involvement of parents as primary educators at all stages of the education of their children,
- To support parents' associations and individual parents for stakeholder involvement in different European countries by offering opportunities for training, cooperation and exchanging information,
- To support the highest possible quality of education for all children in Europe especially by active involvement in EU-level policy development and assessment,
- To foster exchange among our members.

www.europarents.eu

HEARTHANDS SOLUTIONS - HESO



HeartHands Solutions (HESO) is a dynamic consultancy offering a vast range of services bridging the gap between the commercial and public/EU funding ecosystems. HESO's service provision ranges from business development and public funding acquisition to

custom implementation, training and technology transfer. All services are offered with focus on high quality of results which is what separates HESO from most consultancies that distance themselves from technical implementations leaving their customers exposed.

www.hearthandsolutions

IDEC



IDEC is a training consulting company located in Piraeus, Greece. Its activities consist of training, management consulting, quality assurance, evaluation, research, innovation and development of ICT solutions for both private and public sector. It co-operates with more than 800 institutes all through Europe and with about 300 experts on specific fields. IDEC has extensive experience in European projects, either as coordinator or as partner from different European programs and Initiatives. Moreover, IDEC has an accredited lifelong learning center and is certified according to ISO 9001 quality standard. Through its double role, both as educational provider and as management consulting company, IDEC has been able to incorporate best practices from the business sector into the educational by adjusting them to the spirit of open and sustainable and accessible education for all.

www.idec.gr



CHAPTER 1

Media
Literacy
in general



Chapter 1.1

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF MEDIA

Media influence almost every part of our daily lives. They largely determine our beliefs, actions, decisions and sometimes affect our values and relationships. Starting with television, whose messages are automatically sealed in our and our children's minds, going through all the information on the Internet and reaching social media and group chats. The information we receive affects our way of thinking and our behavior. That is why it is very important for parents and educators to know how to recognize and choose the proper media content, sources of information and platforms for themselves and their children. It is also crucial to understand how media influence our emotions, decisions and actions.

Another main topic for us as parents is how we can guide our children to assess, evaluate and take the best and most from media influence, to teach and inspire them with our own example as a role model. One of the very first steps we recommend is to take your time to explore and evaluate the following topics for you and your children:

- How much time is your TV switched on?
(passive time in front of the TV for the whole family)
- Which are your information sources regarding politics, parenting, house keeping, sport etc.?
- How do you evaluate the information you find?
- How sure are you that the information you get is based on real facts?
- Do you know the difference between fact and opinion?

Here are some important questions you can ask yourself which can help you evaluate your media sources and their influence on you and your children:

How do different people (you, your kids, colleagues, relatives, friends) respond to media content?

There are various factors that determine different people's reactions to the same information. The most common are: gender, age, ethnicity, cultural and social conditioning, current situation. It is important for us as parents to understand this and explain it to our children in an age-appropriate way.

What is your motivation to respond/react to media content?

As parents, it is important to understand what makes us and our children react or respond to media content. What makes us respond to a post on social media or attracts our attention on the news?

We should be able to recognize the provocations that push us to take action or to form an opinion or belief. Fake news and disinformation, for example, are always designed in a specific way to provoke our reaction, and most often it is the various forms and nuances of fear.

TIP:

We recommend you intentionally focus on your responses/reactions to the News, Social Media posts, commercial ads that you see/listen to on your usual media channels for a week. Write down the results and findings and reflect on them for yourself. You can further discuss them with your family and friends. In addition you can use this exercise as a game with your children (depending on their age).

How does media content influence your emotions?

It is important to develop our emotional intelligence, to learn to observe and recognize our emotions and external influences on them. It is also crucial to talk with our children about their emotions, to teach and coach them on this topic.

How does media content shape your beliefs, attitude and behavior?

As parents we should clearly understand how media content shapes our and our children's beliefs, attitude and behavior. Our beliefs and convictions define the filter through which we all see the world. They determine our reactions, actions, opinions.

In today's world, our beliefs and convictions are often shaped by media information that comes to us from a variety of sources. Accordingly, they largely determine our reactions and actions. The values and beliefs of our children are also formed, not only in the family environment, but also by the information received from various sources that they are exposed to.

How does media content influence your decisions?

The information that constantly comes to us through different media sources greatly influences our decisions. Therefore it is very important to develop our critical thinking and to pass this knowledge and awareness onto our children.

TYPES OF MEDIA INFLUENCE

Direct and indirect influence

What is the difference between direct and indirect influence? Direct media influence is easier to distinguish. For example, we see an advertisement for a product and make a purchase decision. Or we see political advertisement and this forms our opinion about a political candidate. However, in other cases, media influence is indirect. For example: the ads we see are from manufacturers/suppliers who can afford financial advertising in a given medium. I.e. the media select the advertisers and the news we see and we are indirectly exposed to this influence by the media.

Positive and negative influence

When we talk about media influence, more often than not the focus is on negative influence and disinformation or fake news. We explore and teach our children how to recognize negative influence and how to protect themselves.

However it is just as important to learn to recognize and point out to our children the positive influence of media content. We can teach them how to explore and use online learning materials, educational games, various age-appropriate web applications, to read about causes, environmental and social issues etc.

REAL TO DIGITAL TO REAL CIRCLE

Clearly distinguishing between the real and virtual worlds and the transition from one to the other is often a problem not only for children but also for adults. This happens most often in online games, but there are many other cases that we do not always recognize. Here, we can also find both a negative as well as a positive impact.

For example: following a celebrity on Social Media and trying to imitate her/him in the real life. Sometimes, in more extreme cases, this can lead to serious psychological problems. On the other hand, information about a sporting or cultural event can encourage us to attend it and develop our skills.

TIP: Find examples of these types in your and your kids' daily lives and discuss them.

INFLUENCERS

Are you aware who influences you and how? Do you know who are your childrens' influencers and role models?

Here are some of the most common influence sources:

Commercial ads - Commercial advertising

It is the most easily recognizable way of direct media influence.

Personalities/celebrities

In the last 10 years, the influence of personalities/celebrities called influencers has been growing, especially in social networks like Instagram, Twitter, YouTube etc.

Social groups (on-and offline)

Increasingly, the lives of adults and children are concentrated on closed online and offline groups, whose opinions have a great influence on them.

Social experience

Children reflect in the outer world the social experience they have experienced in their home and social environment. This also applies to their level of media literacy.

Cultural background

Cultural background is a leading influencing factor in the formation of values and behavior.

PARENTS' ROLE IN DEFINING CHILDREN'S SOURCES OF INFLUENCE

What you can do as a parent:

- Talk to your children about their interests.
Who are their role models?
Who are they following? In which social media?
- Look for information and direct your children to appropriate influencers, according to their age and interests. Follow them together and discuss.
- Talk with your children about their emotions.

What and which information evokes positive/ negative emotions? What are the reasons?

- Discuss with your children their social circle.

Who is in it? How does it affect them?

What do they like and what do they not? What would they like to be different?

MEDIA INFLUENCE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

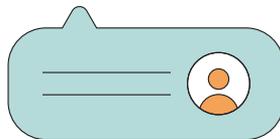
Many news, games and explicit or implicit advertisements are designed to affect our emotions. The expressions, images and music used convey the message that the authors have set even without being expressed verbally. They are designed in a way to play with our hopes or fears, to arouse our emotions and make us buy a certain product, support a certain cause or defend or oppose a certain position.

It is important to develop our emotional intelligence, to learn to recognize our emotions and external influences on them, as well as to pass this knowledge on to our children. You can find more information about core emotions and emotional intelligence here:

<https://www.paulekman.com/universal-emotions/>

Why is it important to coach your kids on the topic of Media Literacy?

The digital world surrounds us and our kids on a daily basis and besides being useful and necessary, it can be overwhelming, and even dangerous. Kids need to be able to understand and evaluate the information that they come across so they can use it safely and effectively. Media literacy is not just about knowing how to use different devices or update Instagram. Media literacy means understanding the information and using it appropriately. Concerning the topic “Economic, social and cultural aspects of media”, the most important thing is to teach and coach our children to understand and evaluate how their social circle and media content influence their emotions and how these emotions determine their behavior, decisions, and beliefs.



Further Reading and references

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zg24frd/revision/2_

<https://www.socialmagnets.net/how-social-media-influences-people/>

<https://www.paulekman.com/universal-emotions/>

<http://atlasofemotions.>

http://org/?fbclid=IwAR1E9K_NceQ8lV2wwRzz2o2DfefkNAo2uZ9DuFAMuKcsYm9ugJggQuMVtpE#introduction/

Chapter 1.2

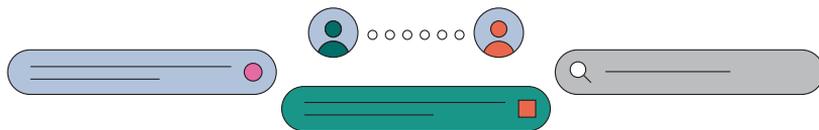
COMMUNICATION AND TRUST BUILDING

What do we mean by communication?

Nowadays, there are many different ways to intend the word “communication”, and the expression is especially used a lot in a very technical way to describe the interaction between systems, machines, machines and humans, etc. In this chapter we will however concentrate on communication as a social act going back to the Latin origins of the word *communicare* “to share, divide out; impart, inform; join, unite, participate in”, literally “to move together”.

In order to manage “to move together” you have to be able to understand each other, which leads to the different ways of expressing yourself and make somebody else understand but also vice-versa.

So, communication in our context is a process about conveying a message (or messages) and making meaning of what the other person is trying to convey, influenced by various factors that we will look at further on in this chapter:



Why is communication important when we talk about media literacy?

In the general chapter on media literacy we have described why media literacy is essential in the 21st century and that it cannot only be taught at school. As a matter of fact, media literacy is not about teaching whether something is “right” or “wrong” but to find out things together, analyse and create content and to learn from each other. Children are often faster than adults in scrolling and finding things, more at ease in using new apps and playing online, they have great ideas for keywords to look for information etc. but they are less aware of the problems that may arise while surfing the Internet, playing games or engaging in online conversations.

Many parents are therefore worried about keeping their children safe and would either like to completely block their access to the Internet or install heavy control tools to prevent their offspring from coming in contact with any undesired content. This is however a dangerous endeavour

as “forbidden fruits” are generally the most interesting (remember your own childhood 😊) and children are often very smart in finding ways to get around these obstacles if they really wish to. Sometimes they may also just come across inadequate content accidentally on a friend’s phone or laptop or the device of an elder sibling.

That makes good communication and trust so necessary because it will not only make your child aware of the reasons behind your actions but it will also help you understand why playing a certain game, participating in a challenge or watching a specific video seems so crucial for your child. Listening carefully and recognizing your child’s wishes and worries will enable you to react empathically but not necessarily to give in to all your child’s desires as we will see in the chapter on parenting styles. Furthermore it will encourage your child to inform you in case a problem arises without fear of punishment.

Teaching media literacy should therefore be seen as an interactive process and not as a one-off talk that you conduct at one point and you are done and over with. It will be more effective when included in everyday activities on a regular basis.

Chapter 1.2.1

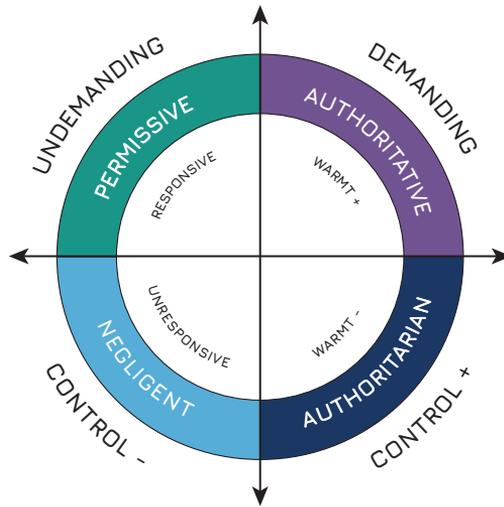
PARENTING STYLES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON MEDIA EDUCATION

In general, the way you go about child rearing will also have an influence on your practices regarding the media use of your child, so let us have a look at the model of the four parenting styles as developed by Diana Baumrind (1966, 1967)¹ and extended by Martin and Maccoby (1973)².

Looking at the overall patterns of parental interaction characteristics with the child, considering the dimensions of the parental control (e.g. supervision, demand and set rules) and the parental warmth (e.g. responsiveness, support), the following scheme emerges as a result of the combination between both dimensions:

¹ Baumrind, D. (1967). Child care practices anteceding three patterns of preschool behavior. *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 75(1), 43-88 originally: Baumrind, D. (1966). Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior, *Child Development*, 37(4), 887-907.

² Maccoby, E.E.; Martin, J.A. (1983). “Socialization in the context of the family: Parent-child interaction”. In Mussen, P.H.; Hetherington, E.M. (eds.), *Manual of child psychology*, Vol. 4: Social development. New York: John Wiley and Sons. pp. 1-101.



These standard parenting strategies are evidently theoretical constructs and in everyday life there are certainly overlaps as not every parent acts according to the same pattern all the time. The model should therefore be used to enhance reflection on one's own practices: which are the specific behaviours that can be observed and categorized.

The following descriptions mention the general characteristics of each style but also show their influence on how media usage is handled:

Permissive or indulgent parents attempt to behave in a nonpunitive, acceptant and affirmative manner towards the child's impulses, desires, and actions. They consult with the child about policy decisions and give explanations for family rules. They make few demands for household responsibility and orderly behaviour. They present themselves to the child as a resource for her/him to use as she/he wishes, not as an ideal for her/him to emulate, nor as an active agent responsible for shaping or altering her/his ongoing or future behaviour. They allow the child to regulate her/his own activities as much as possible, avoid the exercise of control, and do not encourage her/him to obey externally defined standards. They attempt to use reason and manipulation, but not overt power to accomplish their ends (cf. Baumrind, 1966, p. 889).

Typically, indulgent parents are excessively tolerant, allowing the child to monitor their own online behaviour and activities without setting rules or limits. Indulgent parents are affective,

communicative and receptive to their children internet usage, tending to satisfy any demand that the child presents.

Authoritarian parents attempt to shape, control, and evaluate the behaviour and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct, usually an absolute standard, theologically motivated and formulated by a higher authority. These parents value obedience as a virtue and favour punitive, forceful measures to curb self-will at points where the child's actions or beliefs conflict with what they think is right conduct. They believe in keeping the child in her/his place, in restricting her/his autonomy, and in assigning household responsibilities in order to inculcate respect for work. They regard the preservation of order and traditional structure as a highly valued end in itself. They do not encourage verbal give and take, believing that the child should accept their word for what is right (cf. Baumrind, 1966, p. 890). Authoritarian parents are more rigid and establish strict rules (including the use of control tools) for internet use, regardless of any child participation. Usually, authoritarian parents do not value dialogue and autonomy.

Negligent, neglectful or uninvolved parents are often emotionally or physically absent. They have little to no expectation of the child and regularly have no communication. They are not responsive to a child's needs and have little to no behavioural expectations. If present, they may provide what the child needs for survival with little to no engagement³. There seems to be a rather distant relationship between parents and children with this parenting style. Children with little or no communication with their own parents tend to be victimized by other children and may themselves exhibit deviant behaviour⁴. Children of uninvolved parents often suffer from lack of social competence, poor academic performance, inadequate psychosocial development and problem behaviour. Negligent parents are neither responsive nor demanding, regarding their children's use of the Internet.



³ Brown, Lola; Iyengar, Shrinidhi (2008). "Parenting Styles: The Impact on Student Achievement". *Marriage & Family Review*. 43 (1-2): 14-38.

⁴ Finkelhor, D.; Ormrod, R.; Turner, H.; Holt, M. (November 2009). "Pathways to Poly-Victimization" (PDF). *Child Maltreatment*. 14 (4): 316-29.

Frequently, negligent parents show little involvement with the child's internet usage and do not monitor their online activities. While indulgent parents are involved with their children internet use, neglectful parents are often focused on their own online activities.

Authoritative parents attempt to direct the child's activities but in a rational, issue-oriented manner. These parents encourage verbal give and take, share with the child the reasoning behind their policy, and solicits her/his objections when she/he refuses to conform. Both autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity are valued [the parent values both expressive and instrumental attributes, both autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity] ... Therefore they exert firm control at points of parent-child divergence, but do not hem the child in with restrictions. They enforce their own perspective as an adult but recognize the child's individual interests and special ways. The authoritative parent affirms the child's present qualities, but also sets standards for future conduct. She/he uses reason, power, and shaping by regime and reinforcement to achieve her/his objectives and does not base her/his decisions on group consensus or the individual child's desires but also does not regard herself/himself as infallible, or divinely inspired.

Authoritative parents set rules for the online activities of their children and they monitor their compliance, correcting negative and rewarding positive behaviours. Communication between authoritative parents and their children is clear and open, based on mutual respect.



Chapter 1.2.2

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES AND COMMUNICATION

So, in a communication situation with your child not only do your words matter – WHAT you say, but very often even more the way – HOW you say it. When the two aspects do not match, you are sending a confusing message to your child which can be the base for misunderstanding and conflict.

This could even worsen if one or more of the following maxims of conversation are not respected (adapted from Grice 1989):

MAXIM OF MANNER - CLARITY

- No ambiguity in the message
- Be clear to help to understand the meaning

MAXIM OF RELATION - RELEVANCE

- Making the message relevant to the receiver will increase its acceptance

MAXIM OF QUALITY - VALIDITY

- Only valid information should be transmitted
- Be truthful

MAXIM OF QUANTITY - INFORMATIVENESS AND TIMELINESS (ADAPTATION)

- Finding the adequate moment
- Being informative

ADDITIONAL MAXIMS

a) Be perspicuous (clear).

There are various additional maxims of manner (sometimes referred to as submaxims), that are based on this supermaxim. Grice lists four specific ones in his original work⁵: **Avoid obscurity of expression.** Avoid language which is difficult to understand, i.e. because it contains words that the listener does not know. **Avoid ambiguity.** Avoid ambiguous language which can be interpreted in multiple ways, and which therefore makes it difficult for your recipient to understand what exactly you are trying to say. **Be brief.** Provide information in a concise

⁵ Grice, Paul (1989): Studies in the way of words.

manner that allows your recipient to focus on the key details. **Be orderly.** Provide information in an order that makes sense and makes it easy for your recipient to process it.

b) Be relevant. Make sure that all the information you provide is relevant to the current exchange; omit irrelevant information.

c) Try to make your contribution one that is true. Furthermore, based on this supermaxim, there are two more-specific maxims of quality (sometimes referred to as submaxims): Do not say what you believe to be false. Avoid stating information that you believe might be wrong, unless there is some compelling reason to do so. If you do choose to include it, then provide a disclaimer that highlights your doubts regarding this information. Do not say that for which you lack evidence. Avoid including information that you cannot back up with supporting evidence. If you do choose to include such information for some reason, provide a disclaimer that points out your doubts.

d) Make your contribution as informative as it is required. Provide all the information which is necessary for the purpose of the current exchange; do not leave out anything important. Choosing the right moment for your intervention does not belong to Grice's principles but is very important especially when dealing with children. That brings us to the different communication styles. As we have seen with parenting there are also four main patterns that can be distinguished:

PASSIVE COMMUNICATION is characterized by;

- Difficulty to make eye contact .
- Inability to say "no".
- Having poor posture.
- Having a "going with the flow"- type attitude.

AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION on the contrary can include the following:

- Talking over other people.
- Interrupting frequently, poor listeners.
- Controlling or demanding.
- Finger pointing.
- Staring and glaring intensely.
- Frowning.
- Criticizing, intimidating, or threatening others.

PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION is a compound of the above and means:

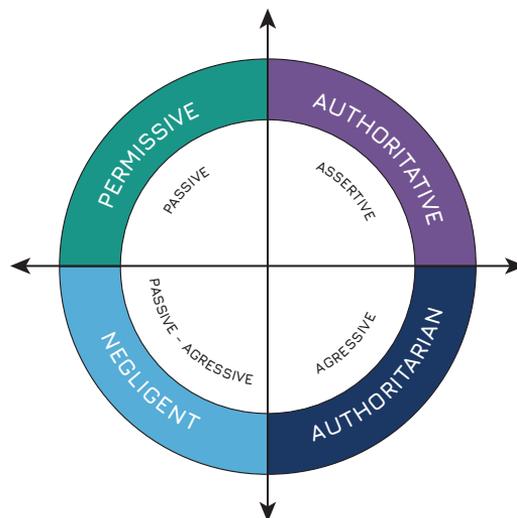
- Being frequently sarcastic.
- Words do not align with actions.
- Facial expressions do not match words.
- Having difficulty acknowledging emotions.

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATORS

- Are able to express desires and needs with confidence.
- Encourage balanced conversations in which both people have a chance to speak.
- Use “I” statements (eg. I feel frustrated when...).
- Are able to say no.
- Maintain good eye contact.

As you have probably already guessed, it is this last style that is being widely promoted to be used in interaction between parents and children but as it is true for the parenting styles you might not always use the same style in every situation or with each and every interlocutor (person you are communicating with). You may use a more aggressive style when you are angry about something and a more passive one when you are tired.

You can also see how these four communication styles tie in nicely with the four parenting styles that we have just seen a moment ago. We can associate them in the following way:



Chapter 1.2.3

TRUST BUILDING

In order to establish a culture of dialogue where everybody's opinion is valued and taken into account, parents need to make sure that their children can participate in the decision making in all matters that concern them. This process can start rather early as even small children are able to take decisions when given a choice between two or three options. Children who experience this kind of agency will be more likely to identify with these decisions and take on responsibility for their actions. Evidently, this exchange on small issues will have to be extended gradually to more important problems and challenges establishing a culture of dialogue where the child is considered a competent partner – a kind of expert on her/himself. This evidently requires mutual trust as well as a lot of patience and a holistic approach on education as a process to foster the development of the child's full and unique potential.

This goal is best reached by a combination of an authoritative parenting style with assertive communication where boundaries are set in accordance with the child - taking into account her/his age and maturity level - through negotiations and agreements where also consequences for non-compliance are included and will be administered in case of breach. Trust-building measures in relation to online behaviour can be twofold: co-creation of content and co-presence in the digital world.

Co-creation of content might include:

- Taking pictures together during a walk, while playing a game (indoor or outdoor), at a party, during a common activity (cooking, gardening, etc.) and deciding afterwards which to share, with whom and where (not making private pictures publicly available, etc.)
- Writing messages (emails, posting messages on social media, to whom, which content, etc.)
- Creating a video (video clip, short film, etc.)
- Coding: creating content through Scratch Jr. or Scratch
- Creating figures in a game.

Co-presence refers to activities like:

- Playing an online game together with your child
- Surfing the Internet together
- Searching for information on an interesting topic.
- Watching a video and discussing it afterwards.

Chapter 1.2.4

TALKING ABOUT SENSITIVE TOPICS

Having an established practice of dialogue with your child will be specifically beneficial when it comes to talking about “delicate” topics. What is considered a “delicate” or “sensitive” topic will depend a lot on your family and/or societal culture, i.e. whether certain topics are mentioned naturally in everyday conversations or rather not touched upon. Children “learn” about all family/society traditions mainly by observation, absorbing them almost automatically and will only question them when coming in contact with different practices in other contexts, e.g. at kindergarten, at school, seeing them in the media, at a friend’s place, etc. As a parent you should therefore prepare for conversations for example about sexuality, nudity, violence, religious beliefs, media consumption or others that might not be part of your usual topics of conversation with your child.

a) How to prepare for and carry out a conversation?

First of all, it is recommendable to gather information about the topic that should be evidence-based and scientifically proven (see 1.2.2 the 4 Maxims of Conversation by Grice). Comparing different sources can be of great help to understand the complexity of some issues which should not be hidden, especially from older children (for more information on the different issues, see the specific chapters of this guide, e.g. 2.1.1. on Cyberbullying, 2.1.2 on Hate-speech, etc).

Secondly, admitting that you do not know everything but that there are ways and means to find and distinguish valid information from “fake news” (see chapter 2.1.4) will make the need for critical thinking and questioning of what one sees, hears and reads clear to your child and help them to build resilience against attempts of malicious influence whether it is cyberbullying, sextortion or others.

Thirdly, being clear about your own opinion and able to argue your points well and in an understandable age-appropriate way while adopting a listening attitude to try to understand the child’s motivations and concerns will greatly increase the probability for acceptance by your child.

Fourthly, choosing an appropriate moment for these conversations might actually be as crucial as the content of the conversations themselves. This does not mean however

that you fix a date and time in your calendar to sit down and talk about a certain topic but rather to harness opportunities as they come along in your everyday life. This can include a remark by your child or somebody else in the family that you can pick up and develop. It might also be something you come across while watching TV, a movie or a video together, or any other kind of “trigger” that can be used to initiate a deeper and meaningful conversation on the topic. If nothing comes along and you have the feeling that you need to have a talk on a certain topic, you can try to create such a situation by referring to an article that you have read or a conversation you had with the neighbour, a peer or a friend of your child.

Keep in mind that in most cases this will not be a one-off conversation but that you will need to come back to the topic more or less regularly – especially as children grow older – to add more and more detailed information, explore your child’s engagement more in depth and make sure that the messages have been understood and accepted as well as clarifying dis- or misinformation that your child may have been exposed to in the meantime. Encouraging your child to ask questions from an early age, to not take information for granted is actually the best method to help your child develop critical thinking and build resilience which will, at the end of the day, be the best protection that you can provide as it will have long-lasting effects way into adolescence and adulthood. This can be extremely strenuous and cumbersome at times – especially during the famous “why and why not phase” but it is worth the effort. In order to help you to better argue your point of view/decision with older children, find some useful indications in the following points.

b) Legal Provisions

If you find it difficult to make your child understand why you think that certain measures need to be put in place to protect them or why certain behaviour is unacceptable it might also be of help to know that there are laws and other regulations that have to be respected. For example the minimum age to use certain social media channels or the fact that sexting is considered child pornography when the sexually explicit content is sent by a minor no matter whether it is the child itself that posted the message or image. Some of these legal provisions are national law and you can usually find out about them on your Ministry of Justice’s website. Other rules are established by the providers of such services and it is a good start to go through them with your child and explain even if in many cases they are lengthy and not always reader-friendly but this will also teach your

child never to accept or sign anything they have not read or understood which can be very important later in life when it comes to contracts or other agreements.

c) Cooperation

Creating a network of other family members, parents of friends, teachers, other school staff will help you to know what is going on, realize quickly whenever there is a problem and exchange possible solutions with others.

The contact with the parents (families) of your child's friends is especially important as the same rules do not apply in all families and you do not want your child to be exposed to undesirable content in other places. So you might need to call these parents and explain what your zone of comfort is and what boundaries you have set or what agreement you have reached with your child.

Establishing good relations with your child's teacher(s) will give you the possibility to learn not only about how your child behaves at school or the content of lessons but also about possible relational issues that your child might face at school or in class. This can help to prevent or to detect (cyber)bullying and also to find solutions.

Other family members can help to increase your child's feeling of self-worth, detect eventual problems with friends or at school that the child would not want to tell you about. Make sure that your child knows who the trusted people are that they can turn to in case of need.

Further Reading

General information:

<https://nesetweb.eu/en/resources/library/teaching-media-literacy-in-europe-evidence-of-effective-school-practices-in-primary-and-secondary-education/>

https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/public-consultation-new-digital-education-action-plan_en

Parentnets was an Erasmus+ project (2014-16) that has developed an interactive handbook and an online game for parents to raise their awareness of the dangers and possibilities for children in the online world: <http://www.parentnets.com/>

<http://handbook.parentnets.com/en/index.html>

Global kids online is a website run by the London School of Economics with information about research in the field of children's rights in the digital age: <http://globalkidsonline.net/>

On the following websites you can find extensive explanations and further studies on the different parenting styles (including in various cultural contexts).

<https://www.parentingscience.com/parenting-styles.html>

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/types-of-parenting-styles-1095045>

<https://www.parentingforbrain.com/4-baumrind-parenting-styles/>

The following articles/websites deal with communication styles and principles and their relation to media education: <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/management-communication/7-principles-of-communication-explained/53333>

<https://soulsalt.com/communication-style/>

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/research/research-projects/eu-kids-online>

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/research/research-projects/CORE>

Here you can find tools for self-reflection and agreements:

<https://movingimageeducation.org/getting-started/activities/media-diary#privacy-settings>

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/creating-a-family-media-agreement-matt-levinson>

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/family-agreement>

The positive sides of digital media in parenting and development of critical thinking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdRcZlcRi9I>

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy>

[https://ucris.univie.ac.at/portal/de/publications/childrens-ict-use-and-its-impact-on-family-life\(33618167-3929-4fc7-9f53-05624f1107b7\).html](https://ucris.univie.ac.at/portal/de/publications/childrens-ict-use-and-its-impact-on-family-life(33618167-3929-4fc7-9f53-05624f1107b7).html)

Studies on children's online behaviour with recommendations and practical tips can be found here:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/research/research-projects/eu-kids-online/eu-kids-online-2020>

<https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers>

<https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/parent-and-carer-toolkit>

Websites, videos and articles on specific topics are included in the following websites:

<http://www.parentnets.com/media/>

<http://www.webwewant.eu/>

(result of an EU project with the European Schoolnet – outputs in several languages)

Sexting and sex education: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/nov/10/>

[sexting-becoming-the-norm-for-teens-warn-child-protection-experts](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/nov/10/sexting-becoming-the-norm-for-teens-warn-child-protection-experts)

<https://www.wiredsafety.com/sexting-sex-tortion-and-revenge-porn>

<https://www.fpa.org.uk/relationships-and-sex-education/parents-and-carers>

Cyberbullying: <http://handbook.parentnets.com/public/img/TheCyberbully.pdf>

<https://www.wiredsafety.com/gethelp>

Chapter 1.3

FAMILY SCREEN TIME RULES

Why do we need rules?

While children do not have a problem with browsing the web or handling mobile devices, they are unaware of risks lurking online, and incapable of critical thinking or confirming content credibility. This is why talking to children and protecting them is so important. Banning all mobile devices the child might access is not a long term solution; this may trigger aggression and constrain peer interaction.



Parents should join their children in the virtual world, accompanying them in their online and offline lives.

Screen time affects how children operate, including home chores and learning obligations. This is why it is so important to ration mobile device usage for all family members with age being the most important factor in terms of setting time limits.

Screen time rules – what are they?

Screen time rules are a set of principles determining the way mobile devices shall be used by children and other family members, and establishing the limits and a framework of web browsing at home. Proper choice of new technologies' use, well-suited to match the child's age and needs, allows for a screen and offline time balance. Correct rules secure online child safety; they are a source of knowledge, learning and development, as well as a support system for new skills acquisition and bond strengthening processes.

Screen time rules introduced for a given family should be drafted as a team, and designed to match the family's needs. Rules may change depending on the season (holidays, for example) or child's age. Any modifications should be introduced in the presence of all family members. Good screen time rules include a number of sections:

1. SCREEN-FREE ZONES have to be specified – it is very important to identify such zones, so that the child understands that no digital devices will be allowed there. Most frequent screen-free zones include the following:

- The child's (bed)room – all devices should be charged outside the child's (bed)room to avoid sleep disturbance and temptation to check texts and other messages.
Light emitted by a charging device may affect the child's sleep pattern.
Vibration and/or sound alarms may wake the child;
- Dining room/room where meals are eaten.

2. SCREEN-FREE TIMES OF DAY have to be specified – hours when the use of digital devices is not allowed should also be clearly specified, with the child's age being taken into account. Most frequent examples include the following:

- Mealtimes – they are a time for conversation and interaction with the family;
- One hour before bedtime – using screens before bedtime may cause sleep disorders;
- Car trips, long journeys being an exception;
- Family gatherings.

3. MEDIA CHOICE AND DIVERSIFICATION – offer the child a variety of screen activities to prevent her/him from constantly engaging in a single activity. Screen time rules may include watching multimedia with the parent to allow interaction and conversation, both of which support the learning process.

4. PLAYING A GAME AND/OR USING AN APPLICATION with the parent to allow monitoring of how the child spends time and shared media experience.

5. INTRODUCING SAFETY RULES:

- Never sharing personal data online;
- Never sharing private photographs online;
- Parent joining the process of defining privacy settings for all websites visited.

6. BENEFITS OF REDUCED SCREEN TIME (in favour of time spent e.g. playing with blocks, playdates etc.) should be accentuated.

The list may be expanded to include new rules important to all family members. Once new screen time rules are introduced, everyone has to be consistent and observe them.

How to introduce Screen Time Rules?

While today's children inhabit a world swarming with new technologies, their fundamental needs – such as time spent offline, and 8-12 hours of sleep and at least 1 hour of physical activity per day – should not be neglected. When setting screen time rules:

- Find out about applications/software available to the child, and behaviours appropriate for minors of her/his age;
- Check out all media accessed and/or used by your child;
- Never allow the use of display devices later than one hour before bedtime;
- Discourage the child from accessing social media/other online forms of entertainment when completing her/his homework assignments; encourage her/him to work on the school assignment/problem at hand;
- Plan offline family activities. Encourage your family to engage in healthy lifestyle-promoting activities, reading, conversations, walks;
- Use proper technologies to check out films/games/applications accessed and/or used by your child (children);
- Talk to other family members (especially part-time caregivers) about screen time rules to encourage consistency in following newly introduced rules;
- Talk to your child (children) about online safety, safety rules and cyberthreats, such as cyberbullying or sexting;
- Draft personalised screen time rules appropriate for your family: screen time rules should reflect your family's principles and parenting style;
- Approach the media as you would any other area of your child's life – similar rules should apply to offline and online activities. Set boundaries. Get to know your child's mates. Find out which websites she/he visits and which online activities she/he considers interesting or fascinating;
- Online time does not have to be spent alone; have fun with your child, watch films, play computer games. Do not focus on monitoring your child's online activities only;
- Become a role model for your child; limit your own screen and web browsing time, teach your child about online communication, refrain from using mobile devices offline; set an example;
- Realise the importance of face to face interaction. Young children learn best when talking to another person in two-way communication. Engaged conversations with your child are of fundamental significance to the development of their communication capacities;

- Select screen-free zones, such as bedrooms or the dining room. Set up a charging location for all mobile devices in the household to help avoid constant smartphone checking, for example;
- Do not use technology as the single most important way of pacifying your child. While media may help the child calm down, they are by far not the only remedy. Children experience a variety of emotions – it is recommended that they be shown a variety of ways to calm down, such as deep breathing, sharing emotions, focusing on problem-solving methods;
- Seek out educational applications and recommend them to your child (children). Visit child-friendly websites;
- Do not try to ban online activities for your teenager – it is a part of her/his life!
- Do not yield to the pressure of introducing your child to the world of new technologies as early as possible; online tools and applications are intuitive – and children are quick studies;
- Writing newly introduced rules down is always a good idea (drawings or panels with symbols to illustrate rules etc. are recommended as well). Rules should be hung/taped/ placed in a location visible and accessible to all family members as palpable proof and a point of reference;
- One should begin with the simplest activities, where the child's positive reaction may be reasonably expected. This would be a favourable and promising beginning. If the household includes children of assorted ages, the different age-dependent rules should be emphatically highlighted. Some rules will be identical; others will vary – younger children will need to be told why;
- Parents should have a conversation about some of the focal matters in order to present a joint front. When talking to children, they should be consistent and deliver identical messages;
- Switch display devices off whenever they unused. Background media may distract the child during parent-child interaction or during playtime.



Good Manners when Using Digital Devices (Netiquette Rules)

Politeness and proper behaviour are as important as they used to be before the computer, smartphone and tablet era. Using digital media is not an excuse for abandoning good manners. When online, digital devices shall not be used to cheat, lie or use words potentially hurtful to others. The child should know that remaining who you are and not enhancing or beautifying your circumstances is worth her/his while. Point out to your child that her/his posts will never disappear off the web and will remain there forever; consequently, it is recommended to refrain from using words one would not use in person in the real world. Encourage your child to talk about her/his online experience, to foster comfort with and ease of sharing potentially concerning situations.

A number of netiquette/good manners rules have been drafted to date (it is recommended to pick rules well-matched to suit the given family)¹ :

- Put your device down when anyone approaches. Focus on the conversation.
People are what matters, here and now.
- Put your device down and refrain from texting and/or checking messages/notifications during mealtime.
- Choose face-to-face conversations over making phone calls and/or texting.
Live in the moment – do not live in your phone.
- Choose conversations over texting.
- When e-mailing or texting, use proper greetings, complete words and proper language.
- Always ask a photographed person for permission to share her/his image. If she/he refuses, honour that decision.
- Any disputes should always be resolved in private messages.

Proper posture when using mobile devices

Proper posture when using mobile devices may help reduce neck or shoulder pain. Physical movement and placing the screen slightly below the child's horizontal eye level are essential factors allowing such ailments². Screen supports, tablet stands or even several books under the laptop may be used to adjust screen elevation. Such action should be taken to prevent

¹ Family Media Plans, <https://www.turninglifeon.org/family-media-plans> (accessed: October 28th 2020).

² Don't let distance learning be a pain in the neck (or head, or wrist), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/09/10/remote-learning-ergonomics-eye-health/> (accessed: October 28th 2020).

slouching and its aftereffects. If the screen is properly placed slightly below the child's horizontal eye level, make sure it has been positioned at a distance of 45-60 cm from the child's seat. A chair with a backrest allowing feet to rest on the floor (knees bent at a 90 degrees angle), and organising writing space that will not force a slouched position are further solutions conducive to the proper posture of a child using digital media. Wrists should remain horizontal, fingers at level with, neither above or below the wrist. A textbook or book as thick as the laptop can be placed beneath the forearm to allow the child to assume the position naturally.

Why not try the Offline Challenge?

This is an activity intended for the participant to experience unknown things, formerly set aside in favour of online activities. The challenge may be accepted by individual family members or by the whole family. This is an opportunity for trying out new hobbies/activities without screen distraction. The offline challenge has been designed to reduce stress levels and experience **JOBO (Joy of Being Offline)**.

Two offline challenge strategies are available:

- **Strategy number one:** plan your entire challenge time, down to the hour. Make appointments in advance and keep them. There are many fun and games options offering pleasure with no web access and no mobile device use. Activities may be classified by category: games to be played on sunny/rainy days; summer/winter games; outdoor/indoor games; exercising; day trips; relaxation; group/family games; creative tasks; wild games; sports; music; volunteering³.
- **Strategy number two:** plan nothing; do whatever you feel like doing at the time; plan no specific tasks; follow your own train of thought.

Watch yourself/your family during the challenge; talk; share your reflections. Note the times you are tempted to go online. Ponder the following: why do you want to go online? Can you satisfy the need in a different way? Consider your emotions. How do you handle being offline? Do you feel relieved or angry when unaware of what is going on in the outside world and in your friends' lives?

³ 101 ideas for screen free fun, <https://herviewfromhome.com/101-ideas-for-screen-free-fun/> (accessed: October 29th 2020).

Once the challenge is over, attempt a summary. Jot down what you accomplished and what you found the most difficult.

- Was your challenge a success?
- Did you manage to stay offline?
- Would you consider repeating the challenge?
- How can you benefit from it in your other activities?

In the case of a family challenge, success should be measured for the whole family:

- Has everyone managed to stay offline? What did that mean to individual family members?
- What were the upsides and downsides of the challenge?

Auto-reflection time: Sharenting

Sharenting stands for posting photos and videos of your child's life to social media, blogs and other websites. Themes vary: most frequently, sharenting involves the posting of daily life, vacation or travel photos. Yet there are also online groups of parents interested in arranging situations intended to make audiences laugh. In all actuality, such material may ridicule and/or humiliate the child. In olden days, family photos would be kept in albums made available to select viewers only: the Internet offers an option to expand the audience, but is that really the point?

Posting and publishing your child's photos online means that they stay online forever. Nothing disappears from the worldwide web. A minor's picture available online becomes part of her/his digital image.



Chapter 1.4

ROLE MODELS AND STEREOTYPES

Definition/Introduction

In this chapter we will talk about how parents can set healthy standards for their children so that they do not overuse the Internet. Specifically, parents play a key role in educating and guiding their children to safely move in cyberspace. Parents have a twofold mission which includes being both a role model and an educator. This chapter provides some interactive

activities to help parents to set the foundations for a healthy and aspiring relationship between them and their children.

Key Aspects

Role Modeling: Why children need models at home

Parents play a critical role in a child's development; they fulfil their duties as educators by setting a good behavioral example. Children observe every action of their parents very closely. These actions get "imprinted" in their minds and will shape their own behavior.

Usually, children are more influenced by what they see you do as a parent rather than by what you say, and they simply follow your example. This means that, as the first and most important role models for their children, you need to offer a positive example for your children to imitate and develop a positive lifestyle.

Digital parenting, digital role modeling

As a digital user yourself, your behavior and relationship with the tech devices you use will influence the relationship your children will have with their own device. You can lead them into a healthy digital life based on the mature example of your habits by explaining certain actions like why a screen break is needed.

Media is a concurring element in providing both good and bad examples to children, it has a way of distracting or even influencing them into a certain routine or actions. This has to be monitored in order to avoid possible risks that can become a habit to children. It is important that the parents remain in control over the media, and they build a good, healthy relationship between the children and the digital devices fostering an inquisitive, critical approach.

Be a role model in screen time management

One crucial element is to discuss with your child why it is important to limit screen time. There are a few helpful suggestions in order to open up this topic:

- When using something digital, try to spend as much time together, or even interact with them in order for your child(ren) to become aware of the time they spend.
- Research, watch and evaluate shows/games/apps before allowing the children to use or enjoy them.
- Use parental controls (refer to unit 3.2 Parental Control Tools).
- Arrange a lot of non-screen time within your child's day.

- Be sure that media activity takes place in the living room or another commonly used space.
- For teenagers, find a way to be involved in what they do with their devices.
- Discuss what you are watching/seeing.
- Do not forget paper-based activities, such as reading books.

Stereotypes. Self-image on digital media

Self-image is the idea we come up with when we think about ourselves. It is only healthy when this image matches who we are in reality, it makes us feel comfortable and it also brings us positive emotions. However, we do not always visualize our body image in a way it reflects reality. Media plays a major role in shaping the image that we have about ourselves and others as well as showing us a plethora of images that most of the time are products of editing or good marketing. The concept of beauty and standards we set are usually based on what we see on Social Media. In fact, Social Media has been connected to eating disorders and other issues related to mental health for both men and women.

Stereotype online and why it can be problematic

A great number of people appear on Social Media on a daily basis, and most times there are certain features categorized as “mainstream” for some groups – this easily leads to the creation of stereotypes. Usually, teenagers are very likely to imitate what they see represented here, not only in terms of images but also concerning behavior. Young boys and girls are very often stereotyped online especially with regard to their appearance and roles. As a consequence however, this also affects the relationship they have between them, such as considering themselves celebrities online or offline and relating to their peers according to this assumption. Negative stereotypes can be hurtful and are wrong; they can lead to hate or even violence.

The impact of stereotypes

By drawing on elements from the traditional perceptions we have of certain social groups, stereotypes exert a significant influence on social cognition because they guide our anticipation mechanism. Usually, they lead to oversimplification and generalization of the reality around us, and young children and teenagers tend to replicate such models.

How parents can educate children in dealing with stereotypes

Parents can play an important role in balancing the flow of information, stereotypes and online images coming from Social Media or media in general.

- Satisfy child's desire for attention.
- Discuss the humor in stereotypes.
- Pay attention to positive stereotypes, even if they look like compliments.
- Remind the children of respecting the online netiquette.

Why not ban the Internet altogether for children?

There are many risks and dangers lurking on the Internet but that does not eliminate the many opportunities that it also provides. To protect your children, you do not need to restrict them from the cyberspace as a whole, neither is it a solution to give them unlimited freedom. The results of not allowing your child to create their own Internet experience can vary, but mainly this action can marginalize the child from her/his friends and school groups or even make her/him the subject of negative comments. It can also limit the child's cognitive development and digital skills. Do not forget that this will also have a negative impact on your family's atmosphere. It is likely that the child will become more curious about something that is forbidden and will secretly find a way to deal with it. The real problem then would be that the child will not be educated at all about media use, nor will she/he know what rules and limits to comply with.

EMPOWERMENT TIPS: These are some tips that will help you to communicate better with your child and build a relationship based on trust and respect.

How to encourage your child to talk?

- **ENGAGE.** When you are surfing on the Internet or checking apps along with your children, take some time to talk with them about what you see. It is a good opportunity to discuss your thoughts and to learn what your child does in their cyber life.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/healthy-technology-use-children>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/khan-for-educators/resources/parents-mentors-1/helping-your-child/a/create-accounts-for-you-and-your-children>

- **LISTEN.** Let them express their opinion about the media they use and be an active listener. You can learn a lot about their concerns if you let them pick the agenda of discussion.

- **ENCOURAGE CHOICES.** Offer children choices dependent on the age and ability of each child - but not regarding the media they can use before a certain age.

- **FREEDOM.** Consider each of your children as individuals and allow them opportunities to grow and develop. At the same time ensure children are aware of the impacts of their actions and behavior and teach them how to interact in any social setting.

<http://www.parentingstyles.co.uk/>

- **TAKE BREAKS.** Disconnect for some time from the constant use of the Internet and try to implement other activities during this time. You can leave your phone in a different room or do not have it in your hands when you are with family or friends. In this way you are setting a good example for your children.
- **BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL.** Your children will not be wise on the Internet if you do not follow online privacy tips yourselves. Make sure that you are a good coach for your child. Think twice before you post their photos on your feed. Guard their privacy and yours. Speak with them and be a good model user.

These are some interactive activities to engage with your children in order to achieve 'learning by doing'. It is important to have some personal time in educating and setting the right example for your child to follow.

- **Role playing:** You can take turns and hold discussions on various topics with your child. Example scenarios: someone sends you a befriend message, someone posts your personal information, you upload a photo of a friend who does not like it or you write a comment under a post and other participants misinterpret your intention.
- **Activity on stereotypes:** How do we perceive stereotypes? Share examples that you can find online and discuss with each other (regarding females, males, and intersex - note that social gender differs from biological gender ("sex"). Examine differences between stereotypes in real and online lives.

https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/pluginfile.php/272873/mod_resource/content/1/Classroom%20Activities%20on%20gender%20stereotypes%20and%20equality.pdf

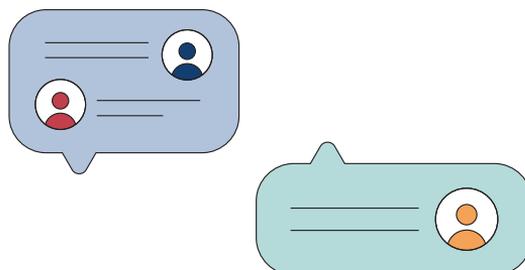
- **A quiz to take together with your child** so you can then explain why it is important to have a break from the screen so they can spend it on something more productive:

How addicted are you to your phone?

<https://www.amexessentials.com/cell-phone-addiction-quiz/>

In conclusion, as a parent you need to realize that you play a crucial role in showing and educating your children about safe use of the Internet. Children observe your actions and behavior and try to imitate them, that is why you need to provide them with a good example to follow, especially when it comes to the use of the Internet. As an active role model, you need to share your positive experience of the Internet and show them how you use it correctly so it can be beneficial. In that way you are setting boundaries but in parallel you are not blocking them from their online opportunities and skills acquisition.

Last but not least, when you are at home and do not have work to do or other duties try to spend time on the Internet together. In that way you will explain and guide them on how stereotypes are being made on the Internet.



Further Reading

Further reading on stereotypes:

<https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/web/portal/practice/awareness/detail?articleId=3995615>

<https://www.commonsense.org/education/lesson/gender-stereotypes-online-6-8>

Further resources with digital parenting tips:

<https://www.fosi.org/good-digital-parenting/seven-steps-good-digital-parenting/>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/>

http://assets.uscannenber.org/docs/digitaldevicesUK_oct2018.pdf

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/parenting4digitalfuture>

CHAPTER 2

Dangers and Opportunities Online

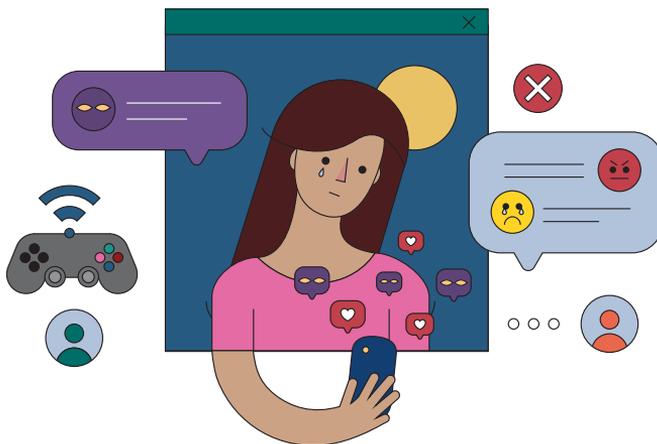


Chapter 2.1 DANGERS

When talking to parents about the digital world and their children's involvement in it, one of their biggest concerns is cyberbullying. Unfortunately, this is however not the most frequent let alone the only danger that is "lurking" in the digital space and it is not a stand-alone issue either but intertwined with many other aspects of moving within the online world. As it is true for the following chapter on "Opportunities" also here there is no way of describing all the possibly negative sides but the consortium has decided on the following topics which have been identified as the most pressing ones, either because there is already a lot of interest in them or because they were considered as too little known and therefore even more preoccupying.

- Cyberbullying
- Hate-speech
- Sexting, Sextortion and Grooming
- Disinformation: Distinguishing fake news on traditional and digital media
- Internet addiction

Each chapter tackles various aspects of the chosen topic but in order to keep the guide readable they are not treated in an exhaustive way. For more information we have included tips for further reading, mostly websites that we recommend for consultation for those who want or need to dive deeper into the given matter.



Chapter 2.1.1

CYBERBULLYING

Introduction

This is probably the most common and well-known situation of danger that children at every age can meet online. Almost everyday we can read in newspapers or see on TV and other media current events, sometimes tragic, involving children who are victims of cyberbullying attacks. What is usually missing is the explanation of what exactly this crime is about and why it can deeply shock people, especially children when they are cyberbullied.

We talk about cyberbullying to describe forms of aggression, harassment and discrimination that have found fertile ground for development in all new communication opportunities: sharing and exchange of information made possible by the widespread access to the Internet (social networks, forums, chats and other messaging services, gaming platforms, etc...).

Although lacking the physical and material dimension that characterizes the most classic episodes of bullying, the attitudes referable to the notion of cyberbullying should not be underestimated. The virtual context in which they are placed (potentially open to the participation and interaction of an indefinite number of people) and at the same time the feeling of anonymity and impunity that the use of IT tools can falsely generate in younger users is unprecedented and particularly alarming because of the serious consequences that the indiscriminate use of the web can determine.

Definition and characteristics

Cyberbullying is manifested through the most varied forms of pressure, aggression, harassment, insults, denigration, defamation, identity theft and manipulation of personal data made electronically to the detriment of minors.

The ways of aggression with episodes of cyberbullying may vary over time based on the new possibilities of interaction that technological evolution will make available, but are currently mainly conveyed through social media and online games, which young people (but not only them!) are particularly fond of.

In order to properly use the term cyberbullying - distinguishing it from isolated manifestations of mere "keyboard aggressiveness", likely to be related to rudeness and uncivility in the

use of communication tools - the conduct must be clearly characterized by the precise purpose of isolating, putting in serious difficulty or ridiculing one or more children identified as a target and has to be a repeatedly occurring action.

Differences from traditional bullying

Although the name given to it may perhaps lead to the belief that cyberbullying is simply one of the many ways of manifesting the traditionally understood bullying, it is in fact a new phenomenon, linked to the digital age.

The most obvious difference between bullying and cyberbullying lies in the loss of the physical and direct component that characterizes most of the classic episodes of bullying. Contrary to a "relationship" in which the bully and victim know each other, live in the same city and frequent the same environments, the new forms of cyberbullying impose instead a dimension in which the interacting parties can be perfect strangers, who know nothing of each other, except their respective user names, avatar and profile images, thus making the manifestations of the phenomenon even more dangerous.

The potential of the new media means that aggressive behaviors linked to cyberbullying can occur at any time and regardless of the geographical distance between the parties involved, making it even more difficult for the victim to escape the harassment of which she/he is the target.

The same computer tools then contribute to feed, especially in younger subjects, a particular ease in their use: the simplicity with which boys and girls can now access various online services often determines the lack of perception of the risks and even serious consequences of the actions put in place in the digital world. It easily borders on behaviors that in real life would not have been assumed or would probably have found a barrier in control mechanisms and disapproval operating within the school, sports and social environment in general.

The dangerousness of the phenomenon is also evident from another point of view: because of the nature of the Internet, all the contents uploaded on it end up escaping the control of those who shared them, determining a possibility of dissemination of data, information and materials on a scale that has no equal in other forms of communication of the past. In addition, there is the difficulty of taking action at a later stage, should the intention be to remove them.

The main manifestations of cyberbullying

As already mentioned, the different forms of cyberbullying that youngsters risk being victims of also depend on the evolution of the technological means used to perpetrate it. Currently, we can say that the most frequent manifestations of cyberbullying can be identified and defined as follows:

HARASSMENT: this term indicates real harassment via the web. Hurt someone, and in some cases, you even get death threats. It is the Blue Whale case.

CYBERSTALKING: Like traditional stalking, this is about repeated harassment on the web and real threats to provoke fear. Even in the case of the web, we are talking about a very dangerous obsession.

CYBERBASHING: This is when a group of children mistreat or beat up someone of their own age, but they have someone to record a video of the attack and post it on the Internet. The video is then watched by many people.

TROLLING: A troll, in the jargon of the Internet and in particular of virtual communities, is a subject that interacts with others through provocative messages, irritating, off-topic or simply meaningless and/or completely wrong, with the sole aim of disturbing communication and stirring up spirits.

IDENTITY THEFT: Identity theft occurs when a thief steals a piece of someone else's personal information and uses it to create an alternate identity for himself. Among teens, this is the way to provoke serious consequences to the reputation of the offended person, often providing lies and false information.

BANNING: It is the act of leaving someone out deliberately. Banning exists with in-person bullying situations, but is also used online to target and bully a victim. For example, your child might be excluded/uninvited to groups or parties while they see other friends being included, or left out of message threads or conversations that involve mutual friends.

OUTING: It is also known as doxing and it refers to the act of openly revealing sensitive or personal information about someone without their consent for purposes of embarrassing or humiliating them. This can range from the spreading of personal photos or documents of public figures to sharing an individual's saved personal messages in an online private group.

Recognize cyberbullying to prevent it.

As a parent, you may have some uncertainties about how to interact with your children on this topic. How much to control? How to stimulate safe use of digital devices?

Any educational approach can only start from the awareness of the child's emotional, social and knowledge needs, which manifest using the Internet and its gaming and communication applications. Given the key role in their growth, the Internet can become a meeting point where you can interact with your children, doing everything you can to prevent risks before they occur.

Existing data reveals that the percentage of teens who have been victims of cyberbullying at least once is different according to the territory that we take into consideration, but it is anyway impressive, included in a range between 35% and 50%, maybe more, but only one out of two spoke about that with her/his parents. When kids do not talk about it directly, you have to rely on dialogue, communication, which is based on the relationship of trust that you have built with them. If this is good, they are more likely to eventually tell you what is going on.

However, precisely because of the type of violence they suffer, the confusion they experience, the sense of guilt and helplessness, often the victims start thinking they must get out of it by themselves. In cases like these, the observation of behavior becomes fundamental to try to understand if there is something wrong.

The signals that can be seen may be an indication of other problems or of a normal phase of growth, but they deserve in any case to be taken seriously. It is therefore good to pay attention to situations such as:



- Sudden change in behavior with friends, at school, or in other places where kids socialize.
- Children are reluctant to attend places or events involving other people.
- Children stop using computers, mobile phones and other technologies to communicate with others for no apparent reason.
- Children show signs of stress or alarm each time they receive a message or notification.
- They show poor self-esteem, depression, eating or sleeping disorders.

SOME TIPS FOR PARENTS

Each educational project necessarily varies according to the age and type of relationship you have established with your children. Here are some general tips.

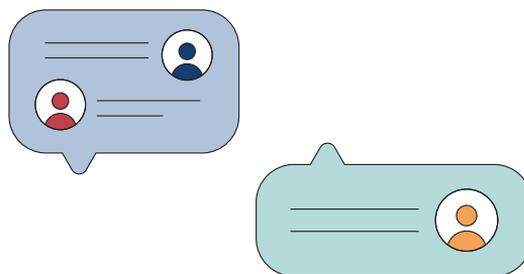
- Communicate with your children. Make them feel that they can always ask for advice. Remember that if they fear punishment or negative consequences it will be more difficult for them to approach you or ask for advice. Cyberbullying takes advantage of an audience that is sometimes frightened and unable to take a stand, other times fascinated and collusive. You should make your children understand that without this “protective” attitude around, cyberbully could not occur.
- Help them to grow balanced and respectful of others. Make sure that computers, smartphones and tablets do not replace “real” life: the more they identify with what they share on the Internet, the more they can be hurt by those who attack them. Allow them to make experiences in which they consider “the point of view of the other”, so that online too they can always act respectfully of the opinions of others.
- Give them a sense of privacy. They need to know how to manage it online and they need to follow the rules that you have established together. They should never post personal data or too much information, photos, videos about themselves. Cyberbullies could use this material to offend, blackmail, discredit, etc. Depending on their age, please personally ensure that privacy settings of any connected device are correct.



Preventing cyberbullying is no doubt better than intervening after an incident has occurred. But remember that if it happens, there is a way to intervene effectively and put things right. If you discover that your child is targeted, ask her/him how you can help and share an intervention strategy. Children often fear that the parent will overreact, making their situation worse. So put yourself in a position to listen to the story without judging: a victim of cyberbullying needs understanding and comfort, because the simple telling of what happened is a gesture that requires courage and trust in the listener. Once the dynamics of the facts are established, you can begin a path of rebuilding self-esteem. The victims need help to understand what has not worked in their relationship with the Internet and its applications, but they must also feel that what happened is not their fault but the cyberbullies!

Everywhere in Europe there are telephone and online listening channels where experienced and competent people are always ready to give advice and to stem the consequences of this phenomenon. Therefore, if dialogue with parents is not enough, or if the child does not feel able to tell the family what is happening, it is imperative that she/he knows that they can always use these services.

It is important to keep track of what is going on online, because cyberbullying has to be countered by making sure that those responsible are discovered, isolated and punished, absolutely avoiding putting themselves on an equal footing. Cyberbullies are mistakenly convinced of acting in anonymity, but they leave many traces of their actions, which may constitute evidence of the crime. Remember that in most countries many actions in cyberbullying are punishable by law.



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<https://www.modugno.edu.it>

<https://wwwidtheftcenter.org>

<https://blog.securly.com>

Chapter 2.1.2

HATE SPEECH ONLINE

Introduction

With regards to the dangers online that Media Literacy for Parents aims to counter, a prominent place belongs to the phenomenon of hate speech, ancient and new at the same time.

Hate speech dates back to the dawn of time. It was born as a practice used for political or religious purposes and witnessed by history. Hate speech is at the root of all the genocides in the world, and it made millions of victims: for example, in the Jewish community during the Fascist and Nazi period that spanned the Second World War. But in every age and in every place the incitement to hatred has created the conditions to divide a society and create first- and second-class people.

The need for educational initiatives which target hate online can partly be seen in the growing amount of abuse to be found on the Internet, much of which is extreme and racist in tone and can threaten the fundamental values of a democratic society. However, cyberhate is not just a problem related to racism and discrimination; it is also a problem related to the way that people use the Internet. This makes it a relatively new phenomenon, and one which is not fully recognised or understood. The 'novelty' of online hate speech means that this is a problem that the World does not yet quite know how to deal with.

"Hate speech has become one of the most common forms of intolerance and xenophobia in Europe today. Of particular concern is the increasing presence of hate speech in political discourse and how it has become commonplace in the public sphere, in particular via the Internet. When the unacceptable starts to be accepted, becomes "the norm", there is a true threat to human rights. The No Hate Speech Movement of the Council of Europe was launched to reduce the acceptance of hate speech online and put an end to its "normalization". No one would deny that the Internet provides us with remarkable new tools for communication, solidarity, organizing social change and entertainment. And yet we must not let it be misused as an instrument of online torture and propaganda for the industries and ideologies of hate. Freedom of expression online must also mean freedom from fear online" (Thorbjørn Jagland, former Secretary General of the Council of Europe).

Hate speech online and cyberbullying

There is a strong relationship between hate speech online and cyberbullying, the subject covered in the previous sub-chapter. Cyberbullying is a power relation directed against an individual, while hate speech usually calls for hostility and violence against a whole group of people. However, for their victims, both are forms of violence and humiliation. Hate speech and cyberbullying use the same online channels. They are often happening against individuals who are considered different, either because of their background, disability, ethnicity, or other reasons. They both make use of insulting and harassing communication. In many instances, cyberbullying and hate speech are combined and this is very damaging to individuals and groups. At the same time, building the resilience of young people in combating hate speech can support their resilience in dealing with cyberbullying and vice versa. Media literacy is a support in empowering young people and their families to understand the issues at stake on the Internet and to protect themselves or react to abuse when it occurs.

What is the target of hate online?

The problem that arises in the context of proper media education of adults and parents of school-age children is to establish a barrier to the possibility that the most disparate forms of hate speech found on the Internet can do harm. Statements and images filled with hatred for their own sake may in fact end up on the screen of potential direct targets as well as of people unable to recognize the danger and therefore at risk of becoming proselytes of professional haters hiding in the network. Parents must therefore be the first to be helped to recognize hate speech and to regard it as a serious violation of human rights and the principles of democracy. Only in this way can parents help their children not to fall into a trap, because the Internet is open to freedom of expression in both a positive and a negative sense: you can find everything there, especially between the folds of social channels and online gaming sites increasingly frequented by children and teenagers. Rejecting hate speeches, and not remaining in some way “fascinated” by them, requires a critical analysis of the countless messages that everyone receives when they are online. For this reason, we speak in the full sense of a real activity of media education.

Let us remember that according to the Council of Europe, a correct definition of hate speech covers “all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, antisemitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin”. Entering into the reality of today, we can say that

women, foreigners, refugees, Jews, Roma, Muslims and LGBTQI people are the preferred targets of online hate speech. It is, however, a list that will be extended as society becomes more complicated and diversified.

By the way, hate speech is rarely a black-and-white, yes-or-no concern. Opinions differ both over how it should be classified and over what we should do about it.

Part of the reason for the difference of opinion is that these questions are seen by most people as related: if something is classified as hate speech, it seems to warrant some action. If it is not, we assume it is acceptable, or at least, that it should be tolerated. That means that the definition we use also seems to tell us when we should act.

Some people are reluctant to 'act' against hate speech because they see this as an unacceptable limit on freedom of expression. This is typical of the US approach, where the term 'hate speech' is used to refer only to the very worst instances, for example, when immediate threats are made to someone's life or security. But for us, in the EU, the prevailing approach is a bit different: a reaction is required about anything which falls under the definition provided by the Council of Europe. However, it is important to remember that 'doing something' does not have to mean restricting speech or banning it: there are many other ways we can respond!

The consequences to be avoided of hate speech online

The Internet allows unlimited dissemination and access to speeches that often trigger a chain effect, with words becoming increasingly vulgar and violent as they spread. On the other hand, the sense of apparent impunity linked to the relative anonymity of the haters online offers a freedom without responsibility and allows the liberation of the racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, homophobic and sexist wording. This can have a devastating effect on young people in search of their own identity and accustomed to communicating quickly, for example through Social Media and online games, and very often also anonymously. Online hate can be expressed through videos and photographs, as well as in its more familiar 'text' form. The visual or multimedia forms can often have a greater impact on conscious and subconscious attitudes.

If hate speech is unchallenged, it drives human rights abuses further: negative stereotypes are disseminated throughout society, groups become increasingly marginalized and

isolated, conflict and division grow, and abuse or threats increase as new boundaries are tested. In the worst cases, mere 'expression' begins to translate into physical abuse. Hate speech can lead to hate crime, engaging human rights relating to personal safety and security. Hate crimes are always accompanied by hate speech: not all hate speech results in hate crimes, but hate crimes always involve hate speech.

In such a context, human rights education becomes paramount for parents first, as it provides a powerful tool to address hate speech online by developing young people's knowledge, skills and attitudes to tackle hate speech from a human rights-based approach. A human rights approach helps not only with developing empathy and respect for others; it also encourages active participation.

Parents' role to protect children and teens from hate speech online

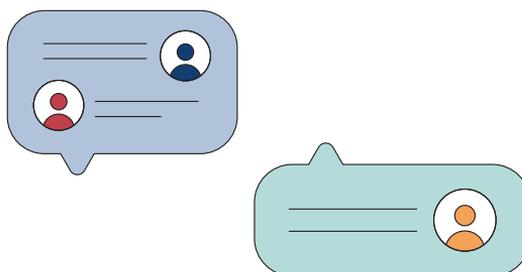
Although governments and other organizations are working hard to remove hate speech online, with so many people sharing their views online, it can be hard to stop it altogether. It is not enough, therefore, to rely on the intervention of the authorities in charge, but everyone must be mobilized in the first place, in defense of their children and, in general, of the most vulnerable young people.

The practical advice addressed to parents is extremely similar to those already highlighted with reference to cyberbullying: it is necessary to be very careful in discreetly accompanying children in their online activities, without blatantly invading their privacy but at the same time keeping your guard high against risks. Noticing early signs of discomfort in their daily behaviors and in carrying out online activities that are usually pleasing to them can help to intervene more effectively.

When a situation of exposure to hate speech online comes to light, it is necessary to report the incident to the authorities able to investigate and identify the culprits, without omitting a report also to the managers of the site or the app where the incitement to hatred appeared. But it is not enough: parents must always pay close attention to the danger that their child is the author of hate speeches. Here too, parents have to act quickly, by initiating a constructive dialogue aimed at making it clear how serious the behavior has been.

Last but not least: the Internet can be dangerous itself if it is badly managed, and recent research shows that young people who are vulnerable offline are also vulnerable online.

They are more susceptible to people who want to influence them, and also more likely to try to be like the others to be accepted as a friend. Being behind a screen can reduce or eliminate people's usual (natural or learned) inhibitions. For some who are easily swayed, this can mean they adopt the attitudes and beliefs of a group they join online. Often young people are more vulnerable to radicalization as they are more trusting and susceptible to this type of grooming. There have also been cases where through 'mate crime' vulnerable people have been targeted with the intention of taking advantage of their isolation to exploit them.



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<https://www.internetmatters.org/connecting-safely-online/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/IM-CSO-Hate-Speech.pdf>

Chapter 2.1.3

SEXTING, SEXTORTION AND GROOMING

What is sexting?

Sexting means the sending, receiving or forwarding of messages with sexually explicit content: text, images/photos and/or videos of oneself or others usually on social media or via messenger service channels. Many young people are unaware that the production, possession, distribution and/or broadcasting of images and videos of a person under the age of 14 in the nude or in sexually explicit poses is considered child pornography in most countries and is liable to prosecution even if done by the young person her/himself.

Often it is young girls interested in or in love with a boy who are asked to “send (a) nude” as a “proof” of their love. Even if the image/video is sent within a loving relationship it can be turned into a means of revenge at a later stage, for example when one of the partners decides to terminate the relationship. In other cases this is not even someone they know in the “real world” but only an internet acquaintance. The message might also fall into “false hands” – sometimes unintentionally – and be used for blackmail and sextortion.



WATCH THIS VIDEO

Watch this video to find some tips on how to address this topic with your child: [Sexting - Advice Video - What parents need to know - Internet Matters](#)

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/sexting/>

You may also want to consult this website to get more detailed information:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/sexting-sending-nudes/>

What is sextortion?

Sextortion refers to a form of blackmail in which sexual images are used to extort money or “services” from others. In the worst case scenario not only are pictures/videos with sexually explicit content demanded but also physical meetings with the victim that can lead to physical sexual abuse and violation. This happens to girls and boys alike.



WATCH THIS VIDEO

You can watch this YouTube video for better understanding and also for discussing the matter with your child: [SEXTORTION, blackmail started after a cybersex offer](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agbtK5Me8rg>

Sexting and sextortion also occur among adults. When children are concerned, they are closely related to online grooming. Therefore, the same measures for prevention apply as mentioned below.

What is Online Grooming?

Online grooming is when someone uses the Internet to build a relationship with a child or young person, ultimately aiming to manipulate, exploit and abuse her/him.



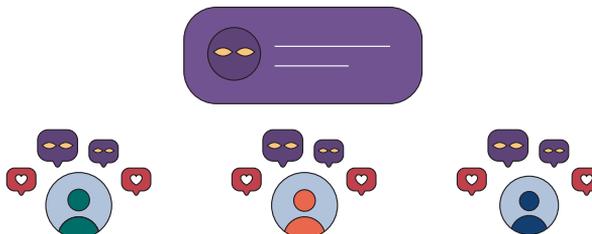
WATCH THIS VIDEO

Watch this video which is based on a real life online grooming case to get a better insight on how an online child sex offender may attempt to groom a child online: [Emily's Story - Online Grooming](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQsgQbmvuUQ)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQsgQbmvuUQ>

KEY FACTS ABOUT ONLINE GROOMING

- Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race.
- Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years.
- Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.
- Groomers may hide who they are online by sending photos or videos of other people. Sometimes this will be of someone younger than them to gain the trust of a "peer".
- Groomers try and isolate children from their friends and family, making them feel dependent on them so that they have power and control over them.
- They might use blackmail to make a child feel guilt and shame or introduce the idea of "secrets" to control, frighten and intimidate.
- It is important to remember that children and young people may not understand they have been groomed. They may have complicated feelings like loyalty, admiration, love, as well as fear, distress and confusion towards their groomer.



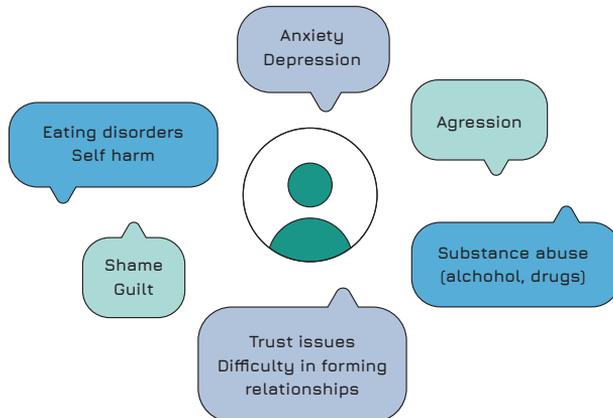
WARNING SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS BEING GROOMED ONLINE

Online grooming may be difficult for parents to detect as groomers often order children not to mention their relationship to anyone. The signs of online grooming are not always straightforward and might often be received as normal behaviour, especially with teenagers. Here are some warning signs that might help you identify if your child is being groomed online:

- Your child is being secretive and does not allow you to check her/his activities.
- Your child spends more time online during late hours.
- Your child receives gifts/money from an unknown source.
- Your child finds it difficult to stay away from her/his phone.
- Your child goes to unusual places to meet friends.
- Your child appears sad, withdrawn, preoccupied, anxious and aggressive.
- Your child makes use of sexualized language or behavior beyond what is appropriate for their age.

The effects and impact that online grooming can have on your children

Online grooming should be taken seriously as it can have the following negative effects/impact on children:



HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

Find out who your child is talking to and who they are communicating with. If you still feel uncomfortable, discuss it with their friends, teacher or someone that might be able to tell you.

Start by giving them advice from an early age about the dangers of communicating via the web and sharing personal details. Monitor your child's online usage/activities. Learn which platform she/he uses and understand her/his activities online.

Communication with teenagers sometimes can become difficult. It is always important to discuss with your children showing support and understanding. Ultimately, your child needs to know they can approach you with honesty, no matter how much trouble they may have gotten into.

As a parent, you need to know where to seek help if your child is threatened in any way. Become aware of the different types and channels of support (help lines, national policies, help centers etc.) for victims of online grooming in your country.

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO:

- Not accept friend requests from people they do not know on social media.
- Configure their privacy settings to hide posts online and make their social media profile private.
- Not overshare private information on social media such as phone numbers, home address, bank account number etc.
- Speak up when they are in risk or when they are addressed by a potential predator.

Resources for further reading

NSPCC (2019). "Grooming". Available at:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/grooming/>

NSPCC (2019). "Talking about difficult topics". Available at:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/talking-about-difficult-topics/>

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Council of Europe (2020) "Child Friendly material". Available at:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/child-friendly-materials>

Kids Help Line. (2019) "Being safe on the internet". Available at:

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/kids/issues/being-safe-internet>

Chapter 2.1.4

DISINFORMATION: DISTINGUISHING FAKE NEWS ON TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Often we ourselves as parents and educators are not able or do not make an effort to distinguish which part of the information we receive is real, based on real facts and which is invented for one purpose or another - the so-called fake news. That is why it is crucial to learn to critically evaluate the information we encounter.

What is 'fake news'?

This is false or misleading information that aims to form a certain opinion or motivate you to take an action (purchase, reaction, etc.).

There are different types of fake news. Some are created completely consciously for profit (money, influence, reputation). Others are created involuntarily due to error, carelessness or simply reflect someone's subjective opinion.

Disinformation and misinformation

Unlike disinformation, which is intentionally disseminated and pursues certain goals, misinformation is the unintentional spreading of wrong information. Each of us does this on a daily basis when for example we share genuine information, but unintentionally confuse some of the details.

We recommend you always ask yourself the following questions, and encourage your children to do the same:

- Is this information true?
- What is the intention behind this publication?

Disinformation is false or inaccurate information which is disseminated INTENTIONALLY. It is also called "propaganda".

Misinformation is false or inaccurate information which is disseminated UNINTENTIONALLY. It happens often in our everyday lives and it is important for us as parents to be able to distinguish it from disinformation and to explain the difference to our children.

Commercial posts and articles - Be aware that sometimes commercial advertising posts and articles may contain misleading information in order to increase their audience or sales.

Why do people create fake news?

Some of the most common reasons for creating fake news are:

- To persuade others to take an action or support or oppose a cause or political candidate.
- To get people to click on sites so they are exposed to advertising and can purchase a product.
- Some people produce fake news designed to look real just for fun.
- Sometimes it is just a mistake and not fake news. But those who publish or say it have an obligation to correct it.

However the main motivation behind these reasons is - to make money.

MAIN TYPES OF DISINFORMATION:

- **Fabricated content:** completely false content.
- **Manipulated content:** distortion of genuine information or imagery, for example a headline that is made more sensationalist, often popularised by 'clickbait'.
- **Imposter content:** impersonation of genuine sources, for example by using the branding of an established news agency.
- **Misleading content:** misleading use of information, for example by presenting comment as a fact.
- **False context of connection:** factually accurate content that is shared with false contextual information, for example when a headline of an article does not reflect the content.
- **Satire and parody:** presenting humorous but false stories as if they were true. Although not usually categorised as fake news, this may unintentionally fool readers.

The difference between facts and opinions

Quality news must be based on facts, on indisputable information. It is important as a parent to be able to distinguish facts from opinions when reading or watching news. The next step is to teach your children how to do it.

Facts: Facts refer to something true or real, which is backed by evidence, documentation.

A fact is based on observation or research and presents the objective reality - an event or information, based on real occurrences. A fact can be easily verified by evidences. It can be proven true or false. It is either true or not true.

Opinions: Opinions are the individual, subjective interpretation of facts. The interpretation of a fact or event from a subjective point of view can give it completely different meanings depending on who represents and interprets it. This is happening even by serious, respected journalists.

An opinion is based on assumption or personal view or feeling. It is a subjective statement. It is a perception about something.

A verification of an opinion is not possible.

There are many different interesting and amusing ways to attract children's attention on the topic and to make teaching and coaching a game for the whole family.

You can play dedicated online games together with your kids:

www.roomrecess.com/mobile/FactAndOpinion/play.html

www.brainpop.com/english/writing/factandopinion/quiz/

www.wordwall.net/resource/48813/english/quiz-fact-or-opinion

www.educationquizzes.com/ks2/english/fact-and-opinion/

How to distinguish fake news?

There are several basic ways to distinguish fake news. We recommend to consciously focus for one week on every piece of information that attracts you and to evaluate it using the criteria below:



- **Examine the source** - Always check carefully the source of information - where it is published (website, media), who is the owner of that media, what is its mission and contact info.

- **Read the content** - Very often, headlines are worded to gain more clicks.
Read the whole story critically.
- **Check the author** - Do a research on the author. Is this a real person?
Which other works/articles/papers has she/he published ? Can you trust her/him?
- **Check the authenticity** - Is it a joke or parody?
If the information is too incredible, it may be just a joke.
- **Check own biases** - Consider your own beliefs on the topic.
Could they influence your judgement?
- **Check photos and media carefully** - The origin of pictures and videos can
be found through a reverse search.

Do not let fake news stop you from enjoying the information you read online. You do not have to doubt everything you read. It is enough to develop your critical thinking and be aware of the way information affects you. Choose your sources carefully. Knowing that fake news exists, check the information before sharing it or forming a definite opinion based on it. You can check the facts on sites like :

<https://www.Snopes.com>

<http://www.Factcheck.org>

Fake news always target our emotions

When you feel strong emotions when reading/watching something online we recommend that you ask yourself the following questions:

- **What emotions do I feel after seeing the item?**
- **Why exactly do I feel these emotions?**
- **How do my emotions influence my thinking?**
- **Which part of the news causes these emotions?**

More information about universal emotions can be found on the following website:

<https://www.paulekman.com/universal-emotions/>

Teach your kids to recognize their emotions and to pay attention to their feelings. It is never too early or too late to start exploring emotional intelligence and how news and information

on media trigger our emotions. When they understand why and how media trigger their emotions, your kids will be better equipped to recognize which information caused them to feel that way and they can logically evaluate it. While watching TV or browsing online with your child, point out ads that are appealing to emotion and discuss them openly.

Coaching and teaching our kids on the topic of disinformation

The digital world surrounds us and our kids on a daily basis and besides useful and necessary it can be overwhelming, and even dangerous. Kids need to be able to understand and evaluate the information that they come across so that they can use it safely and effectively. Media literacy is not just about knowing how to use different devices or update apps. Media literacy means understanding the information and using it appropriately. Fake news can affect very strongly any child's self-esteem! For example, when children or parents find out that they have shared fraudulent stories or posts without checking them, they often feel stupid. This can undermine their self-esteem, provoke ridicule from others, and sometimes lead to serious psychological problems.

There are many different ways you can coach your children how to evaluate information. Depending on their age you can play several games, explore together diverse types of news, commercial ads, posts, images, videos. It is important to teach them about and discuss with them their emotions and show them and explain to them how the information they encounter triggers their emotions and reactions.

Teaching your kids to ask themselves questions about the information they read or watch will develop their critical thinking and create in them the habit of checking and evaluating the flood of information before they believe and/or share it. Your own behavior in the online space also plays a very important role here - what you read, what you share, what you believe.

You can play dedicated online games together with your kids. Here are some tips:

- Explain to your kids what fake news is. Patiently talk with them in each appropriate situation about the difference between real and fake news.
- Share your knowledge about fake news with your children according to their age. Ask them to apply the new knowledge to a news story that is important to them.
- Afterwards discuss with them the results, their impression and the lessons learnt.
- You can play a game with your children where you both have to write an article about

a news story or a historical event from two opposite perspectives. The idea is to push them to see the same set of facts from at least two different angles.

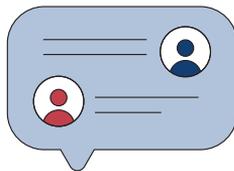
- Point out advertisements or sponsored stories masquerading as news in social media streams or on news websites and ask children to evaluate them.
- Read posts on social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and watch videos together with your kids. Play with them asking questions. You can turn the game into playing the detective.

Example questions:

- Where did you see the story/photo? How many likes/shares does it have?
- Who published it? Do you know him/her? What do you know about him/her?
- Who else is reporting the story?
- Try to track down the story to its` original source
- Show your kids tricky photos and explain to them how to distinguish if a photo is real, manipulated for a purpose or it is a joke.
- You can make them familiar with easy and free photo editing software and show them how easy it is to manipulate a photo.
- You can produce your own photo collages, use app filters and turn it into a game.

Resource:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/family/article/teaching-kids-about-fake-news-and-photos>



References

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/fake-news.htm>

<https://www.factcheck.org/2016/11/how-to-spot-fake-news/>

<https://www.connectsafely.org/fakenews/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/38906931>

<https://www.whatsapp.com/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/thoughts-thinking/201911/7-reasons-why-we-fall-fake-news>

Chapter 2.1.5

INTERNET ADDICTION IN CHILDREN

The notion of Internet Addiction

Dependence, a term introduced to replace the term “addiction”, was defined in 1964 by a WHO Expert Committee as a psychological and occasionally physiological condition resulting from interaction between human organism and substances. Typical signs include behavioural changes and other reactions, including the desire to use the respective substance continuously or periodically with intent to achieve effects of intoxication (impact on the psyche) and/or to avoid or relieve withdrawal symptoms.

Unquestionable internet benefits include offering diversity. Deprived of established control mechanisms, children and teenagers are not always able to resist online stimuli. The use of new technologies is part of how young people function in the modern world. Intrigued by what they find online, children draw pleasure from playing different games with their reward centres being continuously stimulated. If their world offers no other satisfying activities, reaching for a laptop or tablet is the easiest solution of all. When deprived of internet or mobile device access, young individuals start suffering from so-called abstinence syndrome. With progressing addiction, web users will spend more and more time online, seeking further stimulation: the one experienced in early stages of web resources use no longer being satisfactory. With daily repetition, such activity may transform into problematic digital device use.

When it comes to mobile phones, the absence of clear smartphone-use rules means that the device can be reached for well-nigh at any time. Parents rarely introduce rules of responsible mobile phone use; accepted rules of courteous mobile phone use in public spaces are not followed either.

There are five types of internet addiction¹:

Cyber-relationship addiction: Involves chat site and online acquaintance compulsivity. It is also referred to as emotional dependency; a highly intimate relationship evolves between two persons: the addict and the enabler. Cyber-relationship addiction is associated with an inability to establish offline relationships.

¹ Internet Addiction, <https://www.addictioncenter.com/drugs/internet-addiction/>

Cyber sexual activity: Compulsive use of pornographic websites, uncontrolled erotic chatting, purchase of pornographic content. This category includes sexual deviations: paedophilia, extreme exhibitionism and other virtual world-related aberrations. Anonymity, opportunity for oblivion and convenience are all conducive to this form of addiction.

Net compulsions: Compulsive online gambling, gaming and shopping. All these activities may include a competition or risk factor, both potentially exciting to the internet user.

Information overload: Need for continuous online data collection. Gathering possibly extensive information/data volumes serves the purpose of making better decisions, and thus gaining greater social prestige. In reality, the phenomenon breeds information overload disallowing its use. The web user's excitement ties in with the information seeking activity as such.

Computer or Gaming Addiction: Any activities associated with the inner compulsion of computer use or playing games (even offline). The affliction most frequently presents itself with playing computer games – even solitaire.

Other phenomena

FOMO stands for the Fear of Missing Out on something interesting when offline: the anxiety that my friends are having a great time without me, and also the worry that I might forget about a party or appointment; the compulsive need for incessant checking on acquaintances in order to know what is going on. FOMO also involves the need to keep one's life on constant display, positives in particular. This means that the smartphone has to be available at all times: "I need to check what is going on in my friends' lives, and/or let them know what I am up to". While FOMO may affect all users, teenagers are particularly vulnerable: keeping in touch with their mates satisfies their need for belonging (to a group), and smartphones allow that. Young people's essential development needs include being part of a peer group and peer acceptance².

FOBO stands for the Fear Of Being Offline – fear of a world without notifications, without the possibility to check communicator messages, with no access to one's own data. It is also an anxiety of no internet access, which ties in with activities intended to prevent web disconnection (e.g. preventing offline status by carrying a power bank at all times).

² „FOMO i nadużywanie nowych technologii - poradnik dla rodziców” (FOMO and New Technologies Abuse – a Handbook for Parents), Marta Witkowska, NASK National Research Institute, Warsaw 2019, p. 10.

JOBO stands for the Joy of Being Offline – in opposition to FOBO, it involves a conscious process of setting boundaries to online activities. Online presence restrictions are applied with the intent to produce a sense of physical and mental well-being. Limits to time spent online are set to reduce stress and enjoy time away from mobile devices.

Internet use offers irregular rewards: the time of receiving a new message, finding a funny meme or levelling up in a computer game remains unknown. Long periods of web browsing may tie in with poor stress handling skills, and/or with a tendency to escape problems, confrontations, family issues or the need to join a new and potentially unfriendly environment.

Reasons for internet addiction usually include the following:

- Poor acquaintance-making skills.
- Low self-esteem.
- Inability to handle problems (oblivion is sought in the virtual world).
- Lack of parent-child bonds.
- Learning issues at school (caused i.e. by attention deficiencies, hyperactivity, mood swings).
- Family structure disorders (parental authority deficiencies, “children rule”).
- Poor difficult emotion handling skills.
- Rejection by the peer group.
- Loneliness.

Internet addiction problems will not be resolved in any of the aforementioned cases unless profound structural issues are addressed. Internet addiction is associated with the following issues: depression, introversion, neuroticism, oversensitivity, shyness; co-existing addictions; low self-esteem, poor sense of agency; negative stress management strategies. Furthermore, as shown by studies, internet overuse may be accompanied by social isolation, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and propensity for greater aggression³.

³ „Nadużywanie internetu przez młodzież – wyniki badania EU NET ADB” (Excess Internet Use by Young People – EU NET ADB study results), Katarzyna Makaruk, Szymon Wójcik, http://yadda.icm.edu.pl/yadda/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-909e7238-34aa-478e-bb9f-dcf91d983439/c/Makaruk_K_Wojcik_S_2013_Naduzywanie_internetu_przez_mlodziez.pdf [accessed: October 27th 2020].

CONSEQUENCES

Children and young people born in a world of new technologies use them from an early age, unaware of offline reality or formerly applicable social rules. Digital media have permeated all areas of family life, which is why it is worthwhile to learn more about the compulsive web use aftereffects⁴:

Physiological and physical consequences – depend on the type of device used. Desktop use may result in e.g. spinal conditions. Laptop or tablet use will produce posture issues. Excess smartphones use leads to eyesight problems. Furthermore, the overuse of any mobile device may result in eating or sleeping disorders. Children are particularly vulnerable to excessive smartphone use, as the immunity system in minors reaches full development stage only at the age of twenty.

Psychological consequences – new technology overuse by teenagers may produce mental disorders, such as depression or aggression, especially under circumstances of limited or non-existent mobile device access. Excessive web use may produce the following:

- Blurring of real- and virtual world boundaries (frequent escapism into the online world),
- Self-isolation from friends and family, avoiding personal contact, problems with making friends offline,
- Experiencing a sense of security only when using a computer/smartphone,
- Diurnal rhythm aberrations (irregular meals and/or sleeping patterns) potentially causing irritability, petulance and/or mental deterioration,
- Deterioration of emotional bonds with family and friends,
- Attention span impairment,
- Suicidal thoughts and/or attempts.

Moral consequences – depend on web content perused (pornography, drug purchase sources, drug use descriptions, instructions for explosives production, religious sect sites, etc.). Children are also particularly exposed to online paedophilia. Open and curious about the world, they may come in contact with inappropriate persons – abusers of childish immaturity.

⁴ Uzależnienia technologiczne wśród dzieci i młodzieży, Ewa Krzyżak-Szymańska, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”, Cracow 2018, pp. 91-98.

Social consequences – it goes without saying that spending massive amounts of time on mobile devices affects relationships with family and friends. Personal contact is gradually displaced with online interaction; as a result, families spend less or no leisure time together.

Altercations and disagreements over digital device overuse are frequent as well. At school, children may isolate themselves from peers, neglect student duties, break school rules, skip classes, and get into conflict with teachers or other pupils. Peer communication may also be limited unless moved online.

Intellectual consequences – these include the following:

- Uncritical trust in mobile device capacity and in online information,
- Impaired learning interest,
- Information shock (information overload prevents the brain from engaging in rational selection; the child absorbs multiple messages, even if useless).

Financial consequences – may tie in with online purchase expenses, the use of paid applications and/or computer games, as well as online gambling. Financial consequences include parent behaviour, if loans are taken out for expensive mobile devices for the child. Long-term aftereffects may include the cost of treatment and/or psychotherapy following a computer addiction diagnosis.

Prevention

Children and young people are surrounded with digital tools used in communication, applications making life easier, and other innovative solutions improving overall life comfort. This is why it is so important to never lose sight of interpersonal relations, parent-child bonds in particular. Robust family ties are essential to fight internet addiction. The importance of time shared by parents and children without using digital devices is of consequence as well.

Talking to the Child

This is a very important conversation, and one well worth preparing for; it will serve as proof that the parent is concerned with the child's behaviour and aware of her/his presence and problems. Speaking to the child frankly about reasons for our concern is a good idea; one must nevertheless be prepared for denial. Communicating addiction consequences is recommended, as is being prepared for the child claiming that she/he does not have a problem and seeing no need for any change. The whole family may turn out to be in

need of specialist assistance. Any circumstances or aftereffects notwithstanding, the child should be shown support; yet she/he should be allowed to suffer the consequences of her/his own behaviour; disapproval should be targeting behaviour rather than the child him- or herself. During such a conversation, the adult must strive for strictness and exactness; in all probability, the child will claim to be in control of their own behaviour, and/or seek justification of the situation. Such is the regular behaviour pattern for any addiction-afflicted individual – the adult has to be consistent when introducing new rules. A child meeting all newly-established principles deserves praise. An array of new activities has to be prepared in lieu of screen time. In all likelihood, other families may be suffering from similar problems: joining a support group and/or seeking support with people best-equipped to comprehend the situation is a good idea.

Response Techniques

If parents/guardians notice the issue in time and enjoy the child's trust, the problem is easier to resolve. A child may be offered new forms of activity to limit technology use; nonetheless, it ought to be borne in mind that she/he should be given more attention; time they would usually spend on the computer has to be filled with other options. Isolating the child from new technologies is not enough: her/his online activity habits have become ingrained. The time needs to be spent well, in ways preventing boredom. If the child is to be helped, the entire family must be on board. If, on the other hand, addiction symptoms have persisted for a number of years, parental attempts to resolve the issue may prove ineffective, especially if the bonds with the child are feeble.

Consulting a specialist is always a valuable move: addiction may conceal other issues – the child may be compensating for stress/problems by delving into the virtual world to escape real-life problems. Co-existing afflictions may arise: peer interaction issues; learning problems; inability to talk about problems, asking for help, or sharing feelings.

An appointment with a specialist makes sense only if the child shows any will to see one. Resistance to early sessions is natural; yet if a child persists in categorically refusing to accept therapist assistance, dragging her/him into a specialist's office perforce will be useless. In such cases, it is recommended that parents see a therapist themselves, describe the situation, and follow instructions concerning changes to family life. Should such a move prove ineffective, reaching out to a child protection service officer might be useful to seek advice in terms of changes to family functioning.

Chapter 2.2

OPPORTUNITIES

The digital world is a vast virtual space that offers endless possibilities for finding and sharing information, playing, participating in online or hybrid events, watching or producing videos and films, listening to podcasts, music, news and other broadcasted items and many more. It is a room for leisure activities, social, scientific and political exchange and provides lots of good opportunities also for children and youngsters that can be explored. Due to its sheer amount and the constant change of the digital landscape it is impossible and undesirable to establish a list of recommendable websites or digital tools. We have therefore decided to concentrate on three specific topics that seem most important to the consortium and are general enough to be valid also in various national, regional and local contexts:

- **Digital content creation.**
- **Online learning.**
- **Media in communication and travelling.**

The first seems of particular importance to us as it is often overlooked or underestimated by parents. Children and young people are “doing” it almost all the time, whenever they post a message, upload a picture or comment etc but very often this is not perceived as “creating digital content”. There are however many possibilities and also some guidelines that should be taken into account.

The significance of point two and three has increased enormously through the COVID19 crisis with its subsequent lockdowns and school closures and has brought these aspects to everybody’s attention. Even though the pandemic will hopefully be defeated at some point, blended learning will be part of the “new normal” and video-conferencing, webinars and hybrid events are new formats that are here to stay and new communication channels will most probably develop.



Chapter 2.2.1

DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION

Introduction

In creating digital content freedom of expression finds an opportunity never seen before, thanks to the easy availability for anyone of the devices connected to the Internet. Just a simple smartphone (or a tablet, a laptop, a desktop PC...) is enough to access the infinite applications that allow you to become active subjects of the network, making public your thoughts, desires and abilities.

This opportunity to participate in public life, however, ceases to be such a great possibility and instead can turn into a threat when access to technology and its applications occurs incorrectly, forgetting the rules of prudence and netiquette that every network user should apply every time she/he puts their hand on the keyboard. We often do not realize it, but every time we post a photo of our holidays on Instagram, or write a comment to a post on Facebook, we become authors, creators of digital content. Each of these contents can be read, saved and commented on by a multitude of people, probably many more than we realise.

For this reason, it is essential that all families and all family members become media literate, developing the ability to manage electronic devices and knowing about their positive and negative potential. Both from the point of view of the passive use of the content placed on the Internet by others, and from the point of view of the increasingly easy - and sometimes almost unconscious - creation of autonomous content that the rest of the World can see, comment, like but also attack and use to denigrate the author. In this context, too, adult learning therefore fulfills a twofold objective: to create knowledge in a population group which is increasingly responsible in the first person for the activity of creating digital content, and to ensure that these adults, as parents of school-age children, may be an online behavior model, passing on to their children the rules of good conduct to be followed and keeping an informed eye on their online activities that generate digital content, unwittingly exposing them to the dangers already analyzed by talking about cyberbullying, hate speech and fake news.

How to create digital content

Digital content creation is a very large topic, and we can say it was born together with the Internet, when the commercial companies realized that the web could be an extraordinary

means to promote their businesses, and that in order to be effective marketing was in need of attractive content.

But when we talk about the creation of digital content in the frame of a training path about media literacy, we must turn our view to different aspects of this topic, focusing on that specific kind of content that any private citizen can create when she/he is online:

- The use of popular videogames online that in these last years captured the attention of young and less young people, parents included.
- The understanding, use and interaction with social media.

Children whose parents are able to manage the apps for the creation of digital content may feel that they have someone with whom to share these activities, addressing clever topics and driving their creativity in a positive direction. This is the reason why parents must have a good knowledge of the functioning of the most popular apps and videogames used to create and edit digital content: children are not aware of the large amount of information they give to unknown people when they interact with other players based everywhere in the World, and the main problem is that many parents are not aware either.

In late 2018, UNESCO launched its Five Laws of Media and Information Literacy (MIL), a sort of “behaviour rules” representing a manifesto of what adults and children need to know in order to make conscious use of the Internet, actively participating with their own content. These rules are paramount, valid for anyone and in any circumstances, and the goal of this Guide is to contextualize the meaning, to understand how they must be applied in order to properly monitor the creation of digital content by young people.

Online games

The main category of online activities where children (and adults) usually create and publish digital content is provided by videogames.

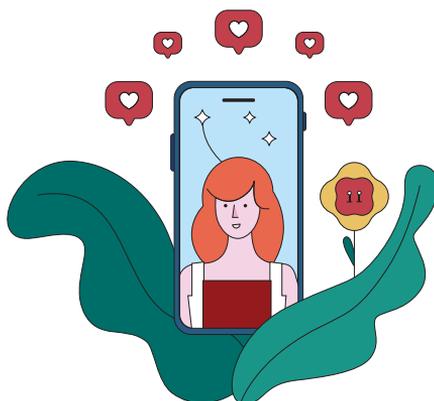
From the educational point of view, playing online games (not all of them, but a large part) is a positive activity, able to enhance important skills for the player. It is important however to reflect on the actions that anyone can perform when playing online, because there is a link between the content that the children create online while playing and the risk incurred in cybercrimes such as cyberbullying and hate speech online, which have already been the subject of previous

parts of this Guide. There are some tools that bullies and haters use in videogames to contact victims and followers, and you always need to pay attention to your children's favourite games. In particular, the analysis of individual videogames and internal chats, which are often used by bullies and haters, may help to discover which are the most popular and potentially "dangerous" games of the moment. Different games can represent different risks and opportunities, related to the age group of kids, highlighting the kind of content that on average children can create.

Social Media

More or less the same applies to the second vehicle also used by young people for the creation of digital content, namely Social Media. Parents need to monitor their use and the possible consequences of an inappropriate process of content creation, being aware that their features and design are frequently changing and allowing new activities. Sharing content only with entrusted people and only when you are sure of what you are publishing; stimulating dialogue; limiting the time spent online; discussing inappropriate content... These tricks may be considered as part of the behaviour rules deriving from the UNESCO Five Laws of MIL, and may serve parents as internet users themselves. But please remember that increasing your media literacy is an important target in order to develop new and effective skills to accompany, protect and let your children grow up without any problem or danger in a digital world.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong and misleading to focus only on the risks eventually associated to the creation of digital content. Let us try to be positive and think above all about the extraordinary possibilities of expression that the Internet has offered and through which it has encouraged every single person, of every age, to express their opinions and in general to develop critical thinking and manifest themselves.



The role of the school for children

Young people are not only part of a family, but they are also and above all pupils/students, and the convenient availability of digital devices for everyone has really revolutionized the approach of students to the creation of content required by their school education. Before, at school, the teachers used to assign students, as homework, the drafting of a “research” on a disciplinary topic or on an experience carried out. It was an activity that served to stimulate in the student the expansion and deepening of the subject treated in class, to invite them to observe it from other points of view, comparing different sources and developing skills of analysis, construction and synthesis of content. The sources were mostly books or encyclopedias that you might already have in your family, or books found in the library. The creation of digital content, note, is an activity that affects both students, when they have to carry out documentation, essays, research, group work or reality tasks, and teachers when preparing materials and lessons customized or adapted to the specific context. Therefore, the current digital tools and technologies modify and redefine the activities of “research”, documentation, organization and, in general, content construction. It is true that children under a certain age cannot have a personal account, so no web search applications for them. But it is not said that the account to be used must be the child’s own. Indeed, this limit could become a formidable opportunity to involve families in the school life of their children and also make parents responsible and knowledgeable digital citizens.

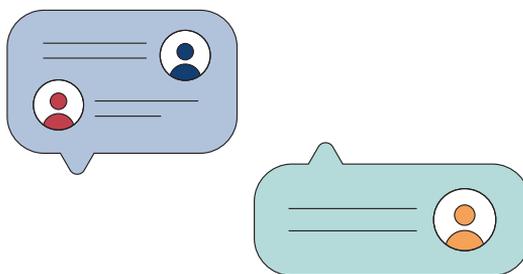
For several years now, digital classroom experiences have been launched in many European countries, including at primary school level. Under the responsibility of the parents, each student is assigned a device (e.g. a tablet) and an account that allows access to the Internet. The educational activities carried out using the account can be viewed and controlled at any time not only by the teachers but also by the parents and, why not, providing, where required, even their participation. Acting in this way, young pupils are educated and trained in the conscious, responsible and intelligent use of digital resources, whereby risks (as typically perceived, especially by families) are transformed into opportunities.

Digital content and family approach

On the other hand, as we know, the need to organize documents, photos, videos, audio recordings, to write, produce and archive them is not exclusive to the school world. Children and their parents create digital content also in their spare time, playing online, keeping in contact with other people and in general use all the possibilities that Social Media may offer. This is the floor where parents must be able to provide rules, to set a good example and

- why not - to teach their children to positively interact with the networks in order to create effective and useful digital content.

The ultimate aim of creating digital content should be in fact, depending on the circumstances, to know how to entertain, educate, persuade or convince your audience. To do this you must first choose the most appropriate communication channels, learning how to make use of their functionalities and potential. If you know the rules, respect them and propose content that may be of interest to potential recipients, then you are on the sunny side of the street, because this is the correct approach to the modern interactive technologies in the field of media, to make it an opportunity and not a risk!



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Chapter 2.2.2

ONLINE LEARNING

Online teaching and learning has been around for some time especially in Higher and Adult Education but it received an enormous boost due to the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic and the subsequent school closures in most countries in 2020 and 2021, when it became a reality for many teachers and their pupils from one day to the next, mostly without preparation and without an alternative.

Even though schools have returned or are planning to return to presential teaching again, all countries envisage harnessing the opportunity and not only continue but push the process of digitalization even further. In the sector of formal education this means an increased use of digital technologies especially for blended learning, a mixture between online and offline experiences. The forced online experience during the 2020/21 health crisis has however brought to light a number of issues that need to be solved for a successful implementation of these new programs.

If the government in your country, the local authorities and/or your child's school plans for any form of blended, hybrid or online learning the following technical requirements should be considered beforehand:

- **Good connectivity (sufficient bandwidth) at school but also at home:** Making sure that all pupils (and teachers) have the possibility to access the same learning platform or other resources at the same time without losing their internet connection and supporting families who have difficulties in providing a stable internet connection to their youngsters. The same is true for school buildings where often only a reduced number of pupils can be online at the same time without incurring connection issues.
- **Well-performing and sufficient number of devices:** Many families were not well-enough equipped during the pandemic to support parental teleworking and online schooling of their children at the same time, e.g. children had to follow lessons and/or perform tasks on a smartphone or could only take turns in using another digital device.

Many schools are equally ill equipped and there is only one "computer room" where a whole class has access to a device per person.

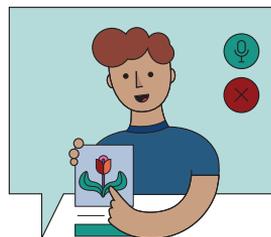
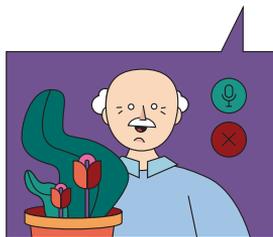
- **Outdated equipment and software:** As the development in this area is extremely fast, older versions of certain software programs will not support documents sent or to be downloaded in a newer version. Older devices might not support the installation of newer software programs. This problem can be partly tackled by using opensource software but teachers have to be aware of the issue to find solutions.

Together with your local parents' association/parents' representative consider the following challenges and aim at improving the situation:

- **Adequate initial training as well as continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers, school leaders and education support personnel** is a must to equip everybody with the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to implement any kind of online or blended teaching. The pandemic has clearly demonstrated the needs in this field and many projects including MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and peer-learning-activities have been started to fill these gaps. In many countries more organized training has yet to be established.

- **Lack of parental involvement:** During the school closures the important role of parents in education has become more obvious than ever and also the problems they are facing regarding the support that their children need. It is therefore crucial to also involve the families when establishing new programs/projects to better understand their possibilities but also their needs and help them to overcome eventual difficulties.

- **Insufficient cooperation and agreements on adequate tools:** the use of several platforms and communication channels have made it difficult for pupils and parents to always follow up on instructions and indications from school or different teachers. The use of a limited number of tools (preferably the same learning platform for the whole school) makes orientation easier for all and also allows teachers to know what colleagues are doing and demanding.



Here is a list of the most common tools in use:

- MS Teams
- Google classroom
- Khan Academy
- Kahoot
- Schoology
- Moodle
- Class Dojo
- Bloomz
- Buncee
- 3P Learning
- Seesaw
- Slack
- Wooclap
- Sutori
- Zoom
- Webex
- WizIQ
- Adobe Capitavate
- Elucidat
- Blackboard Learn

These learning platforms offer the possibility of live video lectures (synchronous teaching), sending recorded videos or materials (asynchronous teaching), team work in groups (virtual break out rooms), interaction among pupils and pupils and the teacher (by using the microphone or the chat function), storing and downloading of instructions, exercises and examples and uploading of homework, solution of exercises, texts, video clips etc.

The choice of platform will in most cases be a decision by the school or the school authorities. As a parent you should however – preferably together with other parents or the official parents’ representatives – ask for an introduction for parents especially if you are not familiar with the tool used. The same is true for any other program used at or by the school that children are expected to be able to handle.

Apart from introductory evenings at school, peer-to-peer learning can be organized in an informal way with other parents and you should also foresee some time to explore new programs and their possibilities together with your children, not only to find out how things work but also to discover and discuss eventual pitfalls with them (see the other parts of this chapter 2.1) as well as teaching them respectful behaviour on the Internet.

Apart from the offer by the school, you can also find great online learning materials that can be used additionally at home to:

- Deepen your child's knowledge on any topic that she/he is specifically interested in (e.g. dinosaurs, volcanos, domestic animals, etc.)
- Support your child's studying in any school subject
- Help your child with presentations
- Prepare for tests, exams and/or competitions
- Learn and practice new skills and competences (e.g. learning a new language, playing chess, etc.)
- Foster your child's interest in important issues (e.g. climate change, protection of the environment, gender equity, etc.)

In order to be able to use these great opportunities safely, basic knowledge on the possible dangers as explained in chapter 2.1 and the ways to protect yourself against them (see chapter 3.1) are crucial to avoid unpleasant situations and confrontation with undesired content. Age-appropriate choices are also essential to avoid over- or under-stimulation of the child.

Resources for further reading:

<https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/>

Chapter 2.2.3

MEDIA IN COMMUNICATION AND TRAVELLING

Talking about media literacy, we usually emphasise all negative and dangerous aspects of media on children, families and relationships. However, we should remember that new media give us a lot of possibilities to actually strengthen family relations and communication if we use them wisely.

Media in communication

An important example of positive media use is the possibility of online communication with relatives or friends who live in distant places. Different applications such as Skype, Viber, WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet or simple video calls on smartphones give us a chance to stay in touch, see and talk to each other. The visual aspect of communication is especially important for young children who can hardly focus on talking on the phone without seeing the interlocutor. Video calls can become an important moment in daily routine of families, especially if they have family members or friends who live or work in distant places, which is quite popular nowadays. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the last years even more families have had problems with organising face to face meetings. Such circumstances may be destructive to family relationships and friendships.

The advantages of online communication with relatives and/or friends:

- It allows you to see other family members/friends; visual contact is crucial especially for young children to build a relationship for example with grandparents who live in a distant city;
- It shows children that relationships with family or friends are important and that one should maintain them; young children can actually get to know their relatives thanks to online communication, so that they do not feel so embarrassed when they meet them face to face;
- For older family members like grandparents it is a possibility to follow how their young relatives grow and change (which happens very quickly); some grandparents become motivated to learn how to use new media in order to see their grandchildren, which is also a positive effect in terms of intergenerational learning and personal development;
- In pandemic times it can become an essential tool for being together in crucial moments (like holidays, birthdays etc.) when other options of spending time together are limited.

Obviously, online communication with relatives and/or friends also has some **limitations and disadvantages** which should be taken into account:

- It is a short-term solution for maintaining relationships; if we never meet our interlocutors face-to-face, after some time they become “virtual”, very distant and we may have problems in finding topics for conversations which can render the communication artificial and imposed. Face-to-face meetings are crucial for maintaining any relationship in a long term.

- Online meetings should not last very long. 10-15 minutes is probably the optimum. Otherwise it may become a long boring ritual which children would prefer to escape from. The conversation should last no longer than everybody is focused on it and really interested. It is also important not to exceed the recommended screen time (see chapter 1.3)

- Maintaining eye contact during conversation is an important social skill, which may become problematic when using video chat, because cameras are often placed above the screen on which we see the interlocutor. It is important to bear this in mind especially when talking to infants on video chat¹.

- When talking about youngsters, limitations and dangers are different:

- We should make sure that the children understand that we use video calls to talk to our relatives or friends; video chatting with a stranger may be dangerous for many different reasons (see chapter 2.1);

- The COVID-19 pandemic shows that some children become used to online communication so much that they tend to stick to online chats with friends even when face-to-face meetings are possible. We should then encourage them to make an effort and organise a face-to-face meeting. Real interactions with other people are crucial for the development of healthy social relationships.

Media in travelling

Another example of positive media use are games and applications which allows spending time together in a family not only in front of a screen, but also on a field trip. There are quite a lot of possibilities. Those presented below may serve as an inspiration.

Geocaching

Geocaching is an outdoor recreational activity, in which participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or mobile device and other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers, called “geocaches” or “caches”, at specific locations marked by coordinates all over the world. A typical cache is a small waterproof container containing a logbook and sometimes a pen or pencil. The geocacher signs the log with their established code name and dates it, in order to prove that they found the cache. After signing the log, the cache must be placed back exactly where the person found it. Larger containers such as plastic storage containers (Tupperware or similar) or ammunition boxes can also contain items for trading,

¹ Elisabeth McClure and Rachel Barr, Building Family Relationships from a Distance: Supporting Connections with Babies and Toddlers Using Video and Video Chat, p. 236-240;

such as toys or trinkets, usually of more sentimental worth than financial. Geocaching shares many aspects with benchmarking, trigpointing, orienteering, treasure-hunting, letterboxing, waymarking and Munzee².

It is a global programme with more than 3 million “caches” around the world. In order to play, one needs to install a mobile application (Geocaching.com, c.geo or other) which shows a map with “caches” and allows you to search for them on the territory. Some require solving additional puzzles or carrying out special tasks. One can also create his/her own “caches”. Users can collect points for badges, meet at special events etc. There is a huge community of geocachers around the world. It can be a great idea for encouraging children and youngsters to travel and discover new places together with the family, using their smartphones.

Questing (letterboxing)

Questing is a type of letterboxing which has developed in the USA, then in Poland and other countries. Letterboxes are also a type of “geocaches”, so they may be found anywhere, too. Questing is a game played across a community or geographic place. Originally coined in the USA, it is similar to the concept of letterboxing where clues lead to sealed boxes to be found in a type of treasure hunt³.

Letterboxing is an outdoor hobby that combines elements of orienteering, art, and puzzle solving. Letterboxers hide small, weatherproof boxes in publicly accessible places (like parks) and distribute clues to finding the box in printed catalogues, on one of several web sites or by word of mouth. Individual letterboxes contain a notebook and a rubber stamp, preferably hand carved or custom made. Finders make an imprint of the letterbox’s stamp in their personal notebook, and leave an impression of their personal signature stamp on the letterbox’s “visitors’ book” or “logbook” — as proof of having found the box and letting other letterboxers know who have visited. Many letterboxers keep careful track of their “find count”.

There are many websites and applications that allow you to discover places and regions with quests/letterboxes. The idea is particularly developed in Poland where there are several websites and mobile applications with quests. The biggest Polish programme with over 550

²<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geocaching>.

³[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letterboxing_\(hobby\)#Questing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letterboxing_(hobby)#Questing)

quests is called “Questy – Wyprawy Odkrywców” (Quests – Explorer’s Expeditions) with a website www.questy.org.pl and a free mobile application “Questy – Wyprawy Odkrywców”. Some quests are available in foreign languages (English, German, Ukrainian, Slovakian).

Online games

Playing online games together in general is also a good possibility to keep in touch and better understand your children’s world, but these activities have to be accompanied by the necessary precautions:

- 1) respecting age limits;
- 2) respecting screen time rules and avoiding internet addiction (see chapter 2.1.5);
- 3) making sure strangers can not enter the game (see chapter 3.1 about cybersecurity and online privacy).

Practical hints:

- Use online communication (video chats) to stay in touch with relatives and friends when face-to-face meeting are impossible for any reasons.
- When organising video chats with elder family members (i.e. grandparents) prepare them for that, if they are not familiar with the tools you plan to use (help with installation, give clear instructions how to use the software, explain where the camera and the microphone is etc.), so that the whole family avoids frustration and enjoys the common time.
- When organising video chats with young children, plan them for a limited time when they can focus on the interlocutor and pay attention to the eye contact problems caused by the camera placement.
- Look for applications and games that will allow you to enjoy the family time and to prove both to children and to yourself that new media can be interesting, useful and can be fun!

Resources for further reading:

From the ParentNets multimedia handbook, chapter on online games:

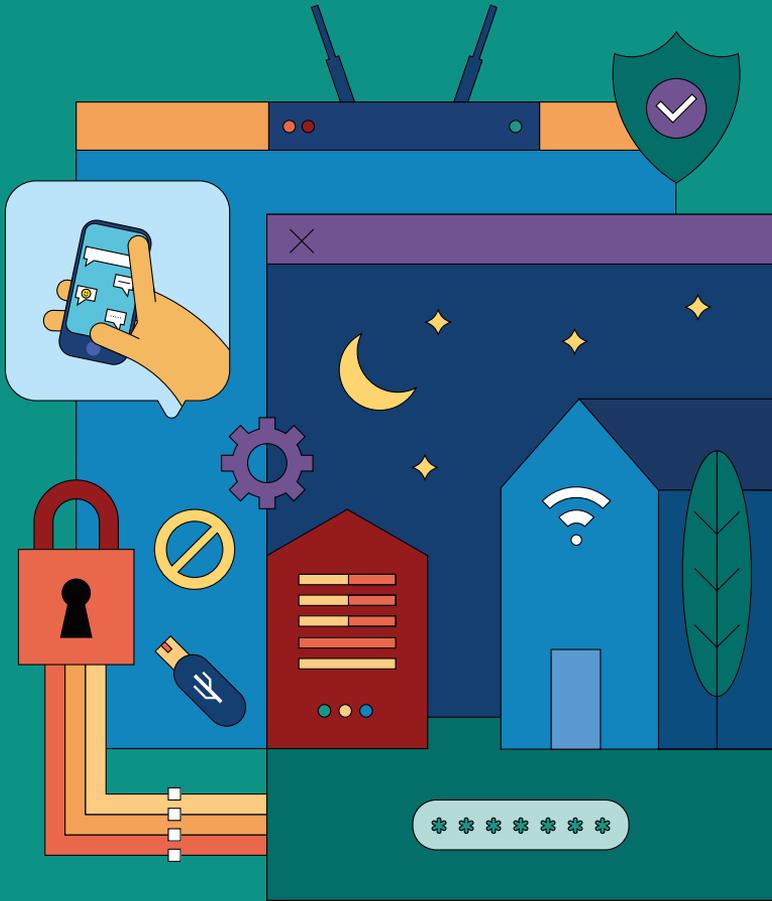
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CHAPTER 3

Preventive Measures



Chapter 3.1

CYBER SECURITY

What is Cyber Security?

The Internet is present in all aspects of our lives, making it easier to communicate, trade, entertain, learn and socialize. It presents us with endless opportunities, but it can also prove to be highly risky both for our finances and for our private lives, which is why cyber security is particularly important nowadays. Cyber security is defined as “the practice of defending computers, servers, mobile devices, electronic systems, networks, and data from malicious attacks. It’s also known as information technology security or electronic information security.”

The importance of keeping your accounts secure

In order to communicate, interact, learn and get entertained on the Internet we all need to create accounts on different platforms that store our data and allow us to participate in these activities. Sometimes we might even use the same account (usually Google account), which means that our password is common across all these platforms.

What can parents do to keep the accounts secure?

To ensure that your family’s accounts as well as your personal accounts are kept safe, **you need to prevent anyone from getting into your devices.** You can set up a PIN code or password pattern on the lock screen of your device which will keep your children and other people from getting access.

TIPS FOR CREATING A STRONG PASSWORD:

- Make it memorable, but avoid using personal information like names or birthdays.
- Use a mix of uppercase letters, lowercase letters, symbols, and numbers.
- Make it long
- Do not reuse your password
- R3pl@ce le++ers wit# sYmb0ls & n^mb3rs 1ike Thi\$.



WATCH THIS VIDEO

to get more tips on how to create a strong password:

RBC Cyber Security - Powerful Passwords:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhXtBNNuKs>

EXTRA TIP: Make sure that you remind your children to create strong passwords as well. This will help to minimize the risk of others sending them fake or embarrassing messages and protect them from malicious attacks. Inform your children about what type of information they should keep private (home address, school names, passwords etc.) Encourage them to come to you if online users ask for information like this.

Viruses and malware

In total there are five different types of viruses and malware that can put your devices at risk: Virus, Worm, Trojan Horse, Spyware and Adware.

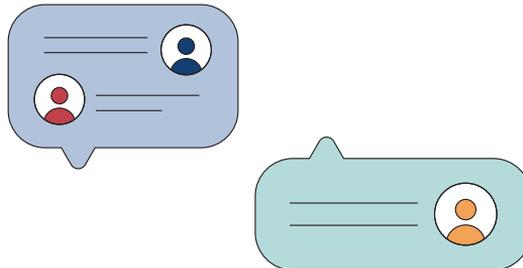
- **Adware:** Advertising software (pop-up advertisements). Most often they collect data and information in order to target you with customized adverts.
- **Spyware:** A malware to spy on your computer by collecting personal information – most often financial- and passes the information onto third parties. Can be downloaded through pop-up windows or opening an email and an attachment.
- **Trojan Horse:** A malicious software that uses a disguise to hide its true purpose. It is the most common type of malware which hides its true function and often disguises itself as legitimate software. Many Trojan viruses exploit vulnerabilities in victims' systems in order to infiltrate them using social engineering techniques.
- **Viruses:** A type of malicious software which gains access to our system by hiding in downloaded files or portable storage devices, such as flash drives. Once they get into the system, they start to spread. Their purpose is to alter, corrupt or destroy files and to cause system malfunctions.
- **Worms:** A worm does not need a host system and is capable of spreading across a network and any systems connected to the network without user action. Worms can be transmitted via software vulnerabilities or as attachments in spam emails or instant messages (IMs). Worms can modify and delete files, and they can even inject additional malicious software onto a computer.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR DEVICES FROM VIRUSES AND MALWARE:

- Install antivirus anti-malware software
- Use an Online Scanner
- Update the Operating System regularly
- Choose strong passwords and keep them safe
- Review bank statements regularly
- Do not open files you don't know about
- Backup your files

What do you need to teach your children?

- Teach them how to create strong passwords
- Teach them to identify malicious attacks: Files, Pop-Up Windows, Messages and never click on them
- Teach them to check if there is something different when browsing
- Teach them to check their files on the computer



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AD BLOCKER

What is an ad blocker?

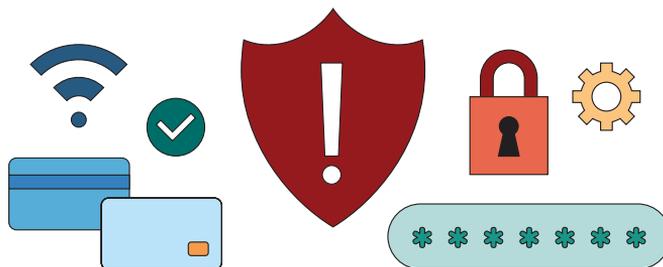
An ad blocker is a tool that blocks ads while we are browsing. Ad blockers can be used on a number of devices, such as desktop computers, laptops, smartphones or tablets. They allow us to browse the Internet and get the content we need, without the annoying, flashing ads.

Why are ad blockers important for the safety of your child?

- Companies always look for new ways to attract the attention of children through advertising, which leads children into an unlimited exposure of what they view and consume online.
- Sometimes these advertisements consist of cyberattacks which purchase ad space on websites and eventually harm your device and data.
- Ad blocking enables you to ensure safe browsing and protection of your device from maladaptive users.
- Ad blockers can provide faster browsing by avoiding content you do not want to view. By blocking the analytics code, text and imagery in every ad, your browser is safer.
- Blocking ads can make the websites you and your children browse process faster. Ad blockers also make sure that your data is protected.

WAYS TO INSTALL AD BLOCKERS

- Install a plugin or an add-on for the browser you are using.
Example: Adblock <https://getadblock.com/>
- An easy way to block ads is via opening your browser > tap Settings on the right side > Site Settings > Pop-ups > tap disable popouts on website
- Use a browser with a built-in ad blocker such as Opera or Brave browsers
- Use standalone ad blocking such as AdFender or AdGuard



The dangers of using Public Wi-Fi Networks

When we use the Internet, we usually do so through our home network or through our mobile data. These are both private and quite secure. However, occasionally we access the Internet from other sources – perhaps at a coffee place, a restaurant, the airport, or a hotel. Such places provide free internet access to their customers through public Wi-Fi Networks. Access on these networks is not as controlled, it is very easy for people to steal data. Hackers are aware of this, and a lot of the time they will take advantage of these networks to carry out various types of cyberattacks to steal data or install malware on our device.

Teach your child about the unsafety of using a Public Wi-Fi

The Majority of children and teens, when using a device, just want to go online and hit the Wi-Fi button, without questioning the type of the network they will be using. Therefore, it is crucial for parents to understand the risks related to using public networks and advise their children accordingly.



ADVICE FOR PARENTS:

- Always click the forget network option when you reconnect to a Wi-Fi network to avoid connecting to your used spaces on the device.
- Turn off file sharing because hackers might be able to access any files on your device.
- Do not write or press on any of your sensitive information such as a home address, governmental information and banking data.
- Use Virtual Private Networks (VPN) instead because this type of network does not collect or log any information transmitted through the network. You can set up a VNP by clicking on Settings > Network and Internet > Advanced > VPN.
- Remind your children that connecting to the Internet through public networks is just as important as keeping passwords private and not interacting with strangers.
- Ensure that the Internet is accessed through home networks or through mobile data which are private and secure sources.
- Warn your children that they will be exposed to hackers that can steal their data if they log into a public Wi-Fi network.
- Teach your children to use HTTPS sites as this is an encryption which prevents other people from snooping on their activities.

TIPS ON HOW TO KEEP YOUR DEVICE SAFE:

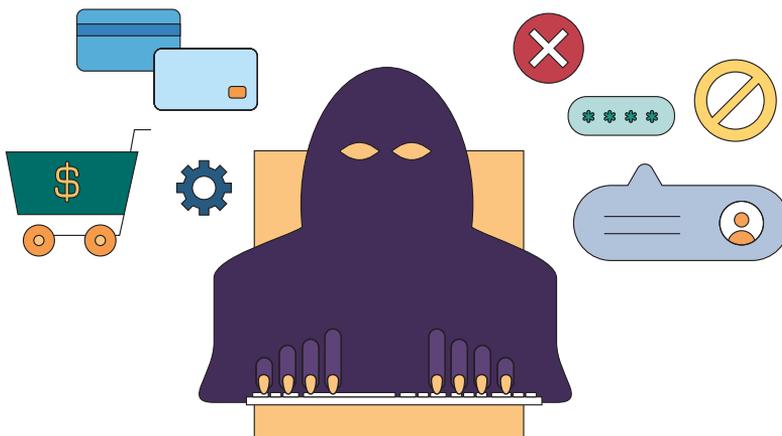
- Lock your home screen.
- Turn off your Bluetooth and Wi-Fi when not in use.
- Do not charge your phone in public ports because it transmits data as they are compromised ports.
- Use caller protection apps such as Burner to block unwanted callers.

PHISHING

Phishing is a type of threat from emails, texts or calls. A phisher attacker impersonates a legitimate organization or a person and they try to get the victim to divulge personal information, such as bank details, passwords or credit/debit card numbers.

Your children need to learn to not open malicious email attachments. These attachments are designed to launch an attack on the victim's devices when they are opened. Malicious emails usually arrive as spam messages with uploaded email attachments.

Use the information below to teach your children to stay away from Phishing.



Signs to help you identify Phishing scams:

- Suspicious activity or log-in attempts to your email.
- Emails or texts that claim that there is a problem with your account or your payment information.
- Emails that ask you to confirm some personal information.
- Emails that include a fake invoice.
- If you are asked to click on a link to make a payment.
- Emails offering a coupon for free stuff.
- Phishing attackers usually use email addresses from established organisations but do not seem genuine such as facebook@access-58.com. A genuine email would have the organisation's name in the domain name.
- Email addresses with misspelt domain names.
- The text contains incorrect spelling and grammar and poor language. When crafting phishing messages, scammers will often use a spellchecker or translation machine, which will give them all the right words but not necessarily in the proper context.

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FILE SAFETY

File-sharing technology is an easy way to transfer content online. One-to-one sharing might put personal information at risk. People might share information with people they do not know or do not share it safely. It is important to verify the source of the sender before opening a file that has been shared with you.

Your children might listen to music, watch videos/movies/series, play games online using websites you are not aware of. File sharing might occur during these activities from other sources without the knowledge of the child. Eventually, these incidents might introduce security risks and misuse of personal data.

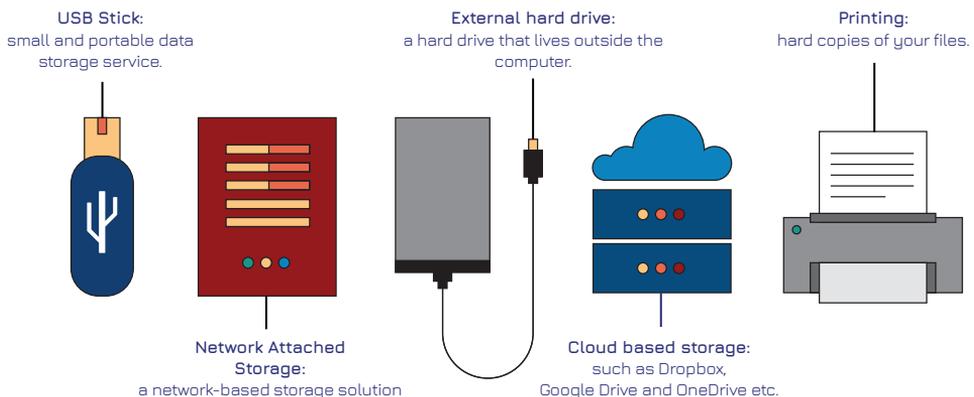
TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO:

- Check the sender address
- ONLY download files they recognize
- Understand illegal or pirated content
- Understand the purpose of a legit antivirus network

The importance of backing up your data

Backup is a preventative measure where a copy of our data is created on another device or a cloud to ensure minimal data loss should a particular device become compromised in any way. There are many dangers to our data – cyberattacks being only one of them. Natural wear and tear from time is another factor that may cause our device to lose data. We might even lose our entire device, it might break, or it might get stolen.

WAYS OF BACKING UP YOUR DATA



TIPS FOR EXPLAINING TO YOUR CHILD WHAT DATA IS:

- Talk about what information they should keep private – home address, passwords, or the school they attend. Encourage them to come to you if online users ask for information like this.
- Use storytelling techniques.
- Use metaphors like the following:

1. “Imagine a giant toy box, filled to the brim with lego bricks, duplo blocks and your favourite characters. Sounds exciting right? You could build all sorts of things, castles, forts, fire engines and even pirate ships. But with a box as big as you are and thousands of bricks all jumbled up it could be pretty difficult to find the right pieces”.

2. “Big data is a lot like that toy box. A big jumble of numbers and words. This makes it very difficult to read and understand without lots of help” (Amy- JO Crowley, 2014).

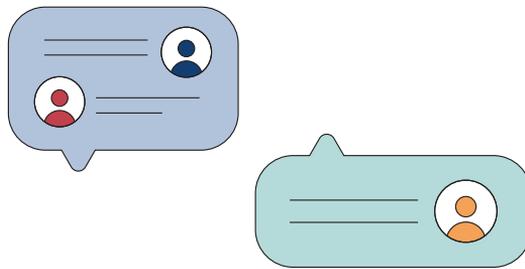
PARENTING TIPS FOR SECURE ONLINE TRANSACTIONS:

- Monitor your children’s activity.
- Ensure that your credit card is in a safe place - not reachable by your children.
- Avoid sharing information with others, even family members and friends.
- Limit Online Spending.
- If your child will use a credit card on a webpage remind them to create strong passwords and use safe and authentic websites that start with: HTTPS/

ADDITIONAL PARENTING TIPS ON CYBER SECURITY:

1. Discuss the dangers of the Internet with your child from an early age.
2. Watch videos and read stories together to identify misinformation, viruses and online attacks.
3. Manage emotions by focusing on weak reasoning. Provide the space and opportunity for your children to discuss their feelings and communicate their concerns.
4. Adopt a good role-model for your children to mimic. Be skeptical about your online activity and behavior.
5. Question the media: When reading a story confirm information together by using digital means.
6. Teach your children the value of privacy.
7. Teach them about the role of advertising and ensure they understand the purpose of advertisements and recognize the dangers.
8. Limit digital time. Children need to spend 1 hour per day (maximum) online to eliminate the negative consequences on their development.

9. Encourage your children to engage in offline activities such as playing an instrument, a board game, painting and so on.
10. Help children develop their critical thinking during a game. Try asking your child 'what do you think will happen next?', 'Let's predict'.
11. Encourage thinking in new and different ways to create creative problem skills. Ask questions like 'What other ideas could we try?', 'Let's find another solution?'. Do not intervene and judge their ideas.
12. Watch other videos i.e. funny videos of children and discuss the dangers of posting such videos online. Why does their image need to be protected?
13. Look at an image and ask the following questions:
 - Who? Who posted the image? Were they reliable and what other content do they usually post? Are they coming from a particular perspective?
 - What did they say about the image? Could the image have been edited?
 - Why? Why did they post it? How did they want you to feel, or what did they want you to do?



Resources for further reading

AVAST (2018). 'How to create a strong password'. Available at:

<https://blog.avast.com/strong-password-ideas>

CBR (2014). '13 Ways to explain big data to a five-year old'. Available at:

<https://www.cbronline.com/analytics/13-ways-to-explain-big-data-to-a-five-year-old-4315589/>

Consolidated Technologies, Inc. (2018) '10 Common Causes of Data Loss'. Available at:

<https://consoltech.com/blog/10-common-causes-of-data-loss/>

The World (). 'The Diceware Passphrase Home Page'. Available at:

<https://theworld.com/~reinhold/diceware.html>

Norton (2020). 'How to stay safe when file sharing online. Available at:

<https://us.norton.com/internetsecurity-how-to-how-to-stay-safe-when-file-sharing-online.html>

Chapter 3.2

ONLINE PRIVACY¹

Cyber security and online privacy go hand in hand and often overlap so it is not so easy to make a clear distinction. As a general rule cyber security is a set of measures where we protect our devices against attacks from the outside and use software to keep others from breaking in – very much like a burglar protection in the real world –, whereas online privacy is very much about what we share voluntarily on the net and with whom and how this data is being used in the end.

In Europe the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation: <https://gdpr-info.eu/>) has been set up to help people protect their data. The GDPR consists of 99 articles including:

- The obligation for companies to tell you which data they hold about you and to delete such data upon request.
- The obligation for companies to clearly ask for your consent before collecting any data and to give you the possibility to choose which data you are comfortable to share and for which purpose.
- Strict rules for companies on how to handle and store customer information especially with regard to third parties. For example: Your bank is not allowed to share your financial information with any third parties.

But oftentimes we give consent to the sharing of information when we visit websites or use apps. It is almost impossible to use a browser without agreeing to certain conditions, e.g. allowing the collection of data. The same is true for the owner of websites who ask for consent to set cookies that will allow them to track users' online behaviour.

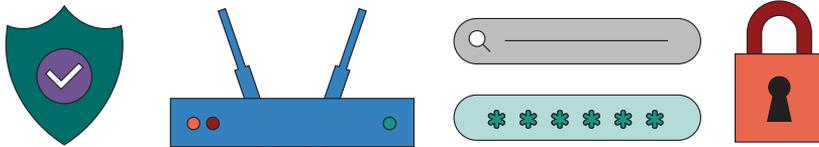
The most common internet privacy issues are:

- User tracking by search engines
- Cookies used for online tracking
- Collecting of data by mobile apps
- Data "harvesting" on Social Media
- Identity theft

¹<https://clario.co/blog/what-is-online-privacy/>

Privacy settings

There are privacy settings included on any mobile phone, tablet and/or PC/notebook and/or in the browsers that can be activated:



- **DNT setting**

DNT stands for “do not track” and you can activate this setting on your online browsers. If you enable it (be it in Chrome, Firefox, or another browser), you are telling websites and third party partners that you do not want to be tracked.

- **Cookie-blocking browser extensions**

These can help to reduce online tracking and gathering of information through third parties.

- **Opting out of app tracking**

In order to avoid that apps get access to a lot of information about you, you can go to your app settings (either within the app or in your phone settings) and opt out of the app tracking information, including location.

- **Private browsing or incognito mode**

By enabling this option you can avoid the storing and remembering of your online history.

TIPS: The following tips are also useful to prevent unpleasant surprises:

- **CAREFULLY REVIEWING PRIVACY POLICIES**

Many people simply click on “I agree” to any user agreements and privacy policies without reading them. As in real life signing a contract without reading it is not advisable, it is also a good idea to take a closer look at any online agreement before accepting. This may be quite challenging as many of these documents seem endless with dozens of pages. It is however recommendable to check what kind of information the website or app asks of its users and whether you are comfortable with sharing that information.

• USING VPN TO ACCESS THE INTERNET

VPN stands for virtual private network and routes your online activity through an encrypted virtual tunnel. In this way, you can keep your IP address and location secret from sites you visit and it also helps to protect you from hackers.

• CHANGING SEARCH ENGINES

Using the same search engine all the time may give it the possibility to collect and connect a lot of data about you. You can opt for different search engines to avoid this issue – here are some indicative suggestions:

- DuckDuckGo.com
- Qwant.com
- LexiQuo: extractsearch.de
- Disconnect Search: search.disconnect.me
- Startpage.com
- Ecosia.org

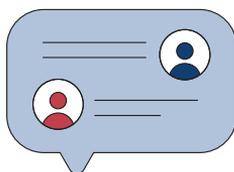
• BEING CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT YOU CLICK ONLINE

Phishing is a very common method to trick you into sharing sensitive information and/or making payments to criminals' accounts. Do not open any suspicious links online, in messages or email attachments. Some ads may also contain phishing threats.

You can find more information and educational videos and games to engage with your children at: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/my-privacy-uk/for-parents>.

Here is a toolkit for young people: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/my-privacy-uk>

These leaflets give you advice on specific topics sorted by age group:
<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/esafety-leaflets-resources/>



PRIVACY AND DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

What is your Digital Footprint?

Our Digital Footprint is made up of the pieces of data we leave behind while browsing the Internet. In the same way that sand maintains the shape of our footprints after we are gone, the Internet keeps the traces of our online activity.

There is a record of EVERYTHING we do online: the websites we visit, the things we buy, the videos we watch, where we pay our bills, where we work, who we chat with, who our friends and family are, the things we search for, the “likes” we give and the comments we make – all of it is logged on servers, and it is called our Digital Footprint.

“What goes on the Internet, stays on the Internet”



How can my Digital Footprint be used against me?

Our online presence and behaviors matter a lot nowadays. People tend to believe that one’s online actions are representative of who they are as a person. This is why we need to be extremely mindful about the way we portray ourselves online. Particularly parents need to prepare and advise their children from an early age about the consequences that their Digital Footprint may have on their future.

It is widely known that employers and academic institutions carry out extensive background checks on candidates. This includes checking out the candidates’ personal social media profiles. Having a positive image on social media is taken seriously by institutions and organizations. Hence, it is not a surprise that people often lose academic or job positions due to inappropriate posts found on their social media.

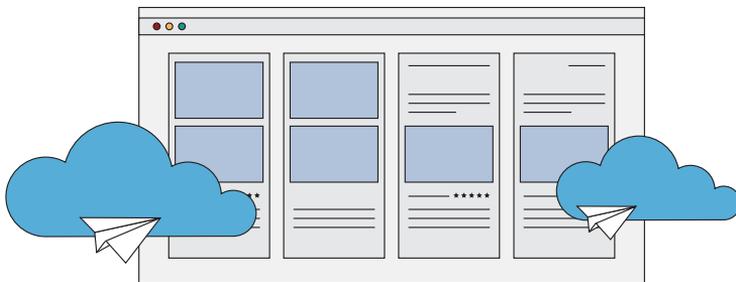
Additionally, it is important to protect our Digital Footprint for fraud purposes. Our digital information can be stolen and used for illegal purposes, as criminals often hunt for people’s personal information and get access to their social media accounts, credit cards etc.

Overall, we should always keep in mind that our online behavior is permanent and that any online activity we undertake can be easily tracked if someone looks for it.

TIPS ON HOW TO PROTECT YOUR ONLINE IDENTITY AND DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

- Ensure you post photos and stories that are well-thought, representable and non-offensive to yourself or others. Avoid controversial or inappropriate texts or visuals.
- Log out from your account each time you leave a social media platform and delete old accounts.
- Manage social media accounts mindfully: avoid disclosing personal information such as credit card numbers, passport/ID photos or numbers, date of birth, photos of your children or home, address information, usernames or passwords.
- Adjust privacy settings on social media accounts: Limit your posts to be viewed by friends only.
- Share false information: Avoid sharing your name and personal information with people you do not know online.
- Update software regularly because it improves security levels and makes devices more secure.
- Avoid using Public-Wi-Fi and public charge ports.
- Use incognito mode.
- Create strong passwords and make sure you remember them. Never allow browsers to remember your passwords so you can be protected in case of the loss of a mobile phone or if anyone else uses your computer or tablet.

“Be aware of the consequences of your online activities and how can they impact you in your personal and professional life”



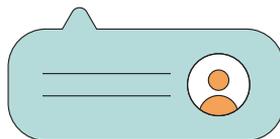
Machine learning algorithms can analyze your photos, and over time recognize your children, even as they age. Therefore, every time you post a video/image/story about your child think about how it might affect them in the future.

ADVISE YOUR CHILDREN TO:

- Communicate appropriately by using the right language online.
- Respect others and disagree politely. Avoid entering into negative discussions.
- Avoid talking to strangers.
- DO NOT download or copy things without permission.
- Stand up for people that are being bullied by other online users.
- Report misbehavior
- Think before texting, posting, sharing.
- Keep their social media profiles private.

EXTRA TIP: You can help your children to complete this form, in order for them to recognize their Digital Footprint:

https://healthpoweredkids.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/229415-HPK-boundaries-lesson_horizontal_FINAL.pdf



Resources for further reading

Common Sense (2019) "Young Children and Digital Footprints". Available at:

https://d1e2bohyu2u2w9.cloudfront.net/education/sites/default/files/education-resources/annotated_conversation_case10_-_young_children_digital_footprints.pdf

Internet Society (2020) "Your digital footprint matters". Available at:

<https://www.internetsociety.org/tutorials/your-digital-footprint-matters/>

Teach Thought Staff (2019) "12 Tips for students to manage their digital footprints". Available at:

<https://www.teachthought.com/the-future-of-learning/11-tips-for-students-to-manage-their-digital-footprints/>

Tech Terms (2020) "Digital Footprint". Available at:

https://techterms.com/definition/digital_footprint#:~:text=A%20digital%20footprint%20is%20a,trail%20you%20unintentionally%20leave%20online.

Chapter 3.3

PARENTAL CONTROL TOOLS

Nowadays, as the Internet has been extremely overused by children of any age group, parents need to take on an active role, not only in guiding their children on how to use it, but also in using tools that will prevent their children from falling prey to possible risks and dangers that are lurking in cyberspace. Parental controls act as a preventive measure that filters the web in order to achieve a safe use of the Internet and keep children from accidentally accessing undesirable or forbidden content.

Specifically, parental controls can filter the web and block access to inappropriate websites. They can be activated by choosing the according settings on your router, or by using the parental controls built into your operating system or by installing third-party software. You can protect all devices in your home network by means of the appropriate settings on your router. You have various solutions according to the type of connecting device.

<https://www.howtogeek.com/167545/4-ways-to-set-up-parental-controls-on-your-home-network/>

Different possibilities exist:

- **Network-wide settings on your router.**
- **Built-in software on your devices.**
- **Third-party software.**

TECHNICAL ASPECTS:

BLACK & WHITE LISTS

As mentioned in the Basic Training, Parental Controls help you protect your child when they are online from inappropriate content, cyber bullying, cyber-attacks, social media scams and traps, misinformation or unwanted acquaintances. You can do this by blocking websites or categories of content, setting white and black lists for your child to access (or not to access, respectively) and limiting downloads to keep your devices safe.

A Black list is a way of blocking content and disallowing access to this list's specifically designated websites. You can set the software so as to block access to certain categories of inappropriate or offensive content, such as "pornography" and "racism" based on the keywords that you select. NOTE: Even in that way you can NOT get rid of all the mischievous content on the hundreds of millions of active websites in our massive web.

White lists are control tools that work in the opposite way, in other words, they allow access only to a specified list of websites. Instead of creating long list of inappropriate sites, you just need to create a list of good sites, selecting exactly the content that your child will be able to access.

ADVERTISING

A large part of all the content found freely online comes with advertising material, and this is particularly true for websites popular among youngsters. If very aggressive, this material can shape your children's behavior as a consumer and make them addicted to any form of consumerism. In order to tackle this very common problem, it is advisable to install software than can block or hide the ads, such as Adblock (which comes both in a free and a premium version).

ONLINE PURCHASES

Another issue on which you should focus your attention is that of online purchases. Usually children are not able to make purchases on their own: however, they might access some websites where your payment information is already logged in. Very common are accidental purchases on Google's Play Store: Parental Control can also be set up here in order to block unauthorized transactions.

Advanced commercial solutions

- **Net Nanny:** monitor your child's computer and phone activity.
- **SPIN Safe Browser:** blocks pornography etc. and filters images on search engines.
- **Mobicip Safe Browser:** cloud-based internet filter for parental control.
- **KidSecured:** check outgoing and incoming messages or calls in order to watch for cyber bullying risks.

LIMITING DOWNLOADS

Cyber-criminals and hackers are a common phenomenon on the Internet. Children can be tempted to click on an impressive button to download apps and programs that look genuine and promise fun but are actually malware and viruses.

This is problematic for your system and it can also jeopardize confidential or personal information like passwords, bank account information, etc. Moreover, viruses can lock your computer, cause operational problems and can even spread to other devices connected with it.

Parental controls allow you to limit downloads from untrusted or suspicious sources. You need to control what your children can or cannot download so that your systems are kept free of malware and viruses. Find out more about online safety tips here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

HOW TO IMPLEMENT PARENTAL CONTROL TOOLS ON OPERATING SYSTEMS

Windows 7

If you use Windows 7 on your computer you can use its built in parental controls. This way you can control how much time a user account can log into the computer and what programs they can use. This is helpful if your children have separate user accounts on your computer.

See full instructions here:

<https://www.howtogeek.com/howto/10524/how-to-use-parental-controls-in-windows-7/>

Windows 10

Most devices today use Windows 10, which has integrated parental controls. It combines time limits and program access controls with Family Safety's web filtering. You can manage the settings you want to establish and view reports from the Family Safety website. When setting up a new user account check the box titled "Is this a child's account?" This will mark it as a child's account and can be managed from the Family Safety website online.

THIRD-PARTY SOFTWARE

Many Internet security suites come with built-in parental controls. If you have installed such software on your computer, check if it has built-in parental controls.

There are many free web filtering solutions you can use. For example, Norton offers a free Norton Family parental control application <https://family.norton.com/web/>

Remember that parental controls do not block everything bad and may occasionally block something good.

Interpersonal aspects: Parental Control Tools work for children in any age group but especially for the ones that are only just starting to use the Internet and are not so familiar

with it. You should find time to explain the possible dangers of the Internet and how they can stay safe. Be aware that something “prohibited” can seem even more interesting. So setting boundaries without pressure, building trust and letting them know that there is a safe space between you and them and that they can share their concerns is the key so they do not feel like you are being overprotective.

TIPS: Parental Tools can be set up on your router which will enable you to perform web filtering for all devices on the network. Some routers have built-in parental controls with instructions in their manuals. If your router does not include parental controls, you can set them through OpenDNS.

WEB BROWSERS

You can set up parental controls on most web browsers that your child may use. Here we cover the examples of the most popular browsers: Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, and Firefox. Available on Android and IOS software.

HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR CHILD’S DEVICE: FAMILY SHARING

You can have access to your child’s device by enabling Family Sharing features in both Android and iOS. This solution helps parents shape their children’s experiences and blocks access to things they might not be ready for.

Conclusion

According to the London School of Economics¹, parents can support their children’s internet safety by sharing a positive experience of internet use while informing and advising them about the possible risks or dangers that are lurking in cyber space. In order to build trust but also to monitor their children’s internet use, you can have an active role and participate in a series of interactive activities.

¹ [How can parents support children’s internet safety\(lsero\).pdf](#)

There is no parental control software that is perfect. For this reason, it is advisable that parents help children understand the risks they may incur when navigating online in an open and fair discussion. Something that you should keep in mind is that restrictive mediation reduces online risks, but it also reduces your child's online opportunities and skills.

Parental Tools can help you monitor your children without limiting their opportunities to play games, connect with friends, find information etc. Together, you can become informed about the safe use of Internet, especially through activities that have fun and informative aspects.

Activities can vary with their target group being both parents and children. It is important that these activities are addressed and introduced to both parties. In this way, you will build more knowledge on how the Internet works, how you can take advantage of it and how you can answer questions that your children might have. At the same time, children will enjoy exploring the Internet while being protected from situations that can possibly have a physically or mentally negative impact on them (bullying, prohibited material etc.).

These activities can be accessed by any digital device (laptop, mobile phone, tablet, PC) that can be connected to the Internet in order to perform them. The main goal is that you will not only show interest in your child's activities but also guide them in a more fun way.

Quizzes are a good and playful example that you can use to participate in "learning by doing" activities with your children. They are useful to challenge and test previously gained knowledge and even give some new information about different topics. Some examples are:

- **PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD:**

While at home find some free time to sit comfortable with your children and do a quiz on how they would react to different types of situations. These situations are given scenarios related to cyberspace that will help you understand how they would manage them. If they make a decision that is considered to be inappropriate, make sure that you explain to them in a calm manner how and why they should reconsider it. After finishing the quiz, you can have a discussion, and all share your thoughts.

The quiz for this activity is:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2017-quiz-8-13-year-olds>

• PRACTICE IN YOUR OWN HOME WITH THE FOLLOWING QUIZZES:

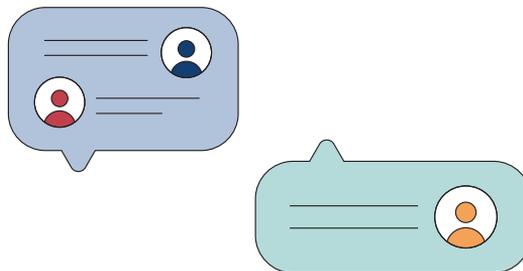
It is important, before educating your children about the Internet and how to use it in a safe way, to first educate yourself. Knowing in depth what you are talking about will give you enough confidence so your children can rely on you in answering questions that they might have or even better for advising them on how to deal with specific situations, for example hate speech, unfiltered comments on their social platforms. Make sure to use these quizzes as a way to improve your digital knowledge and skills. The quizzes for this activity are:

1. https://www.proprofs.com/quiz-school/topic/internet-safety_
2. <https://pumpic.com/security/child-internet-safety-quiz/>
3. <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2018/01/29/579555277/what-kind-of-screen-time-parent-are-you-take-this-quiz-and-find-out?t=1595407623147>

• LEARN BY YOUTUBE VIDEOS

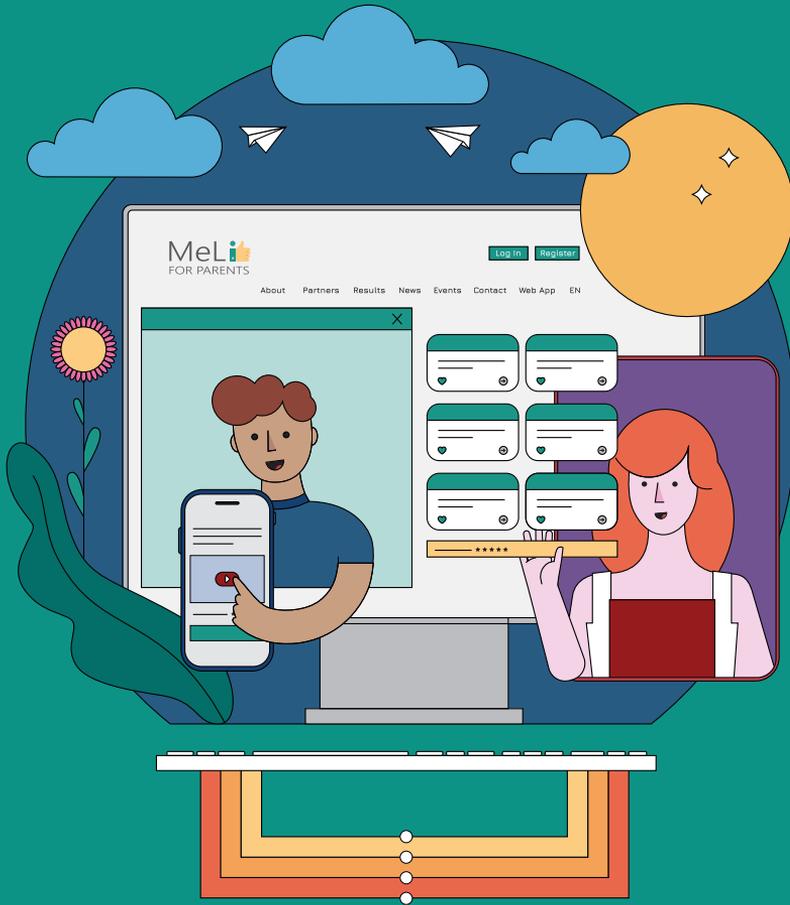
YouTube is an online platform with a plethora of videos including informative ones that can help you visualize what parental controls are and in what ways they can be helpful. You can also watch videos with your child so you can both be duly informed about Internet safety. The videos for this activity are:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIB3avfTo4I>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxySrSbSY7o>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9Htg8V3eik>
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMa1XKGRae8>



CHAPTER 4

How to use the Webb App



Chapter 4

HOW TO USE THE WEB APP

The web application of MeLi for Parents aims to introduce parents to the topic of media literacy. The application includes several activities in the form of text, videos and quizzes that learners can access in order to improve their skills and knowledge in topics relevant to media literacy, such as online privacy, cybersecurity, cyberbullying, etc.

To enter the web application, the first step is to visit the website of the project:

www.meli4parents.eu



Then you should create a new account. In order to do this, click on “Register” in the top right corner:



To create an account, you need to fill in the fields on the registration form, such as email, name, surname, age, number of children and country. The application sends notifications through SMS or emails to users on a specific time basis, suggesting several activities.

During the registration phase you can indicate how often you would like to receive such notifications. If you do not want to receive notifications, you should indicate “never” in the relevant question. You can receive notifications twice a week, once a week, or once a month. In case you want to receive notifications through SMS you should indicate your phone number in the relevant field.

Log inCreate new accountReset your password

Email*

Password*

Confirm Password*

Passwords match:
Provide a password for the new account in the both fields.

Name*

Surname*

Telephone

Age*

Number of Children*

Country*

How often would you like to receive notifications?*

We can send you regular notifications about proposed activities based on our profile

Create new account 

If the creation of the new account is successful, an email with instructions about the account verification will be sent to your email. The email will include a link, which will direct you to the web application.

Once you have an account, the next time you want to enter the application, you can click on “Log in”. When you log in or register, you will see the option “Web app” on the website’s menu.



Once you enter the web app, you will see a brief introduction to the web app at the top and some guidelines for using it.



Welcome to the Web App ML4PI!

The application contains several activities about media literacy, offering a wide variety of types and topics, tailored to your personal needs. You can use the filters on the left to find the most suitable activities for you and your family.

The filters allow you to choose the category and the subcategory of the activity, the type of the activity its language, the level of difficulty, the duration of the activity, and the audio preferences.

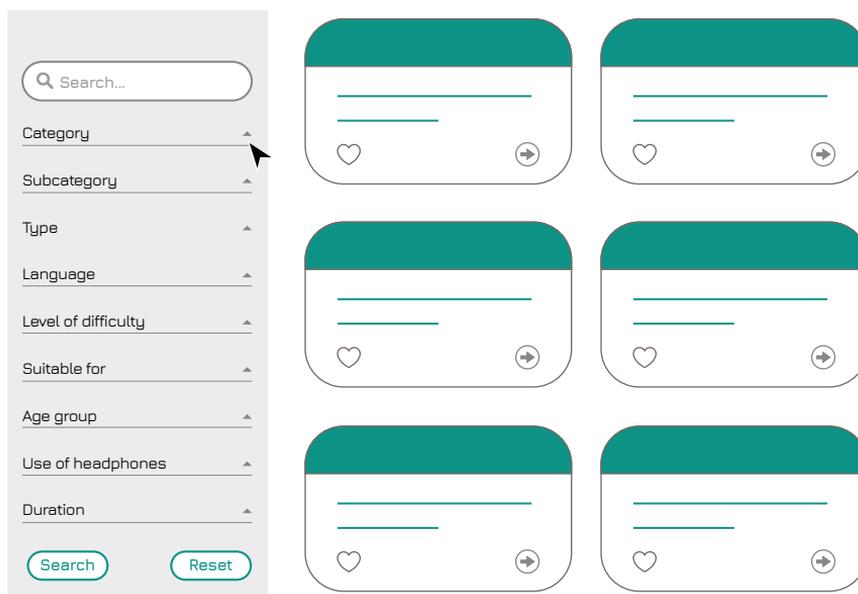
You can also use the filters to find an activity that can be completed by you, or by your whole family. It's up to you!

You can mark an activity as completed by clicking the relevant button on the top of each activity. You can also save your favourite activities by clicking on the heart icon. Both completed and favourite activities will be available on your profile.

Your feedback is valuable to us, so help us improve the activities by rating them.

Have fun!

The application contains several filters that allow you to choose the category and the subcategory of the activity, the type of the activity, its language, the level of difficulty, the duration of the activity, and the audio preferences. You can also use the filters to find an activity that can be completed by you, or by your whole family.



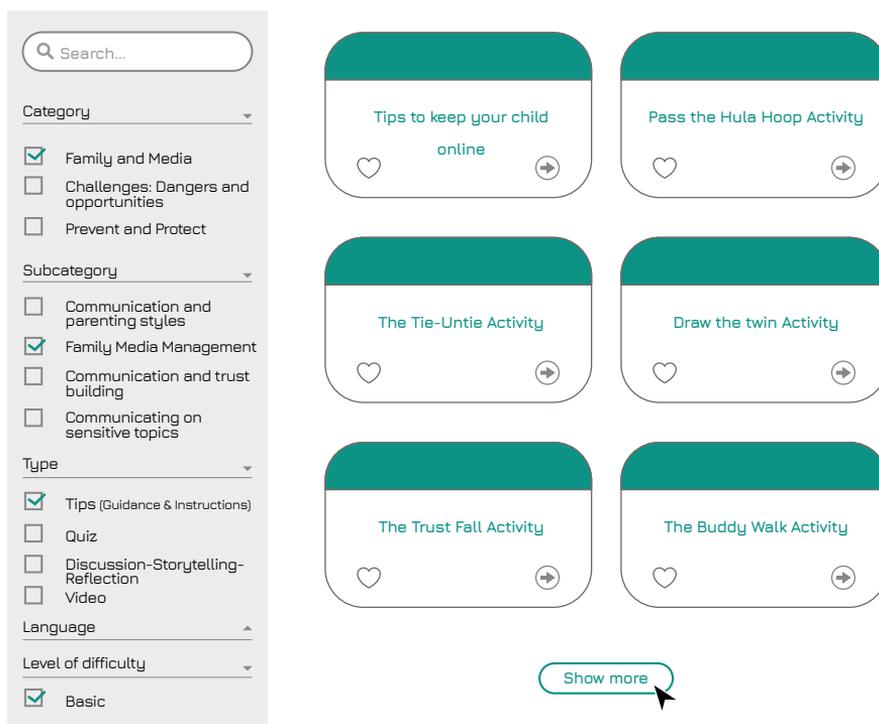
In the category section you can choose from the following topics: “Family and Media”, “Challenges: Changes and Opportunities” and “Prevent and Protect”. Depending on the categories chosen, specific subcategories appear. For the category “Family and Media” the following subcategories appear: “Communication and parenting styles”, “Family Media Management” and “Communication and trust building”. In the category “Challenges: changes and opportunities” the following subcategories can be found: “Popular applications among children”, “Internet addiction”, “Cyberbullying and hate speech online”, “Disinformation: Distinguishing fake news on traditional and digital media”, “Role Models and Stereotypes” and “Digital Content Creation”. Under the category “Prevent and Protect” the following subcategories are available: “Cyber Security”, “Parental control tools”, “Online Privacy” and “Privacy and Digital Footprints”.

The activities are divided into four different types: 1. Tips (Guidance & Instructions), 2. Quiz, 3. Discussion-Storytelling-Reflection, 4. Video. All the activities are available in the following

languages: English, Greek, Bulgarian, Italian, Polish and French. They are also categorized according to the different levels of difficulty: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced.

Parents can choose the activities based on the age of the children. The ages are grouped into the following categories: “Childhood (under 7 years old)”, “Young Teens (8-12 years old)”, “Teenagers (13-18 years old)”. They are also grouped based on their duration. The following categories are under the duration filters: “Under 5 minutes”, “5-15 minutes”, “15-30 minutes” and “more than 30 minutes”.

Once you have chosen the filters, the activities of your preference will appear. Moreover, you can use the research functionality above the filters to find topics you are interested in. You can enter the activities by clicking on the title of the activity or the arrow icon.



All the activities include a title and information about the category, the subcategory, the type of the activity, the target group to which is addressed, the sound options, the duration and the level of difficulty. Many activities also include images and references, in which you can find the links the specific activity is derived from.

TIPS (Guidance and instructions)

Mark activity as completed

Mark activity as favourite

Q Search...

Category: Family and Media
 Subcategory: Communication and parenting styles
 Type: Tips (Guidance & Instructions)
 Language: English
 Suitable for: Parents
 Use of headphones: No
 Duration : Under 5 minutes
 Level of difficulty: Basic

_____ ***** Rate this activity [Back to activities](#)

Discussion-Storytelling-Reflection

Mark activity as completed

Mark activity as favourite

Q Search...

Category: Family and Media
 Subcategory: Family and Media Management
 Type: Discussion - Storytelling - Reflection
 Language: English
 Suitable for: Family
 Age Group: Childhood (under 7 years old), Young Teens (8-12 years old), Teenagers (13-18 years old)
 Use of headphones: No
 Duration : 15-30 minutes
 Level of difficulty: Basic

Reference _____

_____ ***** Rate this activity [Back to activities](#)

Examples of different types of activities:

VIDEO

Mark activity as completed

Mark activity as favourite

Q Search...

Category: Family and Media
 Subcategory: Communication and parenting styles
 Type: Video
 Language: English
 Suitable for: Parents
 Use of headphones: No
 Duration : Under 5 minutes
 Level of difficulty: Basic

_____ ***** Rate this activity [Back to activities](#)

QUIZ

✔ Mark activity as completed

Search...

Category: Challenges, Dangers and opportunities

Subcategory: Digital Content Creation

Type: Quiz

Language: English

Suitable for: Family

Suitable for: Childhood (under 7 years old), Young Teens (8-12 years old), Teenagers (13-18 years old)

Use of headphones: No

Duration : Under 5 minutes

Level of difficulty: Advanced

♥ Mark activity as favourite

Submit

Rate this activity ***** [Back to activities](#)

Examples of different types of activities:

Most of the quizzes contain one correct answer, but some have more than one correct answer. In these types of quizzes it is mentioned that more than one answer is correct. Once you have checked the answer, you can click on "Submit," and the correct answer will be indicated in green. If you have selected a wrong answer, then this answer will be indicated in red. Regardless of the answer you gave, feedback will appear once you submit the answer, providing more information about the correct answer.

In case you complete an activity, or you want to leave and go back to the activities page, you can click on the button "Back to activities" at the bottom. You have the option to rate an activity by clicking on one of the stars on "Rate this activity". You can also see how many users have rated the particular activity and what is its overall score.

If you like an activity, you can mark it as favourite by clicking on "Mark activity as favourite" on the top of the activity, or click on the heart icon on the activities page. When you complete your activity, you can mark it as completed by clicking on the relevant button on the top of the activity. Once you do that, when you go back to the activities page, you will see a tick icon on the activity box.

✔ Mark activity as completed



All of your favourite and completed activities can be found in your profile (“My account”) and you can easily access them anytime by clicking on their link.

Name: *****
Surname: *****
Age: 26-35
Number of children: 0
Country: Greece
How often would you like to receive notifications? once a week
How would you like to receive notifications: E-mail

Favourite Activities

- [What is an Open DNS](#)
- [Creating a slide show and talking about privacy](#)
- [Introducing your child to the virtual world](#)
- [Safer Internet Day](#)

Completed Activities

- [What is an Open DNS](#)
- [Creating a slide show and talking about privacy](#)
- [Introducing your child to the virtual world](#)

You can also change the information on your profile by editing the information provided upon registration and adding an image that will appear on the top of your profile. In order to do this, you can click on the button “Edit” on the top.



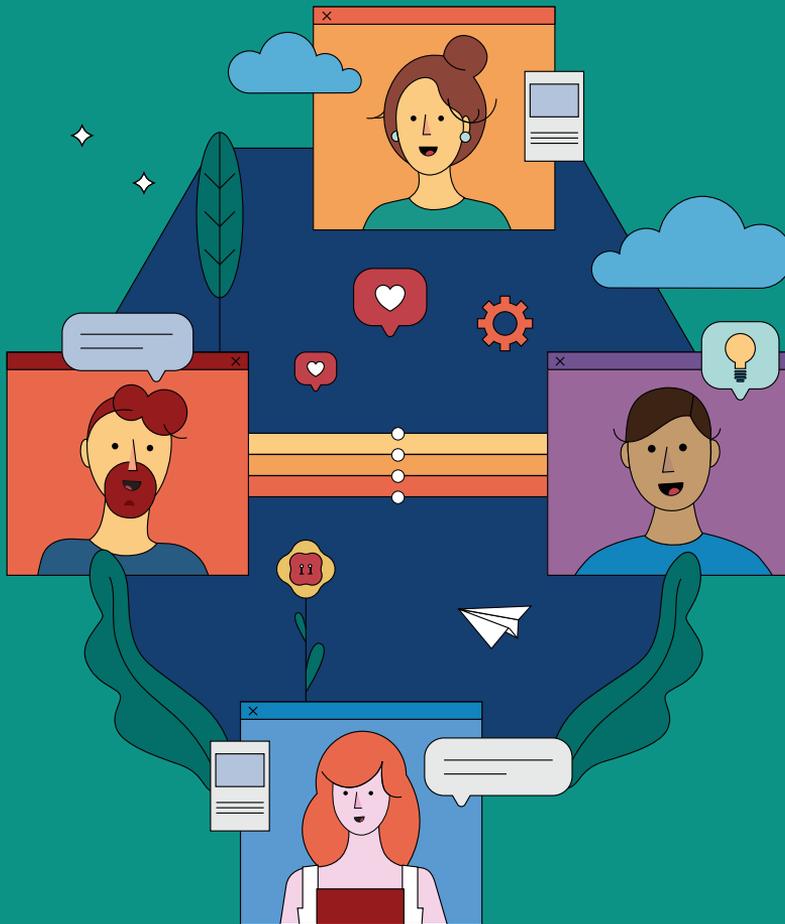
Name: *****
Surname: *****
Age: 26-35
Number of children: 0
Country: Greece

In case you have questions about the web application you can always contact us by sending us a message through the contact form on our website.



CHAPTER 5

Join the Community



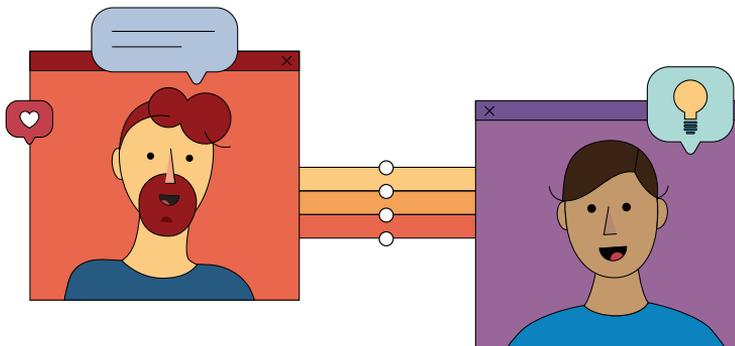
Chapter 5

JOIN THE COMMUNITY

Experience has shown that the field of digitalization with its many different components is already difficult to navigate for parents themselves but even more so for and with their children when they only have their own knowledge and resources to rely upon.

This is why in the framework of this project the consortium not only provides training materials, a WebApp and this Guide for parents but the various partners have also established Facebook groups in their home languages that you are invited to use as platforms for mutual exchange. You can ask questions or offer answers to somebody else's queries, you can share experiences or tips or ask for advice on a specific topic. The Facebook groups will be monitored by the respective partner in charge but there is no unilateral communication foreseen. Quite the contrary, as this is a field under constant and very fast development it is absolutely crucial for everyone to help construct the new knowledge necessary to better support children and youth and cope with the challenges posed by new online games, apps and programs. On top of that children also grow and develop so parents are dealing with a moving target in both directions and peer learning and exchange has proven to be really helpful in these cases.

This is also true for another tool that has been created to help parents to stay in touch and exchange: a **Moodle** platform where a national forum per language is going to be hosted and that you can find at <https://e-trainingcentre.gr/> You'll need to sign up first in order to have access.



FACEBOOK GROUPS

Here are the indications for the Facebook groups, each in their home language: English, Bulgarian, Greek, Italian, Polish and French.

MEDIALITERACY4PARENTS - English speaking Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1807674396288319>

МЕДИЙНА ГРАМОТНОСТ ЗА РОДИТЕЛИ - Bulgarian Facebook Group

www.facebook.com/groups/meli4parentsbg/

ΓΟΝΕΙΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΨΗΦΙΑΚΗ ΕΠΟΧΗ - Greek speaking Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/414579093374223>

PARLIAMO DI MEDIA LITERACY - Italian speaking Facebook Group

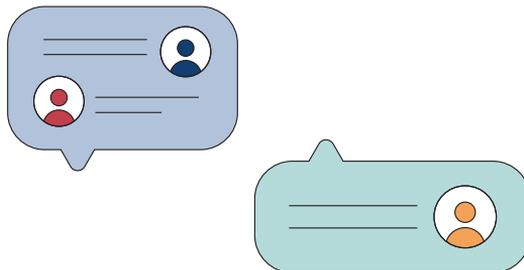
www.facebook.com/groups/404365157940832/

MELI EDUKACJA MEDIALNA DLA RODZICÓW - Polish speaking Facebook Group

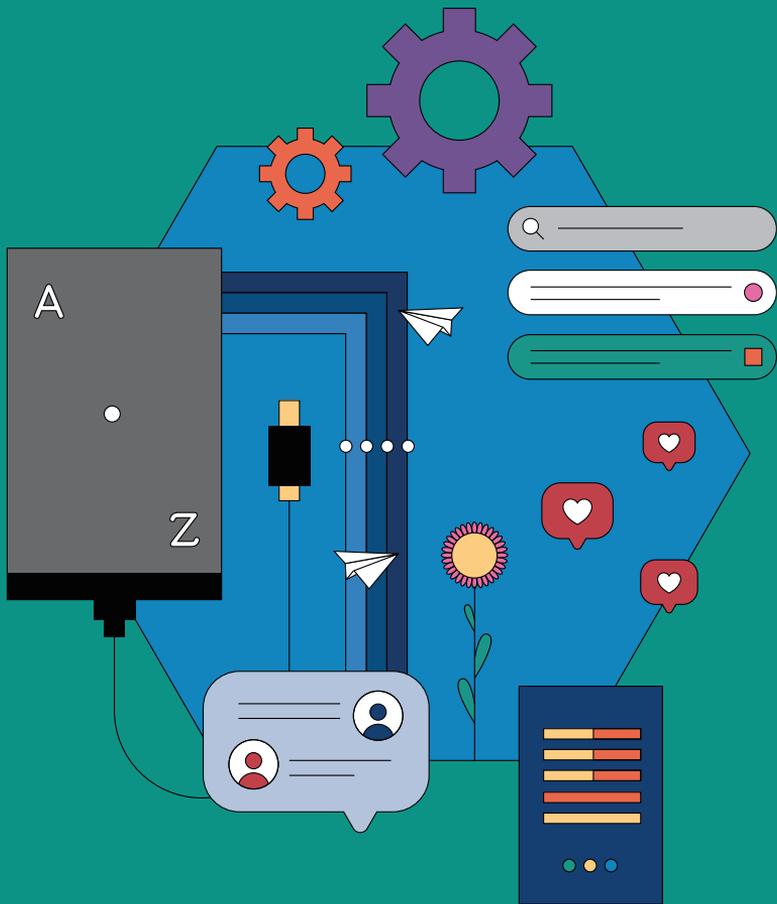
www.facebook.com/groups/edukacjamedialnarodzicow/

ÉDUCATION AUX MÉDIAS POUR PARENTS - French speaking Facebook Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/276149740960651>



Glossary



A **AD BLOCKER:** A tool that blocks ads while you are browsing. Ad blockers can be used on a number of devices, such as desktop computers, laptops, smartphones or tablets. They allow us to browse the internet and get the content we need, without the annoying, flashing ads.

ADDICTION: Internet addiction disorder (IAD) is characterized by excessive or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges or behaviours regarding computer use and Internet access that lead to impairment an individual's function in various life domains or distress over a longer period of time.

You may also find the expression pathological Internet use or compulsive Internet use and several related disorders as for example online gaming addiction, online gambling addiction, pornography addiction, communication addiction disorder, virtual reality addiction and video streaming addiction that can all result from an excessive use of the Internet.

C **CYBERBULLYING:** It is understood as bullying by means of digital technologies. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is characterized by repeated behaviour aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted. Examples include:

- Spreading lies about or posting embarrassing photos of someone on social media.
- Sending hurtful messages or threats via messaging platforms.
- Impersonating someone and sending mean messages to others on their behalf.

CYBER SECURITY: The practice of defending computers, servers, mobile devices, electronic systems, networks, and data from malicious attacks. It is also known as information technology security or electronic information security.

D **DISINFORMATION:** Disinformation is understood as verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm.

F **FOBO:** Short for Fear Of Being Offline refers to the anxiety related to missing something important if you are not constantly plugged in. It is a kind of separation

anxiety that you feel if you have not got your phone with you, the panic when you realize that there is not a good WIFI-connection or the urge to check your various social media accounts or emails all the time.

FOMO: Fear Of Missing Out goes even a step further and refers to the fear that somebody else might be using the opportunity (of a job, a meeting, etc) if you do not react immediately to an offer, a proposal or a suggestion.

G **GROOMING:** In English most often Child grooming is the criminal activity of befriending and establishing an emotional relation with a minor (sometimes also the family) to gain the young person's confidence with the objective of real or virtual sexual abuse. Child grooming is also reported to lure minors into various illicit businesses such as child trafficking, child prostitution, cybersex trafficking or the production of child pornography.

H **HATE SPEECH:** is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as "public speech that expresses hate or encourages violence towards a person or group based on something such as race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation"

J **JOB:** means Joy Of Being Offline and refers to "re-"discovering the joy of pursuing other activities that are not connected to a digital device and an internet connection, an extremely important attitude to prevent addiction and other unpleasant consequences of constant internet use.

M **MISINFORMATION:** wrong information or the fact that people are misinformed, not necessarily intentionally.

MEDIA: (usually used with a plural verb) the means of communication, as radio and television, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet, that reach or influence people widely: the media are covering the speech tonight.

MEDIA LITERACY: umbrella expression that includes all technical, cognitive, social, civic and creative capacities that allow citizens to access the media, to have a critical understanding of them and to interact with them (definition used/given by the European Commission) meaning the ability or skills to critically analyse for

accuracy, credibility, or evidence of bias the content created and consumed in various media, including radio and television, the Internet, and social media.

O

ONLINE GAMING: refers to playing games over some form of computer network, most often the Internet. Online games can range from simple text-based games to games incorporating complex graphics and virtual worlds populated by many players simultaneously. They are distinct from video and computer games in that they are normally platform independent, relying solely on client-side technologies. Normally all that is required to play Internet games are a Web browser and the appropriate “plug-in”.

ONLINE GAMBLING: means gambling activities carried out via a computer network especially the Internet like virtual poker, casinos and sports betting.

ONLINE PRIVACY: is the level of privacy protection an individual has while connected to the Internet. It refers to the amount of online security available for personal and financial data, communications, and preferences and the use of these settings by individual users.

S

SOCIAL MEDIA: websites and other online means of communication that are used by large groups of people to share information and to develop social and professional contacts; examples: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat.

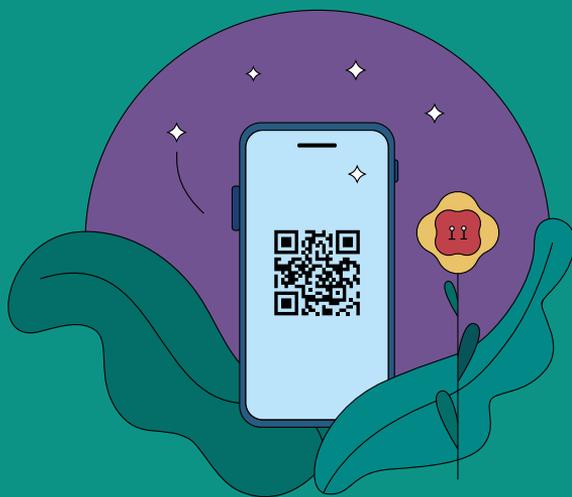
SCREENTIME: The expression has several meanings. In this guide we refer to the time spent by an individual using any kind of device with a screen (TV, mobile phone, tablet, computer).

SEXTING: It is the action or practice of sending sexually explicit messages including digital images, photographs, text messages, videos etc. via mobile phone or messenger services on other electronic devices.

SEXTORTION: It means the practice of extorting money or sexual favours from someone by threatening to reveal evidence of their sexual activity or sexually explicit images.

SHARENTING: Is composed of the words sharing and parenting and stands for posting photos and videos of your child's life to social media, blogs and other websites. Themes vary; most frequently, sharenting involves the posting of daily life, vacation or travel photos. Yet there are also online groups of parents interested in arranging situations intended to make audiences laugh. In all actuality, such material may ridicule and/or humiliate the child. In olden days, family photos would be kept in albums made available to select viewers only; the Internet offers an option to expand the audience but this should be done with the utmost care keeping the child's future image and online reputation in mind.

T TRACKING: It has several meanings but in the context of this Guide we refer to the act or process of following something or someone through digital means mostly via tools connecting a parent's digital device to the one of his/her child.



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