2013

Innovative approaches for investigating how children understand risk in new media: dealing with methodological and ethical challenges

Monica Barbovschi

Lelia Green
Edith Cowan University

Sofie Vandoninck

THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Innovative approaches for investigating how children understand risk in new media

Dealing with methodological and ethical challenges

September 2013

Editors: Monica Barbovschi, Lelia Green, Sofie Vandoninck

Contributors: Monica Barbovschi, Despina Chronaki, Michael Dreier, Lelia Green, Leslie Haddon, Leen d'Haenens, Ingunn Hagen, Giovanna Mascheroni, Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink, Fabian Prochazka, Andra Siibak, Philip Sinner, David Šmahel, Liza Tsaliki, Sofie Vandoninck

www.eukidsonline.net

with members of the *EU Kids Online* network

Innovative approaches for investigating how children understand risk in new media. Dealing with methodological and ethical challenges. This report is based on research on children's use of new media as identified by the network members until March 2013. It has been produced by Barbovschi, M., Green, L. and Vandoninck, S., with contributions from Monica Barbovschi, Despina Chronaki, Michael Dreier, Lelia Green, Leslie Haddon, Leen d'Haenens, Ingunn Hagen, Giovanna Mascheroni, Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink, Fabian Prochazka, Andra Siibak, Philip Sinner, David Šmahel, Liza Tsaliki, Sofie Vandoninck, and with the help of members of the *EU Kids Online* network (Annex 3).

Please cite this report as: Barbovschi, M., Green, L. and Vandoninck, S. (eds) (2013). *Innovative approaches for investigating how children understand risk in new media. Dealing with methodological and ethical challenges.* London: EU Kids Online, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Previous reports and publications from *EU Kids Online* include:

- Holloway, D., Green, L., and Livingstone, S. (2013). Zero to eight. Young children and their internet use. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/52630/
- Helsper, E.J., Kalmus, V., Hasebrink, U., Sagvari, B. and De Haan, J. (2013). Country classification: Opportunities, risks, harm and parental mediation. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/52023/
- Livingstone, S., Kirwil, L, Ponte, C. and Staksrud, E., with the EU Kids Online Network (2013) In their own words: What bothers children online? http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/48357/
- D'Haenens, L, Vandonink, S. and Donoso, V. (2013) How to cope and build resilience. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/48115/
- Livingstone, S., Ólafsson, K., O'Neill, B and Donoso, V. (2012) Towards a better internet for children: findings and recommendations from EU Kids Online to inform the CEO coalition. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/44213/
- Haddon, L., Livingstone, S. and the EU Kids Online network (2012) EU Kids Online: National perspectives. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/46878/
- Smahel, D., Helsper, E., Green, L., Kalmus, V., Blinka, L. & Ólafsson, K. (2012) Excessive internet use among European children. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/47344/
- Dürager, A. & Livingstone, S. (2012) How can parents support children's internet safety? http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/42872
- Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., and Ólafsson (2011) EU Kids Online Final Report. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39351/
- Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., & Ólafsson, K. (2011) Disadvantaged children and online risk. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39385/
- Livingstone, S., Ólafsson, K. and Staksrud, E. (2011) Social networking, age and privacy. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/35849/
- Sonck, N., Livingstone, S., Kuiper, E. and de Haan, J. (2011) Digital literacy and safety skills. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33733/
- Hasebrink, U., Görzig, A., Haddon, L., Kalmus, V. and Livingstone, S. (2011) Patterns of risk and safety online. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39356/
- O'Neill, B., Livingstone, S. and McLaughlin, S. (2011). Final recommendations for policy, methodology and research. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39410/
- Livingstone, S. and Ólafsson, K. (2011) Risky communication online. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33732/
- Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A. and Ólafsson, K. (2011) Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children: Full findings. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33731/

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Monica Barbovschi, Lelia Green and Sofie Vandoninck

Context

Children's rapid adoption of the internet and other online technologies, together with the constantly changing media landscape (e.g. more apps and tailored sites, more individualized media use, more mobile internet), pose challenges to researchers concerning the difficult task of adapting and renewing their inventory of research tools in order to identify the risks and opportunities presented by the internet and new media use. EU Kids Online II (2009-11) has offered a unique picture of a wide range of activities undertaken by European children online and the risks and benefits that accompany these activities. The pan-European survey offers valuable information on where, how and what children access online, what risks they encounter, what risks actually bother them, how they cope with problematic content or conduct and how effective parental strategies are in reducing such risks. It also demonstrates that "online opportunities and risks go hand in hand" (Livingstone *et al.*, 2011: 142).

Children's freely given, detailed accounts of how they understand online risks, and what they perceive as problematic or bothersome, are needed alongside quantitative data that mostly reflect adult perspectives on problematic online content and activities. The recent report, *In their own words: What bothers children online?* (Livingstone *et al.*, 2013), analysed answers to an open survey question concerning what bothers children online. This arose out of data gathered for the EU Kids Online II study (2009-11). The current phase, EU Kids Online III (2011-14), promises a more thorough qualitative investigation into children's understanding of online risks and opportunities.

The *EU Kids Online* Work Package on the qualitative exploration of meaning of online risks for children

In a research field faced with considerable methodological, technical and ethical challenges, a nuanced account of children's own understandings of risk online has yet to emerge, particularly in a manner that permits comparisons across countries. While qualitative comparative methods remain difficult, this Work Package explores new and creative ways to research the meanings of risks and opportunities online for children, building on the work of EU Kids Online I (Lobe *et al.*, 2007) to experiment directly with methodological innovations (e.g. online interviews) as well as traditional methods (e.g. focus groups).

Work Package 4 is twofold. First, it aims to offer an exploration of innovative, qualitative, potentially comparable cross-national methods that address methodological and ethical issues in researching children's relation to online risk. Second, a subgroup of European countries collaborated in realizing a cross-national comparable study that reveals qualitative meanings of risk for children across Europe. This project aims to stimulate and support both new and alternative approaches to researching this field, while also generating some focused and comparable qualitative findings. National teams from across the European Union (EU) have worked together to undertake comparable investigative work with children in their countries, encompassing experiences from Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Europe. Additionally, national teams have examined specific aspects of children's new media use among specific groups, such as socially disadvantaged children.

This report is the first of two deliverables for Work Package 4: 'Exploring children's understanding of risk'. As a first deliverable, this report offers detailed accounts of innovative approaches in qualitative research on

children's internet use and their understanding of online risks. The second deliverable, due in the early months of 2014, will be the comparative report on qualitative data collection in at least 10 countries in the EU Kids Online network. It will be an extensive document built on the analyses of more than 60 focus groups and 120 individual interviews with children, which will offer a new insight into children's understandings and perceptions of online risks throughout Europe. The qualitative comparative fieldwork will further enhance and expand the knowledge obtained through the quantitative survey conducted in 2010. This work package is being conducted in parallel with others. It intersects with the work of Work Package 2, the *Frequently asked questions* guide (Ólafsson et al., 2013) and the European evidence database,[1] which contains more than 1,200 examples of studies on children and young people's online activities and risky experiences. Last, this report is the product of the collective efforts of Work Package 4 members, with a generous input from the researchers in the EU Kids Online network who provided examples of national studies (see Annex 1).

The focus of this report

This report has been produced by drawing on examples of (self-assessed) innovative qualitative studies (or studies with a qualitative component) provided by researchers in the EU Kids Online network (see Annex 3). Its purpose is to offer an approach to qualitative research that balances methodological innovation with responsible, ethically sensitive attitudes towards research with and about children, and their online experiences. The anticipated audience of this report is an academic one, with at least some experience in qualitative social research. The report is intended to be useful to researchers with an inclination towards qualitative methodologies, to experienced qualitative researchers new to this domain, to researchers interested in ethical dilemmas, and to students and interested others.

A series of EU Kids Online reports addressing key methodological issues in researching children and new media is freely available online at www.eukidsonline.net, such as the *Frequently asked questions* guides (Lobe *et al.,* 2008; Ólafsson *et al.*, 2013), together with resources and research materials (survey questionnaires, interview schedules, etc.) that provide examples of useful qualitative and quantitative research practices. The EU Kids Online *methodological issues review* (Lobe *et al.*, 2007) contains up-to-date critical discussion of relevant methodological issues related to researching children's experiences online, such as the main approaches to research, involving children in research and the challenges in researching 'new' media or in conducting cross-national comparative research. The present report does not aim to repeat the work already undertaken within the network, but to provide a deeper insight into relevant issues related to qualitative and mixed-method methodological approaches in the context of discussing what constitutes innovative approaches in researching children's online experiences and their understanding of risks in new media. Instead of focusing on the most novel or experimental approaches at the level of methods themselves, various chapters of the report locate innovation at the level of theoretical and broader methodological design, focusing on examples of studies that offer new perspectives into specific research issues or enable participation in new ways. Furthermore, all authors involved in the writing of this report acknowledge the close link between methodological and ethical considerations. Rather than viewing ethical considerations just as a formal, dry aspect of the research process, the chapters offer valuable examples of how the principles of beneficence, protection and enhancing children's participation in the research process shape and guide methodological choices towards an optimal conduct of research.

---

[1] The European evidence database is available at: www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/DB/home.aspx

References

Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A. and Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children: Full findings and policy implications from the EU Kids Online survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents in 25 countries.* London: EU Kids Online Network (Deliverable D4).

Livingstone, S., Kirwil, L., Ponte, C. and Staksrud, E. (2013). *In their own words: What bothers children online?* London: EU Kids Online, London School of Economics and Political Science. Available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/48357/1/In%20their%20own%20words%20%28lsero%29.pdf, accessed August 2013.

Lobe, B., Livingstone, S. and Haddon, L. (2007). *Researching children's experiences online across countries: Issues and problems in methodology.* London: EU Kids Online (Deliverable D4.1).

Lobe, B., Livingstone, S., Olafsson, K. and Simões, J.A. (2008). *Best practice research guide: How to research children and online technologies in comparative perspective*. London: EU Kids Online (Deliverable D4.2).

Ólafsson, K., Livingstone, S. and Haddon, L. (2013). *How to research children and online technologies? Frequently asked questions and best practice*. London: EU Kids Online, London School of Economics and Political Science.

I. METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

AREAS OF INNOVATION IN RESEARCHING CHILDREN'S INTERNET USE AND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF ONLINE RISKS

1: What counts as innovative in researching children and their online activities?

Monica Barbovschi and David Šmahel

Different ways of thinking about 'methodological innovation' in qualitative research

The studies included in this report[2] were provided by the members of the EU Kids Online network based on the issued request of collecting innovative qualitative national studies on children's understanding of online risks and their experiences on the internet. Inasmuch as the report did not intend to be a comprehensive review of all recent European studies on the topic of children and internet/new media, it offers valuable examples of good practice in using novel methodologies and addressing ethical issues in researching children and their online activities. While gathering examples of studies for this report, the group members were faced with decisions regarding selection of innovative studies and self-assessing of innovation levels, which entailed several difficulties related to defining criteria for innovativeness and researchers' subjectivity. Different points of view regarding combinations of methods were shared among network members, and several methodological approaches, such as the concept of triangulation, were acknowledged as holding innovative potential. In considering potential studies for inclusion in this report, the authors hesitated between a restrictive, narrow definition of methodological innovation (Nind *et al.*, 2012; Phillips and Shaw, 2011) versus a more inclusive one. As an example of an inclusive definition, in their assessment of innovativeness in qualitative studies, Wiles, Pain and Crow (2010: 4) adhere to the criteria of improvement of research aspects (Taylor and Coffey, 2008) or facilitation of more meaningful collaboration with participants. Others (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008; Phillips and Shaw, 2011) have linked the call for innovations with societal and political changes, as well as with a moral stance in doing research (Wiles *et al.*, 2010).

First, innovation faces tensions and constraints at a paradigmatic, theoretical level. According to Wiles *et al.* (2010: 22), in their review of innovative British research, "there is little evidence of paradigmatic shifts in qualitative research methods within these innovations but rather that qualitative researchers draw on existing

---

[2] The studies are listed at the end of the report. When cited inside the text, the title of the study is immediately followed by the corresponding number in Annex 1.

traditions to develop methods and that these developments are articulated in terms of innovation". However, the concept of facet methodologies can provide a novel approach to debates about the politics of methods, especially in regards to its focus on the significance of flashes of insight rather than on the production of 'maximum data' (Mason, 2011).

In their analysis of the relation between research innovation and ethical considerations and the inherent tension thereof, Nind *et al.* (2012) focus their attention on three areas of innovative research: netnography, child-led research and creative research methods. They discuss issues of ethical responsibility, democratization of research, empowerment and the relationship between research and the academy, using thematic analysis of data from interviews with innovators, and from commentators on innovation. In support of the position advanced by Hammersley (2008) in assessing methodological innovation, the authors equate 'good' research methods with methods that are able to address important social research questions in ethical ways, thus claiming the intertwining of ethics and innovation as a necessity. In their analysis of Gauntlett's (2007) creative research methods, Kozinet's (2010) netnography and Kellett's (2005) revolutionary (but deemed problematic at times in terms of the 'quality' of the research products) engaging of children as researchers and research analysts, Nind and colleagues (2012) discuss the tension between research innovation and research ethics and the uniformity and restrictions that might be enforced by the latter on the former. Their argument is that, as the pressure for ethical regulation increases, along with avoidance of risk, so do the restraints imposed on methodological innovation (Nind *et al.*, 2012). Nonetheless, as new theoretical perspectives on childhood meet the research context of online risks and safety, a 'methods gap' may occur (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008: 4), which requires methodological innovations to emerge.

Levels of innovative methodologies

Both mixed-method approaches and internet-mediated methods can be considered emergent research methods (Creswell, 2003; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008). More recently, qualitative methodologies, in the context of internet-mediated research or research about the internet, have received increased attention, as more scholars are exploring and experimenting with them (Hewson, 2007; Wiles *et al.*, 2010: 9). Advantages of internet-mediated methods have been thoroughly documented (e.g. Joinson, 2001; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008), as have mixed modes (online and offline) of internet-mediated research (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008: 561-6). Among the latter, the authors enumerate mutual validation of data, enhancement of the data-gathering process, complementarities between different data-gathering methods and gaining access to sensitive information that would otherwise be difficult to obtain.

The category of ethnography, as a well-established approach within the spectrum of qualitative research, embodies more than a simple methodological choice (Dicks *et al.*, 2005: 27). In addition to theoretical and epistemological framings, ethnography also has to face ethical debates, even more so in the context of research with children online. Digital ethnography brings specific challenges related to ethical principles such as issues of privacy, informed consent, online pseudonyms and documentation of the data. In particular the practice of doing 'covert' research online (e.g. observing profiles on social networking sites without explicit consent) is questionable (Murthy, 2008). Murthy (2008) discusses some examples of digital ethnography, and concludes that this approach facilitates doing ethnographic research, depending on the target group. Some vulnerable or marginalised groups are easier to recruit online, and feel more comfortable discussing sensitive issues in online conversations. Moreover, online environments may be helpful to create an equal power relationship between researchers and participants (Murthy, 2008). Although exclusively online research can be very fruitful, a combination of 'offline' and 'online' research methods is promoted. Such a 'multimodel ethnography' can provide us with a rich understanding of social environments and interactions, and is helpful in understanding how to interpret ambivalent data and ambiguous information (Dicks, Soyinka and Coffey, 2006; Murthy, 2008). Gwyther and Possamai-Inesedy (2009) argue that funding bodies are important drivers of innovation, since they often ask for evidence of innovation in proposals submitted to them. It might be suspected, therefore, that innovation is sometimes seen as an end in itself. Wiles *et al.* (2010: 4) argue

against this, saying that innovation "should have genuine origins in attempts to improve some aspect of the research process (Taylor and Coffey 2008), such as enabling the role of emotions to be investigated more effectively, or to facilitate more meaningful collaboration with participants". Since innovative methods are often unproven; they are frequently combined with traditional qualitative research methods including participant observation (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011), interviews (Seidman, 2006), focus groups (Krueger and Casey, 2009) and activity diaries (Clayton and Thorne, 2000). This means that many innovative designs embrace mixed-method approaches (Creswell and Clarke, 2007), demanding a range of analytical strategies.

Areas of innovation: the methodology section

The format of this report, Part I with a main focus on methodological innovation and Part II on ethical considerations, was agreed among the editors and contributors, although the artificiality of the split was solely dictated by practical reasons related to clarity of text and flow.

Innovations at the level of participants and topics

Within the logic of adoption and adaptation, the studies in this report can be non-exclusively grouped along several lines of innovative methodological approaches. Some of them offer creative ways of employing specific methods to look in different ways at research topics, while others use methodological approaches that engage participants in novel ways in different stages of the research process (either in data collection or creating spaces for enhanced child participation). Chapter 2 deals with innovative ways in which methods are used in connection with specific participants, by either empowering or giving voice to children, or by accessing information from participants otherwise difficult to reach. Examples from studies that illustrate these relations are provided. Chapter 3 addresses the innovative use of research methods for gaining a deeper understanding of a sensitive or under-researched topic, or which illuminate a difference 'facet' of an issue. Finally, Chapter 4 deals with innovative aspects at the level of both topic and participants simultaneously, which includes categories of respondents usually excluded from mainstream research topics.

Rich methodologies

Next, several studies provided by the network were examples of rich methodologies in data collection (and data analyses). Although several examples were previously discussed, that is, combinations of innovations at the level of participants and topics, a specific focus on such rich designs that feature a high density of data and a high level of reflection on the research process itself was needed. The authors of Chapter 5 discuss the advantages of theoretical and methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2009, [1970]) for exploring complex social phenomena.

Analysing data from innovative designs

A separate discussion was dedicated to innovative perspectives in data analysis of qualitative and mixed-methods data. Unsurprisingly, the analysis of data arising from projects that feature innovative design will often require innovative and adaptive methods and approaches so as to honour and reflect their constitutive elements. This dynamic is part of an established tradition of innovation in methodology and project design (Wiles *et al.*, 2010: 3). In discussing the drivers for innovative design, Wiles *et al.* note "the desire to improve knowledge, especially with regard to the emotional aspects of a topic in order to present a holistic picture (e.g. Borum, 2006); or related to empowerment and acting fairly to participants either by increasing collaboration or reducing risk of harm" (2010: 11). These motivations have implications for analysis as well as on design; indeed, it is in analysis and reporting that researchers' perspectives are made most publicly accessible.

Methodological issues in cross-cultural research

Finally, Part I ends with a reflection of methodological issues that might arise when conducting cross-cultural research. In addition to enhancing complementarities of data-gathering, specific data analysis designs such as grounded theory (GT) were considered suitable for analysing rich information from cross-cultural contexts. To this end, GT was explored as an 'open-minded' approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998) in some of the studies collected. The EU Kids Online II survey (2009-11) was a unique research endeavour in terms of breadth and scope of its investigation of online risks for children aged 9-16. Although a quantitative approach by theoretical and methodological design, the survey also collected the freely given open answers of children to the question what preoccupies and bothers them on the internet. With a valuable qualitative insight into the children's understanding of internet risks, the report, *In their own words: What bothers children online?* (Livingstone *et al.*, 2013), gives a detailed cross-country comparable account between salient preoccupations of children and those framed by adults' discourses (researchers, media, policy makers, other stakeholders etc.).

Where methodology meets ethical decision-making: the ethics section

The introduction to the ethics section grounds the rational of discussing ethical choices when conducting research involving children in the beneficence imperatives, and the necessity of constant adjustment of research sensitivity to the topic and its participants. On briefly discussing main guidelines, such as the necessity of informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and granting anonymity to participants, the authors reflect on the imperatives of giving voice and enhancing children's agency in the context of the debate about online risks for young people. Next, the following chapters offer detailed innovative perspectives into areas identified as relevant in this introduction.

Privacy, confidentiality, anonymity

In chapter 2, the authors discuss the sensitive issue of ensuring that data collection involving children respects the guidelines of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, and also their limits; furthermore, research conducted in the online environment can create specific challenges to privacy and anonymity. However, the authors note several times that the online environment might help young people with overcoming obstacles related to discussing openly sensitive topics.

Issues and challenges related to informed consent: language, gaining and maintaining trust, handling group dynamics

The incentives for methodological innovation are located in moral and ethical reasons in many cases (Wiles *et al.*, 2010: 11). In addition to the beneficence agenda for the research community (Rhodes, 2010), innovative methods in research with children should strive to ensure better representation and enhancement of children's own agency. Studies that focus on enhancing children's participation, that make spaces for children's voices to be heard, and that make use of creative techniques to stimulate children's self-presentation and representation are included in this report as examples of innovative good practice in qualitative research. The following chapters, although touching on different topics, can be located under this general umbrella. The chapter on informed consent (Part II, Chapter 3) deals with levels of consent as levels of respectful engagement of children in the research process. The chapter on language, trust and handling group dynamics (Part II, Chapter 4) opens the discussion on the necessity of establishing more egalitarian relationships in order to stimulate participants' engagement in the research process and self-disclosure.

Renegotiating the power relations in data collection: the status of the researcher

The focus on the status of the qualitative researcher was motivated by the implication that research, regardless of how transparent its agenda, is never innocent (Phillips and Shaw, 2011). As the myth of the silent, unengaged researcher and author has long been debunked in ethnographic writings (Dicks *et al.*, 2005:

33), it is especially in research on/with children that the position and voice of the researcher needs to be clearly accounted for. The next chapter in Part II deals extensively with power relations between researcher and the researched.

Research on/with vulnerable groups

Among the studies collected by the network, several involved research on/with vulnerable categories of children (e.g. victims of cyberbullying, children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds or children with special needs). Particular characteristics of the research design of these studies that offer valuable insights into handling ethical issues throughout several stages of the research process, such as accessing respondents, building trust and actual data collection with vulnerable categories, were briefly touched on in previous chapters. However, as an emerging issue that requires an equally sensitive approach to the design of the research tools and context in order to make it appropriate for vulnerable participants, a separate discussion was dedicated to research on children particularly vulnerable to online conduct or contact risks in Part II, Chapter 6.

Cultural differences in handling ethical issues

Finally, a discussion on how different ethical issues, for example, handling consent or negotiating the presence of adults, is offered with illustrative examples from the studies provided in Part II, Chapter 7. In addition, some preliminary considerations on the ways ethical issues, such as levels of consent, accessing schools and negotiating adult presence, were handled throughout data collection in several countries in the EU Kids Online III qualitative fieldwork (spring 2013) are discussed in detail in this final chapter.

References

Borum, V. (2006). 'Reading and writing womanist poetic prose – African American mothers with deaf daughters', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 340-352.

Clayton, A.M. and Thorne, T. (2000). 'Diary data enhancing rigour: Analysis framework and verification tool.' *Journal of advanced nursing*, 32(6), 1514-1521.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (2nd edn). London: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J.W. and Clark, V.L.P. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N.K. (2009 [1970]). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods.* Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

DeWalt, K. and DeWalt, B. (2011). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers* (2nd edn). Lanham, MD, US: Altamira Press.

Dicks, B., Soyinka, B. and Coffey, A. (2006). 'Multimodal ethnography.' *Qualitative Research*, 6(1), 77-96.

Dicks, B., Mason, B., Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P. (2005). *Qualitative research and hypermedia. Ethnography for the digital age*. London: Sage Publications.

Gauntlett, D. (2007). *Creative explorations: New approaches to identities and audiences*. London: Routledge.

Gwyther, G. and Possamai-Inesedy, A. (2009). 'Methodologies a la carte: an examination of emerging qualitative methodologies in social research.' *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(2), 99-115.

Hammersley, M. (2008). *Questioning qualitative inquiry: Critical essays.* London: Sage Publications.

Hesse-Biber, S.N. and Leavy, P. (2008). 'Pushing on the methodological boundaries: the growing need for emergent methods within and across the discipline.' In S.N. Hesse-Biber and P. Leavy (eds). *Handbook of emergent methods* (pp. 1-15). New York: Guilford Press.

Hewson, C. (2007). 'Gathering data on the Internet: Qualitative approaches and possibilities for mixed methods research.' In A. Joinson, K. McKenna, U. Reips and T. Postmes (eds). *Oxford handbook of Internet psychology* (pp. 405-428). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Joinson, A.N. (2001). 'Knowing me, knowing you: Reciprocal self-disclosure in Internet-based surveys.' *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 4(5): 587-591.

Kellett, M. (2005). *How to develop children as researchers: A step by step guide to teaching the research process.* London: Sage Publications.

Kozinets, R.V. (2010). *Netnography: Doing ethnographic research online.* London: Sage Publications.

Krueger, R.A. and Casey, M.A. (2009). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (4th edn). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Livingstone, S., Kirwil, L., Ponte, C. and Staksrud, E. (2013). *In their own words: What bothers children online?* London: EU Kids Online, London School of Economics and Political Science. Available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/48357/1/In%20their%20own%20words%20%28lsero%29.pdf, accessed August 2013.

Mason, J. (2011). 'Facet methodology: the case for an inventive research orientation.' *Methodological Innovations Online*, 6(3): 75-92. Available at www.pbs.plym.ac.uk/mi/pdf/8-02-12/MIO63Paper31.pdf, accessed August 2013.

Murthy, D. (2008). 'Digital ethnography: an examination of the use of new technologies for social research.' *Sociology*, 42(5): 837-855.

Nind, M., Wiles, R., Bengry-Howell, A. and Crow, G. (2012). 'Methodological innovation and research ethics: forces in tension or forces in harmony?' *Qualitative Research*, 1-18.

Phillips, C. and Shaw, A. (2011). 'Editorial: innovation and the practice of social work research.' *British Journal of Social Work*, 41, 609-624.

Rhodes, R. (2010). 'Rethinking research ethics.' *American Journal of Bioethics*, 10(10), 19-36.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

Strauss, A.L. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Strauss, A.L. and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd edn). London: Sage Publications.

Taylor, C. and Coffey, A. (2008) *Innovation in qualitative research methods: Possibilities and challenges.* Cardiff: Cardiff University.

Wiles, R., Pain, H. and Crow, G. (2010). *Innovation in qualitative research methods: A narrative review.* Southampton: National Centre for Research Methods, University of Southampton. Available at http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/919/1/innovation_in_qualitative_research_methods.pdf, accessed June 2013.

2: Innovation at the level of participants

Leslie Haddon

Participants with specific problems

One form of innovation is when the methods chosen to investigate a group are novel precisely because they address something specific about those particular participants, by either empowering or giving voice to otherwise invisible participants, or by accessing information from participants who are otherwise difficult to reach. There are a number of examples that show this process in different guises. Researchers in one Czech study investigating cyberbullying among adolescent girls – *Risks of internet use among children and adolescents (RIUCA). Cyberbullying in adolescent victims: Perception and coping* (No. 6) – were aware that it can be difficult to persuade some young people to talk about these particular negative experiences (Ševčíková, Šmahel and Otavová, 2012). Hence they chose to offer anonymity by using an open online invitation to participate in the study, allowing those who volunteered to choose how they wished to be called. The researchers then conducted the semi-structured interview online via ICQ or Skype chat, as online interviews are sometimes particularly appropriate for the study of sensitive issues and of vulnerable, socially excluded or stigmatized populations. The literature on online research has shown that the internet and its anonymity allow participants to be more open and willing to disclose private or emotionally involving experiences (Seymour, 2001). Furthermore, the lack of physical presence of the researcher makes it easier for the interviewee to withdraw or opt out (Kazmer and Xie, 2008). The participants in this study were also allowed to set the boundaries of what they wanted to discuss, and sometimes expressed themselves in long paragraphs describing their experiences in detail. The participants were thus able to talk about such matters as how they recognized potential bullies and their avoidance and other coping strategies, as well as about how the bullying affected their own self-esteem and sometimes was even perceived as increasing their own sense of aggression against family members and friends. It remains to be seen if admitting such strong effects would have occurred in face-to-face interviews. Moreover, some participants thought that talking about their feelings (online) had helped them find some closure (Locke *et al.*, 1990). A similar approach (online interviewing) was used in another Czech study, this time of people who had negative experiences from meeting online strangers offline: *Risks of internet use among children and adolescents (RIUCA). Adolescents' negative experiences from meeting online strangers offline* (No. 8). If the experience was negative, there were doubts about whether the young people would want to meet a second adult (i.e., the researcher) face-to-face. Hence, once again, the anonymity of online interviewing was meant to enable these young people to talk about a sensitive issue, and indeed they were willing to talk about their lack of initial caution, subsequent disillusionment and development of general distrust from this experience.

Under-represented groups in social studies

In general, there are fewer studies of young children than teenagers. But two studies are described here which are, in their own ways, innovative. One Finnish survey of young children's media culture, *Children's media barometer* (No. 17), arranged for slightly older children (14-15 years old) to interview 4- to 8-year-olds. This was not without its challenges (e.g. making the questionnaire easier enough for the older children to administer), and adults had to be available when the children were interviewed in case of any problems. The approach was innovatory by virtue of using child interviewers to whom the younger children might speak more freely than to adults. According to the researchers, the most useful forms of data collection turned out to be observation at home (0- to 3-year-olds), and interviews (over 4-year-olds), including questionnaire surveys

conducted by peer students. Through observation, it was possible to note the non-verbal messages in the expressions and gestures of the youngest children. Answering a researcher's questions seemed to be easiest for a child when they were allowed some meaningful activity (e.g. drawing, playing) during the interview. In the Belgian studies *Online resilience among children and youngsters* (No. 3) and *Online resilience – motives for coping strategies* (No. 4), it was found that this approach also worked very well for children aged 10-12. The children were more talkative when they could show things on the computer. They were more spontaneous when they could sit together with the researcher at the computer and show what they usually do online. After this phase of show-and-tell, the researcher could more easily move on to questions about harm and coping. In *Children's media barometer* (No. 17) it was also possible to capture the viewpoints of younger school children and make them visible – for statistical analysis as well – through one-to-one questionnaire surveys. These surveys, conducted by upper level elementary school peer students, could make a workable method with some changes to the questionnaire and the training of peer students. The number of volunteer peer students was larger than expected, and younger pupils were excited when they had the opportunity to interact with older students. Most peer students chosen for conducting interviews had siblings the same age as the interviewees; thus they could talk naturally to their younger interviewees. A second, Austrian study looked at the *Media socialization of socially disadvantaged children and adolescents* (No. 1). The main innovation here was that the research involved a qualitative panel study (where panel studies are less common and are usually quantitative) to examine this particular group of young children's media experiences over time, as they grew up. So in the first wave, when the interviews used hand puppets and sat on the floor with children, the children were aged about five years old. They were subsequently interviewed two years later, then three years later, then two years later, by which time they were 12 years old. In addition, one of the parents was also interviewed, following a corresponding guideline, in order to assess the differences in media education concepts and perceptions.

Researching participants' social context

Many studies of children either interview parents about children's internet experiences, or interview children. The EU Kids Online II survey was innovatory for its time in terms of interviewing both a child and a parent from within a household unit, partly in order to compare their perspectives (e.g. whether they agreed that certain rules existed), to compare their accounts (of what had ever bothered the child, when an open-ended filter question had first been asked of the interviewees) and to evaluate the parents' knowledge (e.g. of whether their children had experienced certain risks). But one Estonian study, *The role of significant others for 3rd grade pupils in coping with online risks* (No. 14), went further by interviewing 9- to 10-year-olds, their older sibling, their parents and their teachers. Again, the aim was to compare perspectives (on what was risky) and to examine to whom the young children turned if there were problems (i.e., to which 'significant others' – in practice, it turned out to be the parent rather than older siblings and teachers). As might be expected from such an ambitious project, it was difficult to find families and teachers where everyone agreed to be interviewed (and contacting teachers was especially difficult). Hence this was a rather small qualitative study of four participant 'models' (i.e., only four sets of children, siblings, parents and teachers agreed to be interviewed). Although the method (interviews) was not in itself innovatory, comparing so many different perspectives was a new approach.

Another Estonian study, *Intergenerational communication in new media* (No. 13), made use of a similar approach and interviewed members from three consecutive generations from one family to explore the intergenerational relationships in the context of web-based communication, which few studies have tried to do so far. While ethnographies of media consumption in the domestic context have focused mainly on television (co)-viewing practices, and the study of interpersonal mediated communication has addressed mainly the practice of micro-coordination between family members through mobile communication, or the symbolic value of mobile phones in mediating the relationship between parents and children, the intergenerational use of new

media such as Skype, MSN and Facebook by three generations of family members (grandparents, parents and children) is new. The Estonian study involved members (parent, child and grandparent) of four families, who participated in 12 semi-structured interviews (one for each participant), online and face-to-face. The sampling procedure involved the selection of the parents' generation. Once parents agreed to take part in the research, they assumed responsibility of gaining the consent of their children and the grandparent generation. This sampling procedure allowed the researcher to gain two important objectives: children were motivated to participate given that their parents had agreed to do so; and parents gave their consent to interview their children with more ease. The interviews were built on trust. From the beginning it was agreed that the research granted participants full anonymity, and interviewees' identities were kept confidential through the use of codes (including gender and age) to identify them. The study also included two under-aged children, one of whom was interviewed face-to-face and the other on Skype. One fear of the author was that children would not be willing to give long answers, but both children were very open while talking with them, face-to-face and also through Skype. Moreover, children were familiar with the topic under investigation (online communication), so only a few questions required rephrasing or rewording. A major problem with children was keeping the interview focused. At times children started to give answers based on their relationship with friends and schoolmates, so the interviewer had to use guiding questions in order to get the focus back on the topic of online intergenerational communication. Face-to-face interviews were carried out in the domestic context, to help participants feel comfortable. Compared with face-to-face interviews, it was felt that 'camera-off' audio-only Skype interviews allowed interviewees to be more open and honest, because they could avoid eye contact with the researcher and stay fully anonymous. While granting greater disclosure and spontaneity, such Skype interviews entail some risk, because the interviewer cannot control the interview setting or ensure that parents do not interfere in the conversation through suggesting answers to their children. Online interviews on Skype also pose some privacy issues: when the conversation is fully transcribed, family members might gain access and read it later. The researcher had to trust that the interviewee was being truthful when asked if s/he was alone in the room and parents were not helping answer questions. At the end of each interview, the researcher asked the interviewee if they had anything more to add, so they had the opportunity to speak about other issues that had not been asked about. But the respondents were satisfied with the questions asked already and did not want to add or clarify anything. One Skype interview had to be interrupted, so the remaining questions were sent to the participant in a word document and completed asynchronously. Overall, online interviews had some clear benefits – more open disclosure – but also disadvantages; beyond the privacy issues and the lack of interviewer control over the interview setting, Skype interviews were also more time-consuming.

References

Kazmer, M. and Xie ,B. (2008). 'Qualitative interviewing in internet studies. Playing with the media, playing with the method.' *Information, Communication & Society*, 11(2), 257-278.

Locke, S.E., Kowaloff, H.B., Safran, C., Slack, W.V., Cotton, D., Hoff, R., Popovsky, M., McGuff, J. and Page, P. (1990). 'Computer-based interview for screening blood donors for risk of HIV transmission.' In *Proceedings of the Annual Symposium on computer application in medical care* (pp. 835-839). American Medical Informatics Association.

Ševčíková, A., Šmahel, D. and Otavová, M. (2012). 'The perception of cyberbullying in adolescent victims.' *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 17(3-4), 319-328.

Seymour, W.S. (2001). 'In the flesh or online? Exploring qualitative research methodologies.' *Qualitative Research*, 1(2), 147-168.

3: Innovation at the level of research topic

Andra Siibak

Gaining a deeper understanding of sensitive research topics

Studies that make use of methods and techniques in novel ways in order to gain a deeper understanding of a sensitive or under-researched topic, or which illuminate a difference 'facet' of an issue (Mason, 2011), could be deemed innovative at the level of methodology applied to a specific research topic. A number of studies provided by the group fit in this category. Online interviews, although no longer novel in themselves, have proved to be an effective method for researching sensitive issues, for example, exposure to sexual content. In addition, creative research approaches have previously been employed within a wide range of disciplines – sociology, psychology, social policy, education and health – and often in research involving children and young people (Awan, 2007; Gauntlett, 2007; Lealand and Zanker, 2006), or in studies concerned with issues of identity and meaning-making (Awan, 2007; Gauntlet, 2007). This approach has not yet been used for studying online identity construction practised by the young. However, as proposed by a team of researchers from Estonia and Sweden, such a methodology may offer not only "an alternative to language-driven qualitative research methods" (Gauntlett, 2011: 4), but may also help "provide knowledge about aspects of social life that may not be accessible with traditional qualitative research" (Gauntlett, 2007: 182).

The approach of adopting online interviews as an effective method for exploring sensitive topics was used in the Czech study, *Risks of internet use among children and adolescents (RIUCA). Exposure to sexual content among adolescent girls* (No. 7). This study investigated exposure to online sexual content among 15- to 18-year-old girls (*N*=14), and whether there were any consequent bothersome experiences. As the semi-structured interviews were conducted online, participants appeared to be more open to sharing their sexually related experiences than they might have been when faced with similar questions during face-to-face interviews.

A similar approach was used in an Italian study of 16- to 18-year-olds' use of the internet to conduct personal exploration of sexuality. *The digital face of Eros, Agape and Philia. Adolescents, love and sexuality in the internet* (No. 24) used online focus groups for a similar reason – the anonymity enabled more spontaneous comments when talking about a sensitive issue. This seemed to be a successful strategy, and participants spoke freely and were able to discuss how they used the internet to deal with their curiosity about sexual issues and avoid embarrassment, and to access pornography as a source of sexual information (where for girls in particular the anonymity of the internet could enable them to avoid the stricter social controls that constrain their behaviour compared with boys). This study was also innovatory in terms of having, at an earlier stage, a co-construction group of 16- to 18-year-olds who helped design the research questions and even the appropriate language to use, that is, some participants helped shape the method.

Illuminating a different 'facet' of an issue – perceptions of privacy

The issue of privacy has been explored by means of Instant Messenger (IM) interviews. The Estonian study *Privacy strategies of Estonian teens in networked publics* (No. 12) is, in fact, one of the few studies in English to use qualitative approaches to study young European people's perceptions of the privacy aspects of networked publics. Although the topic of young people's perceptions of privacy in online environments, and their corresponding privacy strategies, has gained significant academic interest in the last few years, the majority of these studies have made use of quantitative research methods for investigating the topic (Acquisti and Gross, 2006; boyd and Hargittai, 2010; Christofides, Muise and Desmarais, 2011; Debatin *et al.*, 2009).

Furthermore, the majority of studies carried out on the topic have focused on the issue of privacy from the viewpoint of one particular online platform, mainly Facebook (see boyd and Hargittai, 2010; Christofides *et al.*, 2011; Davis and James, 2012; Raynes-Goldie, 2010; Siibak and Murumaa, 2011; Sorensen and Jensen, 2010). The Estonian study, however, aimed to analyse young people's perceptions of privacy as well as their privacy strategies on various text-based online environments (blogs, social networking sites [SNS], IM). Furthermore, the innovation of the study lies in the fact that the researchers aimed to gather knowledge about more complex privacy strategies, for example, social steganography (the use of secret writing), and other strategies that teens implement to protect their privacy, which have so far only rarely been explored in detail (boyd and Marwick, 2011; Siibak and Murumaa, 2011).

The data for this study of Estonian teens' privacy strategies was gathered by the means of semi-structured online interviews via IM that were conducted with 13- to 16-year-old adolescents (*N*=15), all of whom were active internet users. However, in order to approach the topic of various privacy strategies more closely, the study participants also gave the researchers permission to access and browse their posts on SNS profiles and blogs. Having access to the online content creation of the interviewees enabled researchers to ask more specific questions and provided more detailed descriptions about, for example, social steganography, multi-layered messages that communicate with different audiences simultaneously but which are essentially meaningless to the audience at large. Largely thanks to being granted access to the respondents' blogs and SNS posts, the researchers were able to detect the usage of hidden messages used by Estonian teens in various text-based communication environments.

Creative methods for exploring adolescents' self-presentation and identity construction online

Within the framework of the *GTO project* another novel qualitative approach, which has come to be known as 'creative research methods' (Gauntlett, 2007), was used for exploring how tweens (aged 13-14), construct their identities online (No. 11). This was particularly in terms of how tweens express gender and age. Two workshops with 13- to 14-year-olds were carried out in Sweden (*N*=16) and Estonia (*N*=17), and a creative methods approach was used. In the first part of the workshop, participants in both countries were introduced to the theme by being asked to 'construct an online character, aged 10'. In groups of four, the young participants were asked to create characteristics for their imaginary net persona by making drawings, accompanied by written statements/characterizations. The researchers did not provide the young people with any additional information beyond being encouraged to take their own experiences and associations of online identity work as the point of departure. In all other respects, the tweens were free to come up with their own ideas and to exercise their creativity to the fullest extent possible, using paper, pens, crayons and post-it notes. In the next stage of the workshop, students drew and described the possible social media platforms (SNS) that their imaginary persona might use. These two stages were then repeated, but with instructions to make the persona 12 and eventually 14 years old, coupled with written statements. After having drawn and written about the 12-year-old persona, the young people were handed laptops with internet access and asked to continue working on constructing the persona online. All the groups, both in Estonia and in Sweden, then constructed the 14-year-old persona on the internet (via a blog, Facebook, etc.).

The researchers believe that the adoption of such a creative approach meant they were able to foreground the fact that these creative and playful explorations of (online) tween identities contain a mixture of on- as well as offline opinions (e.g. interests from pop culture, celebrities they refer to, etc.) and feelings and challenges the young associate with and encounter in their everyday lives as tweens. Furthermore, the researchers argue that using this method gave them the opportunity to witness how peer culture – with its expectations, norms and values – helped shape the imaginary net personas, given that the identities created were the result of a joint reflexive process. In addition, the approach enabled researchers to follow the actual digital literacy practices of the participants as they happened (e.g. through their sampling and mashing of images), as well as

studying the flow and liveliness of their online interactions in a way that would not have been possible otherwise. In the final phase of the workshop, each group was asked to present and explain their work to the others, and a more general discussion on the theme of online identity creation followed. This allowed tweens to take on the role of experts, as well as providing them with a chance to reflect on their own perceptions and practices concerning gender in both off- and online contexts.

A similar methodological approach, where the participants were encouraged to keep their social networking sites (SNS) profiles open during the interview so as to be better able to comment on their own practices, was also used in the *GTO project – Construction and normalization of gender online among young people in Estonia and Sweden* (No. 10). This project explored visual self-presentation strategies of Estonian and Swedish pre-teens (10- to 14-year-olds) on SNS. In both countries, informants (*N*=21 in Estonia and *N*=31 in Sweden) were asked to reflect on their own visual self-presentation choices in online communities, and to comment on the self-presentation trends they perceived to be prevalent online. As the study did not aim to compare the opinions and experiences of Estonian and Swedish youth, the composition of the samples was secondary to the quality of the data collected, that is, the general aim of the researchers was to find the authentic voices of the young. Conducting interviews with pre-teens on the topic of visual self-presentation on SNS is in itself quite an innovative approach, as the majority of studies addressing young people's self-presentation strategies on social networking profiles have been based on surveys or content analysis.

In other research, the Estonian study of young people's self-presentation on SNS, *The importance and role of audience in new media: Messages on social networking sites* (No. 9), asked participants in focus groups to make drawings and interpret their work. The innovatory part, it is argued by the researchers, lay in the implications for the relation between researchers and researched, in this case, adult and youth. Rather than the adult researcher interpreting the drawings, the teenagers did so themselves, giving them greater 'editorial control' over the material disclosed. In this creative exercise, the moderator imposed their agenda of questions less than in 'traditional' focus groups, and to a greater extent followed the discussions initiated by the young people themselves. It is worth observing that this is by no means the only study to encourage participant interpretation, but it nevertheless illustrates sensitivity to this issue. While this challenged the power relations between researcher and researched, the researchers did note that sometimes, unconsciously or not, the teenagers were nevertheless self-censoring as they tried to earn the approval of their peers in the group discussions. That said, this approach did allow the teenagers to be open enough to note that much of what they said in social networking contexts was of little importance in their eyes, more to entertain and attract comments from peers; but some of what they posted allowed them to re-live the low points of their lives, making very private information available to audience. In fact, some admitted that they often thought only about smaller audiences that would see their posted material, whereas wider audiences could actually see these posts, and this sometimes caused problems. Hence if there was some self-censoring in the focus groups, the participants were nevertheless able to talk about potentially personal issues and problems.

References

Acquisti, A. and Gross, R. (2006). 'Imagined communities: Awareness, information sharing, and privacy on Facebook.' 6th Workshop on Privacy Enhancing Technologies, Robinson College, Cambridge University. Available at http://petworkshop.org/2006/preproc/preproc_03.pdf, accessed January 2013.

Awan, F. (2007). *Young people, identity and the media: A study of conceptions of self-identity among youth in southern England*. Available at www.artlab.org.uk, accessed October 2012.

boyd, d. and A. Marwick. (2011). 'Social steganography: Privacy in networked publics.' *International Communication Association.* 28 May. Boston, MA.

boyd, d. and Hargittai, E. (2010). 'Facebook privacy settings: Who cares?' *First Monday*, 15(8), 13-20. Available at www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3086/2589, accessed October 2012.

Christofides, E., Muise, A. and Desmarais, S. (2011). 'Hey mom, What's on your Facebook? Comparing Facebook disclosure and privacy in adolescents and adults.' *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 3(1), 48-54.

Davis, K. and James, C. (2012). 'Tweens' conceptions of privacy online: implications for educators.' *Learning, Media and Technology, iFirst article*, 1-22.

Debatin, B., Lovejoy, J.P., Horn, A.-K. and Hughes, B.N. (2009). 'Facebook and online privacy: Attitudes, behaviours, and unintended consequences.' *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 15(1), 83-108.

Gauntlett, D. (2007). *Creative explorations. New approaches to identities and audiences*. London: Routledge.

Gauntlett, D. (2011). *Making is connecting: The social meaning of creativity*, *from DIY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0*. London: Polity Press.

Lealand, G. and Zanker, R. (2006). 'Dream worlds and media worlds: Using drawings for insights into the lives of New Zealand children.' In U. Carlsson and C.V. Feilitzen (eds). *In the service of young people? Studies and reflections on media in the digital age: Yearbook 2005/2006* (pp. 117-128). Göteborg: Nordicom.

Mason, J. (2011). 'Facet methodology: the case for an inventive research orientation.' *Methodological Innovations Online*, 6(3), 75-92. Available at www.pbs.plym.ac.uk/mi/pdf/8-02-12/MIO63Paper31.pdf, accessed August 2013.

Raynes-Goldie, K. (2010). 'Aliases, creeping and wall-cleansing. Understanding privacy in the age of Facebook.' *First Monday*, 15(1). Available at http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2775/2432, accessed October 2012.

Siibak, A. and Murumaa, M. (2011). 'Exploring the "nothing to hide" paradox: Estonian teens' experiences and perceptions about privacy online.' In Proceedings of the 'A Decade in Internet Time: OII Symposium on the Dynamics of the Internet and Society', 21-24 September, University of Oxford. Available at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1928498, accessed January 2013.

Sorensen, A.S. and Jensen, J.L. (2013). 'Nobody has 257 friends: Strategies of friending, disclosure and privacy on Facebook.' *Nordicom Review*, 34(1), 49-62. Available at www.nordicom.gu.se/common/publ_pdf/382_jensen_sorensen.pdf, accessed January 2013.

4: Innovation at the level of topic and participants

Giovanna Mascheroni

Creative methods with participants excluded from traditional research topics

As previously stated, research on children and the internet does not necessarily involve new methods or techniques. However, innovations may occur at the level of the object of study and the participants involved in the study: emerging or under-investigated issues, and certain categories of participants who are particularly vulnerable. This may require a careful adaptation of traditional and well-established research methods, or lead to the choice of new, experimental techniques. The previous two chapters have illustrated ways in which methods are used in innovative ways to address sensitive/under-investigated topics or to access participants who are otherwise difficult to reach. As the internet has become more and more embedded in children's lives, research has shifted from a focus on the impact of the internet on society to a deeper understanding of how new media are incorporated in the contexts of everyday life, and how they are shaped by the opportunity structures that characterize children's, as well as adults', lives (Livingstone, 2009). Accordingly, issues of inequalities (in access, use, literacy and online opportunities) were raised (Hargittai, 2010; Livingstone and Helsper, 2007), and the exploration of the inextricable relationship between social and digital exclusion became a recurrent theme. Although the overlapping is evident, a special focus on innovation occurring simultaneously at the level of both topic and participants, with categories of respondents usually excluded from mainstream research topics, can be included in the category of innovative research.

One example of innovation to address a complex challenge is where research is conducted on the opportunities and risks associated with internet use for children with cognitive and/or physical disabilities – and investigating how the disability divide shapes uses of the internet in conjunction with socioeconomic status. This was the topic of a recent study conducted in Greece in 2012, *Children and new technologies: The digital divide among children with special needs* (No. 22). It involved 20 children: 13 teenagers aged between 17-20, who had various levels of motor-only and motor-and-cognitive/mental difficulties, with the add-on characteristic that their mental age was not always compatible with their biological age; and seven deaf children aged 11-12 (Tsaliki with Kontogianni, under review). Given the particular category of children involved in the study, field entry was a crucial phase of the research design: researchers had to gain the acceptance of both teachers and children. Indeed, although a greater number of specialist schools were approached initially, a number of principals declined the invitation to participate. As a result, the researchers turned to schools that kept an open mind towards the research goals.

Once access to a school was gained, the researcher made the selection of potential candidates with the school counsellor (a psychologist), and children with lower verbal capabilities were excluded. The category of participants also demanded careful management of the interview situation, in order to respect each interviewee's needs and requirements. Young people with motor and/or cognitive difficulties were interviewed at school, in the counsellor's office, which is a familiar space for all involved. The radio was discretely on, a normal practice for participants during their own sessions with the counsellor. All interviews respected the particular needs and requirements of each interviewee, in terms of length and mode of address. No recording device was used (as requested by the school principal) since this was expected to upset teenagers; instead, detailed notes were kept, while the interviewer made sure she didn't lose eye contact with each participant. The presence of the school counsellor was a prerequisite put in place by the school, but turned out to work in favour of the researchers: the counsellor was trusted by the youngsters, working with them on a daily basis, and her presence helped them feel secure and at ease with the interviewer. In fact, after a while, all the youngsters opened up and even asked the investigator to take part in a school questionnaire project, in an

example of role-reversal. In another case, the investigator was asked by the participants to participate in preparations for a charity event, helping them with paper cuts and gift wrapping.

Interviews with the deaf children took place at their homes, without a parent present, though in the presence of a specialist interpreter. The interview guide itself was adjusted to the children's special needs, with the help of the sign language interpreter; for example, questions starting with 'have you ever heard about…' were revised as follows: 'are you aware that..'; other terms, such as 'internet' and 'YouTube' needed no translation as the Greek Sign Language has borrowed terms from the British Sign Language (BSL). Due diligence was paid to address the children themselves rather than the interpreter, to speak clearly, and to offer interviewees plenty of facial expressions that they could interpret themselves (Morris, 2002).

Another example is the Belgian study *Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies* (No. 5), where the researchers engaged in several qualitative sessions with six children in a school for children with special needs (children with cognitive and behavioural problems, all boys aged 15-19). Several thematic group discussions were organized, in which the youngsters were encouraged to talk about online activities, online risks and coping strategies. Together with the school board, it was decided to organize sessions on the topics of 'online activities', 'digital skills', 'online bullying', 'privacy' and 'online communication'. The suggestion of organizing a session about 'online sexuality' was declined by the school board, as they were afraid this topic would upset some of the youngsters. Before the first session, the researcher went to observe the group one afternoon. This helped them familiarize with the youngsters and the school system. As their reading and writing skills are limited, the discussions were facilitated using pre-printed cards with big fonts, pictures, images, icons, smileys and colour codes. During all sessions, two or three mentors were present and were actively involved. They encouraged the youngsters to speak up, structure their arguments and give examples. The presence of the mentors was also valuable because they know how to respond best if one of the boys started to behave in a problematic or aggressive way.

After all group sessions, individual interviews were organized. This time, no mentor was present in the room. The school agreed with this approach, as meanwhile the youngsters had become familiarized with the researcher. One (autistic) boy refused to record the interview, as he was afraid his voice would sound ridiculous. The recording device really seemed to make him nervous, so it was put away, and immediately after the interview research notes were made. The five other boys agreed with the interview being recorded. Most of the time, the boys were cooperative and actively took part in the group discussions, although they sometimes needed to be encouraged by their mentors. Besides assuring all interviewees the confidentiality and anonymity required by every research process, the researchers were constantly engaged in suspending any taken for granted assumptions about differences between children and adults (Christensen and Prout, 2005), avoiding the imposition of an adult perspective on children, and working instead with Morris's perspective of "being with" the child participants (2003).

References

Christensen, P. and Prout, A. (2005). 'Anthropological and sociological perspectives on the study of children.' In S. Green and D. Hogan (eds). *Researching children's experience. Approaches and methods*. London: Sage Publications.

Hargittai, E. (2010). 'Digital na(t)ives? Variation in internet skills and uses among members of the "net generation".' *Sociological Inquiry*, 80(1), 92-113.

Livingstone, S. (2009). *Children and the internet. Great expectations, challenging realities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Livingstone, S. and Helsper, E. (2007). 'Gradations in digital inclusion: Children, young people and the digital divide.' *New Media & Society*, 9(4), 671-696.

Morris, J. (2002). *A lot to say! A guide for social workers, personal advisors and others working with disabled children and young people with communication impairments*. London: Scope.

Morris, J. (2003). 'Including all children: Finding out about the experiences of children with communication and/or cognitive impairments.' *Children & Society*, 17, 337-348.

Tsaliki, L. (with S. Kontogianni) (2013). 'Bridging the disability divide? Young children and teenagers' with special needs internet experiences in Greece.' *Journal of Children and Media.* [under review]

5: What constitutes a 'rich design' in qualitative methodology?

Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink, Fabian Prochazka and Philip Sinner

Rich designs as multi-faceted perspectives

With regard to methodology, some research designs may be deemed particularly noteworthy because they include 'unusual' participants or topics (as outlined in this report). Other designs are notable because they combine different methods (and sometimes theories) in ways that provide novel answers to research questions and open up new perspectives. The goal of such rich design approaches may be to eliminate weaknesses and blind spots perceived in one method by using complementary approaches that have specific strengths in such areas. A sensitive combination of methods can therefore shed light on aspects that cannot be covered adequately by only one method. Such rich designs feature a high density of data and a high level of reflection on the research process itself.

A rich design is characterized as one that is not restricted to one theory and method, or one set of categories or instruments, but which embraces diverse and multiple perspectives brought together with coherence and harmony. It is more than a multi-method design per se. Given the care taken in their construction, rich designs are particularly suitable for exploring complex social situations and actions where many factors need to be taken into account.

Using triangulation

A useful model for understanding, planning and carrying out a rich design is that of triangulation (Denzin, 2009, [1970]), which involves investigating a problem or question from (at least) two different angles. Denzin distinguishes between theoretical, methodological, data and investigator triangulation. Theoretical triangulation means combining different theories that may originate from different academic and research disciplines, for example, psychology, sociology and education, to fully investigate and describe social and communicative situations. However, using theoretical triangulation also means modifying and combining existing theories to specifically address a certain research question. Methodological triangulation refers to the combination of different methods to understand a topic completely, for example, content analysis and interviews. Data triangulation, on the other hand, refers to different samples, that is, data generated using the same method but with different groups of people or content. For example, teachers as well as children and parents may be interviewed. Data triangulation may also imply the use of data from different points in time. Lastly, investigator triangulation requires the collaboration of different researchers working on a project. This means that more than one person is involved in surveying and analysing data, as well as interpreting results. Where data triangulation involves the bringing together of different perspectives, this can make an ideal combination with theoretical triangulation, as different researchers often have different theoretical backgrounds (see also Fielding and Schreier, 2001).

It is important to avoid the use of triangulation simply as an end in itself, however. Rich design or triangulation is only valid if it is applicable to the research question. Otherwise, the mere addition of methods produces useless data. Theories and methods should not simply be drawn together; there has to be reflection on a combination of methods and instruments that are specifically tailored to the research question. The result is that rich designs are very complex and often costly in terms of money and time, which has to be taken into account when planning such research. It is also important to note that a rich design may not need to use all of the aforementioned aspects of triangulation, but may also be considered rich if only one of the different types of triangulation is carried out as one element in a sound design.

Examples of rich methodological designs

According to the qualitative studies conducted within the EU Kids Online network, many may be considered rich designs. We have chosen three studies that provide examples of how rich design can be carried out in a distinct way. These studies are by no means the only ones that use complex and fruitful designs. Other studies, such as the Finnish *Literacies, young people and the changing media environment* (No. 16), the German *Gambling in childhood and adolescence. Prevalence and prevention* (No. 18) and the Belgian studies on *Online resilience among children and youngsters* (No. 3) and the *TIRO project – The social meaning of young people's online creativity* (No. 2) also had rich, complex ethnographic approaches and made apt use of various forms of triangulation. Nonetheless, the following three examples make clear what constitutes a rich design and provide ideas on how to plan and execute such research.

The first study, *Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies* (No. 5), questions which sociodemographic, psychological and contextual factors shape children's digital literacy and how that level of literacy influences online activities. Further questions include which children are more vulnerable than others to online risks and how children develop coping strategies and resilience regarding these risks. The research questions deal with processes that evolve over time and focus on complex, interdependent social actions that are rooted in the child's individual social background. Therefore, the research is particularly suited to rich, triangulated methodological and theoretical design that can identify and describe the various influences and factors. This study combines a quantitative survey in school classes (*N*=2,047, ages 10-16) with an in-depth ethnographic approach that uses a multi-method design in which three school classes (*N*=39) are accompanied over one academic year: one A-level group (age 12-13), one B-level group (age 12-13), and one group for children with cognitive and behavioural difficulties (age 15-19). The 39 children participating in the ethnographic part of the study also completed the survey. In the three selected school classes, various qualitative techniques are employed in workshops once a month. The qualitative techniques can be constructed as comprising three parts. The first one focuses on digital literacy, combining an observation of digital skills and an assignment for the children to test their digital literacy. The second part, in contrast, focuses on online risks. In the course of each visit to the school, one risk is discussed. Topics covered comprise privacy, sexual images, user-generated content, meeting new people etc. A number of different techniques are combined in this element of the research: storytelling, role-playing games, card-sorting tasks, group discussions as well as individual interviews. The researcher examines how children perceive the risk, how they would react in the event of a negative experience, and how they try to avoid negative experiences. Finally, the third part consists of in-depth interviews with each child from the three focus classrooms. A special emphasis is placed on their social networks, and on the contribution and identity of important people in their lives. Additionally, teachers are interviewed to compare their perceptions and attitudes with the children's. This study demonstrates how the idea of triangulation can be employed in a distinct way. Method triangulation is used by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, alongside an array of different qualitative techniques like interviews and observation. Data triangulation is further enhanced by interviewing children and teachers.

The second project, *The class. Social networking and the changing practices of learning among youth* (No. 30), is from the UK and uses a somewhat similar ethnographic approach. The study focuses on learning processes that are shaped and influenced by media like the internet and mobile phones. Its basic assumption is that the boundaries between spheres like learning and free time, or school and home, are becoming blurred, and that traditional understandings of school are being challenged through intertwined social and technological changes. Learning is increasingly happening at home, online and with peers, while school becomes more important as a nucleus for social activities. These complex and diverse interdependencies can only be investigated using a sophisticated methodological design. The project investigates the social networks of young people online as well as offline, and explores how learning and leisure are combined and interrelated within these networks. The main research question is whether and how informal processes of learning are

supported and enhanced (or undermined) by the activities of digital social networking. The study was conducted in a London school which was carefully selected to represent an 'average' school in terms of school size, catchment, ethnic and socioeconomic status mix, etc. In this school, a class of 13- to 14-year-olds was selected at random and followed for an entire academic year. The project consisted of three phases that all encompassed a mix of different qualitative methods. The first phase was the conduct of school-based fieldwork in and around the classroom and the students' school activities. In-depth interviews with children were conducted, as well as observations of the classroom and examination of informal settings like lunch breaks. A mix of different techniques was employed alongside and within the student interviews, including diaries, mapping of social networks and other pen-and-paper-exercises. Additionally, teachers and other school staff were interviewed. The second phase consisted of fieldwork at the homes of the children involving individual interviews with the child and parents as well as observations of the home. 'Think-aloud' techniques explored media usage from the perspective of the child, and the young people explained what they were doing on their mobile phone, Facebook account, computer game etc. while demonstrating its use. In the third phase, fieldwork was carried out at one additional site that was important for the child: a youth centre, a sports club, etc. The methods here, however, were largely observational. Like the Belgian study, this ethnographic project shows how a complex and diverse research topic can be tackled using a combination of methods tailored to the needs of the research question. Triangulation on different levels is employed by combining different methods such as observation and interviews as well as combining different sources of data such as children, parents, teachers and school personnel.

The third project chosen as an example of rich research design is *Media socialization of socially disadvantaged children and adolescents* (No. 1). This is a longitudinal panel study conducted in Austria. It consists mainly of qualitative research methods in which 20 (subsequently 18) families were interviewed about their everyday lives, their circumstances and any problems around their use of different media. The study started in 2005 when the children in the families were around five years old and was repeated in 2007 (see Paus-Hasebrink and Bichler, 2008), 2010 and 2012 (see Paus-Hasebrink and Kulterer, 2013a), thus covering the development of children from 5 to around 12 years of age. The project explored the media use of socially disadvantaged children and their families with the objective of tracing the complex interplay of socioeconomic, individual and external factors in families' lives in general, and in particular on children's use of media and any impact this might have on children's development (see Havighurst, 1972). The aim was to establish a connection between the macro-, meso- and micro level in order to link together and understand the sociostructural and psychological aspects of children's capacities to cope with their developmental tasks. Paus-Hasebrink integrated several concepts to research media socialization processes by using a praxeological perspective which refers to Bourdieu's *Theory of practice* (1977). This allows identification of the social field in which social action takes place, and in which certain aims are followed and certain patterns of action are socially "accepted" (Weiß, 2000: 47). Within this perspective, the focus is on social milieus and their specific habitus, in which families live and use media. The design acknowledges that specific social conditions form different modes of growing up and therefore of childhood and adolescence. The economic, social and mental environment of family is expressed in the experiences of children and parents, and influences the parenting styles and the ways in which children grow up. A consideration of these issues made it clear that a research design that enables a modelling of these dynamic-transactional and molar (ecological) processes in an integrative and holistic way was required (see Paus-Hasebrink and Bichler, 2008; Paus-Hasebrink and Kulterer, 2013b). In order to capture the complexity of these dynamics, special attention was paid to the whole family – parents, children and siblings – their wider sociostructural framework, their specific way of living together, their ways of interacting and, notably, their communicative interactions with each other and their interactions with/about media. A multi-methodological design was constructed comprising face-to-face-interviews with both children and their parents. In addition, each family was observed in their everyday life, and a quantitative questionnaire was used to get a clearer picture of the particular family circumstances. This study follows the model of triangulation at the level of theoretical triangulation, drawing on theories from

developmental psychology, media use and sociology. Moreover, it also employs method triangulation by combining observations, surveys and in-depth interviews and showcases data triangulation by interviewing children as well as parents over a long period of time, which is very rare in qualitative studies.

References

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice on the basis of ethnological Kabyle society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University *Press.*

Denzin, N.K. (2009 [1970]). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods.* Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Fielding, N. and Schreier, M. (2001). 'Introduction: on the compatibility between qualitative and quantitative research methods.' *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 2(1). Available at www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/965/2107, accessed June 2013.

Havighurst, R.J. (1972). *Developmental tasks and education* (3rd edn). New York: McKay.

Paus-Hasebrink, I. and Bichler, M. (2008) *Mediensozialisationsforschung. Theoretische Fundierung und Fallbeispiel sozial benachteiligte Kinder.* [*Research on media socialisation. Theoretical basis and case study socially disadvantaged children.*] Innsbruck: Studienverlag (with cooperation from Christine Wijnen).

Paus-Hasebrink, I. and Kulterer, J. (2013a). *Praxeologische Mediensozialisationsforschung.* [*Praxeological research on media socialisation.*] Baden-Baden, Nomos (with cooperation from Philip Sinner).

Paus-Hasebrink, I. and Kulterer, J. (2013b). 'Socially disadvantaged children, media and health.' In C. von Feilitzen (ed.). *Yearbook 2012 of The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media – Children, youth, media and health*. Göteborg, Sweden: Nordicom. [in press]

Weiß, R. (2000). '"Praktischer Sinn", soziale Identität und Fern-Sehen. Ein Konzept für die Analyse der Einbettung kulturellen Handelns in die Alltagswelt.' ['"Practical sense", social identity and viewing television. A concept for the analysis of the embeddedness of cultural practice in everyday life.'] *Medien und Kommuni-kationswissenschaft*, 48(1), 42-62.

6: Analysing data from innovative designs

Lelia Green

Approaches to analysing qualitative data – making a case for pragmatism

In any research with children, including that relating to media and the internet, age differences are consistently among the most important background factors. Reporting findings by age, charting age trends or comparing age groups is expected by most readers. It would be the absence of age differences, not their discovery, that would be counterintuitive, if and when it occurred. A useful principle, therefore, is to assume that each child is capable of providing valid and insightful information, provided that s/he is approached appropriately and that the data are interpreted carefully, This was the case with the Russian study, *Emotional perception of the internet* (No. 27), although it examined generally older children, in the 14-17 age range. The problem is that increasingly young children go online and it is difficult to get information directly from them.

The conduct, interpretation, analysis and reporting of qualitative research is an imprecise science, yet it can offer more depth and subtlety than quantitative research. With qualitative research the focus is more on the 'why' questions, and less on the 'how many' questions. As Agar notes in a foundational text on conducting ethnography, "When you stand on the edge of a village and watch the noise and motion, you wonder, 'Who are those people and what are they doing?' […] Hypotheses, measurement, samples and instruments are the wrong guidelines. Instead, you need to learn about a world you don't understand by encountering it firsthand and making some sense out of it" (1986: 12). Ethnographic work, including participant and participant/observer approaches, constitutes only one of many qualitative research methods that might be used in innovative designs. This chapter considers how resulting data can be analysed. The reason underpinning a specific methodological innovation often impacts on the methods used for analysing data. For example, where one motivation is to support the empowerment of participants, researchers commonly use verbatim quotes to include people's voices in the research report and findings. Even so, whatever the motivation for the methods used, research has an important commitment to pragmatism. This is not necessarily unethical. For it to be useful, and for it to be used, research has to result in 'findings' which "necessarily reduce and reorganize a large amount of data" (Fram, 2013: 2), and position outcomes in terms of their relevance. In terms of the value of research findings, these are sometimes in response to specific research questions; on other occasions questions may be constructed from the activities that constitute the research. The reason for undertaking an innovative research project, or for selecting a range of innovative projects in order to compare and analyse their findings, offers a means through which different approaches to analysis can be considered and adopted or rejected accordingly.

Challenges to using triangulation

It can be challenging to analyse data from a selection of projects that use innovative design methods. This is also the case with the cross-comparison and analysis of research projects that use mixed methods (Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie, 2003), such as in the Slovakian research, *Constructing identity in virtual environments of the internet* (No. 29). Data analysis methods useful to mixed-methods research can also be used to evaluate findings across two or more projects, including cases where one or more of the projects utilizes innovative research methods. In these cases the concept of 'triangulation' is may be valuable (see Part I, Chapter 5). Triangulation helps establish reliability of findings, in that several approaches within one study, or several studies taken together, indicate the same result even though the various components of the study (or studies) differ (e.g. Rose, 2011).

Triangulation helps ensure the validity and reliability of research results (Hesse-Biber, 2012). It is one way in which disparate data can be compared to reveal whether or not a range of separate information sources indicate the same outcome. This helps ensure that conclusions are validly based on the project's data. Where certain aspects of several studies allow the comparison of some or all of the results, triangulation can also indicate how reliable the findings are. It may, in addition, identify factors that are associated with a particular outcome or finding in a range of different circumstances. Thus triangulation, which traditionally uses three or more sources of data or studies for comparison, adds strength and value to appropriately justified analytical arguments (Armstrong, Davis and Paulson, 2011). Triangulation has been criticized for "(1) its propensity to suppress variations in situated meanings and (2) its treatment of empirical observations as objectively verifiable rather than inherently theory-related" (Modell, 2009: 208). Indeed, such critiques build on perceptions such as Silverman's (1993: 158), that "the major problem with triangulation as a test of validity is that, by counterposing different contexts, it ignores the context-bound and skilful character of social interaction". Modell argues that these critiques can be addressed by conceptualizing triangulation as "a theory-related and context-bound validation technique" (2009: 218) which indicates that, given appropriate circumstances, it is reasonable to believe that events are connected, such as in the case of *The appropriation of parental control tools among Italian cultures of parental mediation of the internet: The case of Vodafone's Smart Tutor* (No. 25), where parents' mediation practices concerning internet-connected mobile phones were compared with children's approaches to their own smart phone use. The perception that events and attitudes may be connected introduces concepts such as critical realism.

Critical realism and critics of triangulation

Critical realism (Clarke, 2008) argues that both 'the constructed' and 'the real' are vital components of any attempt to understand social phenomena since human actions and motivations are complex and unpredictable, as well as being as much emotional as rational. In recognizing the importance of 'reality', critical realism rejects simple theoretical approaches and explanations, instead preferring to acknowledge the complexity of everyday life. Modell recommends the use of a critical realist perspective when applying triangulation to the analysis of qualitative data, noting that "actual research practices do not always correspond strictly to the philosophical assumptions embedded in the functionalist and interpretive paradigms, but may in fact be located in the 'transition zone' between these two paradigms" (2009: 219). He suggests that qualitative research frequently complies in de facto ways with the critical realist paradigm in that it assumes that reality is "an at least partly mind-independent entity" (Modell, 2009: 218).

Returning to critiques of triangulation, the concern about the suppression of 'variations in situated meanings' can be addressed in part through description of context and the use of quotations direct from participants. In these ways the research honours "an insider, emic gaze of individuals, their communities, and their lived histories" (Rowsell, 2011: 332). At the same time, the research approach aims to embrace theoretical frameworks that can help "maintain the etic perspective (outsider/distant concepts) throughout the analysis" (Fram, 2013: 1). Fram argues that the constant comparative approach is valuable here in combining an outsider perspective and analysis of insider comments. Fram also suggests that the constant comparative approach can be used independently of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), even though it is usually associated with that methodology, as was the case with the international study, *The development of adaptive and maladaptive patterns of internet use among European adolescents at risk for internet addictive behaviours: A grounded theory inquiry (EU NET ADB)* (No. 19).

O'Connor, Netting and Thomas (2008: 41) explain a constant comparison approach as ensuring that:

> … all data are systematically compared to all other data in the data set. This assures that all data produced will be analyzed rather than potentially disregarded on thematic grounds. It is the time and the process of this constant comparison that determines whether the analysis is

deductive and will produce a testable theory or whether the analysis is inductive and will build a theory for a particular context. (cited in Fram, 2013: 2)

One example of this approach in action was the Russian study, *Perception of opportunities and risks of the internet* (No. 28), which used participants' completions of incomplete sentences to construct seven separate kinds of internet users, reflecting a range of attitudes and motivations. Another example of analytical openness was provided by the *Media socialization of socially disadvantaged children and adolescents* (No. 1) (see the previous chapter for details on sampling and theoretical design), with data collected from 18 families. Guided interviews were done with at least one legal guardian and one child from each family, using comparable but updated guidelines. The interviews were combined with observations of everyday life situations and a short standardized questionnaire for the parent(s), concerning income (support), formal education etc. The data was analysed in two steps: first, a focused analysis of the interviews along previously defined categories as well as complementary ones was conducted for the parents' and children's interviews by using software for qualitative data analysis (MaxQDA), to carry out the processes of media socialization, parental education, trends in media usage, preferences etc. Second, a contextual analysis of selected individual subjects was done, comparing their answers from the guided interviews with further aspects of their *Lebenswelt*, financial and social conditions on several levels (micro level: child, meso level: lifestyle and social relations within the family, macro level: social situation). These children and families were treated as individual case studies. Additionally, empirical data from other studies on aspects of childhood, media use, leisure and socialization was collected according to their relevance for the study, and has been integrated into the focused analysis. Last, these independent parts were combined in order to gain results and to derive possible consequences for different stakeholders (see Paus-Hasebrink and Kulterer, 2013).

Deductive and inductive reasoning

Deductive and inductive reasoning differ in that deductive reasoning is more closely centred on formal logic, and inductive reasoning on establishing and accounting for similarity. Even so, Heit and Rotello (2010: 810-11) argue that differences are less apparent when people have a short time frame in which to reach a reasoned conclusion. In structuring an argument, deductive reasoning relates the findings to the external world, and to the etic perspective. It asserts a claim to validity. Inductive reasoning is more focused on establishing internal coherence, the emic approach. It seeks to establish consistency rather than making wider claims to validity. Such arguments from within the data are put forward "as a reason or support for the conclusion. When an argument is not claimed to be valid but is intended only to provide a reason for the conclusion, the argument is inductive" (Sinnott-Armstrong and Fogelin, 2010: 216). Most arguments from innovative research will be deductive, not least because the research methods used are experimental. Inductive arguments from qualitative research projects can be assessed as to their strength, whereas deductive arguments are either true or false. It is up to the reader to assess the value of the statements for him or herself and to judge how convincing those arguments are: does the explanation offered explain the observation made? The judgement of the reader is always important, with all research and all findings, and is one reason why research papers explain research design and the methods used in analysis.

Verbatim quotes

Verbatim quotes are sometimes provided in qualitative research results, both to give voice to participants and to provide a flavour of comments elicited during the project. Where verbatim quotes are used, and where examples of media or policy texts are cited as part of innovative research, it may be possible to use a critical discourse analysis approach to unpack meanings contained in these (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2009). Within critical discourse analysis, deconstructive techniques can be used to identify silences and omissions from everyday discourse and to hypothesize why some matters appear to be unspoken, or to be 'unspeakable' (Michelson, 1993). For example, there is an absence of qualitative research

into the 'sexting' practices of children under 16 in Australia. This is not because there is no sexting by younger teenagers, nor because the topic is unimportant. Instead, this absence is informed by the Australian construction of sexualized images of people under 18 as 'child abuse images' (as in 'child pornography') (Albury and Crawford, 2012). This remains true even if another under-18 has taken the photograph, or even if the subject of the photograph took the photograph themselves, as with 'selfies' (Albury *et al.*, 2013). In Australia, child pornography is a reportable offence which means that if a person with special responsibilities towards children has reason to believe that child pornography has been produced and does not report it, then they are legally liable for that failure (Crofts and Lee, 2012: 98). Research into this area is thus fraught with the possibility of incriminating either or both the participants and the researchers if there is reason to believe that child abuse images may have been produced. In the case of Albury's research regarding *Young people and sexting in Australia: Ethics, representation and the law* (No. 31), she chose to work with young people of 16 and 17 because she believed her university ethics committee would have fewer concerns if her participants were over the age of sexual consent. A deconstruction of the absence of research into the specific sexting practices of Australian children under 16 tells us about legal and policy issues, even though we remain ignorant about the specifics of Australian children's experiences in this area.

Practices of analysing data from innovative projects

When it comes to worked examples of specific methods that researchers can use to analyse data from innovative projects, the literature offers some pointers. Fram's 2013 paper, for example, offers a step-by-step account of how she analyses data using a constant comparative method, noting as she does so that a "methodology is 'a way of thinking about and studying social reality ([citing Strauss & Corbin, 1998], p. 3), whereas, method is 'a set of procedures and techniques for gathering and analysing data' ([Strauss & Corbin, 1998,] p. 3)" (Fram, 2013: 1). Although she uses constant comparative analysis outside the framework of grounded theory, many researchers use it within that context. Wasserman, Clair and Wilson (2009) explain a social science-friendly technique for moving from the process of individual coding arising from the constant comparison approach, for example, in grounded theory research, to the development of concepts that build on coded entities. They argue that, "while grounded theorists have spent much time on coding, they leave unclear just how the logical relation of multiple concepts, that is theory, jumps out of the data through this coding process" (Wasserman *et al.*, 2009: 362-3). Their suggestion is that researchers use a "MIC Fractal Generator" (p. 369) (Multilevel Integrated Cognition Fractal Generator; Wilson and Lowndes, 2004) to explore the development of concepts from coded items according to "four basic ontological categories. These are (1) static, (2) dynamic, (3) evaluative, and (4) self/identity" (Wasserman *et al.*, 2009: 367). Wasserman *et al.* (2009) show how to do this, and argue that their approach offers researchers methods through which "to assemble multiple emergent concepts into conceptual structures and to systematically work between data-specific and broader levels of scale" (p. 356), illustrating their theory with a worked example from their ethnographic research with homeless people. Various researchers have harnessed discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis, to particular research methodologies. This is true, for example, of Tate (2007: 1), who argues for "the emergence of an ethnomethodologically inclined discourse analysis which is called on to make sense of a hybridity of the everyday [in this case] where Black women reflexively translate discourses on identity positions in order to construct their own identifications in conversations". Tate's article includes a detailed account of the approach she takes to analysing the data accumulated from her participants' conversations.

In presenting mixed-methods research results to wider audiences, it is often useful to adopt a case study approach. Yin (2009) uses over 50 examples to demonstrate how case studies can combine "documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts" (Yin, 2003: 83). He suggests that there are different kinds of case study suited to different purposes and outcomes – exploratory, explanatory and descriptive – but argues that the focus should always be on "a contemporary phenomenon with some real life context" (Yin, 2003: 1). He also notes that a case study approach is

particularly useful when "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003: 13). There is no doubt that the use of innovative research design raises the issue of how best to analyse the resulting data and interpret relevant findings. This is a complex challenge, yet it is a problem that is being addressed by many researchers in a range of different contexts. It is always prudent, however, to start the process of collecting data with a specific purpose in mind. If the purpose can be coupled with a clear idea as to how the data will be analysed and written up, and the intended readership and the credibility required of the findings, then difficulties associated with the analysis of data resulting from the use of innovative design will be lessened.

References

Agar, M. H. (1986). *Speaking of ethnography.* London: Sage Publications.

Albury, K. and Crawford, K. (2012). 'Sexting, consent and young people's ethics: Beyond Megan's story.' *Continuum. Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 26(3), 1-11.

Albury, K., Crawford, K., Byron, P. and Mathews, B. (2013). *Young people and sexting in Australia: Ethics, representation and the law.* UNSW/CCI. Available at http://jmrc.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/File/Young_People_And_Sexting_Final.pdf, accessed June 2013.

Armstrong, S.L., Davis, H.S. and Paulson, E.J. (2011). 'The subjectivity problem: Improving triangulation approaches in metaphor analysis studies.' *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 10(2), 151-163.

Chouliaraki, L. and Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Clarke, A. (2008). 'Critical realism.' In L. Given (ed.). *The Sage encyclopaedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 168-171). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Reference Online.

Crofts, T. and Lee, M. (2012). '"Sexting", children and child pornography.' *Sydney Law Review*, 35, 85-106.

Fairclough, N. (2009). 'A dialectical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis in social research.' In R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds). *Methods for critical discourse analysis* (2nd edn) (pp. 161-186). London: Sage Publications.

Fram, S.M. (2013). 'The constant comparative analysis method outside of Grounded Theory.' *The Qualitative Report,* 18, article 1, 1-25. Available at www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR18/fram1.pdf, accessed June 2013.

Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Heit, E. and Rotello, C.M. (2010). 'Relations between inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning.' *Journal of Experimental Psychology. Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 36(3), 805-812. Available at www.psych.umass.edu/uploads/sites/48/Files/Heit%20Rotello%202010.pdf, accessed June 2013.

Hesse-Biber, S. (2012). 'Feminist approaches to triangulation uncovering subjugated knowledge and fostering social change in mixed methods research.' *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, (2), 137-146.

Michelson, P. (1993). *Speaking the unspeakable: A poetics of obscenity.* New York, NY: University of New York Press.

Modell, S. (2009). 'In defence of triangulation: a critical realist approach to mixed methods research in management accounting.' *Management Accounting Research*, 20(3), 208-221.

O'Connor, M.K., Netting, F.E. and Thomas, M.L. (2008). 'Grounded theory: Managing the challenge for those facing institutional review board oversight.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(1), 28-45.

Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Teddlie, C. (2003). 'A framework for analyzing data in mixed methods research.' In *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 351-383). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Paus-Hasebrink, I. and Kulterer, J. (2013). *Praxeologische Mediensozialisationsforschung.* [*Praxeological research on media socialisation.*] Baden-Baden, Nomos (with cooperation from Philip Sinner).

Rose, J. (ed.) (2011). *Triangulation, one's own mind, and objectivity. Mapping psychic reality: Triangulation, communication, and insight.* London: Karnac Books.

Rowsell, J. (2011). 'Carrying my family with me: artifacts as emic perspectives.' *Qualitative Research*, 11(3), 331-346.

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting qualitative data. Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sinnott-Armstrong, W. and Fogelin, R.J. (2010). *Understanding arguments: An introduction to informal logic* (8th edn). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd edn). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Tate, S. A. (2007). 'Foucault, Bakhtin, ethnomethodology: Accounting for hybridity in talk-in-interaction.' *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 8(2), article 10, 1-18. Available at www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/247/546, accessed June 2013.

Taylor, C. and Coffey, A. (2008). *Innovation in qualitative research methods: Possibilities and challenges.* Cardiff: Cardiff University.

Wasserman, J.A., Clair, J.M. and Wilson, K.L. (2009). 'Problematics of grounded theory: innovations for developing an increasingly rigorous qualitative method.' *Qualitative Research*, 9(3), 355-381.

Wilson, K.L. and Lowndes, F. (2004). 'Heart-thinking: An archetypal epistemology for the humanities and the sciences.' *International Journal of the Humanities*, 1(1), 221-31.

Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd edn). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th edn). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

7: Cross-cultural/cross-national perspectives

Michael Dreier

The impact of cultural differences on the use of methods

Differences in internet usage among European countries can have several explanations, for example, establishment of the internet, safety technology or knowledge, awareness of parents and children as well as cultural aspects (cf. Livingstone *et al.*, 2011). All these aspects constitute cultural differences that can be addressed via quantitative or qualitative approaches. For instance, opportunities, risks, harm as well as parental mediation can be analysed and provide detailed information in terms of cultural as well as national societies' contexts (Helsper *et al.*, 2013). The assessment of cultural differences themselves remains a problem, while qualitative methods are more suitable than quantitative approaches for identifying cultural differences; investigation in qualitative differences requires a strong focus on methodology. Additionally, it is useful if research teams represent different cultures and different scientific backgrounds ensuring fruitful discussion and multiple perspectives about the identification of cultural difference. Such an approach recognizes that it is not only the research field or the investigated groups of participants who represent the potential for cultural difference, but that researchers themselves analyse the field with their own understandings of the society in which they live (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

The EU NET ADB project (No. 19) includes investigation of adolescents living in rural areas of specific European countries that still lack easy and cheap internet access, directly affecting the organization of everyday life. Internet users were divided into two different groups: *digital natives* who were born into a time that already had the internet, and *digital immigrants* who were the first generation learning to use the internet in their cultural context (Prensky, 2001).

Socialization to a certain point in time results in a generation effect (Geißler, 2006) that is a logical consequence of experiencing a specific set of influences at a specific moment in development (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Some European adolescents were originally assigned to the group of digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001), but EU NET ADB's extensive qualitative research approach indicated that this theoretical assessment was problematic since some digital immigrants aligned themselves with the skills and competencies of digital natives, showing how far personal interest, together with the macro-sociological influences of society, can result in a transforming process, which prompted these adolescents to transform their knowledge from that of digital immigrants into that of digital natives. Thus these adolescents can be characterized by the creation of the term *digital transformer*, since they were not born as digital natives (Prensky, 2001), but display equivalent knowledge repertoires. Digital transformers presented the initial moment of first internet contact in a very detailed and emotional way. The knowledge base of digital natives was evident in most parts of the study's adolescent narrations. This is due to the fact that internet applications are homogenized true different cultures, and appear in similar manifestation in different cultural environments.

Cross-cultural studies can be classified according to Kohn's (1989) four-model typology for research within social sciences, namely, approaches where nations are objects of study, a second type where nations are the context of study of a particular phenomenon, a third one where countries are units of analysis and finally, a fourth approach where nations are components of a larger international or transnational system. When it comes to research methods that pay attention to cultural differences in cross-language and cross-cultural research, González y González and Lincoln (2006) suggest five ways "in which Western scholars might aid in decolonizing methodology and research: (a) working bilingual data, (b) considering non-Western cultural traditions, (c) multiple perspectives in texts, (d) multivocal and multilingual texts, and (e) technical issues to ensure accessibility" (Lincoln and González y González, 2009, p. 785), going on to present "some

methodological strategies culled from six different cases of cross-cultural and cross-language research in which both Western and non-Western scholars were involved and/or collaborated" (2009, p. 784). This paper also presents specific guidelines as to how to model the conduct of this research.

Interdisciplinary perspectives

Bearing this in mind, the EU NET ADB project (No. 19) (Dreier *et al.*, 2012) placed a particular focus on interdisciplinary perspectives. This multi-perspective approach was supported by the use of grounded theory and its three steps of coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998). On a national level, open codings were prepared in small teams including researchers from different professions and disciplines. The results of this initial coding were transferred to the coordinating institutions where axial and selective coding was conducted. Generally in qualitative research multiple steps need to be implemented to minimize the risk of diluting or losing cultural difference during the investigation. For qualitative investigations professional translators or researchers with relevant credentials in English are required to keep the original essence of the narration. Investigating cultural differences requires numerous interviews since the similarities within a cultural group need to be elaborated and verified, meaning that small samples are insufficient. Interpretation of the data, as well as more complex steps of analysis, include the risk of losing information or misinterpreting something due to translation issues, thus specific measures need to safeguard the original essence (cf. van Nes *et al.*, 2010).

The quality and richness of the data collected, and the analytic capabilities of the research teams involved, influence the meaningfulness and validity of findings (Patton, 2002). Therefore several measures are required to be realized during data collection and analysis. The following steps usually provide good results in the initial stages of coding: (1) the interviewer is involved in the coding process; (2) the initial coding is conducted using researchers in their native language as well as via an English transcript; (3) a second reader is implemented for quality checks of the translation and additionally for coding; (4) the three-stage process of open, axial and selective coding is split to reflect a national and a coordinator level; and (5) more complex levels of coding should be conducted using researchers with different scientific backgrounds. Together, these steps ensure a relatively complete representation of the field as well as sensitivity to different scientific perspectives. When it comes to bringing together the results from different national teams, another three steps become important: (6) the integration process should be observed by another team working at a coordinating level since an awareness of simultaneous work will raise issues that can usefully be discussed; (7) frequent (weekly or fortnightly) video-conferences are required to ensure the effectiveness of the integration process; and (8), the involvement of international advisers helps ensure transparency and the continuous evaluation of results.

The reproducibility of qualitative research

Lindner and Briggs have tackled the issue of the reproducibility of qualitative research in a study that analysed whether two different research groups would reach similar or different results using the same data set. Reproducibility would enhance the validity of qualitative research. While Lindner and Briggs indicated that there were many similarities, they also identified differences that reflected the researchers' different theoretical backgrounds. They concluded that different national, historical and scientific backgrounds lead to different heritages in psychoanalytic understanding (Lindner and Briggs, 2010). The groups mainly differed in their elaboration of ideal types. Where researchers had similar clinical experience, this enhanced the comparability of results. The main differences reflected the different theoretical approaches used to analyse the field. This is one reason why coordinators need to secure agreement on concise definitions of terms such as 'risk' (cf. Lindner and Briggs, 2010).

Open-minded approaches to qualitative research (e.g. grounded theory) have both pros and cons. Open-mindedness allows the identification of new findings, but not the testing of hypotheses in a traditional quantitative way. Described generalized methodological measures could be used to increase the likelihood of

identifying cultural differences (see Chapter 7 in Part II). Verification and adjustment of the research question, or simply the inclusion of new questions arising during the interviews or analysis, is an advantage of grounded theory, and a grounded theory approach can be used to highlight the quality and the sensibility of the data. Thus, analysed findings can be validated by the use of an adjusted interview schedule, allowing the production of clear concepts, following discussion by the analysis team around theoretical and conceptual issues (cf. Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998).

Other examples

Other studies provided by the network also faced challenges related to cross-cultural theoretical framing, data collection and analysis. The study *Global comparative research on youth media participation* (No. 15) collected quantitative and qualitative data from children in Argentina, Egypt, Finland and India. The survey questionnaire was designed in collaboration with researchers from each participating country. The main methodological challenges came from the cultural differences between participating cultures. This caused problems mainly for the survey, as survey data was to be collected in exactly the same manner in each country. Even though the questionnaire was supposed to be exactly the same, the Arabic translation used in Egypt had minor differences in many questions. Because of the shortage of time and funds it had not been possible to realize back-translations of the questionnaires, but that would have been useful and relevant. Even though the questionnaire had been jointly designed, it became clear after the survey was completed that the questionnaire was problematic for rural youngsters in India, and also in Egypt. Some concepts not familiar for youngsters living in these environments, and there is evidence that some of the questions were misunderstood.

Two studies in the GTO project (Nos 10 and 11), namely, *Construction and normalization of gender online among young people in Estonia and Sweden [GTO project]* and the sub-project, *The making of online identity during creative workshops*, took a different approach to issues stemming from country differences. The aim of the researchers was not to carry out a comparative study analysing the differences and similarities in visual self-presentation strategies used by Estonian and Swedish tweens. One of the reasons for not conducting such a comparative study was the difference in site rules and photo-uploading regulations set by the service providers, Bilddagboken and Rate, a favourite SNS among study respondents. Instead, their aim was to deepen understandings of the ways in which tweens create their gender identities through SNS profile images. In both countries, the informants were asked to reflect on their own visual self-presentation choices in online communities, and to comment on self-presentation trends they perceived to be prevalent online.

While there is no definitive blueprint for conducting research into cultural differences in the area of new media use, these projects and others provided by members of the EU Kids Online network can be used to inform both the approaches to investigations, and the quality of research findings.

References

Berger, P.L. and Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Doubleday.

Dreier, M., Tzavela, E., Wölfling, K., Mavromati, F., Duven, E., Karakitsou, Ch., Macarie, G., Veldhuis, L., Wójcik , S., Halapi, E., Sigursteinsdottir, H., Oliaga, A. and Tsitsika, A. (2012). *The development of adaptive and maladaptive patterns of Internet use among European adolescents at risk for internet addictive behaviours: A grounded theory inquiry*. Athens, Greece: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), EU NET ADB. Available at www.eunetadb.eu, accessed June 2013.

Geißler, R. (2006). *Die Sozialstruktur Deutschlands. Zur gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung mit einer Bilanz zur Vereinigung, 4*. überarbeitete und aktualisierte Auflage, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

González y González, E.M. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2006). 'Decolonizing qualitative research: Nontraditional reporting forms in the academy.' In N.K. Denzin and M. Gardina (eds). *Qualitative inquiry and the conservative challenge*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Helsper, E.J., Kalmus, V., Hasebrink, U., Sagvari, B. and de Haan, J. (2013). *Country classification: Opportunities, risks, harm and parental mediation*. London: EU Kids Online, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Kohn, M.L. (1989). 'Introduction.' In M.L. Kohn (ed.). *Cross-national research in sociology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Lincoln, Y.S. and González, E. (2008). 'The search for emerging decolonizing methodologies in qualitative research: Further strategies for liberatory and democratic inquiry.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(5), 784-805.

Lindner, R. and Briggs, S. (2010). 'Forming ideal types by understanding: The psychoanalytic treatment of suicidal men.' *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 11(2), article 12. Available at http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1002120

Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A. and Ólafsson, K. (2011). *Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children: Full findings and policy implications from the EU Kids Online survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents in 25 countries*. London: EU Kids Online Network (Deliverable D4).

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd edn). London: Sage Publications.

Prensky, M. (2001). 'Digital natives, digital immigrants.' *On the Horizon*, 9(5). Available at www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf, accessed June 2013.

Strauss, A.L. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Strauss, A.L. and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd edn). London: Sage Publications.

van Nes, F., Abma, T., Jonsson, H. and Deeg, D. (2010). 'Language differences in qualitative research. Is meaning lost in translation?' *European Journal of Aging*, 7, 313-316.

Children's understanding of risks: 'in their own words'

The EU Kids Online II survey (2009-10) provided a unique insight into a range of activities undertaken by European children online but subsequently, also into the various risks that accompany them. Although quantitative by design, the survey collected qualitative data from nearly 10,000 children who explained in their own words what they considered to be bothersome and problematic about/on the internet, by asking them 'What things on the internet would bother people about your age?' The report, *In their own words: What bothers children online?* (Livingstone *et al.*, 2013), gives a detailed first-time account of how children view the risks associated to the online environment. The EU Kids Online survey found that 55% of 9- to 16-year-olds think that there are things online that bother children their age, and 38% identified in their own words one or more risks.

Content risks dominate children's concerns, with 58% identifying problematic content of some sort (e.g. pornographic, violent), followed by conduct and contact risks (mentioned first by 42% of the children). Some of the risks most prominent on the public agenda, such as sharing personal information online or 'the stranger danger', were rarely mentioned. More than half the children who responded spontaneously included a platform or technology in their answer. Video-sharing sites (e.g. YouTube) were the most commonly mentioned in terms of risk (by 32%), followed by websites (29%), social networking sites (13%) and games (10%). Although they were not directly asked about how they felt about specific risks, children gave spontaneous reactions. When expressing a reaction to violent content, children mostly reported fear (54%) or disgust (37%), whereas reactions to pornographic content ranged from disgust (59%), to fear (25%) or annoyance (16%).

Gender and age differences were noticeable, with girls being bothered more by contact-related risks and boys more by violent content, with no gender difference for pornographic content. The youngest children are more concerned with content-related and other risks, and become more concerned with pornographic content as they enter their teens. Concern with conduct and contact-related risks increases with age.

The report also provides interesting cross-country differences, with the children in 'higher use, higher risk' countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden) mentioning more risks than the other European children (59%), suggesting an increased level of awareness. Pornographic content is of less concern to children from 'higher use, some risk' countries (17% only, versus 22% to 24% for other country groupings), whereas violent content bothers more children in 'lower use, lower risk' countries (24%, versus 14-18%). Conduct-related risks preoccupy more the children from 'lower use, some risk' (27%) and 'higher use, some risk' countries (24%). Contact-related risks are more the concern of children from 'higher use, higher risk' countries (18%) and less of those from 'new use, new risk' countries (9%). Other risks are mentioned most often (15%) by children from 'new use, new risk' and 'higher use, some risk countries'.

II. WHERE METHODOLOGY MEETS ETHICAL DILEMMAS

MAKING RESPONSIBLE CHOICES IN RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN

1: Introduction to ethical aspects in researching children and their internet use

Liza Tsaliki and Despina Chronaki

Ethics in the context of research on children and their internet use

Research ethics is an important part of any study, no matter whether deriving from life or from the social sciences. Although one would think that discussing the ethical implications of a study is a typical part of any research process, and vital to get approval from an ethics committee, debates on the topic have proved the opposite. This is especially the case since the internet became a platform for research (see AoIR and Ess, 2002; Markham and Buchanan, 2012). Moreover, the involvement of young people intensifies any ethics discussion. Given this, Lobe, Livingstone and Haddon (2007) offer an introductory account of what issues are at stake when considering research with children, such as issues of vulnerability, anonymity, confidentiality, consent and agency. It is these issues that we aim to address more specifically in this chapter.

Giving voice to children is a primary concern of researchers in social research (Buckingham, 1993; Greig and Taylor, 1999; Tsaliki and Chronaki, 2012). It also makes ethical considerations of this kind even more paramount, where both the context and the agenda of research remain adult-oriented. This context indicates expectations that children should adjust to an adult-defined agenda and govern their behavioural conduct according to normative, socially acceptable standards. In this respect, ethical considerations become integral to methodological decisions (Markham, 2006), meaning that ethics is not solely a procedure to be completed at the beginning of the study, but also a means for determining an epistemological position and deciding on the use of applying certain methods. As a result, continuous reflexivity throughout fieldwork also plays an

important part in engaging ethically with the research. As children are usually considered a 'vulnerable' population (see Buchanan, 2011; Markham, 2006), research with this age group is also subject to ethical guidelines focused on minimising the possibility of distress or harm for participants. Although some researchers might argue against the contextualization of children as vulnerable populations, and in favour of them being constructed as active agents in the research process (e.g. Darbyshire, MacDougall and Schiller, 2005), this is not a debate to be engaged with here. On the contrary, the aim of this section is to call attention to the ethical issues at stake as these are addressed in the relevant literature and in sample studies.

Main ethical considerations

Most countries refer to specific guidelines, often set by regulatory or academic institutions, which define the basic ethical framework within which research is conducted (see Markham and Buchanan, 2012). Obtaining informed consent (Holmes, 1998), ensuring confidentiality of the data collected and providing anonymity to participants (thereby protecting their privacy), along with offering contributors the opportunity to represent themselves (through giving voice and acknowledging respondents' agency) are often central to ethical guidelines, reflecting "respect for persons, beneficence, and justice" (Buchanan, 2011: 84), as adjusted by different regulatory bodies in accordance with their particular epistemologies.

Stepping back from contextualizing children as informants 'at possible risk', and considering them instead as equal to adults in the research process – while making adjustments for their scope of knowledge and life experience – seems to be an ethical approach that further informs the methodological choices made throughout research. Children need to be fully aware of what the study concerns, as well as being informed that they can freely address the topic in any way they feel like. For minors, consent is required from parents, who thus decide whether the child will participate or not in a study. This does not mean, however, that respondents themselves should be unaware of the research process or their rights, especially when a sensitive topic (e.g. sexuality) is involved. In cross-national studies, both cultural and social factors (moral codes and everyday practices) influence the nature of ethics and the ways in which researchers engage with respondents and get parental consent. Markham's (2006) comment that ethical decisions, and consequently 'good research', are subject to reflexivity, sensitivity and subjectivity, thus still appears to offer a useful perspective for researchers.

Guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity protect respondents' rights to privacy in the research process and contribute to establishing trust with respondents. In the case of minors, establishing trust must address the dynamics generated by differences in status, age and/or gender between participants and the researcher. Safeguarding the privacy of participants enables them to feel more comfortable and at ease with the research process, and so contributes to the researcher gaining a richer account from respondents. As Paus-Hasebrink (2007) has pointed out, considering children seriously and treating their contributions and perspective with sensitivity and empathy are very important aspects of guaranteeing children's confidentiality and anonymity. Making methodological choices that show the respondents the seriousness with which researchers take their rights to confidentiality and anonymity is likely to influence the effectiveness of the research process and the richness of the data collected.

Finally, giving voice to young participants is a contested approach within academic debate. Ethically, it falls under the imperatives of offering 'respect for the person' or ensuring 'beneficence', the welfare of participants. Honouring voice also implies that both the research setting and the methodological choices made in the approach to respondents are important in communicating and guaranteeing that participants are, indeed, represented in the research. The practical ways in which the research context is developed defines the extent to which this ethical requirement is fulfilled, no matter how polarized the debates are on whether children are active or passive informants. Giving voice to children involves allowing them to express their opinion and also that researchers create an environment enabling respondents to communicate freely. The way that research guides are developed and questionnaires designed, the choice of the setting where research will take place, and the behaviour, appearance and presence of the researcher can all contribute to a richer communicative

exchange and enhance the validity of the dataset. In addition to these methodological choices in the field, ethical choices regarding representation address the inclusion of minorities (sexual, ethnic or other) and of children with special abilities. Commitments to valuing diversity and acknowledging the rights of different groups to participate in the research demonstrate 'respect for the person'.

The overall ethics debate directs research attention towards conducting research that will protect respondents from any kind of perceived harm or risk. Core ethical imperatives such as justice and beneficence aim specifically to protect participants from any kind of harm during and from the research process (see Buchanan, 2011; Jensen, 2002; Markham and Buchanan, 2012), and different accounts discuss the participation of vulnerable or special groups of people. Such perspectives also stress the need to consider the cultural and social nature of notions of harm and risk and their influence on the methods for approaching participants and collecting data, while also taking account of the reflexive aspects of the research process. Any research with children that asks about sexual content, does, for example, raise ethical considerations regarding whether children actually think about such content as a risk, even though it is generally so regarded in Western nations. The mainstream approach, therefore, is that children should be asked about this topic within a protective context. Social constructionist approaches do, however, address the topic differently, perhaps talking about representations that children themselves consider sexual. This approach is not only consistent with the core ethical guideline of respecting the person and acknowledging their agency to talk about sexuality, but also with collection of rich data concerning complex topics such as sexual content (e.g. Bale, 2012; Buckingham and Bragg, 2004; Chronaki, forthcoming).

Finally, the specific ethical problems encountered in different studies varied depending on the nature of the study and the cultural context. However, when examining the studies profoundly, it is notable that similar issues came along in several countries. Some examples of issues that presented cultural variations are the pros and cons of the presence of adults, the use of potentially identifiable materials, avoiding stressful situations for children, considerations to the parent–child relationship, the use of creative methods and attention to sensitive situations. In some situations, the countries came up with a similar solution or approach. In others, the problems were tackled in different ways.

Having briefly reviewed how the major ethical considerations which relate to conducting research with human subjects become even more important when the respondents are children, it becomes clear that ethics and methodological choices are closely related and influence one another (Markham, 2006). Ethical research with children falls within a philosophical framework influenced by diverse cultural and ethical factors and informed by axioms of respect, beneficence and justice derived from acknowledging the agency of the respondent.

References

AoIR (Association of Internet Researchers) and Ess, C. (2002). *Ethical decision making and internet research.* Available at www.aoir.org/reports/ethics.pdf, accessed June 2013.

Bale, C. (2012). 'Exploring young people's perceptions of the impact of sexualized media on their sexual health: A qualitative study.' Doctoral thesis. Sheffield: University of Sheffield.

Buchanan, E. (2011). 'Internet research ethics: Past, present, future.' In C. Ess and M. Consalvo (eds). *Handbook of internet studies* (pp. 83-108). Oxford: Blackwell.

Buckingham, D. (1993). *Reading audiences: Young people and the media.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Buckingham, D. and Bragg, S. (2004). *Young people, sex and the media: The facts of life?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chronaki, D. (forthcoming). 'Young people's accounts from experiences with sexual content during childhood and teenage life.' PhD thesis. Loughborough: Loughborough University.

Darbyshire, P., MacDougall, C. and Schiller, W. (2005). 'Multiple methods in qualitative research with children: More insight or just more?' *Qualitative Research*, 417-436.

Greig, A. and Taylor, J. (1999). *Doing research with children.* London: Sage Publications.

Holmes, R. M. (1998). *Fieldwork with children.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Jensen, K. B. (2002). 'The social origins and uses of media and communication research.' In K.B. Jensen (ed.). *A handbook of media and communication research* (pp. 273-293)*.* London: Routledge.

Lobe, B., Livingstone, S. and Haddon, L. (2007). *Researching children's experiences online across countries: Issues and problems in methodology.* London: EU Kids Online, London School of Economics and Political Science (Deliverable D4.1).

Markham, A. (2006). 'Method as ethic, ethic as method.' *Journal of Information Ethics*, 15(2), 37-55.

Markham, A. and Buchanan, E. (2012). *Ethical decision-making and internet research recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee (Version 2.0).* Available at http://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf, accessed June 2013.

Paus-Hasebrink, I. (2007). 'Research methods, and children.' In J. Arnett (ed.). *Encyclopaedia of children, adolescents, and the media* (pp. 717-719). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Tsaliki, L. and Chronaki, D. (2012). *Greek kids go online. Report for the General Secretariat of Youth.* Athens, Greece: University of Athens. Available at http://www.neagenia.gr/frontoffice/portal.asp?cpage=RESOURCE&cresrc=1997&cnode=51, accessed June 2013.

2: Issues related to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Liza Tsaliki, Despina Chronaki, Sofie Vandoninck and Leen d' Haenens

Confidentiality

Guaranteeing confidentiality in terms of public disclosure means that participants should be anonymous and not be identifiable in research outputs. Guaranteeing confidentiality is on the level of the participant's social network and in relation to third parties. It involves not passing information on to family members, peers or other actors in the child's social network, and keeping confidentiality when a 'third person' (e.g. a family member) discloses personal information about another (Hill, 2005). Given these requirements, it is vital to create an atmosphere of trust. Creating this trust requires an organized informal contact with the young participants before the actual data-gathering takes place. Not only is this practice in line with the relational ethical approach, it also offers an opportunity to assess the relationship with the child, to foster reciprocity and to reduce power asymmetries (Dedding and Moonen, 2013; Gallagher *et al.*, 2010; Ireland and Holloway, 1996). In online environments; researchers can invest in building relationships with the participants through informal contact moments (online or offline) prior to commencing the research.

As time and space are important elements with respect to confidentiality, research should take place in a safe and private location where the child feels comfortable. The ideal location is both familiar to the child, and enables the research to be conducted undisturbed (Dedding and Moonen, 2013; Powell, 2011). Although school and home are the most commonly chosen offline settings, neither may offer a quiet and comfortable place free of interruptions (Bushin, 2007; Powell *et al.*, 2012). A child may, moreover, struggle more with power asymmetries at school or feel too inhibited to talk freely at home because of the risk of their parents listening in.

Challenges to ensuring confidentiality and anonymity

Whenever participants disclose information about serious risk, harm or abuse, researchers are confronted with the limits of confidentiality. While ethical practices suggest that in these circumstances researchers have to support the child in seeking professional help (James, 2007), there is some debate about whether or not researchers have to breach a child's confidentiality when the child seems unwilling or unable to seek further help themselves. Researchers should in any case inform young participants about these limits on confidentiality before obtaining their consent. It is also crucial to have opened communication between researcher and participant about seeking professional help should the necessity arise (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Lauwers, 2013; Powell *et al.*, 2012).

Online environments pose specific challenges to confidentiality and anonymity. In chatrooms, blogs and other online settings where participants are not obliged to disclose their real identity online (Buchanan and Zimmer, 2012), internet research can maximize confidentiality and protection of privacy. Choosing to research in an online environment can also provide a suitable place and time for the research exchange. It could also be argued that power imbalances are reduced in digital environments where children are not confronted physically with a 'more powerful' adult, and so may feel freer to engage in less socially desirable behaviour. Online environments also allow younger participants to have more control over the research activities, such as deciding when to post something or when to engage in interaction with the researcher (Lauwers, 2013). Young people, especially those belonging to a minority or subculture, may also simply feel more comfortable and confident when communicating online. Research within a specific online environment 'owned' by a minority or subculture, may take place in a space of 'mutual accountability', where participants perceive

themselves as 'knowledgeable social actors' able to establish a reciprocal relationship with the researcher (Murthy, 2008). Internet-based research can, however, also reduce confidentiality and the protection of privacy. According to the principles of research ethics, de-identification of collected data should make it impossible for others to link data to specific individuals, yet simply removing identifiers such as name, age and address is not a sufficient guarantee of anonymity when data is gathered in online environments. The information held on social networking sites concerning what people like about places they have visited could, for example, be used to identify specific individuals (Buchanan and Zimmer, 2012; Ohm, 2009). While the information disclosed by users of these online (public) platforms is a welcome source of information for many social scientists, the specificity of the data and its identifiability highlights the need for discussion and debate about just how 'public' this data is. The concept of 'private information' involves subjects' expectations around what is normally monitored, collected and publicly available (Buchanan and Zimmer, 2012; Murthy, 2008). As many internet users have only a poor understanding of privacy policies, and how their online activities are monitored, it is reasonable to assume that they do not expect researchers to collect and publish their data. The ethics of collecting publicly available data from the internet for research purposes are thus highly questionable when minors are involved (Buchanan and Zimmer, 2012; Zimmer, 2010).

Examples of handling the issue of privacy

The incident with the T3-study (Lewis, 2008) clearly illustrates the existence of conceptual gaps in how participants and researchers may differ in their interpretation and understanding of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity when data are gathered through online platforms such as Facebook (Zimmer, 2010). The T3-study collected Facebook data in several waves from a cohort of students at a north-eastern US university, without obtaining the prior consent of these students. Although researchers took some precautions to protect their subjects' identity (such as removing names, identification numbers, email addresses and phone number from the dataset), the source of the data was quickly re-identified and turned out to be Harvard College. Because of the uniqueness of several data elements (e.g. only one student had Albanian nationality), people's privacy was in jeopardy. Defending themselves, the researchers argued that the collected data were already publicly available on Facebook. Other scholars rejected this argument on the grounds that it violated the assumptions and expectations people had about how their personal information was monitored and used (Zimmer, 2010).

A number of studies touch on issues of privacy. The TIRO project (No. 2) in Belgium highlights the methodological challenges that emerge from children's reluctance to reveal personal information in the presence of their parents, and the negotiations that effectively took place between researchers and parents concerning children being interviewed without parental surveillance. In the *Global comparative research on youth media participation* (No. 15), the methodological challenges are a side-effect of the cultural differences that emerge between the participating countries. In Finland, for example, in-depth interviews with children included personal discussions, and both there and in Argentina participant–researcher confidentiality was safeguarded. In Egypt and India, however, parents were co-present in the interview process due to preconceptions in the national culture regarding what is considered acceptable access to minors. These examples point to how notions of privacy are culturally defined. In the case of the Greek study with special needs children (No. 22), the school insisted on having the school counsellor, a psychologist, present during the interview. This may work in the favour of the researchers. In the Greek case, the research team found that the presence of the counsellor helped participants with motor and/or cognitive impairment to build security and trust. Further, in the Belgian qualitative study (No. 5), *Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies*, which involved a group of six children with cognitive and behavioural problems, the mentors were actively involved during the group sessions. At the end of the academic year (after the researchers had built a relationship with the children), there was a private interview with each of them.

Using potentially identifiable materials was also a topic for ethical reflection. The Finnish research project, *Literacies, young people, and the changing media environment* (No. 16), where the research was conducted both as a school ethnography and online ethnography, the problem was that some parents didn't give permission to take photographs of their children in a teaching and learning environment and it was difficult to know in a classroom who were allowed to be photographed and who were not. Therefore the researcher tried to choose classes where all children had permission to be photographed. The researcher also decided not to use photographs in publications or to choose photographs that s/he could be sure that s/he had permission to use and where it was not possible to recognize people. Online ethnography has special problems. The researcher asked students permission to follow them in their social networks, but still the borderline between stalking and research was considered difficult. Therefore in most cases the researcher followed students' public profiles. In the Belgian study, *Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies* (No. 5), pictures were no problem, as long as the participants were not recognizable, so only pictures of schemes, drawings, word clouds, etc. were taken. In some group sessions with the BuSO group (children with special needs), the youngsters were given a camera to take pictures themselves, which they enjoyed very much.

The fluid line between private and public

The final issue to be considered here is that of private media use, particularly in terms of online practices and *the merging of public/private boundaries and the treatment of users' private activities in public environments online* already flagged as an important ethical consideration by Markham and Buchanan (2012). When it comes to children, a wide range of online activities may be considered risky or even problematic. Disclosure of such activities raises the issue of how private use is addressed, both in relation to the researcher and in relation to how much and what kind of information the child is revealing to others. There are also considerations regarding the extent to which the information revealed is consistent with the initial objectives of the study, and whether or not it puts the overall task at risk in terms of the ethical principles of beneficence. Again, the context of research, venue/participants/data (Markham and Buchanan, 2012) relate closely to any requirement to report on private use, such as a researcher's choice to conduct an interview in a child's bedroom. The relevant ethical concerns include the extent to which the process is regarded as investigative or the researcher's presence is regarded as intruding into the child's private space. The Italian study *Mobile internet and social networking. An exploratory research among Italian teens* (No. 23) offers a valuable insight into the complementary use of domestic and mobile media, and considers how adolescents accommodate micro-mobility, the social display of identity and micro-coordination. The Finnish study on *Literacies, young people, and the changing media environment* (No. 16) explores how young people's changing media practices blur school boundaries to create an unofficial at-school space within which youth may develop peer-to-peer relations and perform identities beyond the school context.

References

Alderson, P. & Morrow V. (2004). *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people.* Barkingside: Barnardo's.

Buchanan, E. and Zimmer, M. (2012). 'Internet research ethics.' *The Stanford encyclopaedia of philosophy.* Available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-internet-research/, accessed June 2013.

Bushin, N. (2007). 'Interviewing with children in their homes: putting ethical principles into practice and developing flexible techniques.' *Children's Geographies*, 5, 235-251.

Dedding, C. and Moonen, X. (2013). 'Kinderen en onderzoek: gaat dat samen?' In C. Dedding, K. Jurrius, X. Moonen and L. Rutjes (eds). *Kinderen en jongeren actief in wetenschappelijk onderzoek.* Houten: LannooCampus.

Hill, M. (2005). 'Ethical consideration in researching children's experiences.' In S. Greene and D. Hogen (eds). *Researching children's experiences.* London: Sage Publication Ltd.

Gallagher, M., Haywood, S.L., Jones, M.W. and Milne, S. (2010). 'Negotiating informed consent with children in school-based research: a critical review.' *Children & Society*, 24, 471-482.

James, A. (2007). 'Giving voice to children's voices: practices and problems, pitfalls and potentials.' *American Anthropologist*, 109(2), 261-272.

Ireland, L. and Holloway, I. (1996). 'Qualitative health research with children.' *Children & Society*, 10 (2), 155-164.

Lauwers, H. (2013). 'Ethische overwegingen.' In C. Dedding, K. Jurrius, X. Moonen and L. Rutjes (eds). *Kinderen en jongeren actief in wetenschappelijk onderzoek*. Houten: LannooCampus.

Lewis, K., Kaufman, J., Gonzalez, M., Wimmer, A. and Christakis, N. (2008). 'Tastes, ties and time: a new social network dataset using Facebook.com.' *Social Networks*, 30(4), 330-342.

Markham, A. and Buchanan, E. (2012). *Ethical decision-making and internet research recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee (Version 2.0).* Available at http://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf, accessed June 2013.

Murthy, D. (2008). 'Digital ethnography: an examination of the use of new technologies for social research.' *Sociology*, 42(5), 837-855.

Ohm, P. (2009). 'Broken promises of privacy: responding to the surprising failure of anonymization.' *UCLA Law Review*, 57(6), 1701-1777.

Powell, M.A. (2011). *International literature review: Ethical issues in undertaking research with children and young people.* Lismore: Southern Cross University, Centre for Children and Young People/ Dunedin: University of Otago, Centre for Research on Children and Families.

Powell, M.A., Fitzgerald, R., Taylor, N.J. and Graham, A. (2012). *International literature review: Ethical issues in undertaking research with children and young people.* Literature review for the Childwatch International Research Network. March. Lismore: Southern Cross University, Centre for Children and Young People/Dunedin: University of Otago, Centre for Research on Children and Families.

Zimmer, M. (2010). '"But the data is already public": on the ethics of research in Facebook.' *Ethics on Information Technology*, 12, 313-325.

3: Issues and challenges related to informed consent

Sofie Vandoninck and Leen d' Haenens

The problematic nature of informed and explicit consent

One of the basic principles in research ethics, that of Informed consent, involves informing participants about the research in an understandable way, and obtaining explicit written or verbal agreement. Consent should be given voluntarily (without coercion or undue inducement), and it should be re-negotiable, which means that participants can withdraw at any time (Alderson and Morrow, 2011; Gallagher, 2009; Powell, 2011). Meeting these objectives is a challenge in (innovative) research with children.

One difficulty relates to ensuring that the children fully understand and consent to both the purpose of the study and the research process that will be used. Most studies use information leaflets with a layout and language style intended to appeal to youngsters (Alderson and Morrow, 2011; Gallagher, 2009). As children are often not very interested in the details of the study, researchers can neither assume that this information is read, nor that it is understood when it is read. Researchers should therefore seek opportunities to use transparent two-way discussion with their young participants to explain what the study is about, while avoiding overloading them with information (Alderson and Morrow, 2004, 2011; Gallagher *et al.*, 2010). One possible strategy for innovative online research involves making a short informative video about the study or creating an informative web 'portal' (Buchanan and Zimmer, 2012).

The requirement for an act of explicit agreement (consent) constitutes a second problem because of the constant need to balance respect for children's autonomy and their free choice on whether or not to participate with respect for the parents' and/or school's role as gatekeepers concerned about their children's safety and well-being (Munford and Sanders, 2004; Powell, 2011). Obtaining children's individual consent is essential and also demonstrates respect for children as social actors. The impact of children's social context including parents, teachers, etc. cannot, however, be neglected, and should be assessed, not least because these gatekeepers might underestimate children's agency and autonomy (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). When researching with children, it may be permissible to gain the relevant adult consent using active or passive approaches. In active consent, parents have to sign a form and return it to the researchers. Passive consent refers to informing parents about the research and giving them an opportunity to respond if they do not agree that their child may participate (Ebensen *et al.*, 1996). While ethics committees often promote active consent, this can be difficult for many researchers to obtain for multiple practical and logistical reasons (Alderson, 1995; Ebensen *et al.*, 1996; Powell, 2011). When research takes place in digital environments, it can be particularly difficult to contact participants' parents. Another argument favouring passive consent is that it fosters the children's rights to participation and encourages them to use individual decision-making processes, especially when it comes to sensitive issues (Carroll-Lind *et al.*, 2006; Powell, 2011). Some researchers who respect children's agency, and construct children as competent social actors, even argue that parental consent as such is ethically questionable (Coyne, 2010).

A third challenge is assuring voluntary consent, without coercion or undue inducement. Because of asymmetrical power relations, children might feel under pressure when it comes to giving consent (Gallagher, *et al.*, 2010). When children feel that parents or teachers support their participation in the study, they are more likely to agree. Where children are used to following the rules and being obedient at school, they may feel an implicit (subtle) obligation to participate in school contexts (Cree, Kay and Tisdall, 2002; David, Edwards and Alldred; Ireland and Holloway, 1996). We can assume that this issue is less problematic in online

environments where young people may enjoy more authority and autonomy in a context associated with 'free time' and being 'away from adults'.

Finally, consent should be re-negotiable, and participants should be able to withdraw at any stage. One approach to this obligation is 'process consent', which involves explicitly gaining consent at each point where a new stage or method is introduced. Another approach, known as 'informed dissent', emphasizes the possibility of refusing further participation at any moment (Alderson, 1995; Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Gallagher *et al.*, 2010). Regardless of the chosen approach, researchers should be vigilant to children's non-verbal and visual cues in order to assess their willingness to participate further (Cree *et al.*, 2002; Powell, 2011). In online environments, signs of unease or dissent might be indicated by slower responses or shorter reactions, the use of emoticons that reflect boredom, unhappiness or other negative emotions, or increasingly long periods of being disconnected.

Examples of negotiating consent

Members of the EU Kids Online network negotiated participants' consent in a variety of ways. The Belgian projects, *Online resilience among children and youngsters* (No. 3) and *Online resilience – motives for coping strategies* (No. 4), and the Finnish 2010 *Children's media barometer* (No. 17) are all examples of how studies of young children and adolescents are usually preoccupied with acquiring parental consent in order to reach participants. The Greek study on the debate regarding the sexualization of young preteen girls (No. 21) also focused on safeguarding consent from parents and teachers, while making sure that participants were guaranteed privacy and confidentiality for their contributions, as well as the freedom to withdraw if they felt any sense of distress. Other studies, such as Finland's *Literacies, young people, and the changing media environment* (No. 16), sought consent from parents and teachers, as well as children.

There is generally a welcome openness towards the use of innovative methods in online environments as these can enhance youngsters' levels of active participation and help overcome issues relating to asymmetrical power relations between adult researchers and young participants. While exploring these new opportunities for investigating young people's social worlds, researchers need to pay attention to issues and challenges related to consent, confidentiality and anonymity. A reflexive attitude in interpreting children's voices and actions during the research process is of particular benefit (Davis, 1998). Ultimately, it is often useful to combine data-gathering in both physical and digital environments. Mixed-method approaches allow researchers to combine and compare findings, leading to more robust conclusions and de-marginalizing the voices of respondents. Such approaches give participants more opportunities to express themselves, and offer them greater control over the research process (Murthy, 2008; Murumaa and Siibak, 2012).

How to deal with sensitive disclosure during fieldwork

The importance of considering one's ethical responsibilities when encountering a sensitive or distressing disclosure (Stern, 2004: 283) was one of the challenges faced by the Belgian researchers who conducted the study, *Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies* (No. 5). Being confronted with the need to support a girl who reported being stalked by an older man on Facebook highlighted the difficulty of finding a balance between providing help and assistance, without breaching confidentiality.

"The participatory study started with a non-anonymous survey intended to collect general information on the participants' online activities and experiences with online risks. One girl used the open question at the end of the survey to report being stalked by an older man on Facebook. The researcher decided to tell the teacher that 'something has bothered the girl', without being very specific about what it was that the girl had actually written. With the approval of the teacher, the researcher then arranged a personal talk with the girl in a private and quiet room. During their conversation, the girl specified that she had received sexual comments from the man, and that he seemed to seek more intimate contact with her. Her failed coping strategies were discussed, and the researcher suggested some additional specific strategies on how to block a contact on Facebook. The girl concluded that she would try these strategies at home, and report back to the researcher on whether or not this was helpful.

Although the teacher was aware that the girl was bothered by something online, no specific information about exactly what had happened or concerning what the girl had told the researcher in the private follow-up conversation was disclosed to the teacher. By using this approach, the researcher tried to find a balance between notifying the teacher (who is also perceived as a caregiver) and respecting the participant's confidentiality. Only with the teacher's agreement could the researcher arrange a personal talk with the girl. Despite the effort made in listening to the girl's story and suggesting specific coping strategies, the youngster seemed to lose her trust in both teachers and researchers. She was willing to talk personally about her negative online experiences at the beginning of the study, but as the year progressed she became more and more closed and introverted. Although the researcher discussed her extremely introverted behaviour with her teacher on several occasions, nobody seemed able to change her behaviour. Even an intervention from the school psychologist was not helpful. During the group sessions, the girl was entirely silent. During the individual interview which the researcher conducted with every participant, the girl refused to allow the conversation to be recorded, and mostly answered questions with a 'yes' or 'no'.

This case shows the difficulty of trying to provide adequate support without breaching confidentiality while maintaining a youngster's trust and willingness to receive help. The needs of the different actors involved can easily result in conflicting interests and resulting tensions. While the girl's comment in the survey may have been a cry for help, her experience of suddenly receiving a lot of attention from different adults may have seemed overwhelming. Her group sessions and individual interview failed to clarify whether she perceived the interaction between the researcher and the teacher as a violation of confidentiality. This situation also illustrates how an intervention from social scientists can lead to the detection of a situation that is highly problematic for a child's (emotional) well-being. Since researchers cannot take on the role of a social worker or psychologist, it is critical that they report the problem to caregivers before leaving the field."

References

Alderson, P. (1995). *Listening to children: Children, ethics and social research.* London: Barnardo's.

Alderson, P. and Morrow V. (2004). *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people.* Barkingside: Barnardo's.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011). *The ethics of research with children and young people. A practical handbook.* London: Sage Publications.

Buchanan, E. and Zimmer, M. (2012). 'Internet research ethics.' In E.N. Zalta (ed.). *Stanford encyclopaedia of philosophy.* Winter 2012 Edition.

Carroll-Lind, J., Chapman, J., Gregory, J. and Maxwell, G. (2006). 'The key to the gatekeepers: passive consent and other ethical issues surrounding the rights of children to speak on issues that concern them.' *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30, 979-989.

Coyne, I. (2010). 'Accessing children as research participants: examining the role of gatekeepers.' *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 36, 452-454.

Cree, V.E., Kay, H. and Tisdall, K. (2002). 'Research with children: sharing the dilemmas.' *Child and Family Social Work*, 7, 47-56.

David, M., Edwards, R. and Alldred, P. (2001). 'Children and school-based research: "informed consent" or "educated consent"?' *British Educational Research Journal*, 27(3), 347-365.

Davis, J.M. (1998). 'Understanding the meaning of children: a reflexive process.' *Children & Society*, 12, 325-335.

Ebensen, F., Deschenes, E., Vogel, R., West, J., Arboit, K. and Harris, L. (1996). 'Active parental consent in school-based research.' *Evaluation Review*, 20, 737-753.

Gallagher, M. (2009). 'Ethics.' In K. Tisdall, J.M. Davis and M. Gallagher (eds). *Researching with children and young people: Research design, methods and analysis* (pp. 11-64). London: Sage Publications.

Gallagher, M., Haywood, S.L., Jones, M.W. and Milne, S. (2010). 'Negotiating informed consent with children in school-based research: a critical review.' *Children & Society*, 24, 471-482.

Ireland, L. and Holloway, I. (1996). 'Qualitative health research with children.' *Children & Society*, 10(2), 155-164.

Munford, R. and Sanders, J. (2004). 'Recruiting diverse groups of young people to research.' *Qualitative Social Work*, 3, 469-482.

Murthy, D. (2008). 'Digital ethnography: an examination of the use of new technologies for social research.' *Sociology*, 42(5), 837-855.

Murumaa, M. and Siibak, A. (2012). 'The imagined audience on Facebook: analysis of Estonian teen sketches about typical Facebook users.' *First Monday*, 17(2).

Powell, M.A. (2011). *International literature review: Ethical issues in undertaking research with children and young people.* Lismore: Southern Cross University, Centre for Children and Young People/ Dunedin: University of Otago, Centre for Research on Children and Families.

Stern, S.R. (2004). 'Studying adolescents online: A consideration of ethical issues.' In E. Buchanan (ed.). *Readings in virtual research ethics: Issues and controversies* (pp. 274-287). Hershey: Idea Group.

4: Language, gaining and maintaining trust, handling group dynamics

Liza Tsaliki and Despina Chronaki

Using child-tailored language

Effectively addressing the issues raised earlier and other matters arising during the conduct of research usually requires active planning both before and during the fieldwork. Processes for establishing and maintaining contact and trust between those involved in the research process need to be designed prior to fieldwork but also further developed during the research process, especially for participatory research. Peer dynamics raise questions about whether children should be interviewed with others they already know, with those they are less familiar with, or by themselves. Finally, the online environment that has inevitably increased the private use of media raises questions about the amount of information shared (the nature of private/public in online research is discussed in Markham and Buchanan, 2012), and also about the context in which research takes place. These factors influence the degree to which young participants feel at ease with the process.

What researchers mean by language when discussing research with children is a matter of debate. Researchers may be using specialized jargon, not easily understood by younger adolescents and children. As a child might mean something different from the researcher's construction of that child's statement, the language used in data gathered via questionnaires or during face-to-face interactions has been of considerable interest to researchers exploring how linguistic data provided by children can be read by researchers as indicating 'competence' (see Buckingham, 1991; Lemish, 1997: 12-14 for a discussion). Some researchers consider it important to talk to children in their 'own language', meaning either that they use simple and age-appropriate vocabulary or that they use toys and tasks to communicate with them (see Lobe, Livingstone and Haddon, 2007, for a discussion). Although creative activities may be effective or amusing in terms of gaining a response from the children (Paus-Hasebrink, 2007; Punch, 2002), they may not be perceived as such by all participants, putting the validity of the research process at risk. Such modes of communication are also subject to criticism, and given diversity among children of the same age group (see Harden *et al.*, 2000 for a discussion) may indeed fail to suit all the child participants, because of differences in age, or differences in maturity and personality, Adopting a child-centred epistemological approach that acknowledges children's autonomous agency implies moreover that researchers avoid dealing with young respondents as 'others' – as a different group of human subjects than adults (ibid.). In a sense, the use of age-appropriate language reflects a developmental model which considers children as a group addressed through protected use of language, avoiding any terminology which relates to potential 'physical, sexual and moral danger' (Rose, 1989: 22). On these grounds, ethical guidelines proposed by regulatory, funding or academic institutions guide researchers towards the 'othering' of children in an attempt to prevent any harm caused in the fieldwork. There are no easy answers to these complex issues, and the way language is used in research with children is a complex and multi-faceted issue.

Capturing the richness of children's language

Making use of thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973), and capturing the language categories used by children and young people, becomes a way of establishing a more balanced power relationship between adult researchers and child participants and shifting the authority of authoring the text onto children. One possible strategy is to use adolescents as interviewers of younger participants, as in the Finnish 2010 *Children's media barometer* (No. 17). Similarly, another Finnish study, the *Global comparative research on youth media participation* (No. 15), points to the diversity of children's internet practices and literacy across cultures, as a result of which child

participants have different understandings of net jargon. The Greek research into the construction of sexual identities of young pre-teen girls on online gaming sites (No. 21) offers an insight into adolescent vocabulary by means of a discursive analysis of the girls' accounts of coolness and sexiness, as does the Italian study on *The digital face of Eros, Agape and Philia. Adolescents, love and sexuality in the internet* (No. 24). This latter study uses a group of older adolescents to co-construct a language register that is appropriate for and intelligible to younger participants and devoid of adult stereotyping.

Establishing contact and trust

Establishing *contact and trust* with young participants is also extremely important for the effectiveness of the research process and the validity and accuracy of the data collected. Issues of agency expressed through the power dynamics developed between the researcher and the participants (Morrow and Richards, 1996) help to define both the extent to which contact occurs and the maintenance of trust is guaranteed. Both the initial contact and maintenance of communication and trust are established in different ways, either via researchers' frequent encounters with children or via sharing a cultural commonplace, where both groups use similar codes in talking about the topic of research (e.g. Buckingham, 1993).

In the Estonian study on *The importance and role of audience in new media: Messages on social networking sites* (No. 9), the moderator's questions referring to distant others, rather than to participants themselves, built trust and facilitated a shift in the research to then explore personal experience. As this study employed creative methods, the moderator 'went with the flow', sometimes deviating from the strategic plan of the original research questions. Researchers in the Norwegian study *'Is it really that dangerous, or...?'* (No. 26) owned up to their personal internet experiences as a means of establishing trust and helping participants 'loosen up' in front of 'unknown adults'. In the Belgian *Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies* (No. 5), trust and confidence between investigators and participants was built up through regular visits to the school across the school year. The result was open and lively group discussions. These repeated visits also helped the researcher get to know the children's personalities and peer group dynamics. However, during the individual interviews, the A-level children appeared reluctant to disclose intimate information about certain online risks (especially sexual risks). This was possibly because the group sessions with the A-level students had mostly taken place in a traditional classroom setting. As a result, when it came to the individual interviews, the children may have perceived the researcher as a teacher, and felt uncomfortable in crossing the line by disclosing more than they would usually tell a teacher. Among individual interviews with the children who have special needs, the researcher's role as a teacher/mentor did not have a similar impact on their disclosure of personal information. The Greek study on children and youth with special needs (No. 22) used the (prerequisite) presence of the school counsellor to secure the trust and confidence of participants with cognitive impairment, and used a sign language interpreter for those with hearing difficulties (Tsaliki with Kontogianni, under review). The UK study *The class. Social networking and the changing practices of learning among youth* (No. 30) sustained contact with children throughout the investigation as one way of managing and maintaining relationships of trust, while the longitudinal Austrian research on *Media socialization of socially disadvantaged children and adolescents* (No. 1) made sure to treat all child participants seriously and addressed them 'on their level', sometimes literally, as they matured over the years of the research.

Although many other issues of an ethical nature might have been identified in this chapter, we have prioritized those that appear to be most important in the research reported so far. Communication (language) and interpersonal relationships (trust, peer dynamics) and privacy (the private use of media) all seem to be play an important role in how fieldwork is being conducted in accordance with core ethical principles of respect and beneficence for the subjects of study.

How to deal with participants who know each other

Another important issue is the matter of how to deal with participants who know each other. This challenge mostly arises in focus groups where researchers have to decide on the relative benefits and risks of peer dynamics. Given that young people develop shared cultural codes and also often have common spaces of lived experience, peer dynamics might both be more or less effective in the actual research process than focus groups with strangers. Information provided might reflect interpersonal relationships or gender dynamics, which the researcher has either to take into consideration prior to entering the fieldwork, or account for during the reporting stage.

For example, in the Belgian study, *Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies* (No. 5), the peer dynamics in the A-level school class were totally different from the dynamics operating in the B-level school class. In the A-level group 'being vulnerable' was less acceptable to the dominant children; in the B-level group 'being vulnerable' was more acceptable. This latter circumstance resulted in more open and in-depth communication about emotions and feelings. Thus, group dynamics between participants may well offer rich information about the "framework of their peer-related activities" (Lobe *et al.*, 2007: 22), revealing how these 'interpretative communities' work (Radway, 1984). The Austrian study on *Media socialization of socially disadvantaged children and adolescents* (No. 1) is a longitudinal study, looking into the media repertoires of specific families over time, an approach that helped create feelings of safety and familiarity. The Italian research into *Mobile internet and social networking. An exploratory research among Italian teens* (No. 23) capitalized on the dynamics of focus groups interviews and used them as a strength. The researchers selected small groups of children who were friends and school/sports mates to minimize any possible distress arising from the interview context and content. In the Belgian pilot study for the qualitative EU Kids Online III data collection, the researchers also found working in groups with children that knew each other resulted in very lively discussions, as the children helped each other to reconstruct stories and remember details of what had happened. Where participants had shared experiences, such as using Chatroulette together, these incidents were discussed in detail. Another example of researchers trying to make children feel as comfortable as possible is the Finnish *Children's media barometer* (No. 17) that used 14- to 15-year-old students as interviewers with smaller children.

References

Buckingham, D. (1991). 'Teaching about media.' In *The media studies book* (pp. 12-35). London: Routledge.

Buckingham, D. (1993). *Reading audiences: Young people and the media.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). 'Thick description: Toward an interpretative theory of culture.' In C. Geertz (ed.). *The interpretation of cultures.* New York: Basic Books.

Harden, J., Scott, S., Backett-Milburn, K. and Jackson, S. (2000). 'Can't talk, won't talk? Methodological issues in researching children.' *Sociological Research Online*, 5(2). Available at http://www.socresonline.org.uk/5/2/harden.html, accessed June 2013.

Lemish, D. (1997). 'Kindergartners' understanding of television: A cross cultural comparison.' *Communication Studies*, Summer, 48(2), 109-126.

Lobe, B., Livingstone, S. and Haddon, L. (2007). *Researching children's experiences online across countries: Issues and problems in methodology.* London: EU Kids Online (Deliverable D4.1).

Markham, A. and Buchanan, E. (2012). *Ethical decision-making and internet research recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee (Version 2.0).* Available at http://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf, accessed June 2013.

Morrow, V. and Richards, M. (1996). 'The ethics of social research with children: An overview.' *Children & Society*, 10(2), 90-105.

Paus-Hasebrink, I. (2007). 'Research methods, and children.' In J. Arnett (ed.). *Encyclopaedia of children, adolescents, and the media* (pp. 717-719). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Punch, S. (2002). 'Research with children: The same or different from research with adults?' *Childhood*, 9(3), 321-341.

Radway, J. (1984). *Reading the romance: Women, patriarchy and popular culture.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Rose, N. (1989). *Governing the soul: Technologies of human subjectivity.* London: Routledge.

Tsaliki, L. (with Kontogianni S.) (2013). 'Bridging the disability divide? Young children's and teenager's with special needs internet experiences in Greece.' *Journal of Children and Media*. [under review]

5: Roles of children and researchers in participative research methods – towards symmetrical power relations in research with children

Sofie Vandoninck and Leen d' Haenens

Degrees of children's participation

Although both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UN, 1989) and General Comment No. 12 (UN, 2009) stipulate that children be included in issues pertaining to their interests, children's actual participation levels in participative offline or online research methods ranges from very passive to very active. Two main viewpoints on participation can be distinguished. The first views children as simply present and taking part in the research, while the second views children as having an impact and contributing to actual changes (Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Dedding and Moonen, 2013). Lansdown (2001) describes three types of participative research. In consultative participation, the focus is to learn from young people's perspectives and experiences. In collaborative participation youngsters are allowed to influence both the research process and the outcome. In child-directed participation, the researcher is assigned the role of a facilitator and the children are supposed to decide by themselves about the research topics and the methodology. While the framework of any study always (strongly) determines how children interact both with each other and the researchers, Hart (1992) has used the metaphor of a 'ladder' to characterize children and researchers' roles in action research. Towards the top of the ladder, the children take up more active and participative roles that allow empowerment. At the ladder's upper levels, the children themselves take initiatives on the research topics and methods, while the researcher is merely a facilitator. By contrast, the three lowest levels on the ladder are, according to Hart (1992), characterized by non-participation, with the children's roles limited to manipulation, decoration and tokenism, or 'sham participation' where children seem to take up an active role in the research process but the children's input may have no impact on the research process whatsoever. At the very lowest level, the participation is mere manipulation, characterized by misleading practices of using children's voices to obtain goals that the children are unaware of.

Table 1: Levels of child participation (based on Hart's 1992 ladder of participation)

Level	Description
8	Children initiate the research, and share decision making with adults
7	Children initiate and direct the research
6	Adult-initiated, but shared decisions with children
5	Children are consulted and informed
4	Children are assigned an active role and are informed
3	Tokenism (sham participation)
2	Children are decoration
1	Children are manipulated

Participation in EU Kids Online

The comparative qualitative phase as part of the EU Kids Online III project could be labelled as consultative situated around the fourth and fifth levels of Hart's ladder. While the children are assigned the role of subjects, the study is developed and directed by adult researchers, intending to use the children's input to influence policy initiatives on safer internet use. The young participants are well informed about the purpose of the study, why they are involved, who coordinates the research and what the research process is. Their opinions on risk perceptions are moreover respected and valued by the adult researchers. Efforts are made to create a comfortable atmosphere, where children are encouraged to express their personal opinions, tell their stories and talk about their feelings. The aspect of consulting nevertheless remains somewhat underdeveloped overall in the qualitative EU Kids Online study. Despite children being consulted in such a way that their opinions of perceptions of online risks are taken seriously, no consultation on the actual research process or methodology takes place, and there are no guarantees that children will be informed or consulted personally about the outcomes of the study.

The examples provided by the network do nevertheless offer some good examples of studies making efforts to increase children's levels of participation and expand their level of agency. One such good example is the two-phased approach in an Italian study on adolescents' love and sexuality (No. 24). In its first explorative phase, youngsters aged 16 to 18 were consulted on the construction of the final research instrument to be used in the second phase of the qualitative in-depth analysis. Assigned the role of 'assistants', these adolescents helped the researchers to familiarize themselves with the delicate field of adolescents' online sexuality and to find the correct language to approach youngsters, avoiding questions that were too intrusive.

Children as competent actors

Participative research with children assumes that researchers consider children as 'knowledgeable social actors', meaning they are well-informed actors, having an impact on their social context. While accepting that children's attitudes and behaviour continue to be shaped and influenced by their social context, this viewpoint acknowledges that children are able to interpret experiences and transfer these to meaningful actions (Dedding and Moonen, 2013; Prout, 2000). Researchers working with children under the innovative participation research approach cannot regard children as incompetent, and instead have to consider them as competent and knowledgeable actors, capable of expressing themselves (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Dedding and Moonen, 2013). This assumption of children with 'agency' thus conflicts with the dominant image of children in Western societies, which describe childhood as a period of dependency, vulnerability and innocence. This Western perspective, which views childhood and adolescence as a stage of growing and developing, where a person is not yet fully competent or capable to decide independently on life issues (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Christensen and Prout, 2002; Prout, 2000), may inhibit successful cooperation between adult researchers and young participants and favour sham participation.

Despite a shift from paternalism and authority to more openness, communication and negotiation between parents and children in family contexts (de Swaan, 1999), children participating in research may still struggle with asymmetrical power relations between themselves and the adult researchers. In most contexts, especially in 'public' contexts such as schools, children continue to perceive adults as those who are in control and who have power. When any unknown adult – such as a researcher – enters their lives, most children do not automatically expect to be recognized as a co-researcher or an expert, expressing opinions and suggesting actions. This can result in information-poor contact moments or socially desirable answers from children (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Huber and Clandinin, 2002). A relational ethical approach would be more beneficial as it focuses on reciprocity, respect, dignity, care, trust, shared responsibility and balance. Reflecting on their positions as researchers, informing and creating trust, reflecting on place and time and transferring control fosters a relationship between researcher and participant, where both are considered as experts (Connolly and Reilly, 2007; Huber and Clandinin, 2002; Lauwers, 2013). As trust comes with time,

building such a relation takes time, yet many research designs fail to allow for multiple contact moments between researchers and participants.

Other examples in the EU Kids Online network

The Finnish mixed-methods study about the use of media among 0- to 8-year-olds (No. 17) provides a good example of research enhancing young people's agency and balancing power relations. In addition to using questionnaires for parents and observations of (very) small children, it trained and used upper level comprehensive school pupils aged 14-15 to survey younger children aged 4-8. Training of these young co-researchers covered how to survey and what to do if a child became upset or emotional during the interview. This method proved very valuable, as both the young interviewers and respondents enjoyed participating in the project, and interactions among them occurred naturally in a language familiar to them. Adolescents with younger siblings turned out to be particularly good interviewers.

Another project making efforts to overcome issues of asymmetrical power is the Estonian study on the importance and role of audience in new media (No. 10) focusing on social networking sites. In its first phase, youngsters aged 16-20 described the people belonging to their online friends' list and classified them. In its second phase, participants were asked to draw sketches portraying the most prominent user types in Facebook. The production of the sketches enhanced youngsters' active engagement in the study, and helped them express themselves and give meaning to social experiences (Murumaa and Siibak, 2012). By allowing young participants to have more control over their self-expression, this project fostered a more equitable relationship between the adolescents and the researcher.

Ethical symmetry and balanced power relations

Christensen and Prout (2002) suggest pursuing ethical symmetry between adult researchers and young participants. This perspective holds that ethical standards are not necessarily different for children and adults; both are approached equally as ethical issues are not considered age-bound. Ethical symmetry does not, however, equate to social symmetry. Not only can differences in children's experiences, interests, values, routines, backgrounds, etc. require different ethical practices, but constant reflection is necessary to deal with ethical issues that may arise at any time in the research process. This more practical, situation-oriented ethical approach requires researchers to maintain a heightened sensitivity to possible asymmetries in the relationship between themselves and the children. The researcher's key task is to maintain children's interests at all stages of the study and to enable them to express thoughts and behaviours as autonomous 'social actors'.

An ongoing dialogue between children and researchers is therefore crucial (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Christensen and Prout, 2002; Davis, 1998). As a central preoccupation of establishing more balanced power relationships, 'giving voice' becomes crucial in research involving children. As Vasudevan (2006: 207) notes, creative and particularly "self-authoring" practices are important for participants "whose lives are often storied by others". Devising ways to have the children's voices heard and creating spaces for children's voices to be heard (Mazzoni and Harcourt, 2013: 6-7) nevertheless remain challenges for child-centred research projects. It becomes even more challenging when researchers confront situations putting children's physical and/or psychological well-being at risk. Researchers have to recognize and accept their responsibility, whenever a child discloses intimate information about a worrying situation in his/her personal life. Until further assistance from social workers, psychologists or other caregivers is guaranteed, the researcher may (temporarily) take on the role of counsellor or confidant. At the same time, a relationship of trust and confidentiality should be safeguarded. Open communication towards the child concerning follow-up by professionals is crucial, and the child's wishes or preferences should be respected. These interests are, however, likely to conflict with each other and threaten the symmetry of the relationship between researcher and participant. Faced with such

ethical decisions, a researcher has to take into account general ethical approaches, legal frameworks, professional instructions and codes, as well as personal moral frameworks (Lauwers, 2013).

The presence of adults: pros and cons

There were some challenges when parents where present in the interview, because this resulted in the reluctance of the children to reveal personal information. Researchers in the Belgian *TIRO project – Teens and ICT, Risks and Opportunities: The social meaning of young people's online creativity* (No. 2) recognized the importance of spaces of interviewing, and the adult control and surveillance of these spaces (see Barker and Weller, 2003). Within the domestic space, parents often wanted to stay very close to their child during the interview. The researchers therefore had to negotiate diplomatically with the parents to get access to a more separate space within the domestic environment, while children did not want their parents to know about their risky internet practices. Getting access to the child's bedroom was, however, difficult to negotiate with the parents, especially when the researcher was a man and the respondent a girl. The researchers also noticed that moving between different spaces within the home (from the living room or kitchen to the bedroom or study room) affected the way the child interacted and communicated with them. For example, they confessed more easily their risky internet practices that they did not want their parents to know about. However, the presence of adults was helpful in several instances, especially when children with special needs were involved. For example, in the case of Belgian study, *Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies* (No. 5), and the Greek study *Children and new technologies: The digital divide among children with special needs* (No. 22), the presence of a teacher or counsellor seemed beneficial for conducting qualitative sessions with children with special needs or vulnerable children.

Consideration as to parent–child relationships

However, consideration should be given as to how the research process might affect family relations. In one Italian study, the concern was with how the research process may impact the relationship between the children and their parents. In the project *The appropriation of parental control tools among Italian cultures of parental mediation of the internet: The case of Vodafone's Smart Tutor* (No. 25), risks were addressed by asking children what concerned their parents most about their internet use, and how they perceived these worries. However, the researchers worried that the investigation of parental mediation strategies from the children's perspective could lead to encouraging children to question parental norms and values, with the risk of weakening parental authority. In a UK study the children and parents were curious about the findings in the project *The class. Social networking and the changing practices of learning among youth* (No. 30); therefore the researchers made an effort to give broad feedback as they went along in the research process.

Other examples of 'giving voice and representation'

Examples of studies offering *voice and representation* to young participants include the Belgian TIRO study into the social meaning of young people's online creativity (No. 2), the Finnish 2010 media barometer (No. 17), where young adolescents interviewed younger children and the GTO Swedish-Estonian study (No. 11) on the normalization of gender identities online through social networking site profiles and photos. The *Global comparative research on youth media participation* (No. 15) highlights the importance of cultural context in the ways in which children are being represented. Different cultural settings and expectations in Finland, Argentina, India and Egypt show that some children's voices may not be heard or may be misconstrued as a result of different readings of internet practices across cultures. *Young people's accounts from experiences with sexual content* (No. 20) focused on participants with sexual agency during late childhood and early adolescence, and gave them the opportunity to discuss their uses of sexual content online. A Greek study, *Children and new technologies: The digital divide among children with special needs* (No. 22), focused on adolescents and young people with mental and/or motor impairment and hearing difficulties, giving a voice to the 'silenced' youth with special needs regarding their internet practices and experiences of access, use and identity formation. Interestingly, it appears that sometimes the very institutions that are called to cater for these audiences are immersed in the same culture that addresses them with derision and robs them of a voice. Among the many studies providing representation for children is the Italian *Digital face of Eros, Agape and Philia. Adolescents, love and sexuality in the internet* (No. 24) study, which offers testimonials of young adolescent boys and girls socially constructing and normalizing their sexual identity. In the Slovakian study, *Constructing identity in virtual environments of the internet* (No. 29), participants described and explained their strategies and frames of self-definition in virtual environments. In the Estonian study, *Importance and role of audience in new media: Messages on social networking sites* (No. 9), creative exercises enabled participants to express their thoughts and ideas creatively.

Online environments may be helpful in establishing a balanced relationship between young participants and researchers and the 'power' of the adult. In the higher perceived anonymity of an online setting, youngsters may feel less reluctant to communicate about even sensitive issues. Asynchronous communication in online settings may likewise give the participants a higher sense of control over the research activities (Dedding and Moonen, 2013; Murthy, 2008; Nind *et al.*, 2012). In the Italian study on adolescents, love and sexuality on the internet (No. 24), participants in the online focus groups organized in the second qualitative phase of in-depth analysis were recruited via the adolescent co-researchers from the first explorative phase, and were contacted by phone or Facebook. The researchers felt that both the absence of a physical presence of an adult researcher and the use of online focus groups permitting anonymity helped young participants respond more spontaneously.

References

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2004). *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people.* Barkingside: Barnardo's.

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V. (2011). *The ethics of research with children and young people. A practical handbook.* London: Sage Publications.

Barker, J. and Weller, S. (2003). '"Is it fun?" Developing child-centred research methods.' *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 23(1), 33-58.

Boyden, J. and Ennew, J. (1997). *Children in focus. A manual for participatory research with children.* Stockholm, Sweden: Radda Barnen.

Christensen, P. and Prout, A. (2002). 'Working with ethical symmetry in social research with children.' *Childhood*, 9(4), 477-497.

Connolly, K. and Reilly, R.C. (2007). 'Emergent issues when researching trauma: a confessional tale.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(4), 522-540.

Davis, J.M. (1998). 'Understanding the meaning of children: a reflexive process.' *Children & Society*, 12, 325-335.

Dedding, C. and Moonen, X. (2013). 'Kinderen en onderzoek: gaat dat samen?' In C. Dedding, K. Jurrius, X. Moonen and L. Rutjes (eds). *Kinderen en jongeren actief in wetenschappelijk onderzoek*. Houten: LannooCampus.

de Swaan, A. (1999). 'Uitgaansbeperking en uitgaansangst: over de verschuiving van bevelshuishouding naar onderhandelingshuishouding.' In J. Heilbron and G. de Vries (eds). *De draagbare De Swaan.* Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Prometheus.

Hart, R.A. (1992). *Children's participation: from tokenism to citizenship.* Florence: International Child Development Centre, UNICEF.

Huber, J. and Clandinin, D.J. (2002). 'Ethical dilemmas in relational narrative inquiry with children.' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(6), 785-803.

Lansdown, G. (2001). *Promoting children's participation in democratic decision-making.* Florence: UNICEF.

Lauwers, H. (2013). 'Ethische overwegingen.' In C. Dedding, K. Jurrius, X. Moonen and L. Rutjes (eds). *Kinderen en jongeren actief in wetenschappelijk onderzoek*. Houten: LannooCampus.

Mazzoni, V. and Harcourt, D. (2013). 'An international experience of research with children: moving forward on the idea of children's participation.' *Qualitative Research*, 1-17.

Munford, R. and Sanders, J. (2004). 'Recruiting diverse groups of young people to research.' *Qualitative Social Work*, 3, 469-482.

Murthy, D. (2008). 'Digital ethnography: an examination of the use of new technologies for social research.' *Sociology*, 42(5), 837-855.

Murumaa, M. and Siibak, A. (2012). 'The imagined audience on Facebook: analysis of Estonian teen sketches about typical Facebook users.' *First Monday*, 17(2).

Nind, M., Wiles, R., Bengry-Howell, A. and Crow, G. (2012). 'Methodological innovation and research ethics: forces in tension or forces in harmony?' *Qualitative Research*, 1-18. Available at http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/08/27/1468794112455042.abstract, accessed June 2013.

Prout, A. (2000). 'Children's participation: control and self-realisation in British late modernity.' *Children & Society*, 14, 304-331.

UN (United Nations) (1989). *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.* New York: UNICEF.

UN (United Nations) (2009). *General Comment No. 12: The right of the child to be heard.* UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Vasudevan, L. (2006). 'Making known differently: Engaging visual modalities as spaces to author new selves.' *E-Learning*, 3(2), 207-216.

6: Vulnerable groups of children

Monica Barbovschi and Michael Dreier

Current myths about childhood

Current myths regarding children's relation to online technologies include the myth of the innocent child (Meyer, 2007), which further perpetuates the image of the victim-child in need of adult supervision and regulation (Livingstone, 2002, 2011). This myth limits the child to the role of a passive recipient of content ignoring the numerous situations where children have an active role or even initiate problematic conduct online (e.g. online aggression towards other children). Like other myths, it fails to capture the nuances of the various situations and roles involving children, By contrast, the myth of the cyberkid does not take into account the differences in children's abilities to assess complex social situations (including online) and to cope with negative experiences. Both these competing conceptions of children make it more difficult to direct resources to where they are most needed (i.e., to dealings with children in vulnerable circumstances). While this report has already touched on the topic of vulnerability several times, some further relevant points can still be made.

Vulnerable children: examples of studies dealing with vulnerable groups

As the EU Kids Online project revealed, online opportunities and risks are interlinked. This makes the inherent tension between the protection and participation rights upheld by the UNCRC extremely relevant to research on vulnerable groups of children. Wilson and McAloney's (2010) article on the UNCRC and the internet use of children summarizes the potential risks and benefits for children, and suggests ways to design a safeguarding policy that upholds the rights of the children. They also state that in addition to any harm resulting from children engaging in online activities, exclusion is in itself a denial of the right to participation, a right that vulnerable children enjoy less. As noted by Byron (2008), over-protection of children and shielding them from both online opportunities and risks is harmful in itself, as it prevents them from learning digital skills and coping strategies, and further contributes to deepening the digital divide. As highlighted by Livingstone and Helsper (2007), while the internet is a pool of rich, diverse, stimulating resources for exploration and growth for some children, for others it remains a narrow and under-utilized resource. Boys, older and middle-class children all enjoy more and better quality access to the internet than girls, younger and working-class children. Vulnerable children (e.g. low socioeconomic status, various types of minority groups, children with special needs etc.) may be less likely to benefit from the online environment. Social exclusion, as a vulnerability category, is directly mediated by online participation mainly in social networks. In the EU NET ADB study, *The development of adaptive and maladaptive patterns of internet use among European adolescents at risk for internet addictive behaviours: A grounded theory inquiry* (No. 19) (Dreier *et al.*, 2012), those adolescents with real-life contacts to their online friends and equipped with significant social skills were mainly assigned to the digital outcome 'juggling it all' group of those participants, who were strongly involved in online as well as offline activities and thus benefitted from their overall social involvement. By contrast, adolescents representing the digital outcome of 'I am addicted', 'considering change', 'have tried unsuccessfully' and 'killing boredom' were linked to psychosocial problems as well as to being vulnerable due to lack of social inclusion and social skills.

The German study, *Gambling in childhood and adolescence. Prevalence and prevention* (No. 18) (Müller *et al.*, 2013), identified norms and adolescents' need for social belonging as key determinants of adolescent behaviour. Their need for belonging can make adolescents with social anxiety susceptible to peer group influence. The group that was prone to develop an internet or pathological online gambling behaviour could include young males, emigrants and those using dysfunctional acculturation strategies such as

marginalization, assimilation and separation (Müller *et al.*, 2013). As it dealt with vulnerable adolescents, this study included a particular focus on ethical precautions, and provided its potential participating adolescents with detailed information about the study as well as informed consent for their parents. The three main ethical concerns addressed were, first, anonymization of both analysed and reported results; second, the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time; and third, measures to avoid identification of the participant within the school. To protect vulnerable children from intrusions by teachers or classmates, the interviews were conducted in separate rooms in the school or better still, in rooms of the interviewing institution in the afternoons. The interviewing situation was made as pleasant as possible to the participant, both in terms of providing good material and according respect to the interviewed participant. The interviewers were very sensitive to the mood and willingness of the participant regarding reported events. As soon as personal limits of reporting were reached, the researcher was extremely careful about in-depth exploration. At times, behaving in a sensitive manner towards to a participant meant losing relevant narration and choosing not to pursue some aspects relevant to the research question. The EU Kids Online findings revealed that children already vulnerable due to outer circumstances are also more vulnerable online, and highlighted a risk/vulnerability migration pattern. This pattern proved applicable to a range of risky activities, including exposure to sexual materials online, and making new contacts online. Children who experienced more offline risks report more exposure and more contacting of new people (Hasebrink *et al.*, 2011).

Attention to sensitive situations

From a practical standpoint, the construction of an inclusive context and actively seeking the children's participation (Mazzoni and Harcourt, 2013) is particularly challenging when dealing with vulnerable groups of children. Special ethical reflections were addressed when the children were perceived as vulnerable, such as children from low socioeconomic status (No. 1) or children with special needs, such as deaf children (No. 22) or children with behavioural problems and learning difficulties (No. 5). There were also ethical considerations related to particularly sensitive topics, such as sexuality, where researchers in some countries chose to interview older children to reflect their earlier experiences with sexual content (No. 7, Czech Republic). In other studies (No. 21) of children's relationship to sexual content there were reflections about children's ability to back out when embarrassed. In the Greek studies there were also back-up plans – which did not have to be used – in case information of sexual abuse came up. Several strategies can be employed to build a trusting relationship between researcher and children assessed to be more vulnerable. In one Belgian study, *Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies* (No. 5), the researchers intended to visit children at school regularly throughout the whole academic year to build trust and confidence between the researcher and the students. Because of their lower cognitive and learning capacities and/or behavioural problems, the 12 children in the B-level group and the six children in the BuSO-level group (i.e., education for children with special needs) were considered vulnerable. With the BuSO group, the researcher also participated in some informal school activities (afternoon breaks, outdoor activity in the city) to become more familiar with this group of children with specific cognitive and behavioural problems. The group sessions with the BuSO group also actively involved their teachers. The presence of familiar adults helped these children, who sometimes responded very emotionally or aggressively to unexpected situations, to feel more comfortable. As the Belgian study *Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies* (No. 5) highlighted, as detailed in Part II, Chapter 3, problematic or even harmful situations such may also be revealed spontaneously during data collection sessions with children. Such situations demand both the researcher's sensitivity and ad hoc adaptability to novel/spontaneous challenges.

Conducting the Austrian study, *Media socialization of socially disadvantaged children and adolescents* (No. 1), led the researcher to make several ethical reflections. First, the aims and scope of the study posed three main problems that had to be addressed ethically and methodologically. Its participants were socially disadvantaged (i.e., low socioeconomic status, low income and low levels of education). The interviewed

children were very young (about five years old) at the beginning and still quite young (12 years) at the end of this study covering sensitive topics, such as sexuality, and especially the relationships between family members (e.g. between a child and his/her stepfather/mother or mother/children relationships). Precautions taken included training the interviewers to conduct the interviews in a sensible and flexible way, focusing on their own experiences and meanings of media use. Before the interview, the interviewers were also given spreadsheets containing any relevant information regarding situations in the interviewee families. All male participants were interviewed by male interviewers, and all female participants by female interviewers. Most interviews were held in the children's own rooms without their parents, who were being interviewed at the same time. This meant the children had a safe and familiar environment and did not feel controlled by their parents. All verbatim reports were also carefully anonymized, so that no family could be identified. As pointed out by Norbert Elias (1978), such 'committed social research' demonstrates not just a scientific interest in the research topic, but also a social interest in raising awareness of socially disadvantaged families and their problems.

Specific strategies

Research involving vulnerable groups needs an extensive warm-up phase to allow participants to lose their fear of reporting. One of the main aims of this interview phase is to avoid unpleasant or uncomfortable situations. Using open questions and requesting techniques in the interview enables a detailed reporting participant to present a flood of words, connecting the dots of the storyline to make it coherent to a native listener. The interviewers need to demonstrate personal interest in the story that is presented, and signal the value of the narration. While guidance on obtaining good data from the interview is necessary, offering too tight a framework to the participant may pose other problems. Limiting the in-depth quality of the narration directly impacts the quality of the data, and the interviewer soon notices whether the interview meets the necessary requirements. Direct feedback offers the opportunity to make technical adjustments, even during the interview. To avoid losing upcoming relevant content, interviewers should not necessarily limit non-relevant narrations by the participant as a consequence of his prior interruption. Although, as Murray and Morgan (2005) highlighted, computer-assisted self-interviewing (CASI) only works for a limited number of participants, it may provide a viable solution for studies involving vulnerable groups of children. The advantages of CASI include consistent question administration that minimizes interviewer bias, conditional branching and automatically logic checks that ensure participants are asked appropriate questions (Kurth *et al.*, 2004). As self-completion does not provide in-depth narration and data quality equivalent to that obtained by a professional interviewer, CASI is also relatively limited in terms of sensitivity, and this in turn limits the generalizability of the findings with an extremely sensitive nature. CASI might therefore not be suitable for research focusing on risks in internet usage (Couper and Rowe, 1996).

As data collected from vulnerable groups is by definition of a sensitive nature, researchers need to be aware of the risks that collection of sensitive data poses for participants, and take appropriate ethical precautions (Mertens and Ginsberg, 2008). Bahn and Weatherill (2012) discuss ethical dilemmas in qualitative research involving data that is sensitive due to the characteristics of the participants, and offer practical solutions and suggestions, such as offering safety training to field researchers. Liamputtong (2007) notes the delicate situation of vulnerable groups who may lack the ability to withdraw from the research if they become uncomfortable, or raise the issue if they experience harm. She stresses the need for researchers to recognize that continuing an interview with participants who might not feel they can withdraw causes harm. Despite the questionable ethical nature of collecting data from vulnerable groups, she concludes that having their voices heard is nevertheless empowering. While the vulnerable condition of children, especially young ones, always demands due consideration, *special ethical precautions are required for children considered to be particularly vulnerable*.

References

Bahn, S. and Weatherill, P. (2012). 'Qualitative social research: a risky business when it comes to collecting "sensitive" data.' *Qualitative Research*, 13(1), 19-35.

Byron, T. (2008). *Safer children in a digital world: The report of the Byron Review.* Nottingham: Department for Children, Schools and Families, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/byronreview, accessed June 2013.

Couper, M.P. and Rowe, B. (1995). 'Evaluation of a computer-assisted self-interview component in a computer-assisted personal interview survey.' Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, 1017-1022.

Dreier, M., Tzavela, E., Wölfling, K., Mavromati, F., Duven, E., Karakitsou, Ch., Macarie, G., Veldhuis, L., Wójcik , S., Halapi, E., Sigursteinsdottir, H., Oliaga, A. and Tsitsika, A. (2012). *The development of adaptive and maladaptive patterns of Internet use among European adolescents at risk for internet addictive behaviours: A grounded theory inquiry.* Athens, Greece: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), EU NET ADB. Available at www.eunetadb.eu, accessed June 2013.

Elias, N. (1978). *What is sociology?*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Hasebrink, U., Görzig, A., Haddon, L., Kalmus, V. and Livingstone, S. (2011) *Patterns of risk and safety online.* London: EU Kids Online, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Kurth, A.E., Diane, P., Golden, M.R., Weiss, N.S., Heagerty, P.J., Spielberg, F., Handsfield, H.H. and Holmes, K.K. (2004). 'A comparison between audio computer-assisted self-interviews and clinician interviews for obtaining the sexual history.' *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 31(12), 719-726.

Liamputtong, P. (2007). *Researching the vulnerable*. London: Sage Publications.

Livingstone, S. (2002). *Young people and new media: Childhood and the changing media environment*. London: Sage Publications.

Livingstone, S. (2011). 'Internet, children, and youth.' In M. Consalvo and C. Ess (eds). *The handbook of internet studies* (pp. 348-368). Oxford: Blackwell.

Livingstone, S. and Helsper, E. J. (2007). 'Gradations in digital inclusion: Children, young people, and the digital divide.' *New Media & Society*, 9, 671–696.

Mazzoni, V. and Harcourt, D. (2013). 'An international experience of research with children: moving forward on the idea of children's participation.' *Qualitative Research*, 1-17.

Mertens, D.M. and Ginsberg, P.E. (2008). 'Deep in ethical waters: transformative perspectives for qualitative social work research.' *Qualitative Social Work*, 7, 484-503.

Meyer, A. (2007). 'The moral rhetoric of childhood.' *Childhood*, 14(1), 85-104.

Müller, K.W., Dreier, M., Duven, E., Giralt, S., Beutel, M.E. and Wölfling, K. (2013). *Abschlussbericht zur Studie Konsum von Glücksspielen bei Kindern und Jugendlichen: Verbreitung und Prävention*. an das Ministerium für Gesundheit, Emanzipation, Pflege und Alter des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen.

Murray D. and Morgan, A. (2005). 'Using computer assisted self interviewing (CASI) questionnaires to facilitate consultation and participation with vulnerable young people.' *Child Abuse Review*, 14, 389-406.

Wilson, J.E. and McAloney, K. (2010). 'Upholding the Convention on the Rights of the Child: A quandary in cyberspace.' *Child Care in Practice*, 16(2), 167-180.

7: Cultural differences in approaching ethical aspects. An insight from the qualitative data collection for EU Kids Online III

Sofie Vandoninck, with an introduction by Ingunn Hagen

Introduction: handling ethical aspects in cross-cultural research projects

In studies where several countries were involved it became clear that there were cultural differences with regards to aspects of ethics. Such issues included what access researchers may have to children without parental supervision, and about the confidentiality of information that children revealed. For example, in the project *Global comparative research on youth media participation* (No. 15), there was a mixed-methods approach (survey: 4,301, interviews: about 110, media diaries: about 400) in Argentina, Egypt, Finland and India. The way ethical aspects were handled varied from one country to another. In Finland and Argentina, confidentiality between children/youth and the researcher was very important and, for example, the in-depth interviews done in Finland could also include very personal discussions. Also the survey data was kept away from teachers (and parents). In Egypt and India parents were often present during the interviews since leaving the youngsters alone with the interviewer would have been inappropriate in these cultures. Therefore, different philosophical backgrounds account for different ways in which adult–child relationships are constructed and negotiated. Moreover, facilitating participation of children and giving them voice in the sense stipulated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 12 (UN, 1989) might pose different challenges in different cultural contexts.

Also, the topic of gaining the consent of ethical committees, and of parents and children, was rigorously addressed by several studies. In the German study EU NET ADB, *The development of adaptive and maladaptive patterns of Internet use among European adolescents at risk for internet addictive behaviours: A grounded theory inquiry* (No. 19), strict ethical guidelines were followed. Each partner was responsible for filing a petition requesting permission for the study with their local appropriate state agencies, Ministry of Education or other ethics committee relevant to each context, and for following all local ethical guidelines and restrictions. In some countries, permission is more difficult to obtain due to more strict regulations and guidelines. A uniform approach at this stage is not possible due to countries' different regulations and procedures required in order to obtain permission. In addition to approval from ethics committees and educational authorities, written informed consent was obtained from the parents/guardians of all eligible adolescents prior to participation in the study, and the verbal assent of adolescents was requested. Although explicit written parental consent is not legally required in every country, an equal approach was preferred for all the participant countries. At this stage in the study, all participants were approached in the same way when it came to consent, although at higher levels (level of the country/state) of obtaining consent, each country follows its own rules and procedures. This approach was the one followed also by the EU Kids Online III qualitative fieldwork. Adolescents were informed about the purpose of the study and about the voluntary nature of their participation (and about the non-consequences of withdrawal or refusal to participate). Furthermore, they were informed about anonymity and confidentiality (and its limits). Finally, additional resources were in an information leaflet provided at the end of the interview, including the contact details of information about internet safety and 13 local helplines (or other appropriate referral sites), whereby the adolescent could access confidential help and professional advice.

The EU Kids Online III data collection

Within WP4 of the EU Kids Online III project, a second task is collecting the views of children aged 9-16 on risky online experiences through focus groups and interviews. At the time this report was written (spring-summer 2013), the participating countries were in various stages of fieldwork, but most of them had finalized

the data collection. The network members were asked to comment and give answers to a series of questions pertaining to issues and problems related to data collection (e.g. accessing schools, obtaining consent, handling group dynamics), as well as to provide insights on what works and what doesn't, and to offer recommendations for future research.

Examining studies from different countries concerning children's internet use and risky aspects of online activity reveals many ways of approaching the ethical aspects of research. Formal consent from authorities or parents and the role of the parents in the interview situation are important in some countries. Where and with whom the children are interviewed also matters. Finally, the status of children in a particular culture and their relationship to adults will also constrain the kind of openness between the researcher(s) and the children they interview or observe. Reflecting on the challenges encountered in their international project involving research with children, Mazzoni and Harcourt (2013) welcome the acknowledgement of similarities and differences, which can be philosophical, ethical or practical in their nature.

Legal and formal requirements

The EU Kids Online network provided consent forms for schools, parents and children. An information letter for parents was also available. As all of this material was provided in English, the forms were translated in non-English speaking countries. Despite the requirements for ethics-compliant research varying from country to country, the materials developed as part of the EU Kids Online protocols proved very useful. All the consent forms were used, even where there was no legal requirement for all of the material. Romania, for instance, had no requirement for consent by children, while the Czech Republic had no requirement for consent by parents.

The table below shows the differences between countries regarding the *official permission required in order to gain access to the children*. In both Greece and in Portugal, the researchers had to go through the Ministry of Education. In Malta, the Education Directorate made the initial requests to the heads of schools. In Romania, the written (explicit) consent of both the School Directorate and the local school inspectorate was needed. Both Australia and the UK required researchers to first get university ethics approval and then obtain a national police check. The Australian team then had to approach the umbrella organization for the school/s in which they wished to conduct research and these negotiations with Australia's school system ethics officers were still under way at the time of writing this report. Requirements for official permission from the government in other countries seriously slowed down the data collection process for periods ranging from one month in Portugal up to nine months in Greece. As detailed below, this slow, painstaking process prompted a search for ways to bypass these governmental permissions. Researchers in Greece and Portugal did eventually manage to sidestep the government's involvement. Obtaining permission from the government proved, moreover, not to provide any guarantee of successful access to the schools, as all the school principals reserved the right not to accommodate the request. Where schools chose to deny access, the process had to start all over again. In the UK, the process of obtaining the police check (Criminal Records Bureau, CRB check) seriously slowed down the data collection, especially after the CRB check was rejected by a junior school.

Table 1: Legal requirements, by country

Country	Permission required from the government or university ethics committee[3]	Explicit consent required from school (headmaster)	Explicit consent legally required from parents	Explicit consent legally required from children	Additional forms required[4]
Belgium	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Czech Republic	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Greece	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Hungary	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Italy	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Malta	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Romania	No	Yes	No	No	No
Spain	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
UK	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Australia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

When approaching children via schools, *the headmaster or principal's explicit consent was always required*. The rationale was that the school is responsible for the children (*parentis inter loco*) while the children were at school. In some countries, children were partly recruited through different gatekeepers (e.g. youth organizations in Belgium). In this case, no school was involved and the consent form for schools/teachers was irrelevant. In all countries, the EU Kids Online materials for schools/teacher consent were used, and most countries also provided an information letter. In Romania, the researchers signed a partnership on behalf of the research institute with the school inspectorate for fieldwork in the EU Kids Online project. This partnership provided nothing beyond a grant of access to the schools. All school principals retained both the right to refuse participation and to 'drop out' at any time and one UK school dropped out after two months of negotiations. Finding a replacement was problematic as the schools' term had almost finished by then, and many schools were taking exams. In Australia, the situation was even more complicated as the type of the school determined whether or not the schools could be approached directly. Within certain groups of schools, the principals sometimes sought approval from their school boards before consulting with the teachers about the study.

Since the school as a 'gatekeeper' was considered to be acting *in loco parentis* in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Romania and the UK, no explicit *parental consent* was required in those countries even though the schools' obligation was to inform parents about activities in which their child was participating. Researchers in these countries did, however, choose to use the form for parental consent and most schools welcomed this prepared request for parental consent. This approach protected the schools from potential disagreement with parents. One UK school did, however, drop out, believing it would have been too difficult to sort out parental

---

[3] A 'yes' means that schools and researchers can't autonomously decide to collaborate in academic research, as permission is required at the level of university ethics committee and/or local or state government.

[4] Additional forms are understood as any formal documents required by the government or the schools in addition to the EU Kids Online information sheets and consent forms.

consent. In the countries where explicit consent from the parents was legally required, the EU Kids Online materials were used. In most countries, the parents did not ask additional questions, and the (translated) parental consent form and information letter seemed sufficiently clear. One exception was Portugal, where some of the (low socioeconomic status) parents of the 9- to 10-year-olds had difficulties reading the many forms sent by the school. In most countries, the rate of parental approval was sufficient and no major problems occurred. Both the Czech Republic and Spain did, however, report that, despite the school's approval, quite a few parents refused to allow their children to inform anyone else about their online activities. A Romanian mother, who withdrew her son (age category 11-13) from the pilot study, explained in a phone call to the researcher that as her son did not use the internet often, it would be better for him not to participate. In Belgium, two parents of 9- to 10-year-olds changed their minds after the interview took place, and requested to withdraw their children and not use the data for analysis. This prompted the researcher to recruit new participants.

Children's explicit consent was legally required in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Greece, Malta and Australia. However, even when children's consent was not officially required, participation was completely voluntary. The researchers made sure that the children were informed and willing to participate in the study by explaining verbally the purpose of the study and asking them to sign the EU Kids Online consent form. In some cases, the forms were provided by the school or the researchers before the data collection took place, and the children were expected to sign and return their forms (Greece, Portugal). In Romania, Belgium, Italy and Malta, children's written consent was obtained directly, at the moment of the data collection. Children rarely questioned the content of the consent form, and they mostly signed it without paying much attention to it. Nevertheless, there were a few exceptions. Despite having the consent of her parents, one girl dropped out from a Romanian focus group before the discussion started. Some children in Greece and Malta were reluctant to participate due to concerns about the sharing of private information, especially information concerning specific (possibly negative) experiences with others. In such cases, the interviewees were replaced by other children.

A few countries required *forms or clauses in addition to the documents provided by the EU Kids Online network*. In Portugal, a detailed explanation of all the procedures for the study had to be submitted with the proposal for the study to the Ministry of Education. In Malta, parents signed a consent form at the beginning of the academic year, and the Education Directorate then asked the heads of schools to recruit participants from those pupils whose parents had signed this form. UK schools also set extra conditions, asking the researcher for letters to prove he was actually participating in the EU Kids Online study and to have the London School of Economics check and confirm his employment history. In Australia, where different types of schools have different rules, documents for parents, teachers and students needed subtle variations. The school system ethics officers' concerns regarding the focus group protocols were addressed by adding an additional clause into the consent form for children, so that the child agreed to 'respect the privacy of other students and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others'. Unfortunately, even this compromise was not accepted in one case, where the ethics officer believed that children would not feel bound by the assurances they had given. This issue is still being discussed with the Australian ethics committee.

Difficulties in accessing schools: how to tackle these?

It is best to avoid promising children valuable incentives that can over-stimulate their participation and therefore put in danger the quality of our findings. It is obvious that getting access to schools was the most problematic holdback in almost all countries. Once a school was convinced to participate in the study, researchers were generally able to find sufficient respondents. In the Czech Republic, one school was willing to participate, but unable to obtain enough signed parental consent forms. As getting access to schools is such a challenge, and consecutive refusals can be very frustrating, several countries decided to bypass the regular procedure and sought alternative ways to find participants. In order to increase the positive regard felt by potential participants, some countries also sought to arrange opportunities for personal contact with school

principals, parents and/or children. Schools that had agreed to participate were sometimes willing to assist with the practicalities of organizing the data collection. In other cases, principals and teachers were so uncooperative that the researchers had to organize focus groups and interviews autonomously.

Table 2: Actions undertaken by countries to find and convince participants

Country	Alternative to access participants[5]	Personal contact moment before data collection[6]	School's cooperation in practical organization[7]
Belgium	Yes – youth organization (Chiro)	Yes – with parents when youngsters were not recruited via school	Acceptable – only children who had finished schoolwork were allowed to participate
Czech Republic	No	Yes – phone calls with principals	Acceptable – many schools had no interest in participating in research, but when schools willing to participate were contacted, they proved very cooperative in distributing consent forms
Greece	Yes – personal network of acquaintances	Yes – with principals (phone), follow-up by junior researchers	Acceptable – distributed consent forms
Hungary	No	Yes – with principals	Good – no issues reported
Italy	No	Yes – various face-to-face meetings with principals and/or teachers	Poor in the upper secondary school, where researchers organized everything autonomously Good in the primary and lower secondary schools, where teachers collected consent forms and scheduled the focus groups/interviews
Malta	Yes – personal networks	Yes – with parents and/or children when they were recruited from personal networks	Acceptable – schools helped in organizing the groups, finding participants and distributing consent forms, but they did not always follow instructions about single-gender focus groups and the numbers of participants
Portugal	Yes – school librarians network	No	Good – distributed consent forms and arranged times and places for data collection
Romania	Yes – partnership with school inspectorate	No	Rather poor – negative attitude towards research in schools
Spain	Yes – personal	No	Good – no issues reported

---

[5] This involves the recruitment of youngsters outside of schools.

[6] This refers to personal meetings or phone conversations before the actual interview or focus group to explain the purpose of the study, arrange practicalities for the data collection and/or create benevolence for participation.

[7] 'Poor' refers to receiving little support, or having difficulties with the recruitment of children and/or finding an appropriate location.
'Acceptable' refers to receiving sufficient though not extensive support and/or having only minor issues related to practical arrangements.
'Good' refers to receiving substantial support and/or having no practical issues at all.

	network of acquaintances and Spanish helpline Protegeles		
UK	Yes – NGOs and personal network of acquaintances	Yes – various face-to-face meetings with principals and/or teachers	Good in most schools – schools helped at organizing consents, recruiting children and providing locations Poor in junior school, which did not allow individual interviews, and where focus groups had to be in visible, public space within the school
Australia	Yes, partnership with independent school – using personal contacts	Yes – with key decision makers in relevant independent school	Good – required a school-based champion

Schools in most countries tended to have a negative attitude towards research projects, as many feel they are already overburdened. School principals believe that participating in the study is time-consuming, requiring extra effort from the teachers, and is prejudicial to regular school curriculum activities. Access was often denied because the period of the year/semester was not appropriate, and extra-curricular activities had to be planned well in advance, or because schools had the impression that researchers were evaluating them or simply because teachers and headmasters were too busy. Researchers were expected to be very flexible and fit with the schools' timetables as coordinating time commitments was often problematic. Slow governmental procedures and/or schools' reluctance to take part in the study led researchers in Belgium, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Malta and the UK to use *alternative methods to find participants*. The Australian team also did this during the pilot phase. In these countries, personal connections turned out to be so important that they functioned as 'gatekeepers'. A gatekeeper, who was an 'opinion leader' with a positive attitude towards the study, could promote the study within his/her organization or network. Such approaches generally created more willingness among potential participants. Although a special partnership signed with Romania's school inspectorate for fieldwork in the EU Kids Online study helped the researchers to access Romanian schools, a negative attitude towards research still meant some schools remained reluctant to participate. A UK researcher used his personal network to access a junior school, but when he turned up to do the first interviews he found the business manager did not accept his police check and therefore refused to permit any individual interviews in a private space.

In Greece, Italy, Australia and the UK, substantial efforts were made to explain the purpose and process of the study to the school more in detail using a more *personal approach*. Researchers believed that these moments of personal contact (on the phone and/or face-to-face) were necessary to create more willingness among the school principals. In Belgium and Malta, parents were visited personally at home before interviews/focus groups took place with any participants who had not been recruited through schools. The interviewer used this home visit to explain the study personally and to complete the parental consent forms. Despite the parents greatly appreciating these personal visits, such a time-consuming personal approach is not feasible in every study.

Even when schools agreed to participate, their further *assistance and cooperation in organizing the data collection* varied considerably across countries. In the Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal and Spain, the

schools distributed the consent forms among their pupils. The Portuguese schools were even willing to assist in arranging a time and place for the interviews and focus groups. In the Italian upper secondary schools, the school principals were not at all cooperative, and everything had to be arranged by the researchers autonomously with the teachers involved. Those researchers introduced the project and its aims directly to the youngsters in each class. In Romania, Belgium, Malta and the UK, principals and teachers appeared to regard research projects as 'inferior' to regular school activities and schools seemed rather inflexible in accommodating the time commitments of the researchers. As a result, only those children who had finished a school assignment were allowed to volunteer to take part in the focus group in Belgium. In Malta, where the school ignored instructions regarding gender and number of participants, the researchers had to deal with mixed-gender focus groups, and some groups with only three or four participants. In the UK, a school's business manager unexpectedly and implacably and inconveniently refused to accept the researcher's valid police check at the first interviews.

Presence and interventions from other people during the data collection process

Although involvement by adults other than the interviewer influenced the conversations and the progress of the interviews, it was neither possible to exactly quantify such influences nor to be sure of their impact. The main impact of adults outside the research team appears to have been creating such an interruption by entering the research space so that children stopped talking until they felt safe to resume again. Holding focus groups and interviews in shared or (semi) publicly accessible spaces resulted in some unavoidable disruption.

Table 3: Presence and type of interventions from others, by country

Country	Presence at focus groups[8]	Type of intervention at focus groups	Presence at interviews[9]	Type of intervention at interviews
Belgium	Youth mentors (focus groups, aged 14-16)	Focus groups, girls: regular interventions by female mentor, giving her personal opinion. Focus groups, boys: mentor remained in the background, subtle encouragements to talk	Older brother (interview of boy aged 9-10) Mother (two interviews of girls aged 12-13) Father (interview of boy aged 12-13)	Older brother: encourages talk, sometimes gave more information. Mother: occasional interventions, gave some additional information. Father: no interventions, remained in background
Czech Republic	Teachers, headmasters	No interventions, just transited the space (very rare)	Teachers, headmasters	No interventions, just transited the space (very rare)
Greece	Teachers	Teachers occasionally entered the room and discussion resumed after they left	Teachers	Teachers occasionally entered the room and discussion resumed after they left
Hungary	Library users (in two focus	People walked by (in the next room which had no real door)	No others present	No interventions

---

[8] This column refers both to 'mere presence' and to actors who just passed by.

[9] This column refers both to 'mere presence' and to actors who just passed by.

Country	Presence at focus groups[8]	Type of intervention at focus groups	Presence at interviews[9]	Type of intervention at interviews
	groups)			
Italy	No others present	No interventions	No others present	No interventions
Malta	Head of school (one focus group)	In one focus group: headmaster was present in final part of the focus group and the participants sometimes involved him in the discussion Other focus groups: interrupted momentarily by a teacher asking or giving information and/or instruction, no involvement	Cousin and a friend (one interview)	No interventions, the family members were on the other side of the room
Portugal	Library users	No interventions, remained at a distance	No others present	No interventions
Romania	Teachers (three focus groups) School librarian (two focus groups)	Focus groups, girls aged 9-10: teacher briefly entered the room, girls were not bothered Focus groups, boys: teacher entered and announced exam, discussion ended Focus group: teacher entered and stayed for 10 minutes, discussion was disrupted School librarian: no interventions, stayed at convenient distance	School librarian (one interview)	No interventions, stayed at convenient distance
Spain	No others present	N/A	No others present	N/A
UK	Teachers and pupils	Focus groups: people wandering and talking in the hall, no interventions Focus groups, girls: several classes entered the hall, focus group ended because of too much noise	Teacher present in two interviews (9-10 years old)	No intervention, but teachers sat right next to the researcher and listened
Australia	Teachers	No interventions, just transited the space	Teachers	No interventions, just transited the space

The *presence of other adults* consisted mostly of rather incidental interruptions or people coincidently being in the same space, as was the case in Greece, Portugal, Australia (pilot test), Romania, Malta and the UK. Many of these incidents resulted from teachers not realizing that a discussion was going on in the (class)room and, as any short interruptions by teachers were generally not experienced as disruptive or bothering, conversation resumed soon after the person left the room. In other cases, where regular users of certain (semi)public spaces, such as the school libraries in Portugal and Romania or the hall in the UK, were present where the interviews or focus groups took place, they generally stayed at a convenient distance and did not intervene. Use of the hall was problematic for the UK focus group, as the entry of several classes at once created a lot of noise and put an early end to the focus group.

In Belgium, Romania and the UK, the researchers experienced a few other *disruptive incidents*. In Belgium, where the focus groups with 14- to 16-year-olds were organized in collaboration with a youth organization

(Chiro), the discussions took place in the room that the youth mentors normally used to hold their meetings. During the focus group with the girls, several female youth mentors were present including one who behaved in a bothersome manner, intervening regularly and expressing her personal opinion about the topics discussed. In Belgium, where some interviews were conducted in the children's homes, there were a few cases where family members were present in the same room. Although those family members generally stayed at a distance, they sometimes intervened by giving additional information and encouraging the respondent to talk. It appears their presence was not experienced as very disruptive, as the family members did not express personal opinions. In Romania, one teacher brought a focus group discussion to an abrupt end by announcing to the boys they would complete a term exam in one hour. In another Romanian school, the principal inhibited the fluency of the group discussion by entering the room to say goodbye, but staying for 10 minutes. In the UK, where the school's business manager did not accept the researcher's valid police check and so did not permit the interviewer to have any private conversation with the participants, a teaching assistant was required to be present at the focus group. Although this teaching assistant did not intervene during the conversation, his/her presence was experienced as a barrier to discussion of sensitive issues.

Finding a quiet space and arranging not to be interrupted posed a serious challenge for many researchers, as researchers always enter the field as 'visitors'. As spaces such as classrooms, meeting rooms or school libraries actually 'belong' to others, researchers remain dependent on the benevolence of those who actually own these spaces. As teachers/principals/librarians/youth mentors believe that other activities normally taking place in the room should have precedence over research projects, there is often a general sense that researchers are being done a great favour. This rather subordinate position makes it difficult for researchers to enforce strict guidelines regarding the presence of others. In the UK, for example, the local government department decided that group interviews could only be conducted in a public place, where a teacher could see everything. In Portugal and the Czech Republic, the research teams did, however, manage to deny access to the discussion room to some teachers, who requested to be present.

Selection of the participants

The selection of the children in each country was done in consultation with other actors, de facto with the principal and/or teachers. In Portugal, the school librarians helped to get access to the schools and also had an impact on the selection process. Due to school agendas and practical constraints, researchers were not allowed to designate participants completely at random. The researcher's impact remained rather extensive in some countries, but rather limited in other countries. The general criteria for selection from the EU Kids Online network on participants' gender, age and internet use were given to the gatekeepers in each country. Malta was the only country where the school management did not always take these criteria into account. Some countries included additional instructions or specified which children should (not) be selected. For practical reasons including the involvement of principals and teachers in the selection process, it was not feasible to recruit focus group participants who did not know each other. Although focus groups in all countries could not avoid having participants who were school- and/or classmates, those groups still provided a real mixture in terms of both personalities and online experiences.

Table 4: Details of the selection process by researchers and other actors, by country

Country	Role of the researcher[10]	Actors (besides researchers) having an impact on the selection process	Additional instructions given to others to select participants[11]	Participants knowing each other[12]
Belgium	Rather extensive – in one school only children who had finished schoolwork could be selected. For the focus groups with 14- to 16-year-olds, availability on a certain time and place determined participation	Teachers – selection of children	General EU Kids criteria	Yes
Czech Republic	Moderate – discuss basic selection criteria with principal or deputy/select children from a pool (e.g. those who had returned consent forms)	Principal and deputy – selection of classes Principal/deputy and teacher – asking for volunteers	General EU Kids criteria	Yes
Greece	Rather limited – priority to children who were regular internet users, media-savvy, open and cooperative	Principals and teachers – selection of children	General EU Kids criteria	Yes
Hungary	Rather limited – teachers were a little bit more active than necessary in choosing the 'best' participants (children who are able to speak and 'to talk cleverly')	Teacher – selection of children	General EU Kids criteria	Yes
Italy	Rather extensive in primary and lower secondary school – randomly selecting children among those with returned consents Rather limited in upper secondary school – rely on availability of three collaborating teachers	Principal (lower secondary school) – suggested leaving out a 'problematic case' and selecting another child Teachers (upper secondary school) – only those children who had a class with one of the collaborating teachers	General EU Kids criteria	Yes
Malta	Limited for focus groups – school management selected the children (but did not take into account EU Kids Online criteria) Rather extensive for interviews	Teachers and assistant heads – selection of children	General EU Kids criteria	Yes

---

[10] 'Limited' refers to others (not the researchers) selecting or supplying the participants. 'Moderate' refers to researchers having an impact on pre-selection process (discussing criteria, pre-selection of a pool/group of children), but not having the final decision. 'Extensive' refers to the researchers being able to select participants randomly from a pool/group of children.

[11] Specific instructions given to the principals and/or teachers in addition to the general EU Kids selection criteria.

[12] Focus groups with participants who are friends/classmates/schoolmates.

Country	Role of the researcher[10]	Actors (besides researchers) having an impact on the selection process	Additional instructions given to others to select participants[11]	Participants knowing each other[12]
Portugal	Rather limited – school librarians and teachers decided who was best for the research in accordance with the researcher's instructions for diversity	School librarians and teachers (head of class) – selection of children	General EU Kids criteria	Yes
Romania	Moderate – discussion of selection criteria with teachers	Teachers – selection of children	As diverse as possible; not the best, not the richest, not the best-behaved children	Yes
Spain	Moderate – discussion of selection criteria with principal	Principal – selection of children	Communicative children rather than good or bad students	Yes
UK	Rather limited – teacher supplied the children	Teachers – selection of children	As diverse as possible; not the best, not the richest, not the best-behaved children	Yes
Australia (pilot)	Rather extensive – select children from a pool (those who had returned consent, which is about one-third)	Any of the children who consented and whose parents had consented could be selected	Students who may have more interesting or complex things to talk about	Yes

In both Australia and the Italian primary and lower secondary school, *the role of the researchers in the selection progress* was rather extensive, and the researchers were generally able to randomly select children from those who had returned the completed consent forms. The researchers in Australia did, however, ask which children would be interesting to interview, as they wanted to access children who had more interesting or complex things to talk about. Researchers had more freedom over the selection process in Belgium and Malta, where most of the individual interviews involved children who were not accessed through school. As the research teams in Romania and Spain had a detailed discussion with the school regarding the precise selection criteria, their role could be labelled as moderate. Researchers' roles were also moderate in the Czech Republic, where principals and teachers appointed the available classes and called for volunteers from whom the researchers could select participants. In Greece and Portugal, school officials used their own criteria to decide which children were best suited for the research and tended to favour the communicative, media-savvy children. In the Italian upper secondary school, the limited availability of the teachers they collaborated with restricted the involvement of the researchers. In both Malta and the UK, researchers had no choice over the children selected by the teacher for the focus groups. While this resulted in a good mixture within the single-gender focus group in the UK, the agreement about the EU Kids Online criteria was not honoured in Malta.

Principals and teachers generally resisted outsourcing the selection process and were keen to retain the right to have some impact in the final selection of classrooms and/or individuals. Although the researchers in Italy were allowed to randomly select children from the pool of children who had returned the completed consent forms, one principal nevertheless objected to the participation of a so-called 'problematic' child, and insisted

on replacing this child with another child. The research teams in Spain and Romania sought to avoid having only 'model children' selected by the principals and teachers, and therefore not only gave more detailed instructions but also emphasized that variety among the respondents was important. As the schools in those two countries took these requests into account, a balanced sample of children (and of socioeconomic status) resulted. All the other countries used only the general EU Kids Online criteria. Although the initial plan to form focus groups with participants unknown to each other was not followed in terms of the composition of the focus groups, researchers in all countries agreed that this had not prevented lively and rich focus group discussion (see below for more details).

Knowing each other: problematic or not?

In all countries, it proved helpful rather than problematic to have focus group participants who knew each other. Romanian participants who knew each other revealed interesting group dynamics and specific situations online that would have not have otherwise been uncovered. In Belgium, the focus group participants helped each other to remember incidents and details of stories, which resulted in very lively discussion. When several participants had a 'shared experience' such as using Chatroulette together and encountering sexual images, these incidents were discussed in detail. By contrast, the Italian youngsters spontaneously brought up a recent serious online bullying incident on Facebook in their individual interviews, but not in the girls' focus group. Unlike the Belgian participants' encounters with sexual images, which had mostly taken place some time ago and so did not provoke strong emotions among the respondents, the Italian incident was quite recent and may have been considered too sensitive to talk about in a group session.

Talking about sensitive issues with children

In all countries, a child-centred approach was adopted and efforts were made to establish a relationship of trust, so that the respondents felt at ease and not outranked or in awe of the researcher. A variety of strategies were employed to create an atmosphere in which children felt free to talk and the most commonly used approaches are listed in Table 5 below. Although the EU Kids Online network provided a list of possible online risks that could be presented to the participants who did not spontaneously come up with issues to discuss, this list was only used in Romania.

Table 5: Strategies used to encourage children to talk about online risks, by country

Country	Using children's language	Indirect approach (general, third-person)	Summarizing the discussion	Changing topic/focus	Arrange a visit prior to data collection
Belgium	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Czech Republic					Yes
Greece	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Italy					Yes
Malta				Yes	
Portugal		Yes			
Romania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Spain					
UK		Yes			
Australia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Using children's language does not so much refer to using a childish vocabulary, but rather to using the words and expressions familiar to children. One example is using the term 'nude pictures' or 'rude pictures' rather than 'pornography'. This approach not only helps to overcome barriers related to different roles, but also increases the sense of the interviewer being 'at the same level' with the child. Asking the children to elaborate on their understanding of particular notions likewise helps researchers to understand how children perceive these risks. In Romania, there was an explicit focus on using the 'internet language' of the children to create the sense that both the interviewers and respondents belonged to the same 'category', that is, to the category of internet users.

Researchers in several countries used a more *indirect approach* of asking questions if children did not spontaneously bring up some issues. They talked about the general experiences of people their age, or asked about examples and stories from people they knew (third-person stories). The interviewer could introduce these more indirect questions by saying 'some people like you say…', or by giving general examples or stories from other children, or by discussing issues mentioned in the media. In the UK, for example, instead of raising some risks (such as sexual risks) directly with the youngest children, researchers asked the children whether they ever came across something completely different while searching for another thing. *Summarizing what had been said* about a certain topic was another strategy used to keep the discussion going when it seemed there was nothing more to add. This strategy helped the interviewer to find out whether children wanted to elaborate on this topic. *The strategy of changing the topic or the focus* of the discussion was used when children felt uncomfortable about a certain topic. This sometimes happened after a child indicated verbally and/or non-verbally that he/she no longer wished to talk about something. Mostly, researchers first tried to reassure the child that the conversation was confidential and that it was fine to talk about sensitive issues. If the child continued to give signs of being distressed or emotional, no further pressure was put on the child. Changing the focus of the discussion to a less sensitive topic helped to reduce the level of tension.

Arranging a meeting with the children, teachers and/or parents prior to the interview or focus group proved a very positive experience in both the Czech Republic and Italy. This preparatory encounter helped participants talk about (negative) online experiences. Familiarizing the children with the process of the data collection also turned out to be very useful. Children who were thinking about these experiences before the discussions took place were more willing to share their stories. In Italy, the research activities in the upper secondary school were framed within the school's need for awareness-raising activities. As the school was involved in a serious case of online bullying involving hate pages on Facebook where pupils and teachers had been bullied anonymously, teachers welcomed giving their pupils an opportunity to discuss what had happened and to reflect on it. Although the researchers did not mention they had been told about the Facebook issue, the children talked about it spontaneously during the interviews. Although the girls in the focus group did not mention it, another incident of online bullying was raised by a former victim. One downside of prior visits is that children, especially the younger ones, might feel disappointed if they are not selected to participate.

The Greek research team had a specific strategy with regard to addressing sensitive topics. They paid attention to *contextualizing the discussion*, by explaining the cultural and social framing of sensitive topics (e.g. sexuality, or bullying after having nudity exposed in public) as taboo, inherently risky or just inappropriate. This contextualization provided a platform of discussion with the respondents, and increased the possibility of respondents feeling more at ease both with the team and with what was being discussed. Providing as much context as necessary to the participants also increases the possibility of gaining critical reflection within these public accounts. The Greek team evaluated their contextualizing strategy as positive, as it helped tease out the meanings children ascribed to different topics, rather than adopting the 'superimposed' adult readings of them. Differences in research circumstances, and the fluid nature of each data collection, both imply that researchers must be flexible about the context and content of the process. Despite these efforts, researchers in several countries still felt some reluctance among the participants when it came to sharing personal stories about negative online experiences. Some children in Greece and Portugal were silent because the subject was not relevant to them, as they had not encountered the issue or had few online

experiences. In other cases, reluctance to talk was related more to shyness or discomfort with certain issues, notably with sexual issues. Cases like this were reported in Belgium, Romania and Greece with some very young boys (9 years old), a 12-year-old girl and a 12-year-old Muslim boy feeling uncomfortable with discussing sexual content. Research teams in the Czech Republic, Belgium, Italy and Malta all reported cases where participants had been victims of (online) bullying, and had problems talking about this issue. To prevent those children from becoming emotional or upset, researchers chose not push to them too much.

Selection of the participants

Researchers in several countries reflected on which methods of data collection were most suitable for gathering information on children's perceptions of online risks. In Belgium, Romania and Spain, the focus groups ran more fluently and turned out to be more productive than the interviews. Researchers in these countries felt that the group dynamics created a productive and relaxed atmosphere more favourable for a discussion where the participants were more active and spontaneous. By contrast, in both Portugal and Italy, researchers had the impression that children felt more at ease and talked more spontaneously in the individual interviews. The focus group settings seemed a bit constraining for discussion of experiences (e.g. bullying) that had upset the children. In Portugal, specialist training for focus group moderators was considered very important, especially when it came to discussion of coping with distressing experiences. Existing group dynamics among participants may, however, have also played a role in determining whether the focus groups or interviews were more productive in a particular country.

References

Mazzoni, V. and Harcourt, D. (2013). 'An international experience of research with children: moving forward on the idea of children's participation.' *Qualitative Research*, 1-17.

UN (United Nations) (1989). *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.* New York: UNICEF.

ANNEX 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDIES

List of studies provided by the EU Kids Online network

No.[13]	Country	Study
1	Austria	Media socialization of socially disadvantaged children and adolescents (2005, 2007, 2010, 2012)
2	Belgium	TIRO project (Teens and ICT – Risks and Opportunities): The social meaning of young people's online creativity (2006-07)
3	Belgium	Online resilience among children and youngsters (2011)
4	Belgium	Online resilience – motives for coping strategies (2012)
5	Belgium	Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies (2012-13)
6	Czech Republic	Risks of internet use among children and adolescents (RIUCA). Cyberbullying in adolescent victims: Perception and coping (2011)
7	Czech Republic	Risks of internet use among children and adolescents (RIUCA). Exposure to sexual content among adolescent girls (2011)
8	Czech Republic	Risks of internet use among children and adolescents (RIUCA). Adolescents' negative experiences from meeting online strangers offline (2011)
9	Estonia	The importance and role of audience in new media: Messages on social networking sites (2010)
10	Estonia (Sweden)	Construction and normalization of gender online among young people in Estonia and Sweden [GTO project] (2010)
11	Estonia (Sweden)	Construction and normalization of gender online among young people in Estonia and Sweden [GTO project]. The making of online identity during creative workshops (2011)
12	Estonia	Privacy strategies of Estonian teens in networked publics (2011)
13	Estonia	Intergenerational communication in new media (2011)
14	Estonia	The role of significant others for 3rd grade pupils in coping with online risks (2012)

---

[13] The numbers correspond to the ones used throughout the text of the report.

15	Finland (Argentina, Egypt, India, Kenya)	Global comparative research on youth media participation (2009-10)
16	Finland	Literacies, young people and the changing media environment (2009-10)
17	Finland	Children's media barometer (2010)
18	Germany	Gambling in childhood and adolescence. Prevalence and prevention (2011)
19	Germany (Greece, Romania, Spain, Poland, Netherlands, Iceland)	The development of adaptive and maladaptive patterns of internet use among European adolescents at risk for internet addictive behaviours: A grounded theory inquiry (EU NET ADB) (2012)
20	Greece	Young people's accounts from experiences with sexual content (2010-11)
21	Greece	Scary vampire girl and other girl make-up and costumes online gaming practices: The sexualization of young preteen girls debate (2011-12)
22	Greece	Children and new technologies: The digital divide among children with special needs (2012)
23	Italy	Mobile internet and social networking. An exploratory research among Italian teens (2011)
24	Italy	The digital face of Eros, Agape and Phiila. Adolescents, love and sexuality in the internet (2011)
25	Italy	The appropriation of parental control tools among Italian cultures of parental mediation of the internet: The case of Vodafone's Smart Tutor (2012)
26	Norway	'Is it really that dangerous, or...?' An exploration of the significance children and young people attribute to risk on the internet (2011)
27	Russia	Emotional perception of the internet (2009)
28	Russia	Perception of opportunities and risks of the internet (2009)
29	Slovakia	Constructing identity in virtual environments of the internet (2010)
30	United Kingdom	The class. Social networking and the changing practices of learning among youth (2011-12)
31	Australia	Young people and sexting in Australia: Ethics, representation and the law (2013)

Study 1

Country	Austria
Study	*Media socialization of socially disadvantaged children and adolescents* (2005, 2007, 2010, 2012) investigated the media impact on socialization of disadvantaged youth in the context of media as a socialization agent, and focused on several themes – construction of identity, knowledge and values and comparison with other agents.
Sample and methods	Theoretical panel of 20 children aged 4-13; the methods included interviews with children and parents, observation of families in everyday life and a short questionnaire.
Results	The study showed the particular problems of socially disadvantaged families when dealing with media, what role media play in the socialization of the children in these cases and what their media repertoires look like. In all families, the media played a crucial role in the socialization of the children and were functioning as an important part of their daily lives and their dealing with developmental tasks. Children turn to the media for advice and orientation. Parents often used the media as a substation for their educational tasks, which even intensified the importance of media for their children. Some children showed alarming tendencies (interest in right-wing politics, violence etc.), many showed signs of developmental deficits (later enrolment in schools than usual, emotional and cognitive and developmental deficits) and only a few were less affected in negative ways by their surroundings. The children showed a strong affinity for cross-media products such as Pokémon or Dragonball Z, using television as well as games, magazines, online platforms and other media. They showed intensive para-social interactions with characters of television shows as well as computer games.
Why the study is innovative	The combination of method and participants: panel design – rare for qualitative studies, attention paid to whole families, triangulation (richness) of methods.
References	Paus-Hasebrink, I. and Bichler, M. (2008). *Mediensozialisationsforschung – theoretische Fundierung und Fallbeispiel sozial benachteiligte Kinder.* [*Research on media socialization. Theoretical foundations and a case study of socially disadvantaged children.*] Wien: Österreichischer Studienverlag (unter Mitarbeit von Christine Wijnen).
	Paus-Hasebrink, I. and Kulterer, J. (2012). 'Socially disadvantaged children, media and health.' In C. von Feilitzen (ed.) *Yearbook 2012 of the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media – Children, youth, media and health.* Göteborg: Nordicom.

Study 2

Country	Belgium
Study	*TIRO project (Teens and ICT – Risks and Opportunities): The social meaning of young people's online creativity* (2006-07) investigated children's understanding of online opportunities and risks, and their digital creativity.
Sample and methods	Seventeen adolescents, 12 to 18 years old; panel subsample of a quantitative study; the methodology was ethnographic, including face-to-face in-depth interviews, Instant Messaging (IM), email, participant observations in home environment, diary, content analysis of their online publications.
Results	Against the background of the social internet developments, two key findings emerged from the analysis of teens' creative engagements with digital technologies. The first relates to the relationship between confirmation and distinction, and shows how young people's digital creative manifestations are ways of sustaining a sense of the self in relation to others, that is, peers. The second deals with the relationship between creativity and publicity. Digital creativity does not necessarily result in mass production and mass reception. Therefore the researchers introduced the conceptual distinction between intro-creativity and extra-creativity.
Why the study is innovative	The combination of more 'formal' and more 'informal' qualitative methods (the combination of 'online' and 'offline' data collection methods) is still rather new to the investigation of children's online activities.
References	Bauwens, J. and Vleugels, C. (2012). 'The social meaning of young people's online creativity.' In M. Walrave, W. Heirman, S. Mels, C. Timmerman and H. Vandebosch (eds). *eYouth: Balancing between opportunities and risks*. Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang. Available at www.ucsia.org/main.aspx?c=*CWONZ&n=103879&ct=103879

Study 3

Country	Belgium
Study	*Online resilience among children and youngsters* (2011) focused on understanding children's digital skills and coping strategies in dealing with online risks.
Sample and methods	Eighteen children, 9 to 16 years old, participated in the study; methods included observation, use of diaries and face-to-face interviews. The selection criteria were rather broad: participants had to be frequent internet users.
Results	Children's digital skills remain underdeveloped, certainly among the younger age groups (aged 9-12). Children have a very predictive pattern of internet use (daily routine), and they mostly do activities they are familiar with and stick to them. Their range of activities is rather limited (only a few children are high on the ladder of opportunities; see Hasebrink, 2011), and social media are generally very important for the older teens (aged 12-16). Few of the participating children experience online harm. A moderate amount of them (especially those aged 12+) came across online risks (often content risks), but in most cases this did not result in harm. Children found it difficult to explain why they would use a certain coping strategy, and quite often they reacted in a rather passive or fatalistic way. Reflecting on this study, we could question whether it would have been better to only recruit children who have already experienced harm, in order to get richer responses on feelings and coping strategies. In this study, the criteria for selection were rather broad; the children only had to be frequent internet users.
Why the study is innovative	The innovative aspect of this study resides in the triangulation of methods, which allowed for a detailed accounting of coping strategies of children.
References	N/A

Study 4

Country	Belgium
Study	*Online resilience – motives for coping strategies* (2012) dealt with understanding choices and motivations for different (online) coping strategies of children, online resilience and evaluation of chosen strategies.
Sample and methods	Twelve children, 10 to 12 years old; interviews with projective strategies (stories, videos) were used.
Results	The communicative coping strategy is the preferred strategy. Especially when confronted with cyberbullying, children's first reaction is to talk about it with somebody. This confirms the quantitative findings of the EU Kids research. Children mainly choose a communicative coping strategy because they seek emotional support, somebody who listens to them. They do not use this strategy because they are seeking an immediate solution. They expect empathy and emotional support from the person they talk to, and the quality of the relationship with the parents is very important. If the child trusts his/her parents and if the relationship is good, the child will be likely to talk to the parents.
Why the study is innovative	The combination method – topic, namely, use of interview for understanding online resilience, is innovative.
References	Croonen, A. (2012). 'Online weerbaarheid. Motieven voor het gebruik van coping-strategieën bij kinderen.' Master's thesis. Leuven: Faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen.

Study 5

Country	Belgium
Study	*Online risks and opportunities among vulnerable children: How to build online resilience and coping strategies* (2012-13) explored the factors of digital literacy and connection with coping and resilience among Belgian children.
Sample and methods	In total, 39 children took part in the study: 21 A-level children in the first year of secondary school (age 12-13), 12 B-level children in the first year of secondary school (age 12-13) and 6 BuSO-children with serious cognitive and behavioural problems (age 15-19). In the secondary school of the A- and B-level children, we interviewed the school's head, the main teacher of each group, the 'care-teacher' and the ICT coordinator of the school. We also had a group discussion with the parental committee. In the school for children with cognitive and behavioural problems, we interviewed two teachers.
	The study used an ethnographic approach; during one academic year (September 2012 to June 2013) the researcher organized several group sessions, using techniques such as storytelling, role-playing games, card-sorting tasks, group discussions and assignments on the computer. In the A-level group, this was mostly done in a rather typical classroom setting, with the consequence that the children had a tendency to perceive the researcher in the role of a teacher. In the B-level group, a wider variety of settings could be used, which stimulated more personal and intimate discussions. In the BuSO group, the youngsters are used to having a personal relationship with their mentors, so they responded in a very spontaneous way.
	After nine group sessions, every participant was interviewed individually.
Results	At all levels, the children tend to overestimate their own digital skills, especially when it comes to being critical about the information they receive through digital media. Especially at B-level and BuSO-level, digital skills were very limited, and the children had very few notions about privacy settings, blocking or removing unwelcome content or contacts and searching and evaluating information. As to online risks and coping strategies, the A-level children tended to give the impression they 'did not care' about online risks, and that they would simply ignore unpleasant online experiences (a rather passive/fatalistic approach). Within this group of A-level children, an image of being 'indifferent' (even being 'sturdy') towards online risks seems to be the norm. Being vulnerable does not seem to be accepted within this group. The B-level children responded with more affection and emotion; some were bothered by online risks and admitted that they struggled with negative emotions. As they often lacked the (digital) skills to cope with these experiences in a proactive problem-solving way, they were more likely to talk about the problem. The children in this B-level group did not mind talking about their feelings, and it was accepted in this group to feel vulnerable sometimes. Among the BuSO-children, the responses varied considerably. Each child in this group had very specific cognitive and behavioural problems. As they were encouraged to talk about their feelings and emotions in other courses and therapies, they expressed their thoughts freely. One boy with high digital skills would search for online problem-solving coping strategies. Those with fewer digital skills tended to lose their temper easily when something went wrong online, which resulted in highly emotional responses, sometimes even in being aggressive.
Why the study is innovative	The combination method – multiple participants, the richness of data resulting from triangulation (survey + ethnographic approach) – is innovative, as well as the inclusion of three groups with different cognitive capacities (research with vulnerable groups).
References	N/A

Study 6

Country	Czech Republic
Study	*Risks of internet use among children and adolescents (RIUCA). Cyberbullying in adolescent victims: Perception and coping* (2011) investigated the consequences of cyberbullying and coping strategies among cyberbullying victims.
Sample and methods:	Fifteen children aged 14-18; interviewed through online semi-structured interviews.
Results:	The study found that cyberbullying experiences led to changes in the victim's behaviour, and that these could be positive in the form of behaviour changes in cyberspace. This was mainly due to victims creating a cognitive pattern of bullies, which consequently helped them to recognize aggressive people. Bullying also provoked feelings of caution, and brought about restriction in the use of risky virtual channels as victims tried to prevent its recurrence. Critical impacts occurred in almost all of the respondents' cases in the form of lowered self-esteem, loneliness and disillusionment and distrust of people. The more extreme effects were tendencies to self-harm and increased aggression towards friends and family. Coping strategies used by victims to deal with cyberbullying took various forms: technical defence, activity directed at the aggressor, avoidance, defensive strategies and social support. The activities of the victims when dealing with this stressful situation varied; this was probably influenced by other contexts, personal traits and the evolution of the respondents.
Why the study is innovative	The combination of method and participants is novel: use of online interviews, the sample itself was also original – victims of cyberbullying were found with the help of a social networking site.
References	Sleglova, V. and Cerna, A. (2011). 'Cyberbullying in adolescent victims: Perception and coping.' *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 5(2), article 4. Available at www.cyberpsychology.eu/view.php?cisloclanku=2011121901&article=4

Study 7

Country	Czech Republic
Study	*Risks of internet use among children and adolescents (RIUCA). Exposure to sexual content among adolescent girls* (2011) dealt with the exposure to online sexual content among adolescent girls, and consequent bothersome experiences.
Sample and methods	Fourteen adolescent girls between 15 and 18 years old; interviewed through online semi-structured interviews.
Results	The analysis revealed that adolescent girls encountered bothersome sexual content while using computers or mobile phones in both public spaces (e.g. at school) and in private spaces (e.g. at home). While online, participants encountered the content through browsing, information-seeking and while chatting with people they met online. The girls were bothered by online sexual content when it was unusually extreme, broke accepted norms and/or felt threatening.
Why the study is innovative	The method for the chosen topic: online interviewing seems to be a suitable method for researching a sensitive issue such as exposure to sexual content as participants may be more open regarding sharing their sexually related experiences.
References	Ševčíková, A., Simon, L., Daneback, K. and Kvapilík, T. (in press). 'Bothersome exposure to online sexual content among adolescent girls.' *Youth & Society.* Available at www.muni.cz/fss/research/projects/13723?lang=en

Study 8

Country	Czech Republic
Study	*Risks of internet use among children and adolescents (RIUCA). Adolescents' negative experiences from meeting online strangers offline* (2011) explored adolescents' negative experiences with meeting online strangers in real life. The aim of the study was to understand the dynamics of an online relationship that led to offline meeting, adolescents' precautions, and to connect it to negative experiences and consequences.
Sample and methods	Fifteen adolescents between 15 and 18 years old; interviewed through online semi-structured interviews.
Results	It was found that adolescents with negative experiences from meeting online strangers did perceive these kinds of meetings as potentially dangerous in general, but they weren't that cautious when they thought about their particular situation and their particular online friend, whom they trusted, based on his/hers unproblematic communication online. Typical features of online strangers that would make them cautious were: substantively higher age of the stranger, lower IQ, rude behaviour online and pressure towards meeting. Further it was found that positive expectations before meeting led to more disappointment and general distrust in one's life after the negative experience from the meeting. Respondents also described changes in their online behaviour leading to them being more cautious in their actions.
Why the study is innovative	Online interviews were used, the sample itself was also original and unique – adolescents with negative experiences from meeting online strangers were found with the help of social networking sites.
References	Janasova, K. (2011). 'Negativní zkušenost adolescentů ze setkání s cizími lidmi z internet.' ['Adolescents' negative experiences from meeting online strangers offline.'] Unpublished Master's thesis. Masaryk University, Brno.

Study 9

Country	Estonia
Study	*The importance and role of audience in new media: Messages on social networking sites* (2010) explored the characteristics of the messages that teens post in virtual communities (Facebook), analysed the (perceived) audience of these messages, and the role of the audience in decoding the messages.
Sample and methods	Fifteen young people 15 to 20 years old; focus groups and drawings.
Results	The findings of the study suggest that young people give their own share to the information society by exchanging information on social networking sites. The results of this study showed that this information is usually of little importance and mainly aimed at entertaining and attracting comments or 'likes' from other users. The messages sent through Facebook are predominantly positive; however, virtual networks are also used as places to re-live the low points of one's life or as battlefields for conflicts. In the latter cases, the audience can access information that is private in the traditional way of thinking.

The findings show that there are three main reasons for sharing private information through social media. Some users lack the knowledge and skills needed to protect privacy online. Others seek gratification and popularity from the public at large by sharing intimate details of their lives. Some users just do not care who can access their private information because they feel protected by the illusion of internet anonymity.

The majority of the young people involved in the study, however, imagine their audience to be immensely smaller than it actually is. According to the perception of the youngsters, the imagined audiences are not those that belong to one's friend list (boyd, 2010), but only a small part of this public – the precise few people that are kept in mind while posting the message. The respondents in this study stated that their Facebook contacts are mostly made up of friends and acquaintances, but also parents and relatives, teachers, musicians, companies and complete strangers. The messages the young post are meant just for friends, but it does not mean that other members of the audience cannot see that information. Youngsters involved in the study confessed having had problems in the past because of miscalculating the actual size and heterogeneity of their audience; from these experiences they had developed a sense of jeopardy.

The main groups that are perceived as a danger to a teenager's privacy are mostly those who have some power over them – the police, teachers and parents. Some youngsters have developed strategies to handle this new situation of virtually no privacy. Despite living their lives in public, they still manage to preserve some privacy. One of the most important and intricate of those strategies is social *steganography*, sending a hidden message in plain sight. In order to decode this message correctly (using the preferred reference code), the audience must have extra knowledge about the context and an interpretive lens. The findings of the study at hand clearly illustrate that the boundaries between the sender and the receiver are blurred in the new media field where the members of the audience are no longer just passive receivers of information but also participate actively as producers. Hence, the young expect their audience to be clever and understanding as well as able to decode the message. |
| Why the study is innovative | The combination of method and participants, which allowed young people to have control over reporting their experiences by use of creative methods. |

References	Murumaa, M. (2010). 'Auditooriumi tähtsus ja roll uue meedia keskkonnas sotsiaalvõrgustikes saadetavate sõnumite näitel.' ['The importance and role of audience in new media: Messages on social networking sites].' Master's thesis. Institute of Journalism and Communication. Tartu University. Available from http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/bitstream/handle/10062/16358/Murumaa_Maria?sequence=1
	Murumaa, M. and Siibak, A. (2012). 'The imagined audience on Facebook: Analysis of Estonian teen sketches about typical Facebook users.' *First Monday*, 17(2). Available at http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/3712/3147
	Siibak, A. amd Murumaa-Mengel, M. (2013). 'Exploring the potential of creative research for the study of imagined audiences: a case-study of Estonian students' sketches on typical Facebook users.' In G. Patriarche, H. Bilandzic, J. Linaa Jensen and J. Jurisic (eds). *Audience research methodologies: Between innovation and consolidation*. London: Routledge, pp. 127-143. Available at http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/bitstream/handle/10062/16358/Murumaa_ Maria;jsessionid=86E93BE11373089FB1355BB43ADCB73B?sequence=1

Study 10

Country	Estonia (Sweden)
Study	*Construction and normalization of gender online among young people in Estonia and Sweden [GTO project]* (2010) analysed how 'tween' girls in Estonia and in Sweden describe and discover their gender identities when selecting profile images for social networking sites (SNSs).
Sample and methods	Focus groups in Sweden, semi-structured interviews in Estonia (21 girls, 10 to 14 years old).
Results	On the one hand, young female SNS users try to combine the markers of their personal everyday lifestyle (e.g. hobbies, interests, choice of clothing and accessories) when constructing their visual self-representations. In that case, the profile images can be viewed as creative personifications of a profile owner, with an emphasis on the aspects that the person considers important or characteristic of him or herself. The influence of peer culture is one of the main sources of inspiration for youth in their creation or writing of the online body-self. Looking for acceptance from one's peers is an important driving force behind the social interaction on SNSs, as with any other social interaction. When writing their identity on an SNS, young girls not only direct their interaction towards others present in the community, but also towards themselves and the construction of their identity. Our findings indicate, for example, that in the case of constructing and reconstructing gendered identities, being 'cute' is considered to be an important aspect forming the overall value standard among young girls. Our findings allow us to claim that for the girls on the brink of adolescence, the possibility of constructing and reconstructing the appearance of the body-self on an SNS allows them to gain a deeper understanding of the norms and values of the contemporary society in which they are growing up. Despite their young age, these interviewees pay attention to cultural norms and values on gender and hence, these power differentials and identity markers are also reproduced in their SNS interaction. The reproduction of norms and values is visible in the manipulated images, as according to the perceptions of the interviewees the girls seem to have greater interest and knowledge in the post-production of images. One important dimension of this gender work, however, is the fact that the girls develop a specific digital competence seldom mentioned by (or seen among) the boys.
Why the study is innovative	The combination of method and topic: studies of SNS image analysis have mainly made use of content analysis methods, but researchers have been less likely to make interviews with young people to get to know their opinion and perceptions on the topic.
References	Hernwall, P. and Siibak, A. (2011). 'Writing identity – gendered values and user content creation in SNS interaction among Estonian and Swedish tweens.' *Global Studies of Childhood*, 1(4). Available at www.wwwords.co.uk/rss/abstract.asp?j=gsch&aid=4877 Siibak, A. and Hernwall, P. (2011). '"Looking like my favourite Barbie" – Online gender construction of tween girls in Estonia and in Sweden.' *Studies of Transition States and Societies*, 3(2), 57-68. Available at www.tlu.ee/stss/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/erinumber_Siibak.pdf

Study 11

Country	Estonia (Sweden)
Study	*Construction and normalization of gender online among young people in Estonia and Sweden [GTO project]. The making of online identity during creative workshops* (2011) analysed how young people ('tweens') construct online identities, with special attention to how they express gender and age. It was, furthermore, the ambition of these two workshops in Sweden and in Estonia to support the young people's reflections on gender norms and gender values.
Sample and methods	Nineteen adolescents aged 13-14; creative workshops.
Results	The analysis of the online characters created by the groups tentatively suggests that age and gender are the most prominent markers of identity. Furthermore, they are also important power differentials as they are intertwined not just with each other, but also with the possible actions of the subject. One obvious thing visible in the drawings of our respondents is how the young dramatized – and perhaps even over-dramatized – the changes in the character drawn, that is, they were growing into drugs, depression, family problems, school problems, etc. But also, when 14 years old, many, if not all, of these problems had been if not sorted out, at least coped with. Furthermore, there seems to an interesting, and important, relationship between the social status of the character and their use of social networking sites and computers in general. At the same time, our results indicate that social networking sites harbour intimate friendships and online relationships.
Why the study is innovative	The method was innovative: creative research methods that are built on the agency and creativity of the participants offer an interesting alternative to traditional research methods for studying social media.
References	Hernwall, P. and Siibak, A. (2012). 'The making of online Identity. The use of creative method to support young people in their reflection on age and gender.' In *Proceedings Cultural Attitudes Towards Communication and Technology 2012*. Murdoch University, Murdoch, pp. 38-50. Available at http://sammelpunkt.philo.at:8080/2137 Siibak, A., Forsman, M. and Hernwall, P. (2012). 'Employing creative research methods with tweens in Estonia and Sweden. Reflections on a case-study on multimodal virtual identity constructions.' *Journal of Technology and Human Services*, 30, 250-261. Siibak, A., Forsman, M. and Hernwall, P. (2013). 'Employing creative research methods with tweens in Estonia and Sweden. Reflections on a case-study on multimodal virtual identity constructions.' In K. Bredl, J. Hunniger and J. Linaa Jensen (eds). *Methods for analyzing social media*. London: Routledge.

Study 12

Country	Estonia
Study	*Privacy strategies of Estonian teens in networked publics* (2011) analysed the perceptions of Estonian 13- to 16-year-olds about privacy and the imagined audiences on social networking sites (SNSs), blogs and Instant Messenger (IM), and explored the various privacy strategies teens implement in order to manage their extended audience.
Sample and methods	Fifteen children aged 13-14; semi-structured online interviews and observations.
Results	The results indicate that the teens' attitude towards their online audience is rather shallow. Although none of the interviewees were sure of the size or the composition of their audience, they sensed the possibility of random acquaintances, parents or teachers occasionally following them on social media. Rather than keeping the latter in mind, they preferred to concentrate on their 'ideal audience', that is, friends and classmates, when creating posts. However, it was evident from the interviews and observations that subconsciously, Estonian teens implement different kinds of privacy techniques to protect their personal sphere. For instance, self-censorship and social steganography, that is, secret messages hidden in plain sight, were used to maintain popularity, and being a visible participant on social media, whereas tightening privacy settings and publishing false information were used moderately. We found out that posting lyrics or quotes is one of the most common social steganographic tricks among teens because they are fluent in pop culture in a way that adults are not. Also, inside jokes were used a lot to keep the real meaning of the posted messages inside the circle of friends it was meant for.
Why the study is innovative:	Richness of data: gaining access to 'hidden' meanings (social steganography), the combination of topic and methods.
References	Oolo, E. (2012). 'Eesti noorte privaatsusstrateegiad suhtluses veebiauditooriumiga.' ['Privacy strategies of Estonian teens in networked publics.'] Master's thesis. Institute of Journalism and Communication. Tartu University. Available at http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/bitstream/handle/10062/25787/oolo_egle.pdf?sequence=1
	Oolo, E. and Siibak, A. (2013). 'Performing for one's imagined audience: social steganography and other privacy strategies of Estonian teens in networked publics.' *Cyberpsychology*: *Journal* of *Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 7(1), article 7.

Study 13

Country	Estonia
Study	*Intergenerational communication in new media* (2011) addressed the exploration of intergenerational relations in the context of web-based communication.
Sample and methods	Four families, composed of parent, child and grandparent each, with semi-structured interviews, online and face to face.
Results	The internet and new media plays an enormous role in supporting and partly also re-establishing intergenerational communication. The desire to have an overview of their loved ones and the sense of belonging are the main motives for why different generations have joined new media. The use of a computer and the internet reduces the geographical distance and allows family members to communicate verbally, visually and through writing. To maintain contact and be aware of the younger generation's social activities is particularly important for older generations.

The motivation for older generations to join new media comes from their grandchildren, who, through their own computer use, act as role models. Using the same online environment gives family members an opportunity to share their values and attitudes, and strengthens ties between generations.

Even family members living under the same roof use new media in order to talk to loved ones sitting in the next room. Communication between family members in new media environments points to the reduction of traditional communication channels. The results suggest that Skype, MSN and Facebook are the most popular for maintaining contact between family members. Rather than taking the opportunity to communicate face-to-face, our respondents confessed preferring to use text-based communication channels, so they could think through the message. Verbal communication through Skype, for instance, is more popular among married couples who, because of work mobility, see Skype as an alternative to a telephone conversation.

Study results showed that the younger generation have different opinions about older generations coming online. On the one hand, young people accept older generations in the new media environment, but on the other hand, there is resentment and misunderstanding. As the older generations have found their way to the same social media channels, young people need to take a critical approach to their postings. This has prompted them to use social *steganography* and different privacy settings. Despite this, parents see their own benefits in using the same new media platforms as their children. Through their children's postings, parents are able to understand their children's thoughts much better. Using the same environments gives them opportunities for online mediation.

Generational differences in the new media environment come out mainly through the posting activity and content creation. For example, grandparents are not comfortable in the new media, because the internet is not their generation's technology, hence they do not feel brave enough to use it. Postings and content creation by younger generations often upset both parents' and grandparents' generations (misunderstanding of language). |
| Why the study is innovative | The innovation resided in the combination of the topic and participants: only a few studies so far have actually tried to explore the topic using interviews with members from three consecutive generations from one family. |

References	Tamme, V. (2012). 'Uus meedia kui põlvkondade kohtumispaik.' ['New media as a meeting ground for generations.'] Available at http://v2rskeaju.wordpress.com/2012/01/30/uus-meedia-kui-polvkondade-kohtumispaik-koostoos-talveakadeemiaga/
	Tamme, V. and Siibak, A. (2012). 'Enhancing family cohesion through web-based communication: Analysis of online communication practices in Estonian families.' *OBS*, pp. 1-28. Available at http://obs.obercom.pt/index.php/obs/article/view/581/532
	Tamme, V. and Siibak, A. (2013). '"Who introduced granny to Facebook?" An exploration of everyday family interactions in web-based communication environments.' *Northern Lights*, 11(1), 71-89.
	Virge, T. (2012). 'Põlvkondadevaheline suhtlus uue meedia kanalites.' ['Intergenerational communication in new media environments.'] Master's thesis. Institute of Journalism and Communication. Tartu University. Available at http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/bitstream/handle/10062/25793/virge_tamme.pdf?sequence=1

Study 14

Country	Estonia
Study	*The role of significant others for 3rd grade pupils in coping with online risks* (2012) examined the knowhow about online risks among 9- to 10-year-old children and the possible influence of their parents, siblings and teachers.
Sample and methods	Four families with children aged 9-10 and their teachers; semi-structured interviews and observations (with think-aloud probing).
Results	Results showed that 3rd grade children associate online risks with internet viruses, hacking, inappropriate behaviour and security topics. Older siblings had much more diverse knowledge, although the level of information depended on their age. Parents were mainly concerned about meeting with strangers, viruses and giving out personal information. It is important to emphasize that parents' and teachers' age and enthusiasm was in correlation to their self-awareness and education.
	Another important finding was the fact that 3rd grade children and older siblings would both turn to their family members when exposed to online risks. This puts a heavy burden of responsibility on parents who would rather see teaching online education as the school's responsibility.
	This research showed that children's online behaviour patterns are heavily influenced by their parents and less by their siblings and teachers. That is why children's influence on their significant others' online behaviour was rather inconspicuous.
Why the study is innovative	The innovation was at the level of participants (the innovative sample – four model group: child, sibling, parent and teacher).
References	Komp, L. (2012). 'Oluliste teiste roll 3. klassi laste toimetulemisel online-riskidega.' ['The role of significant others for 3rd grade pupils in coping with online risks.'] Master's thesis. Institute of Journalism and Communication. Tartu University. Available at http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/bitstream/handle/10062/25781/komp_lennart.pdf

Study 15

Country	Finland (Argentina, Egypt, India, Kenya)
Study	*Global comparative research on youth media participation* (2009-10) was concerned with the ways in which youngsters aged between 11 and 18 participate in and through media in different cultures, including practices of media and information literacies.
Sample and methods	A total of 4,301 children in the survey; 110 interviews; 400 media diaries, collected in Argentina, Egypt, Finland and India (around 50 in Kenya); the children selected for the qualitative investigations were a subsample of the survey.
Results	This user-oriented research noted differences among and inside countries on youngsters' interests in production within several kinds of active relations with the media. Moreover, the study reflected on the relations, for example, with responsible citizenship, which seems to get stronger among young people when the societal situation calls for it.
	The results show inequality in access to media among the young in different continents of the globe, and inside the Southern countries in comparison, between urban and rural areas.
	In all the countries youngsters were interested in different types of media and eager to try out media technologies. Social learning of media (computer) skills was noted, especially among those with a lower level of access. Boys were more confident in their own media skills than girls in every country. Critical thinking in relation to media seems to grow with age, and older respondents trusted, for example, advertisements and newspaper news less often than the younger respondents.
Why the study is innovative	The study is innovative due to the richness and comparability of data collected. Children's media practice and participation across countries is still under-investigated.
References	Hirsjärvi, I. (2009). 'Kuka fanittaa kouluampujaa? Koulusurmien tarkastelua fanitutkimuksen kautta.' ('School killer's fan. Looking school killers through fandom theory.') In S. Kotilainen (ed.). *Suhteissa mediaan* [*Relationships with the media.*] Publications of the Research Centre for Contemporary Culture 99. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, pp. 95-113.
	Hirsjärvi, I. (2010). 'Fandom, new media, participatory cultures.' In U. Carlsson (ed.). *Yearbook 2010. Children and youth in the digital media culture – From a Nordic horizon*. Gothenburg: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, pp. 133-142.
	Kotilainen, S. (2009). 'Promoting youth civic participation with media production: The case of Youth Voice editorial board and "Participación cívica y producción mediática de los jóvenes: «Voz de la Juventud»".' *Comunicar*, 16(32), 181-192. Available at www.revistacomunicar.com/index.php?contenido=detalles&numero=32&articulo=32-2009-21
	Kotilainen, S. (2009). 'Media literacy: Appropriation and empowerment.' In P. Verniers (ed.). *Media literacy in Europe: Controversies, challenges and perspectives.* Bruxelles: Euromeduc, pp. 143-150.
	Kotilainen, S. (2009). 'Promoting youth civic participation with media production: The case of Youth Voice editorial board.' In *Mapping media education policies in the world: Visions, programmes and challenges*. New York: United Nations, Alliance of Civilizations, UNESCO and European Commission, pp. 243-259.
	Kotilainen, S. (2010). 'Global digital culture requires skills in media literacies.' In U. Carlsson (ed.). *Yearbook 2010. Children and youth in the digital media culture – From a Nordic horizon*. Gothenburg: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, pp. 65-73.
	Kotilainen, S. and Rantala, L. (2009). 'From seekers to activists: Characteristics of youth civic identities in relation to media.' *Information, Communication & Society*, 12(5), 658-677.
	Kotilainen, S. and Rantala, L. (2010). 'Civic media education supports a public voice for youths.' In S. Kotilainen and S.-B. Arnolds-Granlund (eds). *Media literacy and education: Nordic*

perspectives. Gothenburg: Nordicom & Finnish Society in Media Education, pp. 81-93.

Kotilainen, S. and Suoninen, A. (2012) 'Cultures of media and information literacies among the young: South-North viewpoints.' IAMCR 2012 Conference in South Africa, Durban, University of Kwazulu-Natal, 15-19 July. [Conference publication available on DVD]

Kotilainen, S., Suoninen, A., Hirsjärvi, I. and Kolomainen, S. (2011) 'Youngsters' expressions of responsible citizenship through media diaries.' In C. von Feilitzen, U. Carlsson and C. Bucht (eds). *Yearbook 2011. New questions, new insights, new approaches. Contributions to the Research Forum at the World Summit on Media for Children and Youth 2010.* Gothenburg: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, pp. 213-222.

Kotilainen, S., Suoninen, A., Pathak-Shelat, M., Taiye, S. and Hirsjärvi, I. (forthcoming 2013). *Youth participation on media: Growing up glocal.* University of Gothenburg, NORDICOM.

Laine, S., Gretschel, A., Siivonen, K., Hirsjärvi, I. and Myllyniemi, S. (2011). 'Toiminnan motiivit.' ('Motives of action.') In M. Määttä and S. Tolonen (eds). *Annettu, otettu, itse tehty. Nuorten vapaa-aika tänään.* Helsinki: Nuorisotutkimusseura, pp. 92-108.

Levamo, T., Laine, S., Kotilainen, S., Suoninen, A., Mattila, P. and Onodera, H. (2020). 'Globaalia ulottuvuutta suomalaiseen nuorisotutkimukseen.' *Nuorisotutkimus*, 28(2), 84-95.

Pathak-Shelat, M. (2011). 'Media literacy and child well-being.' In *International handbook of child-well-being.* Springer.

Pathak-Shelat, M. (2011). 'Youth and the paradoxes of the Indian media situation. Considerations for a socially responsible youth media policy.' In C. von Feilitzen, U. Carlsson and C. Bucht (eds). *Yearbook 2011. New questions, new insights, new approaches. Contributions to the Research Forum at the World Summit on Media for Children and Youth 2010.* Gothenburg: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, pp. 189-199.

Tayie, S. (2011). 'Children and new media literacy: An Egyptian case study.' In C. von Feilitzen, U. Carlsson and C. Bucht (eds). *Yearbook 2011. New questions, new insights, new approaches. Contributions to the Research Forum at the World Summit on Media for Children and Youth 2010.* Gothenburg: The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, pp. 93-102.

Tayie, S. and Hirsjärvi, I. (2010). 'Children and the new media literacy from Egypt and Finland: A comparative study.' *Journal of Media Literacy*, 1 & 2(57), 73-79. [Also published in Mentor, *Media literacy*. ONY & Alliance of Civilizations. Available at www.mediamentor.org/en/content/children-and-the-new-media-literacy-from-egypt-and-finland-a-comparative-study]

Tayie, S. and Hirsjärvi, I. (2011). 'Children and new media: Youth media participation. A case study of Egypt and Finland and "Niños y nuevos medios: estudios de caso en Egipto y en Finlandia".' *Comunicar*, 19(37), 181-192. Available at www.revistacomunicar.com/index.php?contenido=preprint

Taiye, S., Pathak-Shelat, M. and Hirsjärvi, I. (2012). 'Young people's interaction with media in Egypt, India, Finland, Argentina and Kenya.' *Comunicar*, 39(XX), 53-62.

Study 16

Country	Finland
Study	*Literacies, young people, and the changing media environment* (2009-10) investigated the literary practices and production of media among adolescents.
Sample and methods	A total of 305 children for the survey; 26 children and 8 teachers for the interviews; the qualitative data collection was based on an ethnographic approach, including virtual ethnography (*netnography*).
Results	Young people's media practices in schools shows that the boundaries of school space are blurring. Media use is part of everyday online life, social identity and so-called 'life sharing'. This means that young people share their experiences and information online on different kinds of social networking sites. For example, they publish and share videos, photos, writing and drawings made at school on social networking sites and web logs. This sharing ties different physical and virtual spaces together and connects the school to the more public world.
	The media environment and media practices in schools opens up an unofficial school space for the students (unofficial school space as opposed to official school space, which includes formal learning activities, classroom settings and experiences in actual teaching and learning). Official school space has a particular organization of time and space, and interaction between people in formal learning settings. Students' media practices at school are part of unofficial school space, in students' own social space where teachers are unable to control them or where students have made room for themselves by negotiation.
	Using digital devices is part of everyday tactics to create an uncontrolled space for social life in and outside physical school boundaries with peer-to-peer relations and identity performances.
	The project opened new perspectives for the study of media literacy education that traditionally focuses on media use, not on creative media practices. At the same time the project gave the possibility of seeing the school's space and formal and informal learning in a more complex way.
Why the study is innovative	The rich ethnographic approach (semi-structured interviews, essays, video productions, observation) is still innovative for researching children's media practices and literacy.
References	Kupiainen, R. (2011). 'Young people, mobile phones and creative media practices at school.' *Barn*, 29(3-4), 151-167.
	Kupiainen, R. (2012). 'Dissolving the school space: Young people's media production in and outside of school.' *Policy Futures in Education.* [accepted]
	Kupiainen, R. (forthcoming 2013). *Media and digital literacies in secondary school.* New York: Peter Lang.

Study 17

Country	Finland
Study	*Children's media barometer* (2010) investigated children's media use across Finland.
Sample and methods	The sample included parents and children, 743 families, 91 children aged 0-4, with data collected through quantitative and qualitative methods (observation of babies and interviews with older children).
Results	The study showed that media culture is part of children's lives from the earliest age. It is crucial to recognize and acknowledge this aspect, from the point of view of children's rights. According to the study, the relationship parents and other familiar adults of under-twos have with media also seems to have an impact on the child's activities. A child may use the internet by sitting in a parent's lap before beginning to surf independently.
Why the study is innovative	The combination of method and participants (i.e., using peer students as interviewers) and the observation of very small children is innovative in this research area.
References	Kotilainen, S. (ed.) (2010). *Children's media barometer 2010: The use of media among 0-8 years old in Finland*.

Study 18

Country	Germany
Study	*Gambling in childhood and adolescence. Prevalence and prevention* (2011) dealt with the prevalence of pathological gambling in childhood and adolescence in North Rhine-Westphalia.
Sample and methods	Twenty clinical in-depth interviews and 63 focus groups with adolescents aged 12-18, out of a 5,976 survey sample; the methods included experimental designs EDA (gambling advertising); focus group interviews; questionnaire survey (demographics, general gaming use, screening inventory of problem gambling, face-to-face-interviews, content analysis, clinical in-depth interviews).
Results	The study focused on: individual risk and exposure characteristics (e.g. mental co-morbid disorders, personality traits) of problematic gambling behaviour; supply structures (various forms of gambling, distribution channels, accessibility); environmental conditions (e.g. ethnicity, acculturation, effectiveness of youth protection and effects of marketing and gambling advertising); risk factors and co-morbidity of gambling (also online); prevalence of gambling in a student population; application structure of gambling; and effects of gambling advertising.
	Motivators for the use of gambling include 'hope for cash prizes', 'curiosity' and 'friends play'. Problem gamblers have significantly higher scores in the overall SDQ problem indices and in all clinical subscales as unproblematic players (depressive pathologies, hyperactivity, loss of pro-social behaviour, fears and insecurities); lower values in extraversion; significantly decreased conscientiousness; increased social insecurity; significantly increased number in internet casinos, internet-sport-betting and internet Texas Hold'em poker.
Why the study is innovative	The mixed-methods study covered extensive psychometric quantitative data, in-depth interviews in a clinical setting, focus group test and experimental designs. The interrelations of each methodological approach were strongly linked.
References	Müller, K.W., Dreier, M., Duven, E., Giralt, S., Beutel, M.E. and Wölfling, K. (2013). *Abschlussbericht zur Studie Konsum von Glücksspielen bei Kindern und Jugendlichen: Verbreitung und Prävention.* an das Ministerium für Gesundheit, Emanzipation, Pflege und Alter des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen.

Study 19

Country	Germany (Greece, Romania, Spain, Poland, Netherlands, Iceland)
Study	*The development of adaptive and maladaptive patterns of internet use among European adolescents at risk for internet addictive behaviours: A grounded theory inquiry (EU NET ADB)* (2012) used grounded theory (GT) to explain the development of internet use among European adolescents who are at risk for internet addictive behaviours (IAB).
Sample and methods	A total of 124 children with signs of IAB in Greece, Romania, Spain, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands and Iceland. Initial screening for IAB; 124 teens with more than 30 points on the IAB scale were selected for in-depth interviews.
Results	The developmental progression of internet use in adolescence is conceptualized as digital pathways, personal online journeys of exploration starting with adolescents evolving into regular users and content creators. By discovering online opportunities, adolescents quench their teen thirst for information and social connection, which in turn often leads them to the mode of being 'always online and checking out'. This phenomenon is mediated and maintained through processes of facilitating adolescent life and empowering their social self.
	In response to being 'always online', adolescents employed adaptive or maladaptive strategies which in turn led to consequent digital outcomes, ranging from 'stuck online' ('I am addicted to…') to adaptive managing ('juggling it all') and self-correcting ('coming full cycle').
	Digital outcomes were strongly interconnected with developmental pathways and as such, the process of internet use development into variable outcomes was coined 'navigating adolescent pathways', our study's core thematic category. Findings provided important evidence on normative developmental and contextual considerations mediating increased online over-engagement and IAB, and on the multiple outcomes of internet over-engagement.
Why the study is innovative	The richness of methods for investigation of IAB is innovative.
References	Dreier, M., Wölfling, K., Müller, K.W., Beutel, M.E. and Duven, E. (2013). 'Interrelation between internalization, externalization and an internet addictive behaviour.' *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 2 (Suppl.), 13.
	Dreier, M., Tzavela, E., Wölfling, K., Mavromati, F., Duven, E., Karakitsou, Ch., Macarie, G., Veldhuis, L., Wójcik, S., Halapi, E., Sigursteinsdottir, H., Oliaga, A. and Tsitsika, A. (2012). *EU NET ADB. The development of adaptive and maladaptive patterns of Internet use among European adolescents at risk for Internet addictive behaviours: A grounded theory inquiry.* Deliverable D5: Qualitative Analysis. Available at www.eunetadb.eu

Study 20

Country	Greece
Study	*Young people's accounts from experiences with sexual content* (2010-11) was interested in examining young people's accounts from and discourses about experiences with sexual content within the context of how pornography and sexuality is constructed in relation to and by children and teenagers.
Sample and methods	Thirty young people aged 18-22; snowball sampling technique; semi-structured retrospective interviews about experiences during childhood and adolescence.
Results	When talking about their first encounters with sexual content, the participants prioritized the context within which this took place (place, time, with someone/alone). Boys mentioned having had their first experiences with other male friends, while the rest of the time access was privatized. Girls also talked about a group first experience.
	Girls mostly discussed mainstream types of sexual content, although they mentioned exploring other types later on in teenage life. Boys were familiar with more types of content than girls.
	There was an interesting focus on their emotional responses towards content, especially during their first encounters with it. Most of the boys mentioned feeling excited during their first experiences, but at the same time, anxious about being caught. Some of the girls also mentioned feeling excited about gaining adult knowledge, but others reported feeling awkward, or disgusted by doing this. In this case, too, they reported considerable anxiety about the possibility of getting caught.
	The second type of analysis (discourse analysis) focused on the emerging discourses from participants' narratives. Their descriptions of sexual content form mostly cultural (low vs high quality; real vs not real; common vs special), moral (natural vs unnatural; normal vs non-normal; right vs wrong) and feminist discourses (perfect vs imperfect bodies; respect vs disrespect; realistic vs unrealistic). On the other hand, their views about the use of sexual content and their awareness of the public debate surrounding it form mostly political (legal vs illegal; liberalism vs conservatism) discourses, health (sick vs healthy; mentally ill people use it) and didactic (purpose to teach; learn for yourself) ones.
	A preliminary examination of sample interviews on a narrative analysis level shows that most participants told their personal story about how they came to access sexual content. They elaborated on their thoughts about the use of sexual content, about their emotions from relevant experiences and mostly about their cultural or social capital surrounding this experience.
	There are interesting identity shifts both from childhood to teenage life in relation to experiences with sexual content, but also throughout the interviews.
Why the study is innovative	The retrospective approach to describing first experiences with sexual content is novel.
References	Chronaki, D. (2012). 'Young explorers/smart users? Young people's experiences with sexual content during childhood and teenage life.' In K. Sarikakis and L. Tsaliki (eds). *Mass media, popular culture and the sex industry.* Athens: Papazissis. [in Greek]

Study 21

Country	Greece
Study	*Scary vampire girl and other girl make-up and costumes online gaming practices: The sexualization of young preteen girls debate* (2011-12) dealt with the sexualization of young pre-teen girls in Greece, pre-teen gender identity and practices, and gaming practices among girls.
Sample and methods	Sixty girls aged 9-10, focus groups.
Results	N/A
Why the study is innovative	The topic construction of femininity and sexuality; stereotypes and myths of sexuality – reproduction versus dismissal among young girls is new.
References	N/A

Study 22

Country	Greece
Study	*Children and new technologies: The digital divide among children with special needs* (2012) explored the inextricable relationship between social and digital exclusion by working with children with special needs.
Sample and methods	Thirteen teenagers with various levels of motor-only and motor-and-cognitive/mental difficulties, with the add-on characteristic that their mental age was not always compatible with their biological age, between 17-20, and seven deaf children aged 11-12; face-to-face interviews were conducted.
Results	The 'disability divide' is relevant in the Greek case, more so in relation to socioeconomic status; as a result, children and youngsters from poorer families report less access than those better-off ones. In addition, socioeconomic status impacts on the range of online activities, with children from lower socioeconomic status using the internet for leisure activities only, while middle-class children use it for education and information as well.
	Respondents from a higher socioeconomic class are better informed about online risks, experience more active parental mediation and more autonomy in their internet practices. In the case of children from lower socioeconomic status, sibling mediation substituted (non-existent) parental supervision.
	More importantly, none of the interviewees put forward their physical inability as a reason for not using the internet – having special needs was never an obstacle for their internet use. In fact, quite a few of them particularly from a higher socioeconomic status) demonstrated a high level of digital skills. The internet was found to offer a valuable alternative to their everyday routine, and compensated for the activities they were being deprived of; in fact, social media such as Skype and uVu are invaluable social communication tools for deaf children (they use sign language to communicate).
	Youth with motor and/or cognitive difficulties found space for privacy and a chance to participate in social life as equals.
Why the study is innovative	The topic and participants – children with special needs are often disregarded in academic research.
References	N/A

Study 23

Country	Italy
Study	*Mobile internet and social networking. An exploratory research among Italian teens* (2011) investigated the social shaping of mobile internet use among Italian teenagers, and domestication and social networking practices, PC-based vs mobile experiences.
Sample and methods	Twenty-three adolescents aged between 14 and 17; three group interviews and eight focus groups.
Results	Regarding places and contexts of use, mobile social networking is used: (a) away from home, when no other fixed connection is available; (b) as a complementary domestic access point; and (c) to enhance micro-mobility in the domestic context – the PC for immersive experience vs the mobile for short sessions, an intermittent but continuous flow of communication. Location-based services serve as a symbolic resource for identity, to be socially displayed and shared. They are also used as a tool for micro-coordination, resulting in an increase in co-present interaction. The adolescents displayed a low awareness of online risks in general and a lower awareness of risks associated to mobile social networking. The only risk explicitly attributed to mobile Facebook is addiction and inability to negotiate their accessibility. If the mobile phone is the medium for the full-time intimate sphere, social networking sites are used to connect with the so-called extended social network. The mobile phone remediates Facebook, turning it into a tool for intimate ties and bonding social capital.
Why the study is innovative	Combination of the topic and participants: interviews with children who have close ties – resulting in more comfortable, better insight of children's practices.
References	See www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/Conference%202011/Panel%20PowrPoints/Panel%20Powerpoint.aspx

Study 24

Country	Italy
Study	*The digital face of Eros, Agape and Phiila. Adolescents, love and sexuality in the internet* (2011) sought to understand how Italian adolescents (aged 16-18) today use the internet to gain and access information (visual images, discussions, discourses) about sexual and intimate life and activities; to understand 'how' and 'why' they use (or choose not to use) this particular medium; and what kind of social impact can be observed in this relatively new phenomenon. The study aimed to understand what multimedia platform young Italians use to have access to information and discourses connected to sexuality; to understand why they use (or don't use) this media; to define the extent of the internet on the youth's experience on sexuality and their social construction; to understand the definition of previously points to eventually rough out differences between boys and girls understanding how gender differences could be constructed on the internet.
Sample and methods	Sixty adolescents (16-18 years old) recruited from sports, cultural and religious associations etc.; six face-to-face focus groups in the exploratory phase; three online focus groups and 48 online interviews in the in-depth research phase.
Results	The internet is integrated into everyday life with the classic agents of socialization (school, family, friends) in different ways depending on the dialogue that is permitted for adolescents. For those interviewed the internet was important because it allowed them to cope with embarrassment, fear of 'first times' (first sexual intercourse, first kiss, etc.), curiosity, etc.
	Some risks are present overall when the dialogue on sexual aspects is absent in the family. Other risks are connected to the kind of source information that adolescents use when looking for sexual information on the internet.
	The internet, especially social networking sites (SNS), becomes an important part of the construction of identity of adolescents that, with online resources, tries to 'play' and define what Erving Goffman (1963) called 'social identity and personal identity'. Everything goes in a specific direction, what the girls and boys interviewed define as 'normality': a standardized idea of gender roles and identity, something that 'jumps' in the 'online' and 'offline' spaces as a unique region without borders.
	Cybersex and other uses of the internet for sexual interaction were not reported as frequently, as adolescents described it as a 'perversion'. This shows a normalized idea of sexuality where many things are defined as 'not normal', and adolescents only find it useful to define (often in the context of the peer group) the borders of the idea of 'normal' sexuality. According to the adolescents, pornography is a form of sexual information. Thanks to anonymity, access to pornography is simpler for girls who can avoid stricter social control. Adolescents also access and use pornography to define gender borders.
	The internet becomes a catalyst for romantic relationships, especially thanks to SNS. Adolescents use SNS to 'spy' on the profiles of potential partners and to find out if there are some common points to start the process of courting. Adolescents frequently consider the computer a cold medium, however, and prefer to move the courting to a more personal medium, such as using the mobile phone.

Why the study is innovative	On the one hand, the research used innovative methods involving adolescents in the construction of the research and, on the other, used an internet-based method (online focus groups). The first aspect was very important and consisted of the creation of a group, called the co-construction group, composed of youth aged 16-18. This group helped with the definition of research questions and with the testing of research instruments. They also provided feedback regarding the use of a correct language and avoiding adults' stereotypes on these themes. For the data collection, the research was innovative in using online focus groups that helped the youth be more spontaneous thanks to their anonymity and the absence of a physical presence.
References	Scarcelli, C.M. (2011). *The digital face of Eros, Agape and Phiila. Adolescents, love and sexuality on the internet.* Padova: University of Padova.

Study 25

Country	Italy
Study	*The appropriation of parental control tools among Italian cultures of parental mediation of the internet: The case of Vodafone's Smart Tutor* (2012) investigated the practices of parental mediation, negotiation of parental control tools, that is, the Smart Tutor, and understanding children's privacy.
Sample and methods	Twenty-four parents and eight children (10-14 years old); three focus groups with parents, one with children.
Results	The shift from ordinary mobile phones to smart phones is ambiguous in parents' perceptions: on the one hand, smart phones are seen as a potential educational resource; on the other, they are perceived as an addictive device that supports only stereotyped online practices (namely, social networking and YouTube). Mobile access to the internet without an adult's supervision is considered risky. Italian parents are more concerned with inappropriate content (namely, pornography), grooming, sexting and personal information misuse. They tend to combine a variety of mediation strategies, among which the preferred are active mediation (dialogue and co-use) and restrictions. Monitoring and technical tools are perceived as invasive, inappropriate and likely to affect parents' relationship with their children. Children need to be educated to safer internet use. The study confirms what has already emerged from the EU Kids Online survey, which is the Italian parents' discomfort with parental control tools. Nonetheless, the experience with Smart Tutor proved to be an occasion for children and parents to talks about internet risks and safety and to negotiate rules and roles.
Why the study is innovative	The innovative aspect resides at the level of selected participants, which allowed direct comparison between children and their parents on mediation strategies, their perceived efficacy, and negotiation around them.
References	The presentation (in Italian) is available at www.cattolicanews.it/6156.html

Study 26

Country	Norway
Study	*'Is it really that dangerous, or...?' An exploration of the significance children and young people attribute to risk on the internet* (2011) investigated the meanings of risks, concerns and coping strategies among children.
Sample and methods	Fifty-one children aged 9-16; focus groups and essays.
Results	N/A
Why the study is innovative	The use of essays to supplement focus groups is innovative.
References	Hagen, I. (2010). '"Er det så farleg, eller…?" Ei utforsking av betydinga barn og unge tillegg risiko på internet.' ('"Is it really that dangerous, or...?" An exploration of the meaning children and young people attribute to risk on internet.') *Norsk medieforskerlags konferanse i Ålesund*, oktober. Gruppe: Medieresepsjon, Norway.

Study 27

Country	Russia
Study	*Emotional perception of the internet* (2009) focused on an examination of expression and the structure of different emotional complexes depending on gender, age, user activity and online experience of children.
Sample and methods	Subsample of survey, adolescents aged 14-17; creative method.
Results	The study found that the perception of the internet is dominated by positive emotions, which form three affective complexes: 'cognitive', 'pleasure' and 'communication'. Negative emotional complexes include 'shame', 'fear and hostility' and 'lost hopes'. Age and user experience have an effect on the expression of different complexes. 'Cognitive' includes interest, curiosity and wonder. With age it becomes more pronounced. 'Pleasure' includes emotions of joy, pleasure, happiness, admiration and rapture. This complex was also higher for older children, but the weight of its components varies with age: for younger children emotions of happiness and admiration lead. 'Communication' includes emotions of hope, trust and confidence, and it is also less pronounced in younger children. 'Fear and hostility' were made by the emotions of fear, danger, anger and anxiety. The complex of 'lost hopes' includes emotions of sadness and disappointment, and the complex of 'shame' includes shame, guilt and humiliation. Just as in the case of positive complexes, it was found that negative complexes were stronger in the older age group. The older the adolescent, the more negative they saw the internet.
Why the study is innovative	A special method was created to study the emotional perception of the internet by adolescents and to make comparative analysis of the expression and structure of emotional complexes depending on gender, age and user activity.
References	Soldatova, G., Zotova, E., Chekalina, A. and Gostimskaya, O. (2011). *Caught by the net. Social-psychological research on perception of the internet by children and adults.* Available at http://detionline.com/research/publish/books

Study 28

www.eukidsonline.net

Country	Russia
Study	*Perception of opportunities and risks of the internet* (2009) focused on the peculiarities of perception, motivation and negative experiences of internet use by children and typologies of internet users.
Sample and methods	Subsample of survey, children aged 14-17; test of incomplete sentences and content analysis/monograph.
Results	On the basis of what schoolchildren do and what they are looking for online, seven types of internet users were allocated: 'curious', 'rebels', 'communicators', 'players', 'consumers', 'pupils' and 'business'. These do not exist separately; adolescents tend to engage in various activities online, often simultaneously.
	'Curious' are children for whom the internet is a tool for finding information. They use it to satisfy cognitive activity and have diverse interests. The risks that such activity causes are: distortion of the cognitive process, information overload and reduced criticality. One in sixth of this group indicated that they were not in danger on the internet. However, they were more likely to face content and electronic risks.
	'Rebels' are children who use the internet as a means of free expression. Their activities are aimed at satisfying their needs for autonomy and independence. Children in this group often visit sites that are forbidden by their parents, use the internet for reprimanded purposes, are aggressive, provoke conflicts and hack into sites. This leads to the illusion of permissiveness and impunity. These children are more likely to provide personal information online and to meet internet strangers offline.
	'Players' are children for whom the internet is a tool for a game. Their need for games is directly related to their need for recognition and cognition. Children of this type may have problems associated with identity formation, and difficulties in the transition from an online mode to offline mode, which can lead to addiction or some psychological or mental disorders.
	For 'communicators' the internet is a place for finding friends and a means of communication. They use the internet to satisfy their social needs for connection: communication, belonging, love and recognition. Children of this type may have problems with development of social skills to interact in real life, as well as difficulty in identity formation. They are more likely to encounter various risks, in particular extortion, cyberbullying and grooming.
	'Consumers' are children who use the internet for shopping. The internet helps to satisfy their needs for possession, and therefore, recognition, cognition and belonging. Adolescents of this type learn how to navigate in a large flow of information; they are more informed, rational and grounded in setting goals. The main risks they face are online fraud and other consumer risks.
	For 'pupils' the internet is a source of educational information, to satisfy their cognitive needs. Children of this group mostly encounter content risks.
	'Business' is the smallest group; it includes adolescents who use the internet as a means of finding work. On the internet they satisfy their need for recognition and self-actualization, realizing business motivation. In addition to entertainment they see a variety of opportunities. Adolescents of this type may encounter fraud as well as other legal problems.
Why the study is innovative	The test of incomplete sentences was used to study children's perception of the online environment and their motivation for internet use. Such methodological techniques were used for the first time for such research purposes.
References	Soldatova, G., Zotova, E., Chekalina, A. and Gostimskaya, O. (2011). *Caught by the net. Social-psychological research on perception of the internet by children and adults.* Available at http://detionline.com/research/publish/books

Study 29

Country	Slovakia
Study	*Constructing identity in virtual environments of the internet* (2010) aimed to describe and explain the participants' different strategic identity claims as well as frames for self-definition used when constructing and reconstructing their identity in anonymous or non-anonymous virtual environments in connection with their motivations for using the virtual environments, and desirable types of contact with others.
Sample and methods	Seventy respondents aged 18-24; methods included semi-structured interviews, face-to-face and online; participative observation; thematic, content and critical discursive text analysis.
Results	Participants used different strategic identity claims as well as frames for self-definition when constructing and reconstructing their identity in both anonymous or non-anonymous virtual environments.
Why the study is innovative	The richness of methods: interviews, participative observation and document analysis were combined; there were three kinds of interviews: face-to-face, chat and email.
References	Petrjánošová, M. (2010). 'Constructing identity in virtual environments of the internet.' Doctoral thesis. Bratislava: Faculty of Arts, Department of Psychology, Comenius University in Bratislava.

Study 30

Country	United Kingdom
Study	*The class. Social networking and the changing practices of learning among youth* (2011-12) examined the emerging mix of on- and offline experiences in teenagers' daily learning lives, focusing on the fluctuating web of peer-to-peer networks that may cut across institutional boundaries, adult values and established practices of learning and leisure.
Sample and methods	Twenty-eight children aged 13-14; ethnographic approach: participant observation, interviews, small-scale surveys, mapping social networks; online interviews with victims of cyberbullying.
Results	Students, more than teachers, regard technology much like we might think of any other kind of public utility such as electricity or the water supply; it is an everyday and almost uninteresting fact that the internet is always available and always necessary. Use of Facebook and texting is constant, but in the background; it is usually just a simple way of making practical arrangements and staying in touch with friends, which is very important to teenagers.
	Some children make creative or complex use of digital media at home, but most make rather minimal use of it – for example, watching YouTube videos but not making and uploading their own videos. Such uses tend to be intense and episodic.
	Digital resources at school are good, but many teachers do not know a great deal about the exact nature of pupils' uses of technology out of school, and sometimes this leads to misunderstandings, or gets in the way of taking advantage of the learning opportunities now more broadly available to all. The use of technology in the classroom is largely one-way, albeit generally appreciated by all concerned; it's a long way from interactive, connected, collaborative or creative learning for most. Teachers also seem blocked in their efforts to find new approaches to teaching. There is an extraordinary tolerance for new starts leading to blocked paths (the maths blog that no one visits, the failure to get all parents' emails together for school use, the hopeless design of the intranet) – this in itself is worth pondering.
	The risks associated with mobile phones, Facebook, games and other digital platforms are so huge in the minds of teachers and parents that any potential is either vastly under-supported or only covertly explored by children. Either way, adults in the digital realm are few and far between. There also appears to be an imaginative vacuum regarding what could be, how they could be used, even about what already exists.
Why the study is innovative	The methods and multiple settings approach/rich data: the mix of social network analysis and ethnographic fieldwork is innovative. Also, studying the same children at home, school, online and in the community is innovative, especially extended over a full year.
References	See http://clrn.dmlhub.net/project/the-class

Study 31

Country	Australia (EU Kids Online affiliate country)
Study	*Young people and sexting in Australia: Ethics, representation and the law* (2013) addressed young people's understandings of Australian laws concerning 'sexting', and the production of photographs featuring children under 18 in sexy, provocative or naked poses.
Sample and methods	Three focus groups involving young Australians aged 16 and 17. Results from the focus groups were circulated to relevant professionals for consideration and comment. Professionals involved included those from law enforcement, youth and children's legal support, education, criminology, media and communications, youth work, youth healthcare, counselling as well as youth health promotion practitioners.
Results	While focus group participants were familiar with the practice of sending naked or semi-naked pictures, the term 'sexting' was understood as an adult or media-generated concept that did not adequately reflect young people's everyday practices and experiences of creating and sharing digital images.
	Young people observed that gendered double standards were applied to discussions of sexting, and digital self-representation in general. For example, one group of young women were particularly offended that their self-portraits or 'selfies' were viewed by both peers and adults as 'provocative', while young men's naked or semi-naked pictures were understood as 'jokes'.
	Sample media campaigns and public education materials viewed by focus groups were rejected by some participants for failing to acknowledge young women's capacity for consensual production and exchange of images. These participants also felt that current sexting education fails to emphasize young people's responsibility to not share images without consent.
	Both young people and adult stakeholders agreed that current legal frameworks relating to sexting (particularly those that conflate sexting with child pornography) are not widely understood by either young people or adults, and that this lack of education and awareness places young people at risk of unreasonable criminal charges.
Why the study is innovative	Asking young Australians under 18 about sexting practices is innovative because of the ways in which sexting by minors can be constructed by the police and others as the creation of child abuse materials. Also, the research was innovative in taking a neutral stance towards the behaviour of sexting. Instead of automatically constructing sexting as a dangerous or problematic activity, the project positioned young people as rational agents who would have good reasons for behaving as they do. This meant that the behaviour was explored as if it were an activity that was not properly understood by people outside the young adult age group.
References	Albury, K. and Crawford, K. (2012). 'Sexting, consent and young people's ethics: Beyond Megan's story.' *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, June, 26(3), 1-11.
	Albury, K., Crawford, K., Byron, P. and Mathews, B. (2013). *Young people and sexting in Australia: Ethics, representation and the law*. Sydney: University of New South Wales/ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation. Available at http://jmrc.arts.unsw.edu.au/media/File/Young_People_And_Sexting_Final.pdf

References

boyd, d. (2010). *Making sense of privacy and publicity*. 13 March. Austin, TX: SXSW. Available at www.danah.org/papers/talks/2010/SXSW2010.html

Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968]

Hasebrink, U., Görzig, A., Haddon, L., Kalmus, V. and Livingstone, S. (2011) *Patterns of risk and safety online.* London: EU Kids Online, London School of Economics and Political Science.

ANNEX 2: EU KIDS ONLINE

Overview

In its first phase (2006-09), as a thematic network of 21 countries, EU Kids Online identified and critically evaluated the findings of nearly 400 research studies, drawing substantive, methodological and policy-relevant conclusions. In its second phase (2009-11), as a knowledge enhancement project across 25 countries, the network surveyed children and parents to produce original, rigorous data on their internet use, risk experiences and safety mediation.

In its third phase (2011-14), the EU Kids Online network will provide a focal point for timely findings and critical analyses of new media uses and associated risks among children across Europe, drawing on these to sustain an active dialogue with stakeholders about priority areas of concern for child online safety.

Specifically, the network will widen its work by including all member states, by undertaking international comparisons with selected findings from countries outside the European Community, and extending its engagement – both proactively and responsively – with policy stakeholders and internet safety initiatives.

It will deepen its work through new and targeted hypothesis testing of the pan-European dataset, focused on strengthening insights into both the risk environment and strategies of safety mediation, by pilot testing new and innovative research methodologies for the nature, meaning and consequences of children's online risk experiences, and conducting longitudinal comparisons of findings where available over time.

Last, it will update its work through a rolling programme to maintain the online database of available findings, and by producing timely updates on the latest knowledge about new and emerging issues (e.g. social networking, mobile platforms, privacy, personal data protection, safety and awareness-raising practices in schools, digital literacy and citizenship, geo-location services, and so forth).

Work packages

WP1: Project management and evaluation

WP2: European evidence base

WP3: Hypotheses and comparisons

WP4: Exploring children's understanding of risk

WP5: Dissemination of project results

WP4 objectives

- To identify and stimulate the use of innovative qualitative methods for exploring difficult contextual and ethical issues that arise when researching children's understandings of and responses to online risk.

- To explore the qualitative meanings of risk for children, drawing on innovative methods where possible, to exploit the value of such approaches and explicate their potential for comparable findings.

International Advisory Panel

- María José Cantarino, Corporate Responsibility Manager, Telefonica, Spain
- Dieter Carstensen, Save the Children Denmark, European NGO Alliance on Child Safety Online
- Professors David Finkelhor and Janis Wolak, Crimes against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire, USA
- Lelia Green, ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, Australia
- Natasha Jackson, FOSI and GSMA, UK
- Amanda Lenhart, Pew Internet & American Life Project, USA
- Janice Richardson, Project Manager at European Schoolnet, Coordinator of Insafe, Brussels, Belgium

ANNEX 3: THE NETWORK

Country	National Contact Information	Team Members
AT Austria	Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink ingrid.paus-hasebrink@sbg.ac.at Department of Audiovisual Communication, University of Salzburg, Rudolfskai 42, A-5020 Salzburg, Austria	Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink Andrea Dürager Philip Sinner Fabian Prochazka
BE Belgium	Leen D'Haenens Leen.DHaenens@soc.kuleuven.be Centrum voor Mediacultuur en Communicatietechnologie (OE), OE Centr. Mediacult.& Comm.technologie, Parkstraat 45 – bus 3603, 3000 Leuven, Belgium	Leen d'Haenens Verónica Donoso Sofie Vandoninck Joke Bauwens Katia Segers
BG Bulgaria	Luiza Shahbazyan luiza.shahbazyan@online.bg Applied Research and Communications Fund, 1113, Sofia, 5, Alexander Zhendov St.	Luiza Shahbazyan Jivka Marinova Diana Boteva
HR Croatia	Dunja Potočnik dunja@idi.hr Institute for Social Research, Zagreb	Ivana Ćosić Pregrad Marija Lugarić Dejan Vinković Dragana Matešković
CY Cyprus	Yiannis Laouris laouris@cnti.org.cy Cyprus Neuroscience & Technology Institute Science Unit of the Future Worlds Center 5 Promitheos, 1065 Lefkosia, Cyprus	Yiannis Laouris Elena Aristodemou Aliki Economidou Tao Papaioannou
CZ Czech Republic	David Šmahel smahel@fss.muni.cz Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University Joštova 10, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic	David Šmahel Štepán Konečný Lukáš Blinka Anna Ševčíkov Petra Vondráčková Alena Černá Hana Macháèková Věra Kontríková Lenka Dědková
DK Denmark	Gitte Stald stald@itu.dk IT University of Copenhagen, Ruud Langgaards Vej 7, 2300 Copenhagen, Denmark	Gitte Stald Heidi Jørgensen
EE Estonia	Veronika Kalmus Veronika.Kalmus@ut.ee Institute of Journalism and Communication, University of Tartu, 18 Ülikooli St., 50090 Tartu, Estonia	Veronika Kalmus Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt Maria Murumaa-Mengel Andra Siibak Kersti Karu Lennart Komp Inga Kald Marianne Võime Kairi Talves
FI Finland	Reijo Kupiainen reijo.kupiainen@uta.fi Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Tampere, 33014 Finland	Reijo Kupiainen Kaarina Nikunen Annikka Suoninen Sirkku Kotilainen
FR France	Catherine Blaya cblaya@aol.com IREDU - Université de Bourgogne	Catherine Blaya Elodie Kredens Seraphin Alava

		Said Jmel
DE Germany	Uwe Hasebrink u.hasebrink@hans-bredow-institut.de Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research Warburgstr. 8-10, D - 20354 Hamburg, Germany	Uwe Hasebrink Claudia Lampert
EL Greece	Liza Tsaliki etsaliki@media.uoa.gr Department of Mass Media and Communications National and Kapodistrian University of Athens 5 Stadiou Street, Athens 105 62, Greece	Liza Tsaliki Despina Chronaki Maria Philippi Sonia Kontogiani Tatiana Styliari
HU Hungary	Bence Ságvári bence.sagvari@ithaka.hu Information Society and Network Research Center – ITHAKA, Perc u. 8, Budapest, 1036 Hungary	Bence Ságvári Anna Galácz
IS Iceland	Kjartan Ólafsson University of Akureyri Borgum v/Nordurslod, IS-600 Akureyri, Iceland	Kjartan Ólafsson Thorbjorn Broddason Gudberg K. Jonsson
IE Ireland	Brian O'Neill brian.oneill@dit.ie College of Arts and Tourism, Dublin Institute of Technology, Rathmines Road, Dublin 6, Ireland	Brian O'Neill Thuy Dinh Simon Grehan Nóirín Hayes Sharon McLaughlin
IT Italy	Giovanna Mascheroni giovanna.mascheroni@unicatt.it OssCom, Università Cattolica del S. Cuore Largo Gemelli, 1, 20123 Milano, Italy	Piermarco Aroldi Giovanna Mascheroni Maria Francesca Murru Barbara Scifo
LV Latvia	Inta Brikše inta.brikse@lu.lv Department of Communication Studies University of Latvia	Inta Brikše Skaidrite Lasmane Marita Zitmane Ilze Šulmane Olga Proskurova-Timofejeva Ingus Bērziņš Aleksis Jarockis Guna Spurava Līva Brice Ilze Bērziņa
LT Lithuania	Alfredas Laurinavičius allaur@mruni.eu Department of Psychology, Mykolas Romeris University, Ateities st. 20, LT-08303 Vilnius, Lithuania	Alfredas Laurinavičius Renata Mackoniene Laura Ustinavičiūtė
LU Luxembourg	Georges Steffgen georges.steffgen@uni.lu Université du Luxembourg	Georges Steffgen André Melzer Andreia Costa
MT Malta	Mary Anne Lauri mary-anne.lauri@um.edu.mt University of Malta	Mary Anne Lauri Joseph Borg Lorleen Farrugia Bernard Agius
NL Netherlands	Nathalie Sonck n.sonck@scp.nl SCP, Parnassusplein 5, 2511 VX Den Haag, Netherlands	Nathalie Sonck Jos de Haan Marjolijn Antheunis Susanne Baumgartner Simone van der Hof Els Kuiper Natascha Notten Marc Verboord Peter Nikken
NO Norway	Elisabeth Staksrud elisabeth.staksrud@media.uio.no Dept. of Media and Communication, University of Oslo	Elisabeth Staksrud Jørgen Kirksæther

	Boks 1093 Blindern, 0317 Oslo, Norway	Birgit Hertzberg Kaare Ingunn Hagen Thomas Wold
PL Poland	Lucyna Kirwil lucyna.kirwil@swps.edu.pl Department of Psychology Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities ul. Chodakowska 19/31, 03-815 Warsaw, Poland	Lucyna Kirwil Aldona Zdrodowska
PT Portugal	Cristina Ponte cristina.ponte@fcsh.unl.pt Departamento de Ciências da Comunicação Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa (UNL) Av. de Berna, 26-C, 1069-061 Lisboa, Portugal	Cristina Ponte José Alberto Simões Daniel Cardoso Ana Jorge Rosa Martins
RO Romania	Monica Barbovschi moni.barbovski@gmail.com Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, 21 Decembrie 1989 st. no.128-130, Cluj-Napoca, Romania	Monica Barbovschi Eva Laszlo Bianca Fizesan Gyöngyvér Tőkés George Roman Valentina Marinescu Anca Velicu
RU Russia	Galina Soldatova Soldatova.galina@gmail.com Moscow State University, Foundation for Internet Development	Galina Soldatova Ekaterina Zotova Elena Rasskazova Polina Roggendorf Maria Lebesheva
SK Slovakia	Jarmila Tomková jarmila.tomkova@vudpap.sk VUDPaP, Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology	Jarmila Tomková Ľudmila Václavová Magda Petrjánošová Dana Petranova
SI Slovenia	Bojana Lobe bojana.lobe@fdv.uni-lj.si Centre for Methodology and Informatics Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana Kardeljeva pl. 5, Ljubljana, Slovenia	Bojana Lobe Sandra Muha
ES Spain	Maialen Garmendia maialen.garmendia@ehu.es Depto. de Sociología, Universidad del País Vasco, Apartado 644, 48.080 Bilbao, Spain	Carmelo Garitaonandia Maialen Garmendia Gemma Martínez Miguel Angel Casado Estefanía Jiménez
SE Sweden	Cecilia von Feilitzen cecilia.von.feilitzen@sh.se The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, Goteborg University, Box 713, 405 30 Goteborg, Sweden	Cecilia von Feilitzen Elza Dunkels Olle Findahl Ulrika Sjöberg Karl Dahlstrand
CH Switzerland	Sara Signer s.signer@ipmz.uzh.ch IPMZ - Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, Andreasstrasse 15, CH-8050 Zürich	Sara Signer Martin Hermida Heinz Bonfadelli
TR Turkey	Kursat Cagiltay kursat@metu.edu.tr Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technology, Faculty of Education, Middle East Technical University, 06531, Ankara, Turkey	Kursat Cagiltay Engin Kursun Turkan Karakus Secil Tisoglu
UK United Kingdom Coordinator	Leslie Haddon leshaddon@aol.com Department of Media and Communications London School of Economics and Political Science Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK	Sonia Livingstone Leslie Haddon Cornelia Reyes Ellen Helsper John Carr