



**A European
Research Project :**

The Appropriation of New Media

by Youth

With the Support of the European Commission / Safer Internet Action Plan

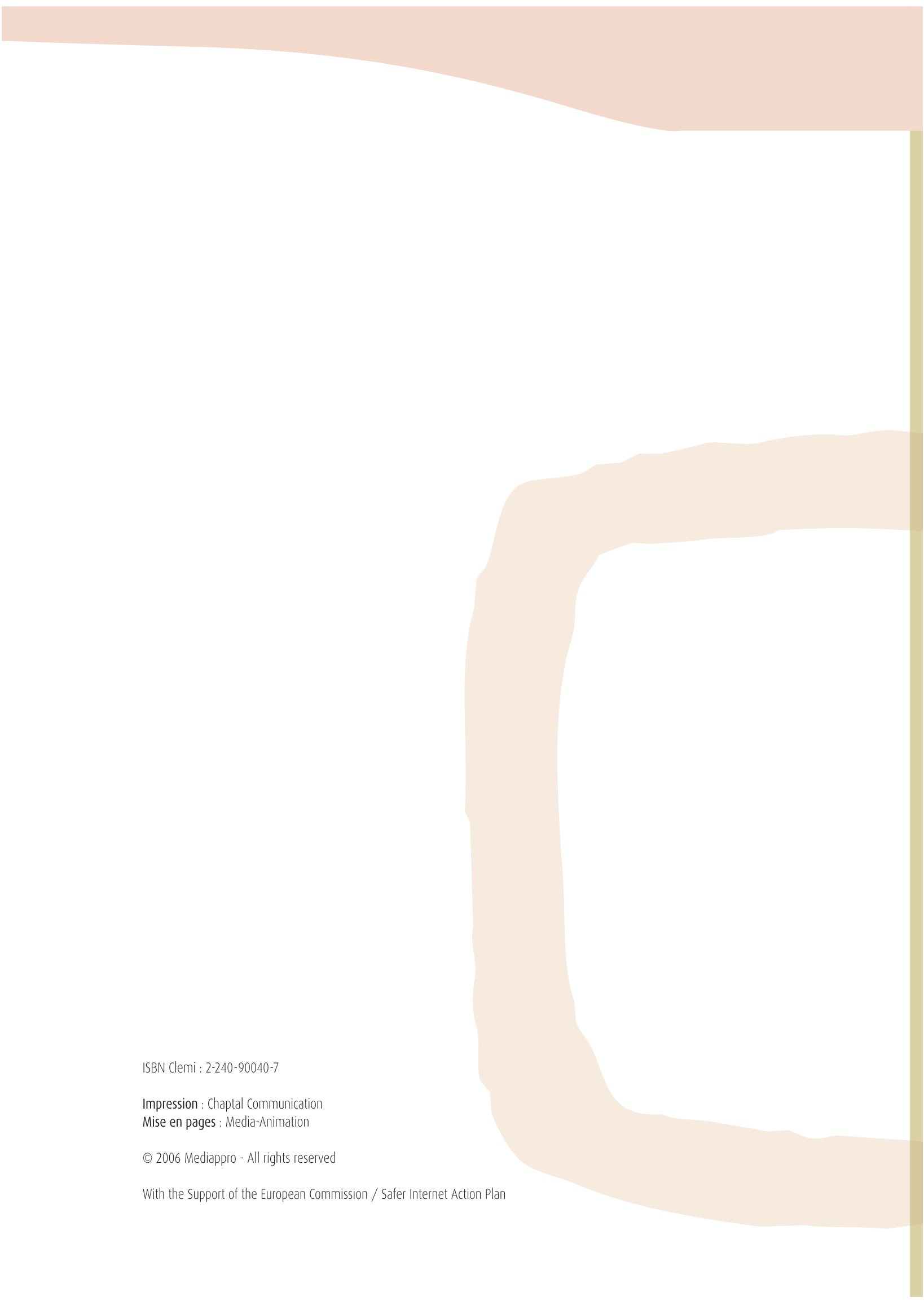


European Commission
Information Society and Media





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INTRODUCTION



MEDIAPRO : **Introduction**

The years 2000 – 2005 will go down as the period during which the Internet exploded among the civil society in industrialised countries. The scope of the dissemination of networked electronic communication (including mobile telephones and games) has raised hopes among adults: hopes for a new freedom of communication and expression and for a new age for the cyberspace of knowledge and of ideas. But also concern about the new dangers of electronic networks and in particular those that threaten young people, whose innocence, inexperience and incompetence are combined with a potential for action on the networks that is identical to that of adults. It is therefore justifiable and necessary for our societies to be wondering about the nature of the changes being ushered in by the new networked technologies, the new skills that are indispensable for young people, and about the way to inculcate those skills into them. These concerns have led to the international Mediappro project: aiming to gauge better how young people are dealing with the risks and opportunities of the new media by appropriating them.

The vision of the Internet given in the traditional media is essentially constructed around exceptional, dramatic facts. This vision reveals the hopes, but above all the concerns shared by our fellow citizens, about a reality which is only in its initial stages, and thus difficult to predict where it is headed. Are the Internet, video games, and mobile telephones to be considered as reinforcements of a media evolution from newspapers, radio, the cinema and television, or do they presage a cultural and economic tidal wave that will mark the twenty-first century the way that Gutenberg's printing press marked the fifteenth century in Europe?

How is the tidal wave of electronic media to be faced? Initiatives are clearly needed on this front. The news from the media might not be the best sources of information to give us an idea of the general situation concerning the relation between young people and the Internet. The media often convey exceptional yet spectacular facts, which are often an echo, a resonance between our hopes and apprehensions and the flows of current events. Consequently, the media image of the relation between the Internet, mobile technologies and young people could hide an ordinary, more banal, yet more representative reality of a general situation that would provide the right information and help us to consider the necessary initiatives.

To manage this, we should consider ourselves as being ignorant and define, as precisely as possible, what we think we do not know. Our attitude must be that of questioning, of receptive listening. We must deploy our best means and resources so as to be able to observe the ordinary reality. We must try to understand the reality of customs and representations that young people construct in their daily exposure to the Internet, electronic games, and networked communicators.

In doing so, we try to contribute to the development of initiatives, provisions, and modes of conduct that can reach the needs of the largest number of young users, from different backgrounds in Europe and beyond, but also in certain astounding dimensions that characterise them collectively as young people living in the 21st century, the first "settlers" and future inhabitants of a forest where we, as adults, can only see the first rows of trees.

MEDIAPPRO : **A European Research Project for the Appropriation of New Digital Media by Young People**

In the framework of the European Commission's "Safer Internet Action Plan"

Between January 2005 and June 2006, universities, government ministries, associations and foundations from 9 European countries - Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal and United Kingdom – collaborated on an applied research project for media education called Mediappro ("media appropriation").

These various institutions, specializing in media education, designed a study to explore how young people between the ages of 12-18, appropriate digital media, including networks and portable media, such as the Internet, mobile phones and video games.

A similar survey was also carried out during the same period in Quebec, Canada. This complementary approach allows for comparison and a better understanding of the situation in Europe and North America.

Why is it necessary to have detailed knowledge on the appropriation of electronic media when it comes to the safety of young people? The main hypothesis underpinning this project is that young people's safety on the Internet and in their use of other digital media depends largely on their own actions. Internet users who find themselves the victim of a harmful situation, have always, in one way or another, put their own selves at risk. As such, behaviour, attitudes and perceptions are important factors of safety. Consequently, it is essential to help young people to be as competent as possible when they use network communication devices. In order to help develop the competences and skills of young people, it is important to understand how youth use and perceive network technology.

For this reason, Mediappro aims to enhance user safety by identifying how young people appropriate digital media and how their practices differ within different contexts of use (at school and at home, for example). Our final objective is to empower leaders and all those engaged in the field of new media education by developing relevant guidance for safer use and to increase young people's responsibility, autonomy and awareness in their uses of these media.

Main topics of the research

In a joint effort, research teams from Europe and Quebec collaborated to develop research along four central themes :

- The Multimedia Environment: the means to access the Internet, mobile phones and electronic games (material, contexts of use, interactivity between different media...)
- Knowledge and the Cognitive Process: the way young people understand the Internet, learn from and with it, get information from it and build representations about this media (technological, communicative, social skills); including the dimensions of danger and risk
- Psychosocial Dynamics (identity, culture, society): young people's representations of and opinions about the impact of the digital media uses on the relationships between them and their peers, parents, teachers and communities
- The Future and Democratic Citizenship: implications for the evolution of digital media and consequences for future needs, in terms of control, regulation, skills or education

In order to analyse the process of appropriation, three dimensions were identified :

- the study of representations regarding their cognitive and emotional aspects: what do young people claim they know, think, want, fear, see for the future...
- the study of attitudes: what do young people claim to be ready to do, to be able to do, in particular situations
- the study of uses: what do they say they actually do

Data about equipment helps to clarify the technological and economic background of the sample and to put into context the three dimensions mentioned above.

This approach should improve our understanding of how young people appropriate digital media and enable us to tackle security issues proactively, rather than from declared uses or from a persistent adult point of view where youth are passive victims rather active agents of media safety.

Analysis of existing data

Previous analysis of existing data, surveys and educational initiatives from European partner countries and across Europe allowed us, on the one hand, to identify different national perceptions, beliefs, values and behaviour relating to children's use of the Internet and new technologies; and, on the other hand, to determine the areas already covered by studies, polls and research conducted in Europe in recent years and to point out the gaps and weaknesses which emerge from these questions.

In addition to the fact that these studies seldom concern the 12-18 age group, we noticed that they focus above all, on the equipment and the uses of media technology as stated by young people themselves. Some studies concerned technical research but almost never touched on the notion of appropriation, which is the central theme of the Mediappro project.

This document titled "Collection, Analysis and Synthesis of Existing Data About Young People's New Media Practices and New Media Education Practices", is available in an electronic version (cf. CDrom in annex and Mediappro website, www.mediappro.org).

Methodological approach

About 9000 young people aged 12-18 (7400 in Europe and 1350 in Quebec), participated in the Mediapro survey. For practical reasons, each national team selected the participants from their schools with the consent of school principals and parents. In order to construct a relevant sample at the international level, schools were selected according to their geographical location and their social, economic and cultural setting. Three school grades, representing three age groups, were defined: 12-14 (beginning of secondary school), 15-16 (middle of secondary school), and 17-18 (end of secondary school).

Using this method we were able to obtain a varied sample representing the diversity of young people's life contexts, reflecting national differences that exist across Europe.

We collected the data through two means. The project team elaborated a common questionnaire including 63 items and distributed it to the whole sample during school time, from September to October 2005. Based on the results of this quantitative phase, 240 young people (24 in each country) were selected according to their different levels of Internet usage, ages and gender, for individual interviews. Each interview took place at school and lasted about 40-60 minutes, and was based on a grid elaborated by the consortium and in coherence with the questionnaire each young people had filled in.

Aside from the statistical analysis of the questionnaires, Mediapro teams conducted each phase of the survey themselves in order to guarantee a coherent process and high quality analysis.

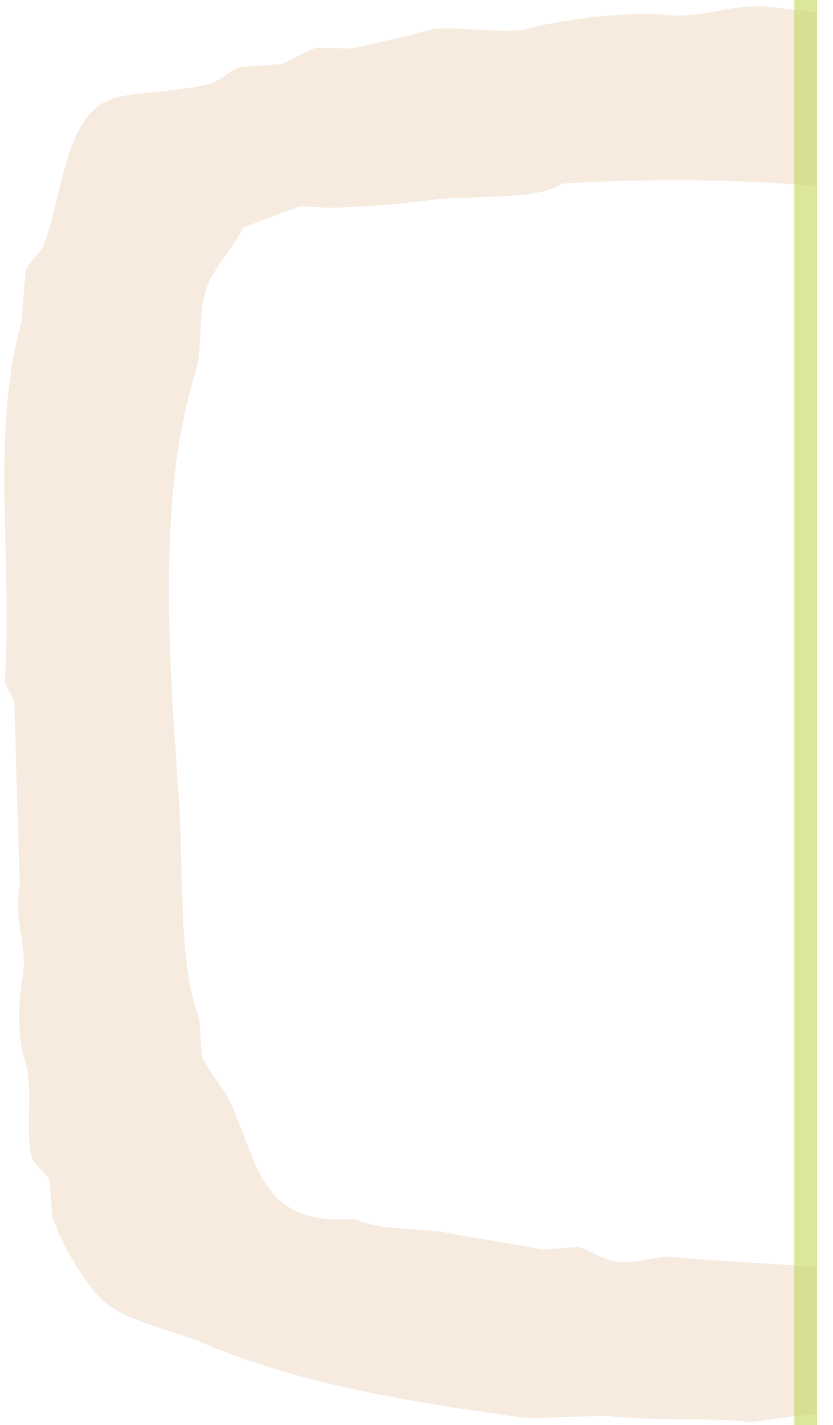
Results and recommendations

The synthesis of the results presented in the following pages highlights five main topics that emerge from the research:

- the gap between home and school uses, educational approaches and attitudes
- the place and the role of networked communication with regard to social identity and relationships within the family, school and peer groups
- young people's attitudes towards regulation, potential risks and dangers, negative experiences and antisocial behaviour
- young people's attitudes towards themselves as networked consumers and how they envisage the future
- how young people learn and act at stake with the Internet, mobile phones and games

In order to empower leaders and persons engaged into the field of digital media education, oriented to safer uses, we elaborated recommendations addressing parents, schools and teachers, industry, politicians and future researches.

The results and recommendations refer to the European situation globally and national situations as well, allowing to perceive common issues and local specificities across Europe. To study deeper the European diversity, detailed national documents are available on the annexed CDrom .



Mediappro survey : Relevant Facts

The survey was completed by 7393 students, aged from 12 to 18 years, from 9 countries of the European Union (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal and United Kingdom) from September 2005 to March 2006. A mirror survey was conducted in Quebec at the same time (1350 students).

Follow-up interviews were conducted with 24 young people in each country, based on data from the survey, covering the age range, both genders, and levels of both high and low use of the Internet.

EUROPE

Europe : Relevant facts

Use of the Internet

It is clear that Internet use is almost universal across these countries at 12-18, though small numbers of non-users remain, and these vary across the countries. 9 young people in 10 say that they use the Internet (highest: Estonia 98%; lowest: Italy 78%). Most of them have used the Internet from between 1 and 3 years (35%), or for 4 years or more (31%) The situation is quite the same in Quebec, but the uses are older (3/4 use the Internet for more than 4 years). In several countries, extent of Internet use is correlated with levels of print literacy, suggesting that these two 'literacies' might be usefully treated as connected in educational practice.

Activities

Uses are concentrated around the following activities:

<i>Activities on the Internet (Sometimes + often + very often) · %</i>					
	Search engines	E-mail	I. Messenger	Chat rooms	Downloading
Belgium	95	74	81	28	58
Denmark	92	66	87	26	50
Estonia	90	69	88	33	73
France	94	67	69	32	49
Greece	81	46	39	41	65
Italy	86	59	49	33	59
Poland	91	62	75	34	67
Portugal	95	69	77	38	60
UK	98	81	78	20	60
<i>Average</i>	91	66	71	32	60

- Looking up information is by far the most common activity in all the countries: more than 9 young Europeans in 10 say they use search engines sometimes, often or very often (highest: United Kingdom and Quebec: 98%; lowest: Greece 81%).
- E-mail is quite extensively used: by 68% of them. However, levels of use are not necessarily extensive or frequent. 22% say that they use it sometimes, 23% frequently, and 23% very frequently. In Quebec, 80% of them use it frequently or very frequently.
- Instant messaging is also widely used, by 7 in 10 European young people (9 in 10 in Quebec), and with much greater frequency than e-mail: 42% of them say that they use instant messaging very frequently, with great differences between countries: highest is Estonia: 63%; lowest is Greece: 12%. Instant messaging is mainly used to keep in touch with friends (62% of the young people), rather than with family (14% of the young people use instant messaging to communicate with their parents). This application allows them to choose the people who they want to talk to through managing a list of contacts, containing more than 50 contacts for 30% of them. In respect of the kind of language they use for instant messaging, a substantial number say that they use the "SMS" language very often (36%) or often (20%). It is higher in Quebec: very often (52%) and often (21%).
- The use of instant messaging has largely replaced the use of chat rooms: 66% say that they never or rarely use chat rooms. The balance of interest in communication is clearly in favour of communicating with friends, rather than strangers.
- Downloading material from the Internet is widely-practised. 61% say that they download a range of material from the Internet sometimes (17%), often (18%) or very often (26%). Strikingly, 44% of the young people said that they download music even when it is forbidden.
- Music or online radio programs are very popular: 67% of young people listen to sometimes (21%), often (20%) or very often (26%).
- Creating their own content is much less widely-practised than forms of communication: for instance, 18% of young people say that they have a personal site, and 18% a blog. A blog is quite popular in Belgium (38%) and in France (25%), while in some cases, young people seemed uncertain what a blog was (a third of the Danish sample, for instance). The Belgian study observes that the life-span of

young people's blogs is typically very short; while the French study notes that a large proportion of blogs owned by young people are dormant.

- Use of the Internet seems to have reduced the use of television (40% of the young people say that they watch it less than before) and books (32% of them read books less often than before). The last finding is more complex and ambivalent when broken down, however: the French study pointed out that 'almost 3 young people in 10 declare they read less than before, mostly the 17-19 year-old girls, but 1 in 10 says he/she reads more than before'.

The Internet at home

Across all countries, including Quebec, it is clear that the Internet is used far more at home than at school. 81% of the young people say they use it at home (95% in Denmark and Quebec vs 64% in Greece). 38% go on it every day (highest: Estonia 65%; lowest: Greece 8%), and 30% multiple times a week. 67% of the students say that they have a high-speed connection at home (highest: Estonia 90%; lowest: Greece 31%).

It is within the home that the young people seem to have most freedom to do what they want on the Internet. Their preferred activities are communicating with friends (via instant messaging), visiting websites, listening to music, playing games and downloading material. The use of search engines is also highlighted as a popular activity in some countries, especially United Kingdom, Belgium, Poland and France; though the French study notes that search engines are not necessarily being used conventionally, for information search and retrieval, but as access to popular sites already known by the users. The Danish study notes that, for its interviewed sample, search engines are synonymous with Google.

Generally, uses of the Internet seem to increase with age. Older teenagers use the Internet more, leading us to conclude that using the Internet increases with maturity. Also, unsurprisingly, use of the Internet at home for school-related purposes increases: the Danish study, for instance, notes this use by 16-18 year-olds, and the availability of online notes to assist homework.

The home is where many young people feel they learn about the Internet, either through self-teaching or from siblings. Learning from parents also occurs, though from young people's point of view, parents do not seem to be great users of the Internet : 25% use it sometimes, 25% often and 15% very often.

<i>Consequences on cultural practices • %</i>			
	Less TV	Less reading	More music
Belgium	45	28	43
Denmark	33	28	49
Estonia	51	46	65
France	43	28	45
Greece	27	26	45
Italy	20	24	46
Poland	54	30	49
Portugal	36	35	48
UK	42	35	50
<i>Average</i>	39	31	49

The Internet at school

<i>Use every day + several times a week • %</i>		
	At home	At school
Belgium	69	9
Denmark	89	33
Estonia	83	30
France	57	10
Greece	38	25
Italy	56	7
Poland	68	45
Portugal	62	22
UK	79	56
<i>Average</i>	67	26

While home use of the Internet is extensive, it is equally clear that school use is severely limited and constrained. Although young people have physical access to the Internet at school in theory, in practice it is used much less than at home. Indeed, 22% (highest: Belgium 42%; lowest: Denmark 6%) of young people say that they never use the Internet at school during class and 30 % rarely. Students mostly say they use the Internet for their schoolwork through retrieving information. The most likely context for use cited in the interviews (in the UK, Portugal, and Poland) was for ICT lessons. The UK qualitative study notes that 'school uses were often talked of without enthusiasm compared with the zeal with which young people spoke about MSN, games, music and other home uses'.

The interaction between the school or college and the young people does not seem developed in relation to the Internet. Explicit teaching about the Internet in schools seems to be seriously under-developed: 82% (90% in Quebec) of the young people never or rarely talk about the Internet with their teachers or educators (highest: Estonia 94%; lowest: Italy 68%). A small majority (56%) are aware of rules regulating the use of the Internet in their school (highest: Portugal 72.4%; lowest: Italy 26.5%). Children in several countries

say that they have learned more from friends and parents than anyone else about Internet use: in Greece, for example, they are most likely to learn from friends; then from family (mostly siblings); and only then from school.

Physical restrictions also play a part. In some countries, computers are simply not available freely to children: in Poland, for instance, computer suites are closed during breaks; in Italy, some schools are still not connected; while in Portugal, the computer-student ratio is low. In other

countries, however, physical access is not the problem (Belgium; Estonia, Denmark). More importantly, use is restricted by school policy. In Greece, the Internet is only used in ICT lessons, for instance; while the prohibition of Internet use for communication (chatting, e-mail, instant messaging), and leisure uses such as games and music, is widespread in schools across all the countries in the project.

The international case for urgent improvements to use of the Internet in schools, and the need to teach about it effectively, is dramatically underlined by the views of the young people themselves. While their experiences of the Internet in school are largely disappointing and constrained, they consider that the school should be an important resource and one that they need. The majority of the young people think it is important or very important that the school teach them how to find useful sites (52%), and to help them evaluate the information they find on websites (42% of them think it is important, 20% think it is very important). The school should also provide better access to the Internet (39% important, 29% very important) and teach the young people how to quickly find information on the Internet. Finally, although the widely-reported experience of young people in this study is that teachers do not talk to them about the Internet, they clearly believe that their teachers have the necessary skills: 45% of young people think that their teachers are familiar with the Internet (highest: Poland 60%; lowest: Estonia 31%).

Safety on the Internet

There is a high degree of awareness of safety issues among the young people surveyed and interviewed. They do not seem to be naïve or ignorant of the dangers they could be confronted with. They say that they never (47%) or rarely (22%) talk to people they do not know face to face. They seem to be aware of certain rules they have to respect on the Internet: for example, 68% believe they should not show images of people on websites without their permission. However, it seems likely that they over-estimate their competence: 79% consider they know well how the Internet works; but only 52% of them are able to evaluate the information they retrieve.

The results of the survey suggest that for young people the Internet is mostly a means of keeping in touch with friends and the people close to them. It appears that young people appropriate the Internet as a tool to enhance their established relationships and activities. The emphasis on communication with friends and people they know, and of the decline of use of chatrooms and interest in meeting strangers, is a positive feature of the study. However, there is an increase in online gaming, another context for communicating with strangers; though there was no evidence that this was experienced as dangerous. Where harmful situations were referred to in the interviews, they were most commonly cited as experiences heard about from friends rather than experienced directly.

The survey data suggests that parents across all the countries, including Quebec, hold fairly liberal views and do not restrict young people's Internet use to a large extent. In Quebec, 9 in 10 young people say their parents control what they do on the Internet only rarely or never. Parents do not seem to be included in their children's "Internet universe". The young people say that they talk to their parents about this medium rarely (32%), sometimes (31%), often or very often (15%). 21% never talk about it. However, this varied across countries: in France, for instance, 37% talk to their parents about the Internet sometimes, and 25% often or very often.

Examples of parental regulation seemed mostly to do with safety issues, with prohibitions applied to chatrooms and certain types of websites. However, also common were restrictions on time of use, suggesting more general concerns about health or spread of activities. The Greek study indicated little intervention by parents except to limit costs.

There is also, importantly, wide evidence of self-regulation by young people. This includes awareness of violent and pornographic sites, sometimes in relation to concern about younger siblings, as in the Danish study; it may be that young people here replicate adult anxiety, adopting adult roles towards younger children. It also includes anxiety about chatrooms; and concern about viruses, spam, expense (buying ring tones, for instance), and hackers. However, awareness of risk and ability to deal with it varies considerably from country to country. In France, the young people were aware of a wide range of risks, and expressed sensible, cautious attitudes, which the French study attributed to extensive and successful public information campaigns and teacher training. Similarly, in Estonia, respondents were well aware of a wide variety of risks, from communicating with strangers to the dangers of Internet shopping. By contrast, Polish study found evidence that young people were sometimes too trusting of websites and in need of education to evaluate risk; while the Greek study found generally low awareness of risk.

The mobile phones

95% of young people have their own mobile phones (highest: Italy 98%; lowest: France 87%). It is very clear that they see these as vitally important to their lives, something they would find it difficult to live without: a majority of them consider it important to be connected with their friends all the time. The situation is completely different in Quebec, where only 4 young people in 10 have their own mobile phone, and very few of them send text messages (20%).

The main use of phones is for communication with friends, including planning events, telling someone they are thinking of them, gossiping. With the exception of Estonia, where calling is more popular than texting, they are more likely to send text messages (79%) than to call (65%). One reason for this is financial: sending a text message is clearly cheaper than a phone call (72% of the young people agree with this affirmation). They also use text messages for planning activities and informing their parents; and to tell someone that they are thinking about them. There is some evidence (in the UK and Portuguese interviews, for instance) that they value the distance provided by texting, which makes difficult communications easier. The Danish interviews suggested that the older age group use phones for flirting, and also appreciate the distance afforded by texting to reduce embarrassment.

While there are debates in some countries about the dangers of bullying with mobile phones, through voice, text or, most recently, image, this is not reflected as a serious problem in this study. The Danish report indicates a very small number who have had problems, but conclude that the problem is not widespread. Similarly, the UK study contains very little reporting of negative experiences; and of those reported, most had been heard about rather than directly experienced.

A less common, but still important, widespread use was to contact parents. The Belgian interviews indicated that young people often gave this as a justification for possessing a phone.

There is minimal use of other functions of mobile phones such as photography, imager-sending of mobile gaming. There is almost no interaction between the cell phone and other media, for instance, for transferring pictures onto a computer or in participate to contests or television, radio or Internet games.

It appears that parents do not restrict their children's cell phone uses. 84% of the young people say that their parents give them permission to call whoever they want. Moreover, they consider it acceptable that their parents use this tool to know where their children are (84% clearly accept this affirmation). By contrast, mobile phones are strictly regulated or even forbidden in schools in all countries.

The electronic games

Young people in general say that they play more on their computer than on a game console, but the difference is small: 52% play on a console (highest: United Kingdom 66%; lowest: Estonia 30%), 64% on a computer (highest: Poland 75%; lowest: Belgium 56%). It also varied between countries: in Belgium and the UK, for instance, consoles were preferred.

The number playing online or network games seems small: only 18% of them say that they play frequently or very frequently, though again this varied considerably between countries: for instance, 30% in Denmark, 26% in the UK, but only 11% in Poland). However, this may represent a considerable rise in use over the last few years. The implications are not clear: there are clearly cost implications, where online games require subscription; and implications for meeting people online, in role. These need further study.

Parents tend to moderately control these activities: they pay most attention to the time their children spend on playing (48%), than on the people their children play with (44%), and finally on the type of games their children play (28%).

CONCLUSIONS

Perhaps the most striking conclusion of the whole study is the marked gap between home and school use of the Internet. This gap, across all the countries including Quebec, was evident in terms of frequency of use, access, regulation, learning and skill development, and type of activity. The data indicates a great gulf opening up, in which all the functions important to young people exist outside school, as well as most of the learning (albeit self-teaching or peer learning), while schools restrict access, unnecessarily forbid certain practices, fail to understand the communicative function of the Internet, and, worst of all, fail to teach the skills of information retrieval, search, site evaluation and creative production that are presumably most important to them.

It is equally clear that young people cannot adequately gain the necessary skills. While in some countries, they are sophisticated users of the Internet, with well-developed understandings of moral and cultural issues, notably France, there are areas where they are much weaker, particularly in understanding any kind of legal question in relation to the Internet. Furthermore, there is evidence in all the countries that they over-estimate their own ability to evaluate. These are areas of knowledge and critical skills that only schools can teach.

While the creative potential of new media is much-discussed in academic literature, the evidence here was that creative work was limited, with a minority of young people developing their own websites or blogs, and some evidence that these products could easily become inert. Again, there is an obvious role for schools in developing these less easily-acquired skills.

Except in Quebec, phones emerge as vitally important to young people's lives: they are used to develop and cement relationships, to attain independence (though also to retain safe contact with parents), and to finely discriminate between different degrees and levels of social proximity. Again, it seems that schools have not properly considered the educational potential of phone uses, or indeed how to explicitly teach about them; but rather revert, again, to prohibition and regulation.

Games seem to be rather less important to these young people than popular wisdom often suggests; but they are still an important leisure and cultural medium, and it may be that online gaming, while still a minority, is growing. Schools, again, are clearly not responding by considering the educational potential of computer games (a well-developed domain of educational research), but tend to prohibit.

Finally, with respect to questions of safety, the evidence in this study is that young people are report being in dangerous, or even uncomfortable, situations extremely rarely. They are mostly aware of the possible dangers; and the shift from chatroom use to instant messaging alone considerably reduces practices which expose them to meeting with strangers, or even unwelcome people they know. While the debate about new forms of risk in relation to phones and online games is clearly alive in many of the participant countries, it is equally clear that, again, there is very little evidence of reported danger. However, all of these issues would benefit from further research, particularly longitudinal study.

APPROPRIATION

The Appropriation Process

The theory of the social appropriation of new technologies – in its latest guises – adopts a dynamic and systemic point of view: the appropriation is an ongoing transformation of use continuously brought about by interactions with other users and by interactivity with equipment and software. Appropriation is a concept that helps us get out of a naïve prediction, built exclusively on technical possibilities (“when all cars can go 100 miles an hour, everyone will drive 100 miles an hour”). To think in terms of appropriation necessarily entails introducing social representations, the power of parents, the traditional media, the sociology of young people and other dimensions that emerge during interviews. The problem at hand is: how can we introduce the dimensions that appeared in a survey in an updated theory of the process of appropriation of new technologies by young people?

Relying on biological models and anticipating the cognitivist approach, Jean Piaget had already identified that when a child discovers a new object, he or she appropriates it in a dynamic of two phases and two directions : by assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is the integration of a knowledge item, or a new object, in the range of mental structures already constructed. Accommodation is the modification or creation of new structures (of knowledge and use), under the robust properties specific to the discovered object.

More recently, Patrice Flichy and Thierry Vedel have, in different ways, theorised the sociopolitics of uses by showing a dual movement, but this time in two dimensions: innovation of production and innovation of use, rationale of production and rationale of use. Once again, there is an interactional view of production and use, or rather of technique and the socio-cultural dimension. The idea is that the technique-use pair is in the medium term changed by the crossed actions of technical objects on the users, and of the users on the technical objects (in a framework of actions that Patrice Flichy calls “socio-technical”), beyond determinist readings (from the technological point of view) developed by economists or by the “social epidemiologism” of some historians of technology.

Mediologists have for their part reproduced a similar dialectic in their discussions. MacLuhan and his continuators have developed a perspective of technical determinism (where technique determines culture). Other theoreticians, following Régis Debray and his famous mediology course at the Sorbonne, have on the contrary underscored that the technique (here the Internet, electronic games and mobile telephones) can be considered as one of the vertices of a triangle, the other two vertices being the prevailing social organisation and ideas (or values). These three vertices are closely interrelated, so that none of them can change without a concomitant change of the other two, whereby every technique is concurrently subjected to and determining of modes of organisation and ideas. Once again, not only is technology determined by use, but the reverse is also true, and the two are actually co-determined.

For example, reliance values among friends (vertex 3: ideas and values) are easily perceptible, as they strengthen the intensive use of MSN and SMS (vertex 1: techniques and uses) through very effective techniques and interfaces that make the dimension of friendly relations all the more present in the social space of the family (vertex 2: organisation and daily life). These three vertices become stronger and help explain the success of electronic communications among peers.

These different approaches enable us to confirm the hypothesis that the way in which the new media are appropriated by young people leads also to a double transformation movement. Whereas the medium is discovered, explored and used by a young person, the latter modulates and models the medium by appropriating it and making it change in its successive generations or by exploring only a selected part of it. The potential of each medium is co-determined by the people depending on the different social contexts.

This appropriation movement has multiple implications, both as regards the relational networks of young people, and the reciprocal position of the traditional media and their relations with young people.

Appropriation as it emerges from the Mediappro study

According to quantitative data and interviews with young people, the appropriation of the Internet and of mobile media has the following characteristics :

- There is no dominant variable that can be said to determine the appropriation. In other words, it is not possible to arrive at a general predictive theory on appropriation. At best, an ethnographic approach sensitive to different contexts and situations can be developed.
- This approach shows a set of factors that comprises, in various lines, the following elements:
 - The nature and intensity of regulation exerted by the parents
 - The motivation, often driven by the meaning of a use or its generalised appropriation among peers

RELEVANT FACTS OF THE RESEARCH

- The technical and communication skills
- The availability of time
- The technical and ergonomic quality of access
- The information activity of the other media
- The socio-cultural context of the young person.

An appropriation of more secure practices can consequently be based on the same factors.

Certain remarkable factors of appropriation can be sources of inspiration for educational methods geared to better or safer use.

- An "older peer" (in terms of age or experience) often acts as an initiator. He or she is the initiator par excellence, all the more so as young people generally do care about the security of the weaker.
- The process of personal appropriation is highly influenced by the person's profile, his or her tastes, psychological and social orientations. Choices are essentially guided by these personal traits.
- Personal use plays a great role in the evolution of the appropriation and user's independence. Use in fact takes the place of social beliefs as the young person becomes more experienced. Nevertheless, this natural process can be reinforced by a favourable educational context which, by giving the young person confidence in his or her critical observations, invites him or her to capitalise on his or her own personal experiences or those of his or her peers, in interaction with them.
- The price of use is a negative discriminating factor, but a low price does not automatically entail use. Consequently, a screening and passive protection system will not be used automatically, even if it is free.
- Similarly, the technical characteristics of equipment and processes limit the uses, but do not determine them in a positive manner. (For example, it is preferable to have an ADSL connection to blog, but not all those who have an ADSL connection are bloggers).

BELGIUM

Belgium : Relevant Facts

Almost all young Francophone Belgians between 12 and 18 years old say that they use the Internet and mobile phones. The Internet is strongly established in the home (82% of young people in group A and 72% in group B say they have an Internet connection at home), above all as a means of communicating with friends. The creation of blogs in particular allows young people to present themselves to the world. By using this tool they are testing the reactions of the other members of their 'tribe' and trying out the image or identity they give themselves. Moreover, MSN and email place young people at the centre of a type of communication which is basically horizontal: they can keep in touch with their peers via these tools.

In many respects, the results for Francophone Belgium are similar to those for France.

The points listed below present the current situation in Belgium based on the research carried out among 900 Francophone young people.

1. The gap between home and school

Most young people questioned say that they use the Internet, but the way that they use it is different at home and at school.

It is in the home that young people use the Internet most intensively: more than 60% of young people questioned using the Internet at home do so several times a week.

They use it mainly to communicate with their friends on MSN (73% of young people in groups A and B) and to use search engines (78.3% in group A and 73.6% in group B). They often use MSN to contact friends they see everyday. They continue conversations from the day, swap school work and photographs. They have a very large number of people in their contacts lists but, in interviews, they point out that they only regularly use a dozen or so of these.

38 % of young people in group A and 34.7% in group B say that they have their own blog. This seems to be a temporary activity; in interviews we saw that the lifespan of a blog varies between six months and one year. The youngest say they have been working on the development of their blog for several months while the older adolescents have closed their blogs for a variety of reasons (boredom, undesirable settling of scores). It should be noted that young people who have a blog are mostly those who have an Internet connection at home.

At home, computer games are played in a more ad hoc way than the Internet is used. The youngest are the most interested in console games, while older adolescents play more on line.

The appearance of the Internet in the home does not seem to have affected family relations: in fact, few young people say that rules about Internet use have been laid down by their parents. Some young people say that they are less often in the living room or the kitchen – the places where previously the family would get together to watch television. They say they prefer to spend their time chatting to friends or searching for information for school work or for personal interest.

The Internet seems to be established in schools in a material sense, but is not part of young people's daily practice. Most of the young people questioned in group A (73.7%) say they hardly ever use the Internet at school except, very occasionally, to carry out research for school work or in the context of a class. In contrast, 42.4% of young people in group B say they never or rarely use the Internet at school. It would seem then that Belgian schools practicing positive discrimination make the Internet more available to their pupils. In general, school use of the Internet, as well as appearing to be weak, seems to be very different to young people's non-school use, with school focussing on information and study sites.

Mobile phone use is very widespread (95.1% of young people in group A and 91.9% in group B have their own mobile phone). However, most communication is carried out not by voice call but by SMS text message (84.8% in group A and 76.5% in group B use SMS text messaging). According to young people, text messages are cheaper and more discreet than voice calls. Young people justify owning a mobile phone on the grounds of being able to contact their parents, but mobile phones are in fact used above all among peers. In this regard we could propose the hypothesis that, for some users, mobile phones constitute a dependency.

2. Identity and relationships

MSN Messenger and above all the blog, seem to be new ways to express and present oneself. While pseudonyms are frequently used by young people, this use derives more from the media presentation of the young person himself or herself than from a desire to fake an identity. Young people overwhelmingly advocate the use of a non-fake identity on the net.

Blogs seem to be a real experience of social enculturation, experienced first between friends and then steadily opening towards other visitors. The role model of the 'media star' is very present among young Belgians, who wish to speak about themselves and what they like both in text and in image. The desire to abandon a blog can be traced either to difficult events occurring with peers who view the blog or to a lack of interest in the experience. MSN and blogs are tools which, according to young people, can help those who are shy to express themselves better.

Peers (essentially friends in group A, tending to be brothers and sisters in group B) play a fundamental role in this type of communication, supplying a community reinforcement function. Thanks to these tools the contact and activities of young people seem to be more easily synchronised. This communication can be characterised as 'tribal'. Young people communicate above all with people they already know and who already form a network of friends meeting regularly.

The use of email is not excluded by these practices, but young people say that they use it in a complementary way, when their friends are not on line.

3. Regulation and risks

By and large young people are not very adventurous as regards the Internet. They say that they have rarely been confronted with sites which were inappropriate and say that, should this happen, they would close the improper pages. They are not really aware of the dangers they might encounter on the Internet and seem embarrassed to describe them, but they nevertheless fear the effect that shocking content might have on younger users. They also explain that since they have been using MSN they always know who their interlocutor is and that they can protect themselves if necessary if the conversation takes an undesirable turn.

For nearly all the young people we met one of the worst types of behaviour anyone can have on the Internet is to have an anti-social attitude. This is defined as behaviour such as saying nasty things in a blog, damaging another's reputation, or making inappropriate statements in a discussion forum, etc. The majority believe that you cannot 'say what you like' on the Internet. Some go further and openly worry that their electronic communication is 'ruining' their relations with friends.

They also fear viruses, but without really having had any experience of them or of understanding what they are. Finally, some are afraid that the Internet might have a negative impact on their school work or might make them waste their time.

Young people do not know the rules which govern downloading or the publication of certain kinds of content on the Internet. Their grasp of the relevant law is practically non-existent, sometimes completely wrong.

In general, parents do not spy and are not inquisitive, but neither are they completely unconcerned. Some very few young people complain that their parents are too inquisitive. When parents intervene it is to limit time spent on the Internet or to manage the order in which brothers and sisters have use of it (which is often a problem). Discussions between young people and parents are rare, occurring more often where the parents themselves are Internet users.

4. Consumerist practices and vision of the future

Young Belgians are not big users of Internet shopping sites; 78.3% of young people (there is no discernible difference between group A and group B) make no purchases online. They visit e-commerce sites from time to time to see new products, but rarely to buy them. They say they do not trust these sites.

In contrast, 42% of them say that they download different things, essentially music, from the Internet. The oldest say they download more than do the younger ones, while being fully aware that this practice is often illegal.

The experience of using MSN and blogs has developed in young people a sense that freedom of speech has limits. These limits seem to relate both to a moral imperative and to practical necessity, resulting from difficult experiences.

Most young people think that current technologies will develop even further in the future, but they do not seem to be sure of using them later on except as part of their jobs or for personal purposes. As in the 2001 research, their vision of the future has no coherent structure and is most often full of gaps and not thought through. This kind of enquiry is clearly not a subject discussed in class and when a vision of the future is formulated it seems to derive essentially from within the family. Paradoxically, when this kind of enquiry is broached in interviews it seems to hold a great deal of interest for young people, even if they are not used to doing it themselves.

Young people also think that in the future school should teach the very young basic Internet techniques as well as the rules applying to the Internet. But they believe that school should remain in its own sphere and should not intervene in their private Internet practice, such as MSN and blogs. In general, they are not capable of defining the real or potential help school might offer in their use of the Internet.

5. Learning processes

Young Belgians feel competent when faced with the Internet, whatever their level of use and the extent of their experience. The need to gain skills rarely poses a problem: young people generally express the feeling that learning to use the Internet is easy. At this stage, knowledge of both the basics and of new techniques is acquired from peers and from older and Internet-competent close family members.

While the real grasp of the Internet happens at home, the wider family, neighbours, school and public places are often where young people use the Internet for the first time.

In some rare cases it is young people who have taught their parents how to use the Internet.

Some young people also state that, thanks to the Internet, they learn more things more quickly and more easily about the world around them, mainly by using search engines; the search engine is the basic instrument of navigation.

Finally, they nearly all use idioms (abbreviations, smileys, etc.) to create their MSN and text messages. According to them, this language is learned through practice and is unique to their group of friends. However, some do say that because of these methods they are losing the habit of writing correct French. Those rare individuals who say they do not understand the language of abbreviations and smileys do not use it and write their messages in standard French.

Denmark : Relevant facts

The sample

In the survey the sample choice was based on two different groups:

Group A: two thirds of the participants (12-18 year-olds) belong to mainstream schools – in two different areas close to Copenhagen

Group B: one third of the participants belong to an area south of Copenhagen, which is a rather low income area with pupils belonging to different cultures. The municipality has a tradition for supporting media education, which means that all schools have media education as part of the curriculum.

However, the qualitative as well as the quantitative report only include group A and is based on 23 interviews and 575 questionnaires.

Use of Internet

97.6% of the children in our survey are Internet users and 79.1% consider themselves as competent Internet users. However, most of the children use the Internet at home and not in school – 20% say they never use it or rarely use it at school and when they use it, it is primarily for school work.

56.9% of the children say that their school has rules regarding the use of the Internet. Most schools do not allow the children to use the Internet for chatting and communicating on Messenger, and, if so, only in breaks. When it comes to their teachers' Internet competences, however, 45.9% of the respondents say that they do not know whether their teachers are familiar with the Internet and some respondents think that they know more about the Internet than their teachers. Moreover, 43.1% actually say that the school does not give them advice on how to use the Internet safely, but when it comes to finding good websites 53.6% say it is not necessary to get help at school. It is an interesting fact however that 63.3% still think that the school should teach them more about information search and search engines. This is also interesting compared to the fact that more than 50% say that what they know about the Internet, they have learned from friends. The qualitative survey moreover reveals that almost all respondents use Google as their only search engine and they have great confidence in the results they find on Google – a fact which stresses the need to learn more about search engines and information search.

At home the children mostly use the Internet for communicating on Messenger or Skype, listening to music and playing online games. The quantitative survey shows that almost two thirds of the respondents use Messenger often or very often while only 30% say that they play online games often or very often. The younger children aged 12-15 also use the Internet for chatting in different chat rooms. When asked about the phenomenon "blogs", only 7.1% of the respondents had one and a third did not know what it was.

The 16-18 year-olds do also use the Internet in connection with their homework as a lot of their assignments and notes are available online. Finally the qualitative survey shows that the respondents' use of the Internet reflects their leisure time interests.

Regarding rules about the use of Internet in the home, Danish parents are very permissive when it comes to the use of Messenger, email and online games. However, 33% have rules about how much time they are allowed to spend online and 24% are not allowed to visit certain websites. Moreover, 21.8% say that their parents often forbid them to use chat rooms. Some of the respondents themselves seem to be aware of the fact that it can be bad to visit violent or porn websites, especially if they have younger siblings. They also seem to be aware of the risk of meeting up with someone whom they have been chatting with.

When it comes to shopping online, the quantitative survey shows that only 18,5% buy things online. However, the qualitative survey indicate an increasing willingness to shop online as they think it will be more common in the future, although 66.6% do still not believe that they eventually will be buying everything online.

The increasing use of the Internet has given the respondents significant multitasking skills as e.g. 65.6% say that they often listen to music while they use the Internet and other media. 32.3% even say that they now watch less TV than before they got Internet access.

Use of mobile phones

95.5% of the respondents in the quantitative survey say they have a mobile phone. 80% say they use it for sending and receiving text messages. They primarily communicate with friends via text messages, while the qualitative survey shows that the respondents mostly communicate with their parents via phone calls, although a few also send text messages to the parents. 46.1% of the respondents say they have more than 50 persons in their phone book. Almost 60% say they use text messages to make plans with their friends. Moreover the qualitative survey revealed that some of the respondents, mainly the 15-18 year-olds also use text messages for flirting with each other, as they find it less difficult and less of an obligation than in real life. However, in the same survey some of the older respondents also said that too much communication via mobile phone – and Internet – could be a stress factor and that they actually prefer face-to-face communication.

44.5% say they get information through text messages whereas only a small part use the more complicated mobile features such as Internet access, video messages etc. However, 20.9% use the mobile to send and received images, thus indicating a tendency to use some of the more sophisticated features.

Regarding rules about mobile phones in the home, the attitudes of Danish parents are very similar to their attitudes towards use of the Internet. 74.1% say that their parents give them permission to call whomever they want. Only a few families have rules about the mobile phone – e.g. that it has to be switched off during meals and at night, but this is especially the case of the youngest children. Some of the respondents also have a certain limit on their phone bill in order to avoid spending too much money on their phone. This is the case of both the youngest and the older respondents. At school, the rules about mobile phones are very clear: it is only allowed to use the phone during breaks. Here the children send text messages to their classmates and friends.

The qualitative survey showed that the respondents find it very important to have a mobile phone and would find it difficult to live without it. This is a fact reflected also in the quantitative survey which shows that 80% find it important to be connected permanently with their friends.

In the Danish media there has been an intense debate relating to children being bullied via the mobile phone. However, neither the quantitative nor the qualitative survey indicates that this is a widespread problem. Only a few respondents say they have had experiences with bullying via the phone. One must keep in mind though, that this is a sensitive subject and the surveys might therefore not reflect the whole truth.

Conclusion

The two surveys show that the Danish children are fairly competent users of both Internet and mobile phones and that these two media are a natural part of their everyday lives. However, the fact that the children use the Internet more at home than at school is interesting. If the fact that most of the respondents are self-taught or have learned about the Internet from friends is compared with the fact that 63.3% think the school should teach them more about the use of the Internet, it seems as if there is a need for a more active role in schools regarding media education. The fact that 50% say they know more about how to use the Internet than their teachers indicates, however, that there is a problem in relation to the teachers' Internet competences and media competences in general. Moreover there is also a need for teaching the children a more critical approach to the Internet as far as search engines and search results are concerned, as the qualitative survey shows that the children are not very sceptical about what they find on Google, for example. Finally respondents' lacking knowledge about blogs is a surprising finding.

Estonia : Relevant Facts

The sample

The Mediapro research project in Estonia started with sampling the groups. Three major criteria were used: language, average family income in region and age of pupils. The Estonian speaking group A was 600 and the Russian speaking group B 300 pupils, which is relatively close to the proportion of Estonian-speaking pupils and the Russian-speaking pupils in the general population (76.9% and 23.1%, respectively).

The schools were selected from three different regions of average family income. The classes in the schools were selected aiming at proportional representation of age groups 12-14, 15-16 and 17-18 in the general population. In the real sample, the oldest age group is slightly under represented compared to the general population (22.2% vs. 29%, respectively). The total sample of students was 869 pupils, who were divided almost equally according to gender (50.2 % of girls and 49.7 % boys). The questionnaires were filled at each school during one 45-minute lesson.

In the second phase of research 24 pupils of group A were interviewed during the school day. The results of in-depth interviews supported and broadened all the results of the questionnaire and gave some additional data about motivations and emotional results of using new media by pupils.

The results

90.3% of pupils (785) have at least one computer at home, 73.1% (635 pupils) have a broadband connection at home. Almost all the pupils (850 pupils, 97.8%) use the Internet. It is problematic how to interpret respondents who claimed that they don't use Internet at all or not any more, since Estonian national curriculum requires some basic Internet usage at every school level.

The most spread technical devices are mobile phones - 93.1% have one of their own. Also mobile phones are used mainly for supporting existing relationships within peer group and facilitating daily movements (where to meet, what to buy etc). Text messaging is not as popular as making phone calls. The other possibilities of mobile devices are rarely used.

As qualitative survey indicated, pupils use the Internet mostly for entertainment and supporting existing relationships. The private character of these activities may explain why respondents clearly prefer to use the Internet at home and use public access points as little as possible.

The most popular activity on the Internet is using instant messaging (MSN) - 44.3% of pupils have even more than 50 MSN contacts and only 7.8% pupils don't use MSN at all. Instant messaging is mainly used to communicate with friends. 22% of pupils sometimes communicate with strangers, but as qualitative survey indicated, this mainly means answering to somebody and not looking for new contacts.

Respondents are quite critical about personal data on the Internet: 49.8% of pupils have sometimes presented false information. As the interviews showed, pupils are very much aware of lying one's own personality on the Internet, but this does not bother them too much. Towards Internet shopping there is also some careful criticism: respondents are afraid of not getting right products or being disappointed about a product they haven't seen or touched before purchasing. Concerning other data there is almost no criticism: pupils believe that home pages they visit for homework are trustworthy.

The role of the school in developing pupil's computer skills has been significant in last 15 years. However, the Mediapro survey indicated that pupils prefer not to use school computers at all or use them only for schoolwork.

Although the Internet has many functions (in Estonia almost all the functions of state and local authorities are available over the Internet), young people use it mainly for supporting already existing peer group, entertainment, and fulfilling some information search for school work. Pupils do not speak about it with adults and have very little knowledge of how parents and teachers use the Internet (68.4% of pupils never talk about the Internet to their teachers; 51.2% of pupils talk rarely or not at all about the Internet to their parents). There is almost no parental control over Internet usage at home: only 13.8% of youngsters have time limitation, less than 10 % are not allowed to download music, play games, use MSN or chat rooms. Since there is very little reflective communication about new media usage, young people often feel being left on their own, being the computer expert of the family or even being responsible of maintaining the family's computer. The same tendency is notable regarding Internet safety and respondents' skills in evaluating web sites. Pupils mean that school should mainly (72.3%) teach them how to find useful information and provide a better access to the Internet (60.4%). At the same time, they do not want to be told by teachers or parents what web pages are good or trustworthy. Boys claim to be slightly more independent in using the Internet, (game playing for example) whereas girls talk a little bit more about media usage with adults.

Using new media seems to follow the natural development arch: younger pupils play more games, older pupil's use Internet more for finding information. Older respondents are also more open to adult's advice and give more recommendations to sisters and brothers. The respon-

dents are well aware of the technical risks concerning the Internet. They are scared of hacking and viruses and have learned to minimize the latter risk by using anti-virus software and avoiding unknown web pages. Most of them also perceive the risks about meeting strangers over the Internet and are scared about their personal security.

Although the children are aware that some activities are not allowed (e.g. downloading music, films and other files; copy-pasting homework), they admit doing it because it is an overall tendency and not sanctioned. The respondents use the Internet for learning purposes quite a lot and many of them prefer it to reading the books. Mostly they search for pictures and information for their reports and presentations. Plagiarizing by copy-pasting is a subject-matter that some consider accepted and allowed, some not. Altogether it is a wide-spread practice amongst pupils who take advantage of their teachers' ignorance and not having time to surf the web and check whether the information is copy-pasted or not. The instant messaging is sometimes used for learning in the group.

The most valued aspect of Internet usage for young people seems to be supporting peer to peer relations and building up one's own identity by using social software like www.rate.ee. Having an account at an indicated portal is a common practice. One can assume that this very popular portal where everybody can put their own pictures, personality profile and other data, is slowing down the need to create pupils' personal websites or blogs.

Conclusion

In conclusion it must be emphasized that respondents were quite satisfied with their knowledge about new media. If they are motivated to use the Internet or mobile phone in certain way, they use peers or online instructions to obtain all the needed skills. User friendly platforms support also those pupils who do feel very confident using the Internet. A key point for media education (and citizen education) seems to be a growing interest and greater motivation for using new possibilities concerning the Internet.

FRANCE

France : Relevant Facts

1. Important differences according to the locations of uses

- If a vast majority of French young people claim to use the Internet, they do so mostly at home. The use at home is far more than use at a friend's house and even greater than at school. If 7 in 10 young people use it everyday or several times a week at home, the use of the Internet occupies a marginal space at school (65% declare to never use it at school). Internet at friends' remains a setting for occasional practices, especially when parents exercise a strict control at home.
- We observe that the kinds of uses follow the established rules. Communication activities, visiting sites, playing games or downloading are for home, while at school young people use the Internet for school papers and homework. This is all the more true for mobile phone use. The mobile phone is often proposed by the parents (usually mothers), who wish to stay connected with their children. Use of the mobile phone is not strictly controlled though it is, at the same time, forbidden in schools. As such, mobile phones are used during school recess, secretly or mute for SMS.
- Young people have a certain demand on school about the Internet and more than 7 in 10 would like more Internet at school with freer access.

2. Two main usages : search engines and messenger

- 8 in 10 young people say they use search engines often or very often ; but not always to find out information. Most of the time, they have appropriated the search engines (Google) as a gateway to websites they already know (especially for games). Research in itself is less frequent, and refers above all, but not exclusively, to school work. While searching for information, some young people say they encounter difficulties which are not linked to a lack of knowledge about searching techniques. They would appreciate help from their teachers to optimize their usage of research tools.
- Almost 6 in 10 young people consider that it is important to be 'all the time' connected with one's friends. Whether by mobile phone or by the Internet, young people communicate above all, with their peers. It is quite amazing to observe that both computers and mobile phones are mostly used to exchange written texts : 9 in 10 young people say they use a mobile phone to send SMS and nearly 6 in 10 use the instant messaging often or very often. Each one is strongly specialised for specific uses : MSN for chatting with friends, SMS to make plans or to inform their parents.
- The other uses concern less than 1 young people in 2, but are sometimes important for a specific group or during a period of time: half of boys, but a quarter of girls declare they download music, film or software ; the use of chat rooms tends to be rare (an occasional passtime for hardly 3 young people in 10) ; a quarter of the respondents declare they have a blog, but for many their blogs are dormant; a quarter of young people say they play network or online games, boys much more than girls, above all at 14-16 age group. The mobile phone is used to communicate by voice or by SMS, while the other uses still stay on the fringe.

3. The parents are present among their children practices in different ways

- Regardless of how they use digital media, young people claim their parents are present and involved in any number of different ways : control, exchanges, discussions, personal uses and sometimes help. It is important to notice that the parents are not in another world. They follow their children in their practices, exercise a control, most of the time limited and occasional, even when they do not use Internet themselves.
- The Internet is also the subject of family conversations. More than 8 in 10 young people talk about the Internet with their parents, even if 2 in 10 do it very seldom, and 87% consider that their parents are more or less regular Internet users. The Internet seems to be a good topic for exchange within the family: 27% of young people say that their parents help them to discover new activities on the Internet, while 33% say they recommend sites to their parents.
- Electronic media allows young people to be at home while staying connected with their friends at the same time, contributing to calm family relationships and allowing to reconcile the 12-18's 'here and there' tendency (particularly in the event of uprooting). Furthermore, electronic media contributes to smooth the way between the adolescent's passage from childhood to adulthood.

4. Combined cultural practices

- Young people tend to combine several practices simultaneously: mainly music for 86%, telephone for 2/3 of them, predominantly for girls. More than half of them declare they watch TV, video-tapes or DVD's while being on the Internet at the same time.
- Music is the big winner of Internet use; nearly 1 young person in 2 declares they listen to music more often since they have an Internet access at home. Television on the other hand is the clear loser : 45% of young people, especially girls, say they watch it less than before, especially at 14-16 age group.
- Reading is also negatively affected by the Internet but in a more ambivalent way: almost 3 young people in 10 declare they read less than before, mostly the 17-19 year-old girls, but 1 in 10 says they read more than before.
- The fact of going out with friends is rather reinforced by the use of the Internet, maybe because it facilitates communication with peers. It is amongst the youngest that the fact of going out is more affected: 1 in 10 says they go out less, and 1 in 4 declare they go out more.

5. Cautious behaviour in a rather controlled environment

- Young people declare a rather sensible and cautious behaviour on the Internet. They have experienced technical problems due to viruses, are aware of risks linked to anonymity and misrepresentation, of privacy laws, of copy and author rights, even if their knowledge about these topics is sometimes vague. Almost all the respondents pronounce themselves on the issue of Internet control, and are clearly in favor. 9 in 10 girls and 8 in 10 boys say they want the illegal and harmful sites and practices to be controlled. The awareness of dangers on the Internet considerably increased in five years. In 2001, they were only 16% to declare to be usually suspicious towards the information found on the Internet. Currently it is 68%. Public information campaigns and the training of teachers in that field have clearly been fruitful in France and a culture of the risks related to Internet uses has definitely emerged. But young people do not completely master the notion of anonymity on the Internet and their opinions are balanced about the issue of knowing if one can identify someone under a username: 45% think that it is possible, 43% don't believe so.
- According to the declarations of young people, the control that their parents exercise on their Internet practices remains globally limited and concerns mostly the time spent on the Internet and on the phone, and the sites they visit ; it is quite rarely exercised on massive practices like instant messaging and email. The situation is radically different at school, where young people very strongly perceive limitations and prohibitions. So strongly that nearly 4 in 10 ignore if rules exist at school and if they received safety advice. For a majority of young people, the Internet has no place in the school world. This double control, in family and at school, is at the same time recognized and accepted. Young people know that there are some users' rules for these new media, and approve of them in their majority. But, consciously or unconsciously, they do not necessarily respect them in their individual practices.

6. The vision of the future

Two-thirds of young people agree with the idea that the Internet leads to deep modifications in our lives. Even among the 12-13 year olds, who in their majority may never have known life without the Internet, the notion of change remains relevant. But it is difficult for them to perceive which aspects these changes will affect.

- They have no stable representation of the electronic vote : 48% consider that it will expand in France, compared with 37% who do not think so. But at 17-19 years of age, the tendency undergoes a complete shift.
- In 2000, 31% did not believe in a massive development of e-commerce. In 2006, more than 3/4 do not believe in it. This tendency is reinforced with age, especially amongst girls. Despite the wide spread of broadband connection, the security of online purchase and the development of the practices, the importance of e-commerce did not get at the 12-18 year-olds.
- On the other hand, they perceive certain technological evolutions, like those concerning mobile phones: for more than 7 in 10, and 77% of the oldest, there is no doubt that in the future mobile phones will be used as computers.

Despite their important practices of these media and their interest for them, young people are less competent than they think. They still need to enhance their competencies and strengthen their critical thinking. This is the condition for an autonomous and responsible use of the new electronic media.

GREECE

Greece : Relevant Facts

The present research took place during the academic year 2005-2006 in Gymnasiums and Lyceums in Thessaloniki and Halkidiki with the permission of the Greek Ministry of Education. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected from 898 students aged between 12 and 18, 592 in Thessaloniki and 306 in Halkidiki, of which 465 were girls and 412 were boys.

1. Identity

Quantitative data: In order to ensure that Group A of the project, the Group common to all partners involved, was fully covered, the area of Thessaloniki was selected as this was a city felt to be broadly representative of the Greek population as a whole. More specifically, the city of Thessaloniki and its suburbs include diverse backgrounds in terms of socio-economic status, ethnicity, family status, geography, and so forth. Thessaloniki is a city located in northern Greece, it is the second largest city in Greece and combines the characteristics of a large city centre with significant social differences between the different areas (centre and suburbs). Thessaloniki and Halkidiki were selected based on information from other research (such as the National Statistical Service of Greece), which identified these areas as being representative of overall population composition.

As far as Group B is concerned, a small urban area located 60 km from Thessaloniki was selected. This is a touristic region and at the same time, agricultural. In the schools that have been chosen in the region of Halkidiki, all socio-economic status, ethnicity, family status, geographic and other factors are represented.

Group B (Halkidiki) was included in the research as a means of supporting the results obtained from Group A (Thessaloniki), as there have traditionally been major differences between large urban centre and the provinces, including those related to technology. The purpose, however, was not to directly compare the two groups, but rather to determine whether this differences still exists in teenager media use. Finally, although the research was not pan Hellenic diverse backgrounds were included.

Qualitative data: Based on the results of the quantitative data 26 interviews (24 Internet users and 2 non users) were carried out in the region of greater Thessaloniki. The selection criteria were as follows:

- 12+1 female students, 12+1 male students, comprising:
 - 6 female heavy users and 6 male heavy users.
 - 6 female light users and 6 male light users.
 - 1 male non user student and 1 female non user student.

- 12 Gymnasium students (Lower Secondary Education) and 14 Lyceum students (Upper Secondary Schools), 8 students from grades 1 and 2 and 10 students from grade 3.

The interviews were conducted on the following five themes: the gap between home and school/elsewhere, identity and relationships, regulation and risk, learning processes and consumer practices. The interviews each lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour and took place at the selected schools and during class time.

2. Findings

Overall findings

- There is total consistency between the quantitative and qualitative data. This finding was an indicator of the validity of our research.
- Greek students ignore or are not interested in basic Internet functions, such as MSN, email, personal pages, blogs.
- There are no great differences between Groups A and B in terms of Internet use.
- There are significant differences between female and male respondents as far as the use of the Internet is concerned.
- The Internet for Greek students is mainly for entertainment and games (70%).
- Although all schools in Greece have access to the Internet students can only use it in the ICT class; one hour per week in Gymnasium (compulsory) and two hours per week in Lyceum (optional). Besides, the Internet is covered in just one chapter in the ICT curriculum.
- Shopping via the Internet is neither common practice among students nor among the overall population in Greece. However, in order to support this finding, it would be wise to take into account the fact that in Greece children under the age of 18 cannot be issued with credit cards.
- Greek students' awareness of the risks of the Internet is limited. While most students know about viruses, few mentioned other risks.

Places of Internet access

School

- Although everyday use of the Internet at school is extremely low (group A 1.7% and B 1%), Greek students do use it during the ICT class (group A 83.3% and B 78.8%).
- At school, students use the Internet for only a few minutes at the end of the computer class, highlighting a deficiency in the Greek educational system concerning computer skills training.

Home

- The use of the Internet at home is low. Many students do not have Internet access at home (group A 25.5% and B 34%).
- Students learn to surf the Internet firstly from their friends (group A 64.3% and B 56.2%), then from the family (group A 46.2% and B 33.4%) –mainly from their elder brothers and sisters- and only then from school (group A 30.1% and B 46%).
- Parents are absent from all new technological events, and do not monitor or intervene while their children are using the Internet, mobile phones or computer games. Parents' interest seems to be financial, as they are more concerned about receiving large bills.

Internet cafes

- The Internet café is a place which primarily boys visit. 9.8% of male students visit an Internet café everyday, by contrast just 1.9% of female students do so. Moreover, 60.7% of the female students never or rarely visit Internet cafés, as compared with 29.6% for boys.
- The Internet café is seen as a meeting point, a place of togetherness and it guarantees youngsters' privacy (group A 49.5% and B 43.7%).
- Although many students have at some point tried chatting, it is not a common practice.

Mobile Phones

- The mobile phone is considered as Greek student's 'best friend' with percentages of ownership being very high (group A 90.5% and B 89.9%).
- Students regard the mobile phone as a personal item more than they do the Internet. The Internet is, by contrast, a shared service among other members of the family.
- Teenagers use the mobile phone mainly to send text messages and to make plans with friends. Most students' mobile phones operate with prepaid cards (see table).

Games

Teenagers generally play electronic games alone (group A 66.6% and B 57.2%), rather than with friends, and very rarely do they play with strangers. They prefer to play on the computer (CD-ROM) (group A 73.8% and B 63.1%), rather than on network computers or on-line. That is understandable as the percentage of home computers connected to the Internet is not particularly high (group A 61.7% and B 45.5%). Besides, only a few students have a broadband connection– a necessary condition for gaming on-line- at home (group A 20.9% and B 14.1%).

Uses	Group A	Group B	Group A & B
Information via search engines	74.8%	67.3%	72.2 %
Instant Messenger	36.4%	27.8%	33.4 %
Online games	69.9%	63.8%	67.8 %
E-mail	42.1%	36.0%	40,0%
Chatting	38.0%	29.4%	35.0 %
Video	53.0%	49.3%	51.7 %
Music	64.4%	62.7%	63.8 %
Downloading	59.8%	47.3%	55.5 %
Competitions	17.2%	12.4%	15.5 %
Shopping	9.6%	8.5%	9.2 %
Learning Process			Group A & B
Friends	64.3%	56.2%	61.5%
Siblings & parents	46.2%	33.4%	41.8 %
School	30.1%	46.0%	35.5 %

The use of the Internet at school			Group A & B
school work	28.7%	32.7%	30.0%
personal activities (games, information on what I like, Chatting, e-mailing, etc.)	16.7%	17.0%	16.8%
for both school work and personal activities	34.1%	25.8%	31.2%
Students school expectations			Group A & B
help me to find more good Web sites	61.8%	56.9%	60.1%
help us to tell if the website we are visiting is trustworthy	62.5%	62.1%	62.3%
give us better access to the Internet	66.7%	63.4%	65.5%
teach us how to find information on the Internet quickly	71.4%	68.3%	70.3%
Use of the mobile			Thessaloniki
make phone call	59.5%	89.3%	69.6%
play games that are available on my mobile phone	41.8%	40.2%	41.2%
send and receive messages (SMS)	82.6%	83.0%	82.7%
send and receive images (MMS)	34.0%	35.0%	34.3%
use my mobile phone to go on the Internet	8.5%	10.1%	9.0%
At home, my parents forbid me to...			Thessaloniki
	never	never	
talk on MSN Messenger (or any other instant messenger)	49.0%	39.9%	45.9%
talk in a chat room	47.8%	34.9%	43.4%
play massively multiplayer online games	47.6%	34.6%	43.1%
download music or movies	52.7%	39.3%	48.1%
visit certain Web sites	40.2%	29.9%	36.6%

ITALY

Italy : Relevant Facts

The general results of the Italian research, in relation to the data obtained from the questionnaires and the analysis of the interviews, depict a picture of the sample that can be summed up through a thematic scheme which collects the main uses and definitions of new technologies. Concerning new media uses we can underline three areas of interest: Internet, mobile phone and video games. While, concerning the different practices that accompany new media (discourses and debates on technologies, control and risk perception in relation to new media), two are the main fields that can be discussed and that can interest the scientific community to define recommendations: parental control and risk perception in relation to Internet use.

The details of the main national observations will be proposed in the following section.

1. Internet use

- Internet use, concerning personal use at home, generally reveals a traditional set of competencies and uses: downloading files, email and information searching are common, while chat and Msn are less developed. The only exceptions are represented by two students from the same school (South sample, Liceo Mandralisca, one male and one female) who have a personal blog, a website (they also create sites) and they are active users. Generally speaking Internet seems a sort of on-line encyclopaedia, a mix of resources and students do not really ask themselves if there are differences in media uses (books as sources of information/Internet). Just one student underlined the need to acquire skills in defining what can be useful on the Internet, given the enormous mass of information. The amount of information – mainly considered as a positive aspect of the Internet – is in this way critically considered, as an aspect of the same coin.
- Internet use at school is really rare, some schools are not connected, some use only computers (as a substitution to paper and pen), but the general situation is poor concerning activities on and with mass media. Teachers seem to be busy even to talk (only some of them are considered prepared and interested). The problem, in this way, concerns the possibility of creating a system to acquire new competencies for teachers and to diffuse good practices at school. Almost every single student would like to use Internet at school, alone or with classmates, under their teacher's supervision (teachers are always seen as important didactical guides). Very few students are uninterested in Internet use (they have not time and prefer to dedicate themselves to other activities).

2. Mobile phone

An analysis of the Interviews confirms the diffusion of mobile phones among young people and adolescents. Everyone in the study had a mobile phone, except one primary school student who was waiting and wishing for one of his own (mobile phone as a desire). Mobile phones were mainly used for calls, SMS and photos. Only one student declared that "he uses his mobile as a media centre to make calls, to surf the Internet and to chat". Mobile phones are considered a communication tool and not a learning aid. Students felt they learned nothing from mobile phones aside from writing a message or answering a call. Just one girl (secondary school, north sample) affirms that she learnt how to be brief and how to communicate a complex concept in a few words. This is mainly the most important aspect of Sms communication, regarding style and competencies, a topic that in Italy has been studied both from a positive point of view, both from a negative one, depicting it as a degeneration of language and linguistic skills among young people. A mobile phone, then, is a tool they use to communicate.

3. Video games

Video games are mainly diffused, on line gaming is not frequent – even if some students play on line and meet new friends. Video games are mainly gender oriented (girls do not use them frequently) and they collect different comments: some students think that video games are just childish and boring; some others consider them as a gathering situation as they play with friends; some students on the contrary think that video games doesn't help socialization ("you even do not need to go out or look for friends" this is a comment from a girl). The most interesting elements connected to video games regard motivation: video games are usually seen as a tool for fun, and just some of them

can be considered as learning aids according to the topic (history, strategy games). What “convince” you to play is competition, that means that competition (with friends or with yourself too) is the main reason to select and spend time on a game.

4. Parental control

The situation concerning parental control can be depicted according to school level and students’ age. At secondary school level, students are not controlled, even if someone admits that at the beginning they had to show their “good intentions” in Internet and gain parents’ trust. So every student in this range uses Internet alone, as parents trust them.

At primary school level, students cannot use Internet alone and parents generally control them or help them in looking for “allowed” or “nice” materials to download or read on line. What’s interesting regards control motivations expressed by these students, as they usually depict and represent what parents say: “Internet is not useful at my age, it will be in the future”; “You have to pay attention when you are in Internet as there are many images and stuff that are not adequate to our age, especially pornography”. This means that parental control does not act only concretely – while using Internet in front of a computer or preventing its use – but also mentally – what you think of Internet is a representation of what parents say.

5. Risk perception

Risk perception is not really deep and reveals a diffused confusion about what the word risk means: a risk in Internet is mainly connected to a virus attack, not to relationship or communication problems. Many answers confirm this aspect, with some exceptions regarding pornography or bad materials on line. According to the school type, interviews confirm the different level of risk perception which is obviously higher in secondary school and especially in humanistic addresses.

That’s why, when students have suggestions to friends who don’t know what Internet is and how to use it, they always declare that what is necessary is to be able to find good websites, to use Google or other search tools. What can be underlined is the strong connection between risk perception declared by students (pornography, hackers, dangerous relationships, inconvenient images) and media representation of risks and bad experiences in Internet, especially on television. Generally students never had bad experiences on line, but they saw them on TV, mainly during news on TV.

Conclusions

Concluding this brief summary, we have noted no great differences between North and South sample, but just a difference between school level, as imagined considering activities at school, parents’ control and Internet representation. The main differences between use level – high users, low users, non users – are connected to the activities on line, as there is no great gap concerning the definition of competencies required to use Internet (the level of the conversations is really similar). If we compare users’ profile, risks representation and problems on line are mainly influenced by mass media opinions (relationship, bad contents etc.), while the definition of Internet risks as virus attacks to computers is mainly influenced by concrete uses (some of them experienced it and consider that situation as a “risk”).

The sample does not seem to be “computer driven” or “addicted to Internet”

POLAND

Poland : Relevant Facts

The Internet in Poland is in common use by 96% of young Polish people. Only 3% of them have never used it. These dates show that the Internet has become a universal tool for activities of youngsters: information, education and leisure time. Most of Polish pupils have used the Internet for more than 1 year (36% - between 1 and 3 years, 22% - 4 years and more and 25% - do not remember) and only 15% have access to the net less than a year.

There is a main difference between home and school in using the Internet and other network media. Usually pupils have a broadband connection at home (56% of young Polish people) and they can quite freely and easily use the Internet. In most of the cases children can decide on their own what and when they want to do. It happens that parents define time assigned on usage of the Internet and they scrupulously control the pages visited by their children. Whereas at school the access to the Internet is possible mainly during the computer science classes. The computer classrooms are usually closed during breaks, only in the library it is possible to use the Internet but there are plenty of pupils who are interested in it.

Usually young Polish people use the Internet every day at home (48%). The least popular place for the Internet is public places (cybercafe, library, etc.). 1% do it every day and youngsters usually do not go on the Internet at their friends' houses (46% of them do not do it or do it rarely). When they use the new media in their friends' home, they do things which are forbidden at their home.

The use of messengers is increasing and over 60% of young people use it often or very often. Only 12% have never used it. Usually pupils have over 20 persons in the MSN Messenger contact list (26% have between 20 and 50 persons, 20% more than 50 persons). In general the lists contain their friends. Pupils rarely talk with foreigners. The dates correspond with the contact lists in the mobile phones. Very often after classes they use MSN Messenger to arrange a meeting with their friends, to discuss the passed day or to discuss how to resolve an exercise, to do a homework or to prepare something for the school tests.

As to the different types of games, the most popular are those on a CD-ROM (21% of pupils play it often and 28% do it very often). The next are the network games (11% - often; 12% - very often) and on the third position are online games (11% - often; 12% - very often). The less popular are the games on a consol. This is probably due to the special equipment which is necessary (Play Station, Nitendo, X-Box, etc.).

The chat is not so popular in Poland. Only 13% of young people use it.

Watching videos (movies, television programs, etc.) on the Internet is not very popular (25% do it often or very often). The problem is the computer software and hardware. However, listening to music or to online radio programs are quite popular. 45% of young people do it often or very often. On the other hand 32% have never done it or do it rarely. Over 50% of young people often or very often download music files, movies, software and video games from the Internet. Most of them are aware of the fact it is illegal but they still do it.

The phone-calls through the Internet are still not so popular because of the software and hardware of young people computer (30% do it sometimes, often or very often).

Polish young people do not like to buy online and only 12% of them do it often or very often. However some of them consider they will do online purchases in the future. Those who buy online consider that activity as very useful: cheaper, quick and easy.

Blogs are not very popular among Polish youngsters and only 18% of them have one. 9% do not know what a blog is.

On the Internet young people usually do not pretend to be a different person (53% never do it, 27% rarely) and do not pretend to do the things they have never done. Young people generally try to be themselves on the Internet. This proves the young people treat the net as a normal part of reality and a place for real social contacts with others.

The dates show that the access to the Internet at home is generally free and not restricted. Parents do not forbid to talk on MSN Messengers (79% never do it), talk in the chat room (71% never do it), email (90% never do it), play massively multiplayer online games (78% never do it), download music or movies (76% never do it).

MSN Messengers or other instant messengers are mostly used as a connection with friends (18% do it often and 45% do it very often), with

people they do not know (10% often, 5% very often), with their sisters and brothers (4% often, 2% very often) and with other family members (8% often, 4% very often). Pupils hardly ever contact their parents by MSN Messenger (only 2% do it often and 2% do it very often).

While parents usually do not forbid their children to talk on MSN Messenger or any other instant messenger, they are often restrictive as to the visited websites. They check which websites their children went on. Some parents forbid the youngsters to go on the Internet for a long time (23% sometimes do it; 12% do it often and 7% do it very often). They justify it that too long time spend in front of the screen computer is harmful to health.

While Polish youngsters are very familiar with the Internet, their parents are not so knowledgeable about it. 23% use it rarely and 30% sometimes. Only 33% of them do it often or very often. As we can see, the Internet is not in common use by the oldest generation and it is treated as a domain of young people.

Pupils consider the school as an important part in the field of the Internet education: 47% of young people expect their school ought to help them to find more trustworthy websites. But teachers don't do that too often. At most schools pupils receive the advice on how to safely use the Internet but in the others they have never talked about the Internet with teachers or librarians. At 73% of school there are rules or a code for using the Internet.

The Internet changes the behaviours at home and pupils usually notice that. The Internet takes advantage over TV and young people watch less TV than before because of the Internet which becomes the medium number 1. 54% agree with that opinion. The other activities are more or less on the same level, but the Internet decreases the percent of time which was dedicated to reading books, comics or magazines (30% of youngsters agree with that opinion).

Young people treat the Internet as a very important source of information about the world.

As to the mobile phones 90% of youngsters own their own mobile and use them with a prepaid card. The most popular way of communication by mobile phones is the text messages (85% of youngsters do it often or very often). Young Polish people usually do not send or receive images (MMS) - only 9% do it very often. The mobile phone games are not very popular.

Pupils never or rarely use mobile phone to go on the Internet. Only 8% do it often and 3% very often. In Poland the connection to the Internet by the mobile phones is still very expensive compared to the alternative possibilities.

To sum up, Polish pupils are not too aware about the dangers coming from the Internet. They mention only virus and hackers and they often trust the information they find on the website. They quite often copy the content of the Internet in their homework and do that without a critical approach. Very few teachers use computer and multimedia in other lessons than computer lessons. They also rarely recommend good websites what pupils would expect. Schools are still not adequately equipped, there are too few computers. As to the parents, they usually don't discuss the Internet with their pupils and are not so familiar with the Internet.

Portugal : Relevant Facts

In Portugal Internet usage has grown in the last few years, especially among youngsters. In what concerns mobile phones, the numbers show us that the mobile phone ownership in our country is really high, above the EU average rate. The questionnaires we have applied and the interviews we have lead afterwards have allowed us to better understand these numbers and to get information about the different appropriations youngsters have of new media.

The gap between home and school

The majority of the students claimed to have computer with Internet connection at home and some of them have a broadband connection in the last few years. All the interviewed students prefer to use the Internet at home rather than at school. The ones who use it at school do it in ICT classes or to do group works with their colleagues. According to students they don't have good conditions for using the Internet at school because there are usually many students for few computers and they are usually old and the Internet connection is slow.

With respect to their main Internet usages, the majority of students use it mainly to research school papers and to communicate with friends via MSN.

Identity and relationships

As most of the interviewed students use MSN very frequently to talk to friends and this is one of the uses they prefer, we can understand that communication is increasing among youngsters. They use MSN to communicate mainly with their school friends or to talk to friends who are far away but few claim to talk with parents or family members. According to them the Internet communication tools allow people to communicate more easily and more frequently because when they go home from school they are still connected to their friends. The same happens with the mobile phone, it allows them to be connected with their friends 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The high usage of mobile phones in Portugal is explained, according to students, by the fact that this is the best way to be connected to friends 24 hours a day and to say everything people want to. They say that the SMS' allow people to "say" things that they wouldn't have the courage to say face-to-face.

The new media allow youngsters to express themselves, to show their identity to others and to always be connected to their friends, which is something really important for them to maintain and improve their relationships. Still, it was interesting that some students have drawn attention to the fact that people talk differently according to the media they use and nothing substitutes a good face-to-face talk!

When we asked students if they'd rather go out with friends or stay at home connected to the Internet, they all claimed to prefer going out with friends. Some referred that they know people who are addicted to the Internet but they think that is not a good thing.

Regulation and risk

Concerning regulations, dangers, negative experiences and antisocial behaviour, most of the interviewed students use the Internet as they want for as long as they want at home. There are no specific regulations or restrictions. But in some cases parents are more concerned about the time their children spend on-line than with the contents of the sites they visit and the activities they do. Some parents forbid children to go to chatrooms and children agree because they are informed about real stories and they have a notion of the dangers.

In what concerns children, the main risks they mention are computer viruses and getting cheated when buying ring tones, for example.

With regards to negative experiences, some of these students already had problems with viruses and that's the first negative experience they mention.

Consumer aspects

When asked about consumer aspects and vision of the future, the majority of the students say they have some doubts concerning the future of the Internet. In what concerns electronic commerce, the big majority claim that they don't do it because they know how it works and most of all because they are suspicious about it. Although some students claim that their parents use the Internet to pay the bills and to

buy some products, they are still sceptical about this Internet activity. They are not only sceptical about the future of this activity as they are also afraid to be cheated.

When we asked them about technological evolution they had some difficulty in imagining how the computer, the Internet and the mobile phones would be like in the future but most of them state that there will be great and revolutionary changes on the ICT's.

Learning process

Concerning the Internet learning process, the majority of the interviewed students started using the Internet between the age of 9-10 years old. Some of them claimed they have learned to use the Internet with their parents, brothers, sisters or with the help of other family members. Some claimed that they only asked for help when they had difficulties, otherwise they tried alone until they understood how it worked out.

A small percentage of the students claimed to have learned alone.

With regards to mobile phone usage they say it is really easy and that they learned how to use it by themselves.

Conclusions

To summarize, the main lines in the Portuguese context are that most students prefer to use the Internet at home and not at school. Their main usage is for researching school papers but primarily to communicate. For this purpose they also use the mobile phone very often. They need to feel they are always connected.

Although the majority of students have no restrictions at home, they all agreed that there should be some restrictions both at home and at school.

Even though students are usually interested in new activities and new "fashions", they tend to always do the same things on the Internet, they follow a pattern. Electronic commerce, for instance, is not within their usual usage. They are still sceptical about their future usage of this activity.

Some of the students have learned to use the Internet by themselves but many claimed that they had the help of parents or friends and they all said that when they have a problem or difficulty they call a family member to help them out.



United Kingdom : Relevant Facts

Young people's uses of the Internet

The data shows that nearly all young people between the ages of 12-18 (97.1%) are using the Internet. A large majority of these go online daily or weekly, demonstrating the popularity of this medium for young people. However, significantly for educational policy and practice, young people are accessing the Internet less frequently at school than at home.

More popular activities on the Internet include using search engines (52%), instant messaging (50%) and email (32.4%). Least popular uses were reportedly watching moving images such as videos and television programmes (6.1%); visiting chat rooms (4.6%); shopping for items such as clothes and music (4%); making telephone calls through the Internet (2.1%); and finally, filling out surveys or entering competitions (1.2%). In relation to more creative/productive uses: 30.3% of the young people have personal pages, whilst weblogs are less prevalent (14.2%). Interestingly, 46.6% of young people do not know what a blog is.

The gap between home and school

Access to the Internet at home: Only 11.3% of young people said that they did not have access to the Internet at home. 65.1% of respondents said that they had access to a broadband connection.

Using the Internet at school: as noted above, young people access the Internet more frequently at home than at school. Indeed, 42% said that it was important that their school should give them better access to the Internet. Some young people mentioned using the Internet within school lessons such as history and science, and particularly within ICT classes. However, school uses were often talked of without enthusiasm compared with the zeal with which young people spoke about MSN, games, music and other home uses.

Regulation of the Internet at home and school

Responses to survey questions about parents' explicit rules showed low levels of regulation compared with school. For instance, only 14% of young people said that their parents forbade them to visit chat rooms, while rules banning other activities, such as downloading music, or restricting time online, were said to be even lower. In contrast, at school, many activities were said to be forbidden, such as instant messaging (63.3%), chat rooms (63.9%), visiting certain websites (69.5%), playing online (49.5%). Findings from the qualitative interviews show how these restrictions influence young people's Internet use. Almost every young person interviewed said that they preferred using the Internet at home, influenced by the prohibitory and regulatory practices within schools and colleges.

Learning to use the Internet

In relation to how young people learn about doing 'new things' on the Internet, results suggest that more sharing of activities takes place between friends than in other directions. Yet the majority of young people also said that their parents use the Internet in the home 'very often' (20.3%), 'often' (26.5%) or 'sometimes' (19.4%) suggesting that parents possess the skills and competencies relevant to advising their children. Moreover, in the interviews, young people described both vertical and horizontal sharing of skills between parents (young people helping their parents and vice versa), siblings and friends. Opportunities for guidance seem rare at school: 59.3% of respondents said that they 'never' talk to teachers or librarians about their Internet uses. 42.4% of respondents thought that it was important for teachers to help them to find good websites. A very similar number of young people, 42.8%, thought it was important for their teachers to tell them whether websites they visited were trustworthy. Moreover, young people said they experience problems retrieving information and evaluating results they find although a large majority (87.5%) said that they had a good knowledge of how the Internet works.

Negotiating the online environment

In relation to the fears and risks associated with young people chatting to 'strangers' online, there appeared to have been a shift from young people meeting strangers in chat rooms to being contacted by people they do not know face-to-face on instant messenger and within games spaces. However, overall negative experiences reported by young people in the sample were few and far between. Questions about commercial content contained within web pages suggested a general acceptance that this is part and parcel of the online environment yet young people were irritated by pop-ups. In relation to surveillance of online activities by companies and governments, responses were mixed. These were balanced between concerns about invasion of privacy yet considered justifiable in light of terrorist threats.

Ethics and future vision

In relation to the more ethical questions, results show contradictions within the young people's moral perspectives. For example, whilst 65.5% of respondents said that pictures of people should never be shown on a blog or a personal page without their permission, 39.5% agreed that they would download music on the Internet despite it being forbidden. In the interviews, it emerged that many young people are confused about what is and isn't legal in any case. Responses relating to how the Internet would develop in the future reflect criticisms

of today's Internet. For instance, some young people said that the Internet will get faster, pornography will be banned, there will be more websites aimed at school work and less viruses and junk mail.

Young people's uses of mobile phones

Overview

Access: uses of mobile phones by young people in the sample are nearly universal: 92.1% said that they own their own phone; 96% said that they had used a mobile phone.

Activities: young people's responses suggest that the predominant use of the mobile phone is for sending and receiving text messages. For instance, 55.7% said that they engaged in this activity, whilst making calls from a mobile phone lagged behind at 33.8%. Text messaging was seen as the less expensive option. Other activities, for instance games playing, transferring images or videos to a computer, sending and receiving images and using a mobile phone to connect to the Internet were carried out by an even smaller minority of users (ranging from 10.4% down to 5.2%). Moreover, only a small number of young people (2.9%), admitted to sending text messages or pictures likely to upset someone. In relation to sending and receiving text messages, the most common uses appear to be making plans (20.2%), contacting a girl or boy friend (17.1%), contacting parents (15.9%). Less popular uses were getting information (7.7%), playing jokes (5%) and entering competitions (1%).

Regulation and risk

In general, parents do not appear to be particularly restrictive. However, the cost of making telephone calls and/or sending text messages could limit usage, particularly where parents were paying the bills. In these cases, young people reported limiting their telephone calls to what they called 'emergencies', such as when they had missed the bus or had other reasons for contacting their parents urgently. In contrast, young people reported that their schools and colleges practised highly restrictive policies towards the use of mobile phones, with the proviso that rules tended to be more relaxed for the over 16 age group.

Negative experiences reported by young people in the sample were rare. Some young people reported being on the receiving end of mobile phone jokes, deemed annoying rather than disturbing. Whilst some young people referred to incidents they had heard of and rumoured to have taken place at school, such as fights being filmed and circulated, or reported in the wider media, such as 'happy slapping' and so on, it was striking that no one within the sample or their friends had been directly involved in such an episode. In general, the strongest feelings expressed in the interviews in relation to mobile phones and negative experiences were regarding targeted commercial practices such as sending advertising messages. Young people found these particularly annoying.

Learning processes

Young people's accounts of learning to use mobile phones usually included stories of helping or being helped by parents, siblings and friends. However, young people emphasized that reading the manual combined with exploration typically played a large part in this. There was evidence that being a mobile phone 'expert' was highly socially valued amongst both peers and family. However, some youngsters reported persistent problems, such as when using Bluetooth or connecting to the Internet via their mobile, that continued to frustrate them.

Identity and relationships with friends and family

Most of the respondents reported that the predominant use of instant messaging was to chat with their friends and that instant messages are mainly concerned with the same topics of conversation that are carried out during the school or college day.

Young people differed in their opinions about whether using instant messaging had any influence on their communication practices and subsequently, their relationships. On the one hand, some believed that there were no differences between on and offline conversations. Some youngsters said that situations online could easily escalate into disagreements or fights, as the result of users perceiving themselves to be at a 'safer' distance; they may go further online in terms of what they are willing to say and do when compared with their offline exchanges. This can have both positive and negative consequences. Whilst some young people report that this aspect of online behaviour can deepen and increase friendships, there are also accounts in the data of young people finding themselves in uncomfortable situations when a situation has escalated online which they then must deal with in person when they return to school.

Some of the habitual practices and differences of using instant messaging compared with having offline conversations were also reflected in responses relating to mobile phones, particularly in the sending of text messages. Again, young people reported a perception of 'distance' when sending text messages which could lead to an escalation of arguments and disagreements. However, youngsters also described positively how texting could help them manage their relationships and lives. On the whole, young people did not report that their mobile phone had made much difference to their relationships with their friends and family.

Young people's uses of electronic games

Overview

Extent and platform: Amongst our sample, electronic games playing emerged as the least utilised medium in our range. Only a minority of children and young people said that they played games 'very often' or 'often' on a dedicated games console (39.9%), a computer (31.7%), a network of computers (17.6%), or online games (26%).

Styles of play: respondents said that they played games 'very often' or 'often' alone (36.5%), with one or more friends in the same location (26.5%), with one or more friends online (20.2%), and with people they didn't know (32.3%). Furthermore, a total of 26.1% of young people said that they totally or partly agreed that through playing online games they had met new friends to be discussed below.

Regulation and risk

Just over half of the young people (50.5%) said that their parents let them play games as long as they want, and that 54.3% are allowed to play any kind of games. Whilst, 39.3% said that their parents forbade them to play online with people they don't know young people reported that they encountered people they did not know offline within games spaces, often when seeking tips relating to the game in hand.

Conclusions

This study shows how the Internet and mobile phones have become embedded within most young people's everyday lives, electronic games less so. In particular, young people in the sample are making extensive use of the communicative potential of online technologies, particularly instant and text messaging.

Interestingly, the home has emerged as the preferred location for Internet use. This suggests that UK schools need to consider how to harness the potential of the Internet, phones and games for learning more effectively, and to do less to discourage and inhibit uses; at the same time they may need to consider what distinctive uses they can develop to add value to the experience learners bring with them. For example, children and young people would benefit from discussions about intellectual property rights, such as in relation to issues like downloading music, where confusions are arising.

In relation to electronic games, the most striking finding is that only a minority of the young people are engaging in games playing either off or online, although the figures may well represent an increase in use, especially in relation to online role-playing games, and interaction with others through online gaming. In view of the rarity of negative experiences, it cannot be assumed that this is a cause for concern; though there is a good case for more research into the nature of relationships begun, and possibly sustained, in online gaming environments.

QUEBEC

Quebec : Relevant Facts

The questionnaire was completed by 1350 Quebec high-school students, from 12 to 18 years of age, in ten high schools in urban (Montréal and its suburbs) and regional (Sherbrooke and Magog-Orford) communities.

The Internet has now been widely adopted by Quebec teenagers: all respondents use the Internet. The vast majority (9 out of 10) have an Internet connection at home and 75% have been using the Internet on a regular basis for more than four years. The widest variation from European users concerns the use of the cell phone, which is far less significant in Quebec: less than half of the respondents use a cell phone and only a minority (4 out of 10) have their own. Moreover, very few send SMS text messages (more than 75% have never sent any).

Internet : above all a communication tool

When asked how they view the Internet, teenagers spontaneously define it as a communications tool. This statement is clearly supported by a history of their Internet usage. Almost all (9 in 10) report using MSN on a regular basis, and some use it extensively: more than half spend at least one hour, and sometimes more than two, on a daily basis, during both the week and on week-ends.

For boys as much as girls, MSN is now the preferred way to keep in touch and maintain close contacts with friends. Although emailing is slightly less frequent (8 out of 10, twice as many for girls) than communicating through MSN, it nonetheless plays the same role: maintaining close contacts, especially with peers. In fact, teenagers communicate very rarely with their parents, teachers, or with strangers through the Internet; nor do they talk to them about the Internet.

Data collected in 2006 thus widely confirms the trend observed six years ago regarding the way teenagers use the Internet. In 2000, it was noted that, despite the vastness of the network, they still preferred to surf on the same sites, mainly using addresses exchanged with friends, chatting with close friends, each building in this way a small personal WWW, often shared with a network of close friends.

In 2006, teenagers have widely adopted MSN, which enables them to assuage their longing for acceptance and to address their fundamental need to socialize and thus respond to their strong sense of belonging to a group.

By providing real-time group communication that is easily accessible and user-friendly, MSN has made it possible to establish relatively small online communities that give teenagers the opportunity to keep in touch with their friends and reinforce peer contacts. In Quebec, a number of teenagers use the Internet in the form of small Intranets.

The omnipresence of MSN as a communication tool for teenagers is far more important in Quebec than the use of cell phones, which, for now, remains rather conventional, as they are mainly used to make or receive phone calls. Quebec has not really adopted the SMS function, which has experienced a remarkable popularity explosion in Europe and now represents the main use for cell phones.

Yet, the cell phone market is expanding rapidly and will undoubtedly match the European market in a few years. The results of the survey, however, indicate that the SMS functions will remain marginal. Teenagers are not, as yet, exploiting other cell phone functions (video games, image downloading, Internet access).

Multiple and combined practices

MSN and emailing are important activities for Quebec teenagers; but they also use the Internet for various other activities and they often do so concurrently. Among these activities, downloading (music, video clips, games, etc.) is particularly frequent (8 out of 10 download on a regular basis). Online or network video gaming is also an important activity: close to half the respondents play regularly. However, we can still observe the traditional distinction between girls and boys with regard to video games; four times more boys than girls play games online.

The use of other Web functions is still limited, such as shopping for products or services: less than 3% shop online often, or very often, but more than 75% have never shopped online.

Although teenagers use the Internet mainly to communicate with each other, it is also a high-powered tool to get all types of information, whether for their homework, leisure or personal interests. To that end, Google is their number one search engine.

Internet control

Parents and educators have serious concerns about the effect of the Internet on teenagers and about its regulation. Such concerns are relayed and amplified by the media. This aspect of the Internet has been the main topic of interest in all surveys conducted over the last ten years.

The general tendency observed is that parents agree that they should control, to a certain degree, their children's use of the Internet. Yet, in reality, parents apply little control.

This lack of control is confirmed by the survey, which indicates that 75% of the respondents declared that they are not limited in the time they spend online, and 9 out of 10 said that their parents rarely or never control their use of the Internet. Moreover, 75% say that their parents never or rarely ask them about their usage of the Internet. Teenagers also reported that very few parents install prohibitive measures (only 2%) on most of their Internet use, with the exception of sites that require payment, or pornographic, violent or racist sites. Interestingly, these measures are more frequent for girls (55% for girls as opposed to 36% for boys). Moreover, the measures tend to lapse as the children grow older. However, 80% of the respondents declared that the Internet should be content-regulated, in particular the sites known to be dangerous, such as pornographic, racist or violent sites.

Teenagers use the Internet mostly from home. This is where they learned to master the medium. This reality, already apparent in the 2000 survey, was confirmed in the 2006 survey. They spend most of their Internet time and do most of their activities (online communication, information research for their homework or for leisure, downloading, video games) from their home. Using the Internet outside the home (at a friend's home, at the library or an Internet café) or at school is occasional.

Internet at school

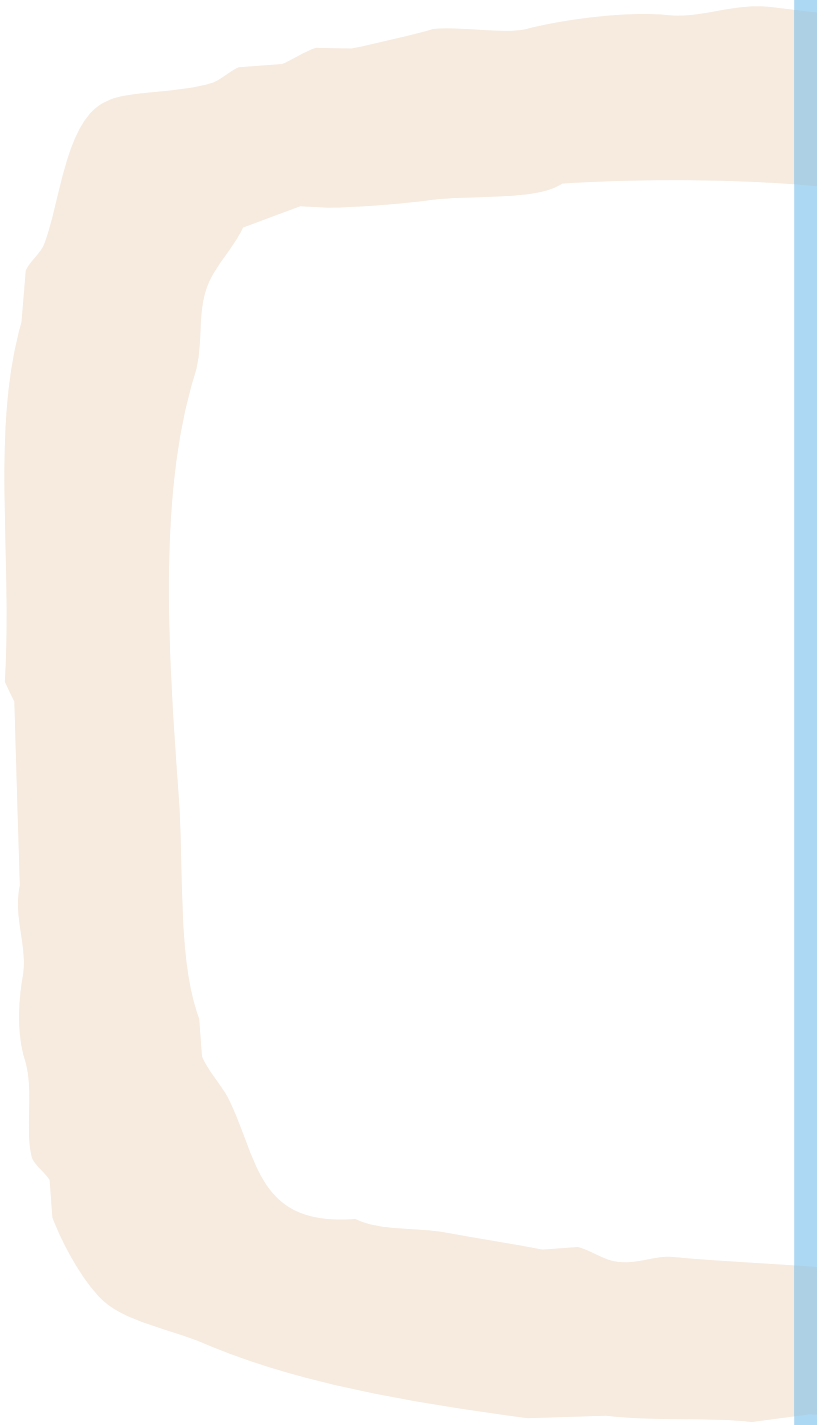
In 2000, the survey revealed that in Quebec, despite heavy governmental subsidies to schools to purchase hardware, teenagers rarely used the Internet at school and they still had to learn how to manage the medium. That survey already revealed a disjuncture between the use of the Internet at school and its extramural uses at home.

The 2006 survey seems to confirm this disjuncture. As much as Internet practices have evolved at home and have been adjusted to the needs and aspirations of teenagers, the use of the Internet in educational institutions seems to be at a standstill, or even to have regressed.

In 2000, two-thirds of the teenagers reported using the Internet at school, and 4 out of 10 were using it regularly. In 2006, the majority of students say that they do not use the Internet at school (never or rarely). The fact is that there are more prohibitive measures at school than at home. Most of their favourite activities (chatting, emailing, downloading, games) are prohibited or restricted at school; nevertheless, 7 out of 10 students believe that school should offer them freer access to the Internet.

Moreover, although more than 60% wish that their school would help them learn about the Internet (by providing addresses of interesting sites or information on the credibility of those sites, by teaching efficient search methods, or by providing security advice either for their own protection or for the protection of their computer), very few (less than 5%) have received such information. The vast majority of students (9 out of 10) declared that they never or rarely talk about the Internet with their teachers.

1. PIETTE, Jacques, Christian-Marie PONS et Luc GIROUX (2001). *Rapport final de l'enquête menée au Québec dans le cadre du projet de recherche international Les jeunes et Internet*. Université de Sherbrooke-Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec : <http://www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca>



Mediappro survey : Recommendations

Nine European countries have participated in the MEDIAPPRO survey, and in the following a summary of these countries' presentation of their national recommendations will be given.

The summary will focus on:

- *Recommendations in relation to parents*
- *Recommendations in relation to school/teachers*
- *Recommendations in relation to industry*
- *Recommendations in relation to politicians*
- *Recommendations in relation to future research*

Europe

Parents

There exists a huge gap between home and school use of media for young people between the ages of 12 and 18. Where school is the place for learning and mainly goal-oriented searching in relation to school work whereas the use of media at home is characterized by fun, entertainment and learning through peer-to-peer communication. Much more time is spent on media at home compared to use in schools. It is a common trend in the recommendations by the different countries that parents today have to consider their children as “experts” regarding Internet and mobile phones given their heavy use of these media and competence in relation to media technology.

Parents and children have different opinions regarding the risks related to Internet use. Whereas parents seem to focus very much on the risks related to chat rooms, violence, pornography etc., the children consider the most serious risk to be virus on the Internet.

In general it is recommended that parents talk with their children about their use of the Internet, although it is a problem that parents in general know less about the Internet than the children. To cope with this fact it is suggested to organize training sessions focusing on new media usage in schools as well as in parent associations – and also to try to create discussion groups where parents can interact and exchange experiences about the use of new media – as well for parents as for their children. Teachers and parents should be guided and encouraged to talk to children and young people about how they manage their online and offline relationships. Furthermore emphasis is put on the need for critical literacy skills and competences rather than prohibitory practices, filters and blocking software.

There are differences among the countries regarding the recommendations to the parents. In the countries where the children already seem to have a critical approach to for instance chat rooms and general use of the Internet, and where the parents have a rather relaxed and permissive attitude to the children’s use of the new media, there seem to be less focus on recommendations to parents than in countries with a more restrictive approach.

Schools/Teachers

There is consensus among all nine countries that media literacy, especially with focus on the new media, is needed in schools. The children’s use of the Internet and the mobile phones is a challenge to the traditional school culture and way of teaching. This means that there is a need for a broad concept of media teaching in the schools.

Schools and colleges need to adopt a positive and inclusive attitude towards uses of new media in schools in order to capitalize on the innovative potential of these technologies. However, there are – in all the countries – barriers to this, consisting mainly of two things:

- 1) lack of equipment in the schools
- 2) lack of teachers’ competences regarding new media

It is a fact, however, that these two problems are closely related to each other, due to the fact that as long as the teachers are not competent and do not see the need for media literacy, including the Internet, mobile phones and other new media, they will not insist on more media technology in the schools and will probably not require further purchase of media equipment for the schools.

It is suggested that an educator’s/teacher’s guide about the new media uses, focusing on its potential risks and challenges - and proposing some related activities for media teaching – is created.

There are also proposals that the emphasis often placed on regulation and prohibition on online media within the schools is substituted by pedagogical interventions aimed at developing children’s and young people’s critical literacy skills and competences.

Peer-to-peer teaching and development of teachers’ in-learning practices are central themes, just as emphasis is put on the general need for promotion of a holistic approach to media literacy and promotion of teacher training and lifelong learning regarding new technologies. Training sessions for educators/teachers are suggested as well as a stronger focus on cooperation between teachers, parents and students regarding new media.

Altogether all the countries have agreed – on the basis of the results of the MEDIAPPRO survey, pointing at the fact that new media are used much more at home than in school and that there is a lack of critical approach to the media – that there is an urgent need for media literacy in the schools, across the curriculum and on all levels. However, as is emphasized by all the parties, this is only possible, if the teachers get a deeper insight in and further training in media literacy.

Industry

It is suggested to develop the interaction between industries and educational partners in order to converge its commercial interests with pedagogical and educational interests. One country suggests that Internet providers should develop the broadband connection in rural areas, as a lot of the towns in that country still don’t have Internet access. Furthermore a related suggestion is to make Internet access to schools and households more affordable and attractive.

Although all media play an important role in the appropriation process, TV is still an important media in the daily life of children and grown ups, and it is suggested that a range of short TV information programmes in prime time are elaborated, aimed at explaining how the new electronic media work and what is at stake for the close future.

Politicians

There is general consensus among the countries that politicians have a responsibility regarding the introduction of media literacy into the schools. The political leaders ought to promote media literacy into educative programmes including the pedagogy of the Internet into a broader concept of pedagogy. The politicians ought to develop a policy that focuses on the ethical as well as the educational aspects of new media technology and support the integration of media education and media literacy contents and subjects into the curriculum of both teachers and students.

Furthermore it is suggested that politicians support the creation of campaigns that not only are focused on the dangers of the media but are focussing on all dimensions of the media.

It is also suggested that politicians support the promotion of an easier Internet access in public places (such as in libraries, in public administration, in young people's houses, in cultural centres etc.)

The politicians ought to understand and accept the paradigm shift from traditional culture to media culture, especially as far as young people are concerned. They have to provide ideological as well as economic support in the introduction of media literacy into all levels of education i.e. as well in relation to children as to grown ups.

There is an overriding need that the decision makers on the political level realize the necessity of teaching every single citizen a deep insight into the role and function of media. This may – hopefully – be developed through a qualified and competent media literacy, an important cornerstone in the process of developing democratic citizenship in the globalized digital society.

Future research

Focus on potential partnerships between industries and Higher Education Institutions, in order to develop research projects in cooperation between the two parties, taking into account the research autonomy of the Higher Education Institutions.

Recommendation to launch research programmes taking into account the children from the age of 8, and other programmes for adults, with a specific emphasis on educators' practices.

Proposal to elaborate guidelines to introduce young people to the social, cultural and economical issues of new media through the school curricula.

Belgium

Recommendation to the Internet industry and ICT stakeholders

- To promote the use of the Internet at home
- The appropriation of the Internet is related to the practices and it is fully deployed at home.

Recommendations addressed to parents

- Parents have to explain clearly to young people what they consider as dangerous on the Internet
Young people seem not to be totally aware of the potential dangers they could encounter on the web, but they are confused by “mysterious” advice
- Parents have to consider, a priori, that young people are “experts” regarding their use of the Internet and that this expertise should be exploited
This attitude promotes self-learning, valorizing youngsters
This attitude encourages young people in taking responsibilities because it brings something valuable to the adults
- Parents have to consider that young people are serious when they are on the Web, they are neither innocents neither blunderers.
Their practises are full of sense in a co-education process.
- Parents have to consider that blogs and online games are a part of the child’s development and not a specific activity
Young people declare to make and follow their own blog during approximately 6 months. After that some of them transform their blogs, some go on surfing on other youngster’s blogs, in many cases leaving their personal blog.
To play online seems to be a temporary activity. Young people have some periods when the play and other periods when they do not.
- Parents don’t have to talk about the Internet with their children if they don’t have any experience of the Web because it should be a subject of dissension. If they want to discuss the Internet with them, they have to learn, practically, how the Net works.
Young people who claim to discuss the Net with their parents, seem to have parents users of this tool.

Recommendations addressed to schools

- Better ergonomic Internet access on school
Regarding the material equipment, the actual access or technical integration seems not to be good and appropriate with the uses by the pupils
Inside the classroom, this access remains “marginal”, limited, difficult, ...
- To promote “peer-to-peer” learning and to let pupils learn other practices and visions of the Internet, sharing together
Young people declare to learn how to use the Internet with the help of their friends or sisters and brothers, but not with adults (parents or teachers)
- To help young people become better explorers, collecting information or to use the potential of the Internet.
- Not encroaching on their “private sphere” which is essentially composed by MSN, emails and blogs
Young people declare that they don’t go to websites they don’t know. They have a “ritual navigation” inside websites they appreciate
- School must learn the state of the laws about the rights of the Internet
Youngsters ignore the laws, even if they are aware of ethics

Recommendations addressed to political leaders

- To promote Media Literacy into educative programs
The pedagogy of the Internet must be included in a wider scope which deals with the media, based on general competencies
- Prevention campaigns have to be focused not only on the dangers that the young people can find on the web, but on all dimensions of media
- To promote easier access to the Internet in public places like libraries, public administration, student houses (Maison des jeunes), cultural centers...

Denmark

On the basis of the quantitative and qualitative reports the following trends can be seen :

The gap between home and school

- At home: multitasking – primary and secondary media use
- At school: sporadic use of media, depending on the school and the teacher
- The official school vs. the parallel school of the media
- Traditional culture vs. media culture

Identity and relationship

- Converging media use – with focus on MSN, Google and SMS
- On-line communication – peers
- Generational differences
- Age and gender differences

Regulation and risk

- High consciousness regarding risks related to websites
- Risk = computer virus
- Liberal parents vs. restrictive teachers

Consumer aspects

- The Internet as a slowly growing marketplace
- Frustration regarding on-line advertising (pop-up advertising and banners)

Learning processes

- Discrepancy between the official curriculum of the school and practice
- Differentiated skills and competences among teachers and among pupils
- Media competences developed as informal learning
- Lack of competence in relation to information search
- Lack of critical approach

Recommendations in relation to education

- Development of a broader concept of use of media in school (including also new media)
- Further focus on the media cultural capital of children and young people in relation to the use of Internet and mobile phones
- Integration of media pedagogical principles in the work of the school - including all levels - and across the curriculum
- Increase media production and analysis in relation to all media
- Focus on communication - the narrative perspective
- Information search ought to be further developed in relation to all subjects of the school from the age of 9-10.
- Integration of media education (including all media) in the training of teachers (as well in formation of teachers as in further education of the teachers)
- Focus on media technical equipment in the schools - in addition to the computers (i.e. digital sound and visual media equipment)
- Development of teachers' in-learning practices including use of media, from as well a productional/technical perspective as a pedagogical and analytical perspective
- New media culture as a challenge to the traditional culture and way of teaching

Recommendations in relation to the political level

- Understanding and acceptance of the above mentioned paradigm shift (from traditional culture to media culture)
- Ideological and economic support of the broad perspective on media in relation to all levels of education (children as grown ups)
- The importance of media education, as described above, as a necessity in the process of developing citizenship in the globalized digital society

Estonia

The pedagogical suggestions of the Estonian working group are mostly meant for educators and parents.

- Talk to pupils openly about activities you do over the Internet: banking, declaring taxes, filling forms for getting new ID cards, reading online newspapers, using Internet phone etc
- Use additional learning material from the Internet and indicate clearly resource's web address. Explain how you find this material and why did you use this particular one
- Talk to pupils about e-learning courses you are taking and help them understand that you are willing to learn new things
- Share your experiences (good and bad ones) with media
- Do not forbid activities you are not able to control
- Help pupils to understand that in new media there are many "gray zones" in legal meaning
- Help pupils to see people behind web sites and analyze different interests of different people
- Include new media examples into ethical debates in classroom and in the family
- Ask pupil's help and use it
- Remember, that Internet allows many kind of activity. Some of them are public, some private. Respect pupil's right to have private conversation and mail, and invite them to talk about other activities

France

Recommendations for research

Electronic media impact young people's daily life always earlier

- There are different kinds of uses according to age, gender and socio-cultural life context
- Specific competencies differ from the ones used at school and are not taken into account by the school system
- Most of the 12-18 year olds perceive the electronic media as changing technologies and adopt the new developments easily, but have no clear idea of their impact on the future
- Young people encounter difficulties reaching an abstract approach of the Internet and their own practices

Recommendations

1. To launch research programmes taking into account the children from age 8, and another programme for adults with a specific stress on educators' practices
2. To elaborate guidelines to cultivate young people's awareness of the social, cultural and economic issues of new media through school curricula

Recommendations for educational bodies

A huge gap exists between home and school usage

- School is the place for discovering (for unequipped people) and first steps; home is the place for a real appropriation
- School is focused on technical abilities and on searching information; home is characterised by various and changing uses

- Teachers do not know how adolescents use the electronic media, and the school system does not take them into consideration
- Young people find out information about the Internet through exchange among their peers and TV

Recommendations

3. To amplify the specific role of schools by proposing educational added value to spontaneous uses, integrating the competencies elaborated at home and with friends, enhancing new schemes of uses
4. To introduce Media Education in the curricula in order to :
 - better share discoverer, experiences, representations amongst educators and pupils, in order to elaborate pedagogical attitudes that benefit peers dynamics and build relevant educational patterns
 - transmit words and concepts to describe, explain, question, argue, reflect, invent..., to help them to obtain a more conceptual vision of the electronic media
 - develop a critical attitude towards all kinds of messages about the new media produced by all kinds of sources
5. For the population still unequipped at home, to recognise and amplify the role of the informal educational setting (associations, youth clubs, etc)

Recommendations for educators

Young people know there are rules and are ready to accept them, so long as they understand their foundation

- School strongly limits the possibilities of usage; home allows experiences, under more or less parents' control
- The 12-18 age group usually know the rules at home and at school and accept them, as long as they are balanced and allow them to conciliate their social life with their peers and their family life
- They are also informed about the legal dispositions (downloading, image rights and privacy)
- When the rules are too restrictive, they develop strategies to bypass them

Recommendations

6. Rules must be clear on both sides (adults vs youth), co-elaborated whenever possible, at least explained, at home and at school as well
7. To be conscious that adolescents develop a multi-profile personality which drives them to experiment a broad use of these new media (the Internet, mobile phones, games). Educators should respect this time of development and take benefit of it

Recommendations for media

All the media, especially TV, play an important role in the appropriation process

Recommendations

8. To elaborate a range of short TV information programmes (1 or 2 minutes each) in prime time, aimed at explaining how the new electronic media works and what is at stake in the near future, conceived with educators on the basis of identified needs

Greece

Educational level

- Development of media literacy
- Development of students' Internet awareness
- Development of computer and Internet skills
- Development of an Internet "consciousness"
- Help students develop an awareness of Internet risks
- Help students develop an awareness of Internet safety
- Help students understand the difference between authentic and false information
- Help students understand the difference between knowledge and information
- Promotion of teacher training and lifelong learning on new technologies
- Integration of the Internet into teaching practices and school life
- Integration of the Internet into the ICT class
- Promotion of a holistic approach to the ICT curriculum
- Promotion of media cooperation via the Internet between teachers and students
- Promotion of media cooperation via the Internet between schools
- Promotion of media communication between schools and parents

Parents

- Development of parents' Internet awareness
- Promotion of media training for parents. Invitations to self-learning
- Promotion of Internet risk awareness for parents
- Respect the need for their children's privacy in the uses of e-mail, MSN, personal websites, blogs, etc...

Political level

- Promote research into media education
- Promote a digital culture
- Promotion of cheaper, easier and quicker access
- Financial support for Internet access at all levels of education
- Development of new modalities in media education
- Integration of media qualification and certification into the school system

Italy

The study conducted seems to confirm the results of recent researches with a general balance between Internet/new media uses and outdoor activities, a defined prevalence of traditional forms of media consumption, a strong correspondence between media and uses (information/Internet, communication/mobile phone, fun/video games). In relation to this frame, we can underline three main addresses of educational recommendations: culture (or cultural environment), youth and adolescents, educators.

Culture

We have to foster the socialization of the idea of a New Media Culture, following the thoughts of Habermas given that new media presents a challenge to both our society and our educational system – as consequence of the renewal of the social environment.

This means thoughtful consideration of the main factors that define the Multimedia Culture Society (MCS), characterized by a zapped and mobile scene, a distributed knowledge and the substitution of the physical place with a new social one, affirming a reconfiguration of the boundaries between inside and outside.

Youth and Adolescents

We need new tools and strategies for youth education, in at least three directions: the school environment, with clearly developed Guidelines for Digital Literacy; the non-formal education, with a strategy for libraries, ludotheques, aggregation and meeting centres; mass media themselves, involving media producers.

Educators

Educators should be able to guide at institutional levels the transition from a protectionist framework (protect children from media) to education. This means that to be a serious and respectable “guides”, both teachers and educators need training sessions, or rather a new training strategy that works on three levels: the literacy level, the didactical level, the educational level.

Poland

We can formulate some recommendations for several groups of subjects involved in the education process, that is: parents, teachers, schools, industries and political leaders.

First, **the parents** have to take into account that their children are very often “experts” regarding the use of the Internet. The parents should talk more with them about the use of new media to exchange experiences and the points of views. They should point out the potential dangers of the Internet because young people seem not to be completely aware about it. Most often they mention only the virus as the biggest risk coming from the Internet. The Internet is mostly used at home, so parents should understand that their role in the education process is crucial.

Secondly, **the teachers** play a very important part as well. They should show young people how to collect information and use the different potential of the Internet. They should help them to become better explorers, aware also of wrong and unreliable information on the web. Some young people consider that the resources found on the Internet are totally trustworthy and they do not adopt a critical attitude about the materials presented on the web. Teachers should also draw the attention of their pupils to the existence of some dangers on the Internet. It seems to be important as well that they promote a “peer-to-peer” learning. The young people can learn from each other different practices of the Internet use. Furthermore, the teachers should start to use the Internet and computers during other classes than only computer lessons. Such lessons supported by new media can be very interesting for both pupils and teachers. It involves the necessity to teach the teachers how to use the new technology in the education process and it has to break their unfriendly attitude against changes.

As to **the schools**, there are still too few equipped: one classroom with computers at school is often not enough, especially when pupils cannot use it during breaks. There is a need to provide more computers or laptops in schools. Moreover there is not always a broadband connection which seems to be inappropriate for the education process. The curriculum should be changed in order to include information about interesting websites, the awareness of danger, unreliable content, etc.

The next group concerns **the industries**. Internet providers should develop the broadband connection in rural areas. There are still a lot of Polish towns where the Internet is not available. The Internet offer for schools and individual households should be cheap and very attractive.

And finally, **the politicians**, they should be aware of the fact that new media have become more popular and should adopt appropriate laws. They should introduce media literacy into educative programs, encourage prevention campaigns focused on the dangers from the Internet and other media. They should also promote an easier access to the Internet in public places like libraries, public administration, cultural centers or individual houses.

Portugal

General recommendations

Develop media literacy in the Portuguese context.

Specific recommendations

For parents

- Organize training sessions focusing on new media usage in schools and parent associations
- Encourage the creation of discussion groups where parents can interact and exchange experiences about the uses of new media, for themselves and for their children

For educators and teachers

- Create an educator's/teacher's guide about the new media uses, focusing on its potential risks and challenges and proposing some related activities for them to develop with students
- Publish the recommendations on a website, where educators/teachers can have access to them and incorporate those insights in their pedagogical activities
- Organize training sessions for educators/teachers in schools

For students

- Organize specific practical activities for the students (by the Mediappro national team members and by the teachers previously trained)

For industries

- Develop the interaction between industries and educational partners in order to converge its commercial interests with pedagogical and educational interests
- Develop potential partnerships between industries and Higher Education Institutions, in order to develop research projects in cooperation, taking into account the research autonomy of the Higher Education Institutions

For political leaders

- Develop a consumer policy that focuses on the ethical and educational aspects of the new media technologies
- Integrate media education and media literacy contents and subjects on the teacher's curricula and on the student's curricula

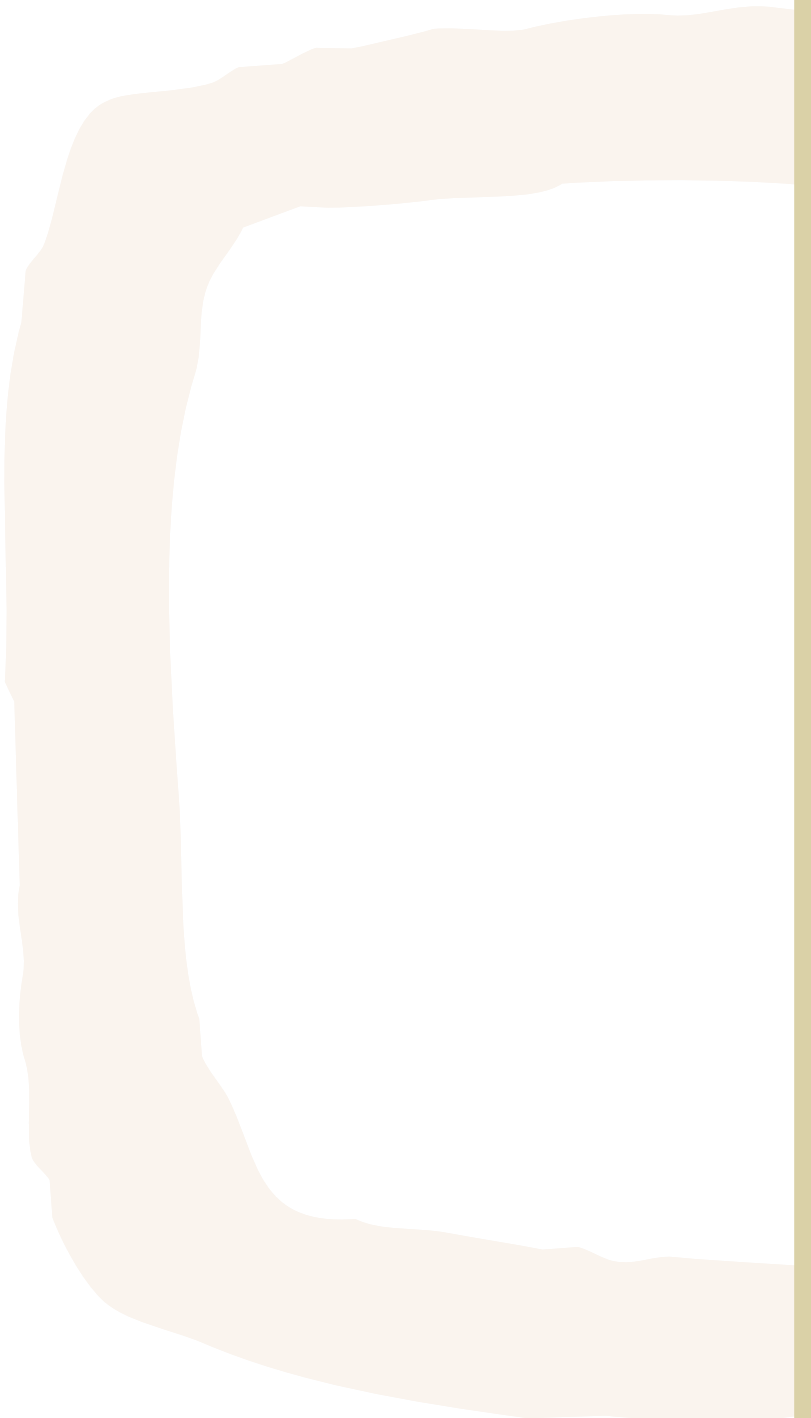
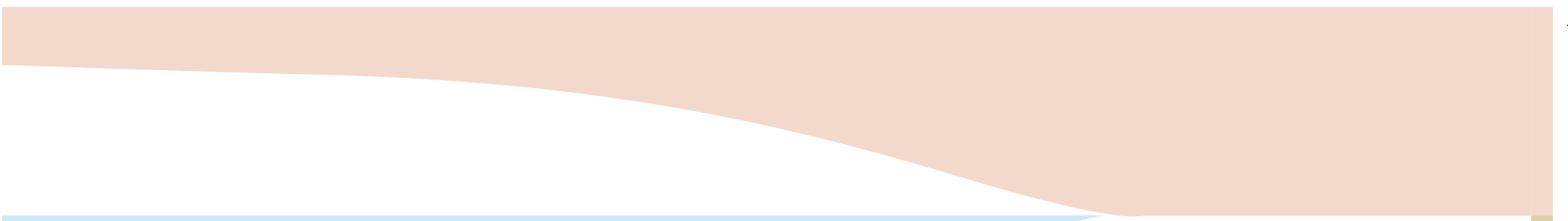
United Kingdom

General recommendations

- 1) Teachers need to be more aware of children and young people's online cultures. We recommend in-service training to remedy this.
- 2) Teachers and parents together need to develop school/college policy to deepen and incorporate understandings of children and young people's online cultures within schools.
- 3) Teachers need to talk much more about online media to make it visible and explicit within schools and colleges. In this way, we hope that children and young people will not only be better informed about online technologies, but will have greater opportunities to raise issues that may be confusing and/or concerning them.
- 4) Schools and colleges need to adopt a much more positive and inclusive attitude towards uses of new media in schools in order to capitalise on the innovative potential of these technologies.
- 5) We recommend that the current emphasis placed on the regulation and prohibition of online media within schools and colleges is substituted by pedagogical interventions aimed at developing children and young people's critical literacy skills and competencies.

Specific recommendations

- 1) Communication: the current UK ICT curriculum emphasises information not communication, this imbalance needs redressing particularly in light of the predominance of communicative functions of online technologies as shown in the data.
- 2) Regulation: both parents and teachers should be guided and encouraged to develop children and young people's critical literacy skills and competencies rather than emphasising prohibitory practices and blocking software.
- 3) Risk, Safety and Antisocial Behaviour: Teachers and parents should be guided and encouraged to talk to children and young people more about how they manage their online and offline relationships.
- 4) Myths and Misconceptions: further educational intervention would help clarify a number of areas where children and young people misunderstand aspects of online technology use. In particular, search engines and downloading music.
- 5) Electronic Gaming: Schools and colleges should recognise that children and young people may have positive and valuable experiences of games playing which should be recognised within the curriculum and capitalised on (see, eg, Burn, A, 'Inclusive Learning: Computer Games in the Curriculum', Curriculum Briefing, January 2005)
- 6) Relationships between Platforms: Whilst the educational potential for computers and the Internet is recognised (though not necessarily optimised), schools and colleges may be less aware of the functions of media such as games consoles, MP3 players and mobile phones and their potential for learning and education. Therefore, appropriate educational activities need to be identified which can capitalise on children's media cultures.



CONCLUSIONS



MEDIAPRO : **Conclusions**

The harvest of data and information from the Médiappro survey is extremely vast and will be subjected to in-depth analyses in each of the places where this study was conducted. The partners in Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal and United Kingdom have already promised to spare no effort in order to deepen and enhance the study of these results.

Certain initial hypotheses as well as lines of action and research can nonetheless be confirmed without having to wait any longer and some other topics can be explored.

A new vision of Internet dangers

Europe has now clearly entered the era of generalised Internet use particularly for young people. Even if the number of new users tended to grow slower, the progression seems headed towards encompassing virtually the entire young population. Paradoxically, this development is becoming a source of concern inasmuch as segments of the population (and not only young people) who do not have access to electronic networks will certainly find themselves in a highly marginalized situation, all the more so as this will in all likelihood be combined with other factors, such as education, housing, nutrition and health. A new vision of Internet dangers is therefore emerging : that of not being capable of using it, i.e. cyber exclusion. This new danger undeniably calls for social policies for equipping young people and their families and securing access to the Internet for them.

Authority and responsibility: the awareness topics

The survey also shows that whereas young people are appropriating user skills thanks to their peers and to their own experiences, they are finding few adult partners to rationalise and systematise the spontaneous learning channels they are developing. Instructional independence is a quality, to be sure, but many young people feel (and sometimes express) the need of finding a heedful ear among adults and at times a dialogue that the family and school develop to a very limited extent about using the Internet, games and mobile telephones.

As in a similar survey conducted in certain countries in 1999-2000, it appears that the interest of young people for these practices and questions is still finding little ground for expression, information and discussion at home and at school. Learning the rules of the new media, the relevant legislation and the stakes involved, and reflecting on the vigorous dynamic that drives them are nonetheless raising keen interest in young people, who find little food for thought in what is on offer from educational and industrial institutions.

If greater precision were needed, two important topics could be cited, for which the survey showed a certain awareness among young people, albeit with highly irregular knowledge and skills : the first is "authority," in the sense of "being the author of." The technique of networks is turning the notion of author inherited from the printed publication upside down, because of the more interactive character of creations due to the increasing speed of exchanges, lawful or otherwise. And yet, the notion of "authority" is not disappearing. On the contrary, the copying and consultation of works are becoming major cultural and commercial stakes, with the controls and threats that accompany them. Young people are aware of this topic, but their level of information is totally unequal, with glaring gaps and errors. Of a comparable nature, the second topic is the notion of "responsibility." Here once again, young people have a sense of responsibility, and at times an astonishing moral sense, characterised by a concern and respect for others.

But beyond the level of awareness raising, information and a capacity to reason are characterised by serious inequalities, that can put the world of education to question. The same applies to a critical faculty.

Prevention: the need for differential and proximity approaches

The attitude of young people to danger deserves particular attention in light of the survey. Because of the range of practices, each young person is faced with different dangers, depending on what he or she does. Furthermore, certain young people are actually suspicious and even fearful. Preaching prudence to them could make them even more insecure, fearful and hesitant. It could even lead them to make errors of judgement, given their tendency to mistrust their own judgement. On the contrary, other young people like danger. Risk attracts them. Child psychiatrists have even pointed out that post-adolescent young people see in danger opportunities for suffering that help them mature. For them, preaching prudence about dangers may be counter-productive by attracting them to dangerous situations.

Consequently, light shed on the extensive variations among individuals when it comes to customs, attitudes and representations should make institutions in charge of prevention weary of generalising warnings, because the same slogans can probably produce altogether different effects among young people, that may be the diametrically opposed to the aims (destabilise the more timid, suggest danger to the bolder ones). The question of youth security certainly entails general information and education approaches, but the most sensitive topics can only be broached by taken the singular traits of each person into account.

Although screens have emerged as the main supports of the new media, we cannot conclude that the text will disappear, nor can we generalise images. Even though they are inventing a new vocabulary, young people remain loyal to writing. They may even write more than before, capitalising on the comfort (and the low cost!) of writing their SMS messages to make communication less intrusive and more symbolic.

Communication practices: the babbling stage

In this context, it is not yet easy to identify new practices in communication through the image. Personal pages, blogs and phone cameras bear witness to an appropriation of the image for expression purposes, but these practices are still at their babbling stage and, though technically possible, they do not reveal any salient innovations or original uses at this time. Young people take pictures of their "outings" with friends and view them among them, in ways comparable to traditional family photos. Here once again, school does not seem to steer them to new practices when it comes to the – documentary or expressive – image.

Conversely, the expression of young people through chats, e-mail, blogs, and personal pages has visibly entered an active phase for many of them. We are witnessing the emergence of the first public medium of expression by and for young people. This medium operates essentially in a circle of friends. The network technology makes these new forms of expression and presentation of oneself visible to anyone, but the interactions are actually limited to circles of young people grouped in different degrees of friendship. Once again, the technical devices are used by young people whenever they give meaning to their social relations, their aspirations, their area of interests. This social confinement is probably an advantage for the security of young people, because an intruder cannot easily pass himself off as a

member of a group of friends, given the many signs of recognition that are difficult to forge. They range from topics of discussion to textual forms of expression, via values and tastes. The question still to be asked is whether this social opening to a circle of friends will naturally be geared to opening up and appropriating wider, more diversified social spaces, establishing a real itinerary of civil and civic initiation and sanctioning skills for evolving fully in the multi-centred space. It is neither excluded nor certain that expression, communication and games between peers will maintain relatively isolated networks for a long time, forming a mosaic of small, similar tribes that turn in on themselves. This question calls for more in-depth studies on the medium- and long-term development of social spaces for electronic communication specific to each young person and the educational stakes connected thereto in terms of security and social fulfilment.

Games and enculturation

The new gaming practices, on one's own or in a network among some young people, cannot be considered a general phenomenon. Here once again, they are connected to specific profiles, to social environments and family contexts that explain them better than their technological accessibility. Young people explain that they play these games as temporary experiences. They say that they continue to play them for as long as they find them interesting or as long as another, more attractive activity does not spur them on. This does not mean that there is never any rationale for seclusion or addiction, but from the international sample such cases appear to be extremely rare and only temporary. Furthermore, studies conducted in parallel with ours often show that groups of young networked players create gaming aesthetics that tend to exclude members who play "any old how." This shows an undeniable enculturation of many groups of games, far from what the social representations convey as the image of the brutal, primary and impulsive player.

The landscape depicted by the Mediappro study is undeniably more reassuring than the landscape depicted by many media discourses based on exceptional, idealistic or dramatic events. Its relative banality should not hide the fact that educational institutions, i.e. essentially the school, but also associative educational spaces and media (subject to a more in-depth study) do not seem to have gauged the importance that the new media have acquired in the daily lives of young people. The data collected are naturally based on what the young people themselves describe, but their statements are consistent and resist crosschecking in a way that makes them credible. The faint commitment of the school, as it appears from young people's declarations in different degrees through the nine European countries concerned, and even in Quebec, raises fears that in spite of the immense stakes linked to the future development of electronic networks, young people will be only slightly trained to gauge the opportunities and risks, despite definite official discourses. If the Internet becomes commonplace, the danger lies in its trivialisation, i.e. in a passive and non-critical subscription by young people to the flow of its natural development. Through their replies and interviews, young people should be capable of thinking about the future and of making responsible choices, but few adults are there to invite them to engage in this exercise and to build complex and reasoned arguments, the way the school aims to do in other areas of our environment such as literature, geography, the sciences and ethics.

Educators as major agents

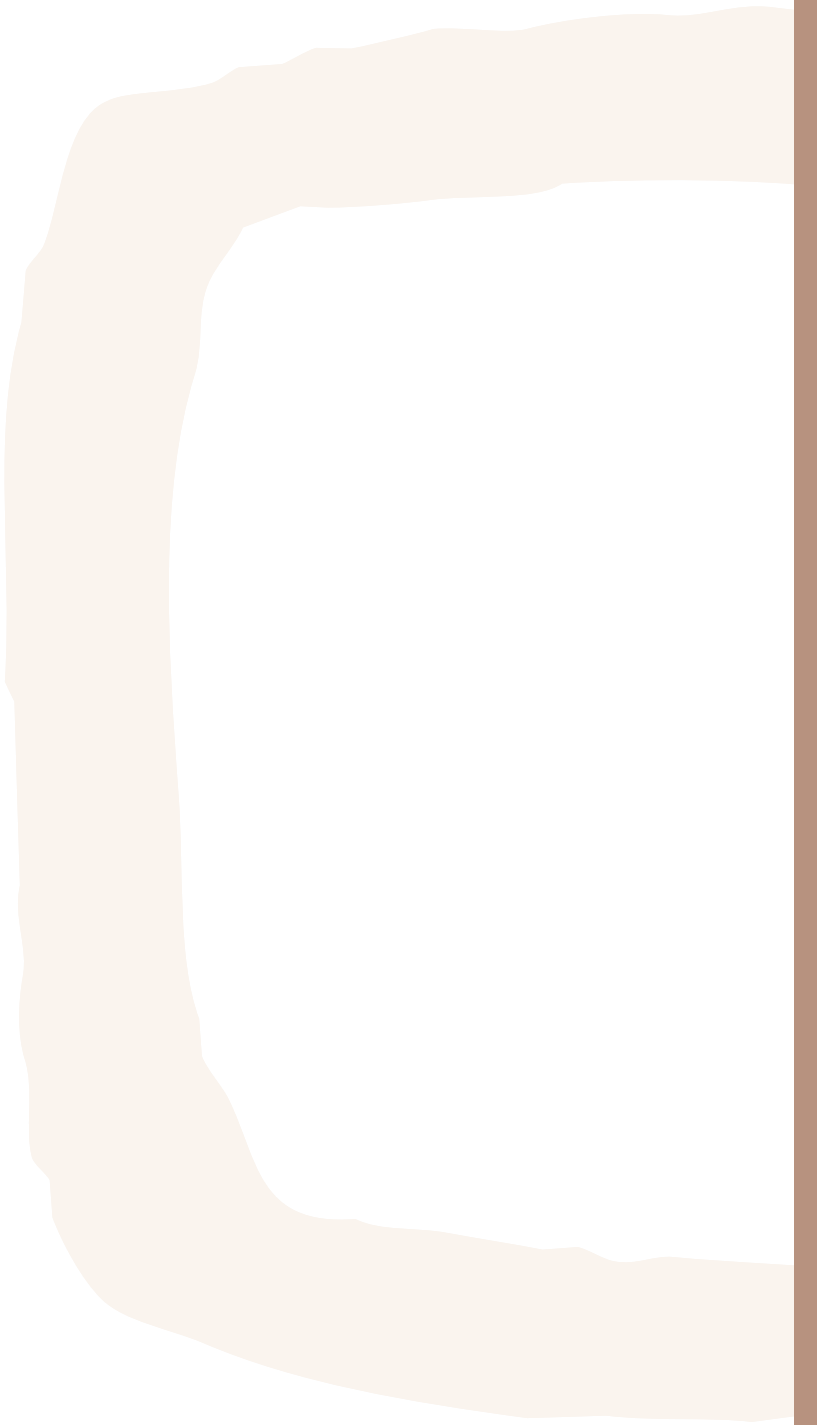
Furthermore, the wonderful potential of the new media for cultural and social opening does not seem to be naturally updated in the hands of young Europeans, who tend to be loyal homebodies. The school

is emerging, now more than ever, as a major factor for getting young people to open up to the world, to the diversity of people and cultures. The technology of networked electronic media inevitably encourages human differences to face each other, because it makes them visible always and everywhere, but with very unequal access opportunities. The skills needed to meet the eyes of others and to communicate with them in curiosity and respect are far more complex than the handling of computer techniques. This is a challenge for school today. And it calls on the public authorities to earmark the means and resources needed for that purpose.

Finally, the Mediappro survey has afforded young people an opportunity to express the difficulties that their parents experience with the Internet, electronic games and mobile telephones that bring the “Web culture” into their homes – with this permanent social permeability which brings into the family home not only continuous interaction with friends, but also the simultaneous combination of electronic media and their multiple demands. This reality calls for new family cultures, but there seem to be few places where parents can get involved and learn how to find and use new mechanisms and attitudes.

An international network for research

It would be a pity to close this discussion without mentioning the fact that, thanks to the support of the European Commission, Mediappro mobilized a network of several dozen European researchers and practitioners in media literacy from several research and training institutions, who decided to make the Europe of questioning. That was not the prime objective of this campaign to propose the Internet safer for young people through a better knowledge of their practices and views. Nevertheless, in doing so, Mediappro gained by a group of enthusiastic experts, which succeeded, in spite of difficulties, to practice an international yet highly diversified culture, capable of crossing the perilous stages of a difficult research undertaking. Today Mediappro has but two wishes: to proliferate initiatives and actions produced by its results, and to continue with the discussions and in-depth explorations that the research study showed were necessary.



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