

# **Internet Safety & Young People**

**Prepared for**

**Regional Youth Work Unit North East**

**November 2012**

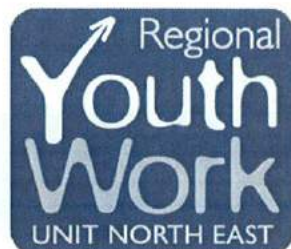
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**RR2013/03**



# 2012

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A Report for

Regional Youth Work Unit North East

Prepared by Ranald Richardson and Liz Robson 2012



## Acknowledgements

This research report was funded through Newcastle University's Business Voucher Scheme and through the UKRC funded research Digital Hub, Social Inclusion through the Digital Economy (SiDE) based at Newcastle University. Special thanks for their contributions go to Sara Walsh and Rob Wilson from the Centre for Knowledge, Innovation, Technology and Enterprise (KITE). We are also grateful to colleagues in the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS) and to Leon Mexter and Ria Farncombe at the North East Regional Youth Work Unit (RYWU-NE) for their advice and comments.

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## INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by Regional Youth Work Unit North East. A key objective of the Regional Youth Work Unit (RYWU-NE) is to grow knowledge and understanding of any issues that impact on young people. A current key issue is how social media can impact on the activities of the youth sector. There are two interrelated reasons for this focus:

1. To improve youth organisations' understanding of how young people use social media and the internet
2. To provide a platform for discussion of whether and how youth organisations can use social media to engage young people safely and effectively.

The question of 'on-line' safety which has received widespread, though not always informed, coverage in the media, has prompted RYWU-NE to gain a better understanding of the balance between the benefits of being online and young people's safety.

This report aims to give youth organisations a simple overview of the existing evidence on the risks associated with using the internet at a time when they, in line with other third sector organisations, are coming under increasing pressure to introduce new ways of working and delivering services. This report draws together the findings from a number of studies concerned with the risks that young people may face when accessing the Internet and social media. It also draws on two workshops organised by the Regional Youth Work Unit. The first sought the views of a group of young people as to how *they* saw the issue of internet safety. The second considered the issues faced by youth workers in bringing to bear digital technologies, including the Internet and social media, on their work with young people. The overall aim of the report is to construct an evidence base from which RYWU-NE and the wider youth work community can draw in respect of policy and practice, when considering questions of safety and security. The resources available for this study do not allow us to cover all points in the literature or to undertake wide-ranging original research. We have, however, identified issues which we think would warrant further research and we identify these in the final section of the report.

Digital technologies are now central to the way that many organisations and individuals organise their lives. For the individual a number of benefits are associated with these technologies including, learning opportunities, expanding social and business networks, accessing services more quickly and cheaply, finding others with similar viewpoints, and undertaking creative activities. Successive UK governments, in line with those around the world, also now see digital technologies as central to economic performance and social well-being. The last Labour government coined the term 'Digital Britain' (DBIS 2009). The present Coalition sees digital technologies as central to the way the country operates: to economic growth, to education, to the delivery of public services, to social inclusion and to participatory forms of democratic and community action (Cabinet Office 2011). The public sector has been exhorted to 'think digital' and to be 'digital by default'. Reorganising activities around digital technologies, however, requires serious thinking not just about the internal restructuring of work processes but also about how to interact with individual client groups, who will vary in terms of their skills, capacities and knowledge sets in relation to digital technologies and their possibilities and potentials.

This report focuses on youth work and young people. On the surface young people are well placed to utilise digital technology and the empirical and statistical evidence points to younger age cohorts being in the vanguard of uptake and use of these technologies, supporting the argument that we are witnessing the emergence of the 'digital native'. Although it is clearly crucial both socially and economically that our young people can effectively use this new technology, a number of concerns

have been expressed. Perhaps the concern most often raised is that of *Internet safety and security*. It is this issue on which this report focuses.

There are a number of genuine risks associated with using the internet. These include 'cyber-bullying', encountering pornography, seeing violent or hateful content and sharing personal information with strangers which may lead to the practice known as 'grooming'. Learning how to navigate the Internet and to use social media in ways which are not harmful to the user and to others is now part of growing up. These are important issues and cannot be ignored. Some commentators argue, however, that the perception of risk amongst adults is often greater than the actual risk and this may in part result from the different levels of familiarity with the technology and feelings of lack of oversight and control, particularly as access to the Internet from mobile devices becomes more common. Concerns are currently likely to be exacerbated by sensationalist and inaccurate reporting of issues around new technologies.

The report is structured as follows. In the next section we provide a brief summary synthesising the main findings from the literature and from our workshops. We then provide a context section which sets out why digital technologies and their safe use is a particularly pressing issue. We then go on to discuss in more detail the issue of internet safety. This is followed by the elaboration of a 'support system' of which youth work forms an important part. Finally we point to areas for future research and offer some brief conclusions.

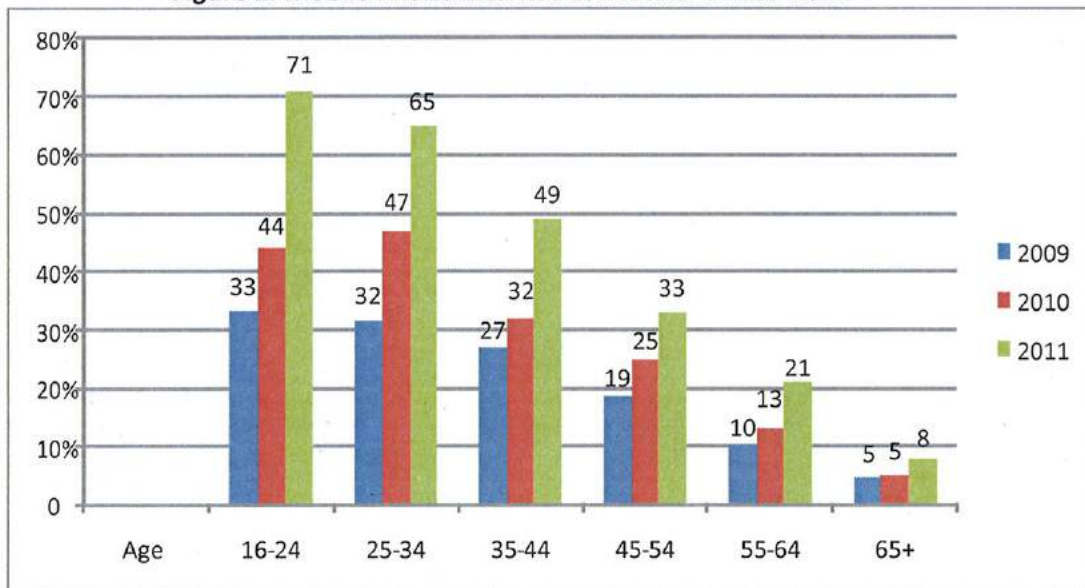
## CONTEXT

In this section we explore two central drivers which give added urgency to the need for the youth work sector to carefully consider how digital technology can be used to interact with its client base.

The first driver is simply that Internet and social media are becoming central to the way that young people communicate, access information and so on. Recent statistical evidence suggests that young people are the group that are mostly likely to use the Internet and mobile technology. They are also most likely to possess high skill levels in using digital technologies (ONS, 2011). A recent study (Cisco 2011) into the importance of the internet, revealed that one in three college students and young professionals considers the internet to be as important as fundamental human resources like air, water, food and shelter. The 2011 Cisco Connected World Technology Report also found that more than half of the study's respondents say they could not live without the internet and cite it as an "integral part of their lives" – in some cases more integral than cars, dating, and partying. Children are accessing the internet at younger ages. On average, children in Europe now start going online when they are seven. Information Society Newsroom (2011) reported that in spite of age restrictions, 38% of 9 to 12 year olds who are online say they have a social networking profile (the most commonly used site is facebook).

Young people, as a group represent the most frequent users of *latest* technologies and in particularly mobile telephony. It can also be seen in the chart below that there is no sign of a decline in the attraction of accessing the internet via mobile phones (in any age group). The data for mobile phone internet connections which includes access by smart phone shows that 16 to 24 year olds lead the way. More than 30% of children who go online do so from a mobile device and 26% via game consoles (Information Society Newsroom (2011)).

**Figure 2: Mobile Phone Internet Connections 2009-2011**



Base: GB adults who accessed the internet in the last three months

Source: ONS Opinion survey: Internet Access - Households and Individuals, 2011

It should, of course, be noted that not all young people have the same levels of access to the internet or to social media, nor do they have they all have access to the most sophisticated technologies. Youth work organisations already take these differences into account when considering their engagement strategies and must be equally vigilant when using social media. Most obviously there is a relationship between social deprivation and access to digital technologies, with people socially excluded on a variety of indicators also being excluded from access to digital technology (OII-DCLG, 2008). There are also spatial factors to take into account. For example, a survey by Ofcom (2008b) found that mobile phone access is higher amongst children in urban areas than amongst those living in rural areas (87% compared to 83%). However, use of social networking sites is higher amongst rural children (61% of rural children compared with 54% of children living in urban areas).

Beyond access, there is the question of the skills required to both safely and meaningfully use the Internet and social networking tools. This is sometimes referred to as digital literacy. A recent report for the European Commission suggests that young people who have low education, low skills and low income are more likely to have inadequate levels of digital literacy and that,

*a new disparity in terms of education levels may increasingly pose a challenge to an inclusive information society in addition to the traditional generational divide (CEC, 2010: 73).*

The message here is that, although digital technology is central in the lives of young people, youth organisations and their representatives cannot assume that all young people have access to, or have the skills to use, the technology effectively. Youth workers are already attentive to these issues; at a recent RYWU-NE workshop the rural/urban divide was highlighted:

*I have noticed that young people in rural areas are slower in adopting technologies than their urban counterparts. They are not using mobile technologies to the same extent. (youth worker seminar 2011)*

The second major driver for the youth sector is government policy at both EU and UK level, which is now moving towards the delivery of many services online. The UK coalition government sees online delivery as a means of widening access, improving services and reducing costs. The mantra now is 'digital by default' (Cabinet Office 2011). Government policymakers are eager for a more participatory approach to policymaking and service design made possible through widespread use of social media and the internet. Social media was used extensively throughout the Positive for Youth consultation process which enabled discussion with and between young people on a wide range of issues. These are covered in the Positive for Youth report HM Government (2011).

The Institute for Government (2011) reports that public service leaders, both in the UK and abroad, are demonstrating many examples of services that have been transformed by the application of local accountability, transparency and innovation made possible through internet access. There is an expectation of these two drivers ('policy push' and client 'pull') will put the youth sector under increasing pressure to systematically examine how internet technology can be integrated into new blended forms of service delivery. Responding to these pressures will require a clear understanding of the potential of digital technologies (especially internet and social media) as well as any inherent dangers to young people.



*Through Directgov, Jobcentre Plus provides a job search service for people looking for work. However, some citizens, particularly younger people, do not have access to a computer at home, but do own a mobile phone with internet access. Directgov and Jobcentre Plus therefore created a mobile browser service and application to provide access to the job search service on mobile phones in order to make it much more accessible. The job search app was downloaded over 100,000 times within the first six months of its launch in March 2010.*

These two drivers will continue to place pressure on the youth sector to find innovative ways to use technologies and the associated new applications that will emerge over coming years. This further highlights how important it is that organisations working with younger client groups are fully cognisant of the potential and benefits offered by these technologies. However, it has been suggested, that the youth sector is a sector which has been slower to adopt and effectively utilise these technologies. Writing in 2008, Davies and Cranston reported that access to the technologies and the skills and knowledge base was not yet widespread. More recently, John Popham (2010) has suggested that both the youth and social care sectors have been slow to adopt and fully utilise social media in their work. The idea that the sector is reluctant to adopt social media technologies has been further supported by respondents in this study who have suggested that even when youth workers use the internet and social media tools extensively in their own lives this is rarely reflected in their work environment, particularly in their interactions with young people. Several reasons for this have been put forward by respondents but one of the barriers to the full use of these technologies appears to be concerns with safety and security. This is an issue for front-line workers, but also for the organisations for whom they work and who need to put systems in place to facilitate digitally mediated new forms of interaction. We now turn to consider the issue of safety more fully.

## SAFETY ISSUES

Many of the reasons young people may encounter risks through social networking have roots outside of the technology and are situated in the areas of personal and social development. The internet does have (as does the offline world) the potential to expose young people to dangers such as bullying, inappropriate material and most worryingly the practice of 'grooming'. However, *physical* harm as a result of using the internet is so rare that no statistics or survey material could be found to indicate the likelihood of this happening.

Meeting an online contact offline was deemed to be the least common risk encountered through internet use by Livingstone & Haddon (2009). Their review of the evidence suggests that online risks and risky behaviours are fairly similar across Europe and include:

- Giving out personal information
- Encountering pornography
- Seeing violent or hateful content
- Being bullied online
- Receiving unwanted sexual content

There are concerns that as young people increasingly take up mobile access to the internet (which is more difficult to supervise) their exposure to these risks will also increase. Counter intuitively a report by NFER (2010) found no evidence to indicate that those young people who are allowed to access the internet unsupervised, are more or less likely to exhibit on-line risky behaviour. However, this situation may change as access via mobile telephony widens to include more disadvantaged groups who have been shown to be more vulnerable online due to their lower levels of digital literacy.

Despite documented evidence of a 'digital divide' where online experience is shaped by age, class, gender, race, nationality, etc. there has been little regard given to groups that may get left behind or ignored. In the case of young people this can be due to a commonly held belief that young people simply do not suffer from this divide, that they are 'digital natives' (Catch22 2010). Researchers have reported that gender inequalities are thought to be disappearing but that socio-economic inequalities persist. Furthermore, young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are both less likely to access the internet and more likely to encounter on-line risks (Livingstone & Haddon 2009, Catch22 2010).

Information exists on adults' and children's awareness with regard to on-line risks and how to safeguard against them but there is little evidence of the effectiveness of particular approaches which makes it difficult to assess which is fit for purpose. This includes parental/carer supervision because few parents are thought to understand their children's 'cyber culture'. Cyber culture is the ways in which children use the internet and mobile phone to work, study, play and socialise (Childnet 2011).

Bullying is an ongoing concern which happens online and offline. That online bullying and harassment continues to be a threat to feeling safe online can be seen from the level of importance that our study participants gave this issue (see table below). Again, NFER (2010) analysis found that young people with special educational needs and those receiving free school meals are more at risk of online bullying than other members of their cohort. The potential for bullying and the mahem that can ensue could persuade stakeholders that using social media to engage young people is too risky to even contemplate. Even so, some youth workers reported that it was the most effective tool they had at their disposal when it came to engaging their target audience. Bullying is also a challenge offline and it is worth noting that online bullying might be easier to address since evidence is clearly



documented. Further research is required to learn more about the links between on-line and off-line bullying and how it can be minimised. Close working with other stakeholders and sharing best practice may give stakeholders more confidence to utilise social media to reach young people and importantly learn every which way to reduce incidents of online bullying.

Our study participants demonstrated that they had good awareness of on-line risks but still admitted to taking risks when using social media sites. They identified ten types of abuse that they might encounter on the internet or on social networking sites. A traffic light system was utilised to establish which three risks were of most concern to participants, i.e. red means 'this is of most concern' through to green which signifies a third place ranking. These were further scored by allocating points depending on whether the concern was given a red, yellow or green light. It can be seen that study participants highlighted 'risks' such as identity theft and downloading a virus – the, albeit unsophisticated, method of scoring these issues revealed that identity theft could be their biggest concern. Our study participants reported incidents that had actually happened to them while online but the workshop facilitator observed that, despite this, participants seemed less aware of the connection between their own behaviour and subsequent exposure to danger. Both of these findings reflect views from the literature, i.e. that young people (and older people) worry more about identity theft, downloading viruses, etc. than actual physical harm and that young people exhibit more risk taking behaviour.

When talking about risky behaviours that may result in harm, our study participants knew the safety rules, e.g., not to accept people they didn't know into their friend networks and that fake accounts could be set up. Despite this they admitted they often accepted mutual friends – using the provenance of their relationships as a safety measure. Some stated they were aware of the dangers but were not concerned about any of them – if they were being harassed then they would turn the PC off. Their views are not wholly unexpected given that the vast majority of young people are unlikely to encounter adults posing as children online or be harmed as a result of using the internet. However, they do give some validity to the claims of educators such as Kist and Jenkins that good judgment requires much more than simple logic, in particular, an understanding of how different media institutions and cultural communities operate.

Broadly, study participants were most concerned about identity theft, online harassment/bullying and downloading a virus. These findings cannot be considered statistically significant and are intended only as an insight into the concerns of young people but they may well be 'the hooks' by which young people can be further engaged in safety sessions. If young people can be attracted to learning and training about identity theft or computer viruses then this provides an opportunity to learn about their own safety and reducing risky behaviours more generally.

Safety Concerns	Red (most concerned)	Yellow	Green
1. Identity theft	6	0	0
2. Harassment/bullying on line		6	1
3. Downloading a virus	0	2	5
4. Contact from unknown	2		
5. Privacy Sharing Information	0	0	1
6. Spam & phishing			1
7. Impersonation	0	0	0
8. Self harm			
9. Racist & discriminatory content	0	0	0
10. Indecent content			

Much has been written about the amount of time that young people spend using digital technologies and the adverse effects this might have on their development. Mark H. Johnson, a Professor of Psychology and Director of the Centre for Brain & Cognitive Development at University College, London (2008) has reviewed the literature on the impact of new technologies on children outlining that there are both positive and negative impacts. Johnson points to adolescence being a period of brain development characterized by increased risk-taking and a relative lack of inhibition which poses potential risks when using the internet. However, he counteracts this with the assertion that frequent technology use may reduce the time available for risks of mortality in real world situations. This last point was supported by our study participants who felt it was safer to chat online than meet on dark nights or travel which might be necessary for rural dwellers. Johnson also noted that large amounts of time online (or playing video games) during childhood were reported to have positive effects on perception and attention. Further, these were documented as having potential to transfer to other computer-based and life tasks. The skills learned by playing games were found to be useful in an increasingly computer-based school and employment environment (Johnson et al 2008). Negative effects were thought to include lack of physical exercise (carrying general health risks) and a lack of expertise in fine motor skills relevant for whole body action (such as in sports).

The risky behaviour that young people exhibit off-line may make adults less trustful of their behaviour on-line. An example of adult distrust was highlighted by our study participants who reported that their schools set homework on-line but blocked internet access in school. The study participants described this as, 'frustrating and showed a lack of trust'. Despite this, they felt that online safety is an issue that should be addressed in their schools. The government backed campaign, 'Zip it, Block it, Flag it' puts more onus on schools to help ensure young people know how to stay safe online (see Appendix 2). Some commentators feel there is a need for increasing knowledge levels, investment in teacher training and growing parental capacity to deal with the potential of technology in children's development as well as the risks (see for an example Barnardos 2007).

Differing perceptions of what constitutes risky behaviour could weaken efforts to engage young people in more creative and meaningful activities and even lead to an increase in risky behaviours. Young people have found new ways of communicating and behaving when using social media and this has created a generational mismatch. This mismatch of skills, perceptions and ways of using the internet has the potential to stifle progress and increase the generation gap due to lack of shared understanding (see Positive for Youth 2011). This issue has been identified and labelled generational mismatch due to divergence in knowledge and skill sets loosely correlated to age. As far back as 2007, Barnardos raised concerns about the gap between children's technology skills and use and parental lack of awareness of their ability and how they used the internet. With regard to social media, a pattern emerges from the literature whereby those who use social media extensively and view it as beneficial are predominantly young people whilst those who are less likely to use social media and more likely to draw attention to the adverse effects are predominantly found in older age groups. The testing aspect of this phenomenon is that those in the 16 to 24 year group tend to be more versed and technically superior in the use of social media than the older age groups who in turn have important life skills, e.g. they are more able to distinguish between fact and fiction. This type of knowledge or skill set tends to come with education, experience and age (Jenkins 2009). For individuals using the internet optimum performance requires that both these skills sets should be well developed.

Generation mismatch can be fuelled by the 'new words and acronyms', often invented by the younger user group and subject to ongoing subtle changes in meaning which can hamper progress



towards shared understanding. Analysis of the workshop discussion highlighted the plethora of terms and nomenclature associated with the internet and its safety, acknowledging that few could be unequivocally defined.

A useful insight into this situation is provided by Marc Prensky (2001), who labelled young people born from the early eighties onwards, 'digital natives' - the indigenous people in a digital country. He develops this analogy to help describe the differences between the indigenous people (the natives) and immigrants to the digital country. Digital life is easy for the natives, for whom the local religion, language, and ways are natural and indigenous, compared with immigrants who may struggle to adapt to and adopt the customs. Prensky points to the 'heavy accented' habits of digital immigrants, such as printing documents rather than commenting on screen or printing out emails, calling people into a room to see a webpage instead of sending them the URL, etc.

The value of Prensky's digital country analogy is that it highlights a particular and natural set of skills and competencies found more usually amongst younger people. For the digital immigrant (or older person) there will be new words to understand, new definitions of old words, different definitions attached to existing words, all of which may make finding common ground and setting safe boundaries problematic. Unfortunately for this review, Prensky focuses on the many benefits of being a digital native without going into detail on how safety guidelines might be established. The term 'digital native' and their associated technical skills can also mask that the young person is not tapping into the real potential of digital technologies to change their lives positively.

*"Young people use technology for social calls, for texting, but it is not widely used for other purposes" Youth worker at RYWU-NE seminar*

Examining other metaphors such as that of 'learning to cross the road', (also used in the literature) signals that young people are not a homogenous group and sensitivity to differences and background is essential if all young people are to benefit from the internet equally. Like learning to cross the road, learning to use the internet safely will require a targeted and tailored approach. The dangers of crossing a road are the same for all age groups but the approach to teaching the 'stay safe message' will vary in line with the characteristics of the user.

Many commentators and participants in this review have pointed to the relationship between the virtual and real world and this relationship may have to be further explored if online risky behaviours are to be reduced. Learning about safe behaviours will have most impact if the relationship, differences and similarities between online and offline is understood. There are dangers to be found online but the findings of this review suggest that online behaviour has relevance and connections with the offline world and that this should not be ignored.

## SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Support mechanisms and systems are provided through a wide range of stakeholders developed to address potential dangers. They can be separated into two main groups – those with direct responsibility for young people, e.g. parents, guardians and teachers and those with indirect responsibility such as government and business corporations. This review has not revealed a means of using the internet or social media in a way that eliminates all risks. There is some evidence that risks can be minimised through a co-learning experience (Jenkins 2008). The Byron (2010) review also makes clear that the issue of child digital safety must be positioned within broader resilience building, (critical evaluation, risk management and self monitoring) rather than ‘blocking’ or filtering access. Blocking may continue to have currency in certain situations, e.g. dependent on the context and specificities of individual cases. Blocking can give an organisation some control over how a young person spends their time but it cannot assure internet safety more generally or over the long term Byron (2008, 2010) because it is thought to:

- Impede cognitive development and the skills for critical thinking and judgement to assess what is safe - children and young people need to develop ‘resilience’ and their ‘critical evaluation skills
- Ignore the many positive aspects of being on-line and using social media sites such as facebook, e.g. safer on dark nights to talk to their friends on-line
- Be unlikely to shield young people or indeed any age group from internet hazards such as stranger danger. Online or offline young people need to develop a whole range of skills and competencies to cope with modern life including the resources that are made available through the existence of the internet
- Exacerbate and frustrate young people, encourage them to be secretive or use their high level technical skills to get around ‘blocking’ software
- Only be effective in a supervised environment (young people are increasingly accessing the internet unsupervised through mobile technologies).

For our study participants, blocking of sites was seen as ‘frustrating’ or ‘hypocritical’. It becomes clear that a range of stakeholders from online and offline (including young people themselves) have equally important contributions to staying safe online and to any associated co-learning processes. Support systems and mechanisms will have to be further examined through dialogue as it is likely that stakeholders will place emphasis on different mechanisms depending on the needs of their particular group. The main elements of the support system are discussed below:

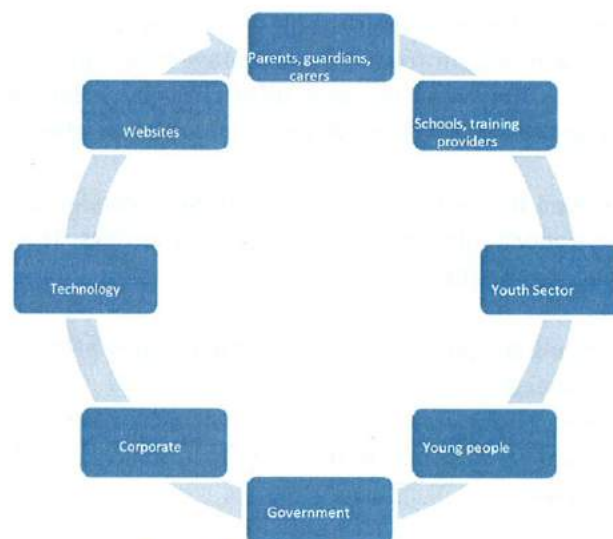


Figure 2 Elements of the support system



### **Parents, guardians and carers**

This sphere encompasses a wide range of stakeholders who have a responsibility of care. Within this broad group there exists a wide range of technical abilities as well as a conflicting opinions and viewpoints. Nevertheless each stakeholder group will share the view that young people must not be exposed to unnecessary risk. The generational mismatch or divide is most noticeable in this sphere. Many of our study participants admitted to not asking their parents for permission to join sites. They reported that their parents trust them but also that their parents often don't know what they are doing [when it comes to internet technology]. Some participants felt their parents didn't know enough to talk to them about internet safety and that schools were scared to talk about internet safety. HM Government (2011) found that many parents feel their children are far more advanced than them in their use of IT, the internet, and social media. For our study participants there was resignation that they have to teach themselves. Their strategy was one of 'common sense'.

### **Schools and teachers**

Our study participants thought that schools should have the burden of responsibility for teaching them internet safety (with some reservations that were also apparent in the literature). Our participants thought that some parents may complain to schools if they did teach safety. Byron (2010) writes of concerns that the drive to improve teaching around internet use and digital safety within schools may not have captured the hearts and minds of the entire school workforce, parents, children and young people. She proposes that ways must be found to engage the teaching workforce to embrace the use of technology, not just in terms of a bolt-on to existing curricula but as an integral part of pedagogy. In response to the Byron review, Ofsted's 2010 study into the safe use of new technologies shows that the most effective schools had a well-considered, active approach to keeping pupils safe when they were online. They also reported that it was important for schools to work closely with families, and use pupils' and families' views more often, to develop e-safety strategies.

Teaching digital safety has been found to be most effective where it is supported by high-quality materials and resources. Examples of materials available to support children and young people's online safety include Scotland's Child Internet Safety Action Plan, Know IT All for Primary and Know IT All for Secondary. Know IT All products were commissioned by UKCCIS and were produced by Childnet for schools but there are also Know IT All resources for parents and carers (see appendices for more information).

### **Youth Organisations**

Youth organisations are also part of this support system. They may also be in contact with groups that are described as 'hard-to-reach' and/or from a disadvantaged background. Because of this they can bring a different perspective. They may be seen differently by young people and provide a unique opportunity to lead dialogue critical to achieving shared understanding and responsibility.

The youth work sector is described by Davies & Cranston (2008) as playing a key role in supporting young people to exploit online opportunities as well as navigate the risks. They see a strong role for youth work and their organisations in that they can:

- Provide the space for young people to reflect upon their online activity, and to develop their critical skills or 'media literacy'
- Be proactive in facilitating youth work engagement with the online safety issues, providing an alternative to 'blocking' and information campaigns which are shown to have limited impact on behaviour change.

As professionals and as approachable adults who young people can talk to, youth workers can

- Use their existing youth work relationships to introduce tailored interventions to address risk behaviours
- Use group work to support the development of shared understandings and practices which in turn can support young people in supporting their peers
- Provide learning opportunities for young people to develop digital/media literacy
- Pilot the use of online social networking tools to assess how they might be best used to complement existing youth work activities
- Work with other stakeholders to explore new models of youth work and to promote youth services to young people.

This would require a youth sector that can demonstrate an excellent grasp of the issues surrounding social media, using the internet and the preferences of young people. The checklist proposed by Davies and Cranston (2008) has been slightly adapted to place the issue of 'safety' within an overall framework for action:

1. Survey – understand specific target group's access to social networking, engagement with online/social networking
2. Assess the skills and resources that are available within the service
3. Safety – consider the safety implications of online social networking for the target group
4. Examine options for policy and action in supporting young people in navigating risk, both individually and as groups
5. Safety 2 - examine the risks that staff may face and how these can be minimised. Ensure that staff have full line manager and organisation support
6. Skills – take active steps to develop the online social networking knowledge and skills of staff. (Draw upon the expertise of young people and a co-learning approach)
7. Strategy – set out why online social networking has been chosen as a youth work tool and how young people will be supported and encouraged to use these familiar [to them] technologies in new and meaningful ways.

Youth organisations, through their work with young people could provide pivotal knowledge on the effective use of digital technologies. The advantages of getting involved in testing and piloting innovative approaches to engagement could be vast given the current deficiency in knowledge about what works in practice. Furthermore, the absence of robust evidence to support or refute the use of these technologies currently results in a diminished ability of both youth organisations and the young people who access their services to influence those who make decisions on their behalf.

Representatives from youth organisations in the North East are already meeting and talking through ideas on how young people can be supported in a campaign about unemployment (see text box below). Youth workers who were already using social media had found it to be the most successful way of reaching their target audience and ensured that their courses were always full. They also gave practical suggestions, based on their own experiences, on how to make the internet and social media safer by ensuring that:

- Social media projects are led by young people
- Important stakeholders such as funders are fully supportive
- Everyone involved has good technical skills and knowledge
- It is linked to the real world
- Establish new policy and practice (because current policy is being eroded by young people's extensive use of social media)
- There is careful evaluation and monitoring





The Regional Youth Work Unit – North East has been exploring a variety of ways in which social media and emerging digital technology can support the development of youth work and the empowerment of the young people of our region. In July, the Unit was successful in gaining funding from the policy and representation partnership to support our new Net Assets Project. Net

### Young people

There is now a degree of agreement that young people should be centrally involved in building safety and control mechanisms to support them on-line. Ofsted (2010) have proposed an interesting approach, namely that young people themselves have a role in the teaching and learning of online safety. Young people can, for example, become Cyber Mentors, work with youth organisations to establish ground rules or organise themselves to take a more active role by getting involved in Government campaigns. Our study participants indicated a willingness to support safety – some already ensuring the online safety of their younger siblings. By including young people and their views on how to minimise risks, their superior technical skills and innovative uses of digital technologies can be exploited to reduce generational mismatch and grow safe online behaviour across all age groups.

### Government Support

The Coalition has accepted all the recommendations made by Reg Bailey for DfE (2011) in his review of the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood. This report covered the measures which businesses, regulators, and government should take to minimise children's exposure to sexualised images in magazines, advertising, television programmes, music videos, and from the internet. The report calls for regulators and businesses to make it easier for parents to highlight their concerns to businesses, to complain if they have seen something they don't like and to block adult and age-restricted material from the internet. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre is currently working on on-line risks and what parents should do about them. The intention is that this will be updated continuously and accessible at the point of service use. The UK Council for Child Internet Safety intend to launch this service on Safer Internet Day in February 2012. The UK Government led 'one stop' has the potential to reduce information overload and encourage internet and social media users to inform and influence what is included on the site.

### Corporate support

An example of corporate support is a coalition of twenty eight leading companies which aims to make a better and safer internet for young people. Their focus is on making it easier to report harmful content, ensure privacy settings are age-appropriate, and that they offer wider options for parental control (reflecting the needs of a generation that is going online at an increasingly young age). Members include, Apple, BSkyB, BT, Dailymotion, Deutsche Telekom, facebook, France Telecom-Orange, Google, Hyves, KPN, Liberty Global, LG Electronics, Mediaset, Microsoft, Netlog, Nintendo, Nokia, Opera Software, Research in Motion, RTL Group, Samsung, Sulake, Telefonica, TeliaSonera, Telenor Group, Tuenti, Vivendi, Vodafone. (Information Society Newsroom Update 1 December 2011). The founding Coalition members have agreed a Statement of Purpose which includes 5 actions:

1. Simple and robust reporting tools: easy-to-find and recognisable features on all devices to enable effective reporting and responses to content and contacts that seem harmful to kids
2. Age-appropriate privacy settings: settings which take account of the needs of different age groups (such settings determine how widely available a user's information is; for example whether contact details or photos are available only to close contacts rather than to the general public)
3. Wider use of content classification: to develop a generally valid approach to age-rating, which could be used across sectors and provide parents with understandable age categories
4. Wider availability and use of parental control: user-friendly tools actively promoted to achieve the widest possible take-up
5. Effective takedown of child abuse material: to improve cooperation with law enforcement and hotlines, to take proactive steps to remove child sexual abuse material from the internet.

### **Online support**

As can be seen from the foregoing text, online support (mostly generated and supported by corporations and government) is prolific. The sheer number of online sites to advise and help with staying safe can result in information overload (see Appendix 2 for some that have been reviewed as part of this study). There are also 'independent' sites in existence. These sites may have currency amongst those with specific values or allegiances but have not been included in this review due to the impossibility of assessing their objectivity or influencing what they say. A useful starting point is the guidelines, terms and conditions that are provided by the social networking sites themselves. They have a vested interest in keeping their users safe on-line and have easy to understand behaviour guidelines. They also provide easy to implement ways of reporting abuse. A 2007 report from Barnardos found that children who choose online as a medium to seek assistance remain loyal to this format.

### **Technology**

Internet technology provides the means of developing the connective tissue of a system, one that facilitates new ways of expressing concerns, exchanging views, and building the resilience learning that is so critical to a young person's development. Ongoing innovation and ideas keep technology as one of the most important drivers of economic success. It is the responsibility of the people who use these technologies to demand technology development for social good and positive impacts which include making access to the internet safer for all people.



## GAPS IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

Unfortunately there are many gaps in our knowledge base which means there is a continuing need for dialogue to help balance viewpoints and decide priorities for action. Some of the gaps in the knowledge base are already being tackled, e.g. the UK government has recently responded to the need for more robust indicators on internet usage amongst different age groups through the provision of the Internet Access Quarterly Update. Furthermore it can be seen that the omission of young peoples' viewpoints is now being addressed by organisations such as the RYWU-NE, however, it is worth highlighting those gaps or weaknesses in the knowledge base that commentators see as undermining progress towards optimising the use of the internet and social media e.g. NFER (2010).

The digital divide is an area which requires further exploration. NFER (2010) state that a research question to be followed up is, 'What links are there between disadvantage/vulnerability and engaging in risky on-line behaviour and other on-line risks?' There is documented evidence of a digital divide but more information is needed with regard to groups that may get left behind or ignored due to a commonly held belief that young people simply do not suffer from this divide, that they are 'digital natives' (Catch22 2010). Socio-economic inequalities are reported to persist and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are both less likely to access the internet and more likely to encounter on-line risks (Livingstone & Haddon 2009, Catch22 2010).

Research and information exists on adults' and children's awareness with regard to on-line risks and how to safeguard against them but there is little evidence of the effectiveness of particular approaches. This includes using internet controls or parental/carer rules/supervision in a world where few parents are thought to understand their children's 'cyber culture' (Childnet 2011).

Changes in the use of internet technologies (most recently the take-up of mobile technologies to gain access to the internet) can make any policy, stance or viewpoint, quickly appear out of date or even irrelevant. Although no evidence was found to indicate that young people who are allowed to access the internet unsupervised, are more or less likely to exhibit on-line risky behaviour, this is an area that requires close monitoring. NFER (2010) notes that the data that exists on the content that young people access on the internet focuses only on specific uses and the associated risks, e.g. the ways and extent to which younger children aged 11 years and below use social networking sites to share personal information. Can research help us to better understand the links between, where, with what, how often and with whom, children access the internet and how likely they are to encounter on-line risks?

Johnson (2008) writes that nearly all of the current neuroscience research on video-game play and exposure to violent or sexual images comes from North America and Japan despite the necessary expertise and facilities being available in the UK. Johnson also points out that research on children in the UK would face serious ethical issues. He would like to see longitudinal developmental studies in which brain structure and functions are assessed after several years of differing levels of internet or game usage. There is also still an ongoing need to research the differences (if any) between interacting with others through a computer interface and face to face social interaction (Johnson 2008).

An issue highlighted throughout this investigation is that of 'generational mismatch'. This mismatch or divergence in digital skills and competencies between the younger and older generations is also thought to impact on how social media can be effectively utilised. This is an obvious simplification and differences in digital know-how are dependent on factors other than age, nevertheless, there is a requirement for more research into the competencies and knowledge sets associated with different age groups. To achieve a position where concerns and constraints can be thoughtfully and

quickly addressed will be speeded up if we can increase our knowledge of different skill sets and competencies associated with different age groups and how these can be brought together.

A note of caution when reading interpretations of surveys: a review of press articles found that despite statistics being frequently cited, the source documents were not in the public domain or simply not available. Some survey statistics are produced by companies whose core business is producing internet security software and these are often quoted extensively on websites which exist to increase on-line safety. In some cases survey statistics were used to create alarm, e.g. meeting people off-line but without any evidence that this was a 'grooming' issue as inferred by the headline. A recent example found in the Metro was the headline 'Addicted to facebook, aged seven'. This was based on a Mintel survey showing that almost half of all children aged 7-12 years use facebook every day (Taylor 2011). Whilst this may be a cause for concern there was no 'evidence' of 'addiction' at age seven. The lack of evidence and individual interpretations of a situation can lead to a confused set of diametrically opposed viewpoints. There is potential for this to reduce as more robust statistics become available.



## CONCLUSION

It is clear that digital technologies, in particular the use of internet and social media, are becoming increasingly important in the lives of young people. In much the same way that the real or offline world cannot be made wholly safe the same is true of the online world. In this report we have outlined some of the safety issues which have been raised in the literature and suggested that a balanced approach to these dangers must be adopted. Furthermore we have indicated that the online world should not be considered in isolation. Rather a holistic approach to security and safety is required, which embraces the totality of young peoples' lives.

A system of direct and indirect support organisations and mechanisms has been identified which includes young people themselves. Youth organisations are well placed within this system to bring together the different elements, optimising the benefits and minimising the risks of internet and social media. The reality of generational mismatch makes it essential that all parts of this system come into play, bringing their contributions to bear on tailored and effective outcomes for all sections of society. It is crucial that these stakeholders pay attention to the increasing evidence and advice which is now available and to which we refer in the report. It is equally crucial that research continues to be carried out to enhance our understanding of the risks and how they can best be overcome, and to fill the knowledge gaps that we have identified in our report.

Our findings suggest that the youth sector may be behind in some respects but a 'community of the willing' is evident in the North East which is proactive in addressing issues and sharing their experiences, e.g. the Regional Youth Work Unit's Net Assets project. It is hoped that this report will act as a resource for youth organisations, helping them to build on the progress already made.

## APPENDIX 1 INTERNET SAFETY - WORKSHOP NOTES

**Workshop Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011  
**Venue:** Quayside, Newcastle  
**Group Profile:** 8 participants: 5 females, 3 males aged from 15-17 years old

Three new males to the group – they were younger than the other participants (15) and the workshop date was the first time they had met the youth worker or any of the other young people. They were a little shy and not as eager to come forward unless directly asked. Others members of the group were part of youth councils and projects and appeared comfortable and used to giving and sharing their opinions.

### **Purpose of Workshop**

To explore young people's experiences, perceptions and expectations concerning cyber safety.

### **Summary of main points**

Participants tended to access the internet everyday. All participants stated they had mobile phones which allowed internet access and tended to have their own laptop or access to a PC.

The main source of on-line activity tended to be social networking sites – particularly facebook and this was the focus of much discussion.

There appeared to be 'pride' in how many 'friends' people had on facebook – on average they stated 600 friends (due to accepting most people from their school). One person had over 2000 friends.

Whilst participants could give examples of the potential dangers and risks on line and knew what they ought not to do on sites such as facebook (e.g. accept people they didn't know) many accepted mutual friends and used the provenance of their relationships as a safety measure e.g. 'if a friend of a friend then this seems ok'.

From a list (generated by the literature review of internet safety sites) concerns about on-line activity were focused on identity theft, bullying and downloading a virus (ranked in importance by participants).

Many stated they were aware of the dangers but were not concerned about any of them – if they were being harassed they would turn the PC off.

Most participants stated their parents did not know what they were up to. Parents were considered to be out of date regarding technology and many felt they knew more about the internet than their parents.

Older siblings may take on more a protective role watching what younger siblings are doing on-line (e.g. with facebook).

Schools set homework on-line (mymaths) but block access in schools which was 'frustrating' and showed a lack of trust.

Many participants felt schools should talk to them about using the internet but they don't. Whilst they could reiterate dangers it appeared to be more meaningful if people reminded them not to do anything on-line which they wouldn't do 'face to face'.

As such there is an issue of who provides advice or who young people can turn to if schools and parents don't provide this or understand the technology.

There were many positives of being on-line and on facebook, e.g. some felt it was safer on dark nights to talk to their friends on-line rather than looking for them /meeting them in the streets.

There is a question over the legitimacy of information – participants stated that fake accounts can be set up but also stated if they saw photos of people then it may be ok to accept them as friends – whilst they are aware of the possible dangers, they sometimes do not link it to their own activity.

### **Workshop Themes Explored:**

As a result of the literature review, three main topics to review were:

#### **1. Access to the Internet**

- Frequency of internet access (daily, weekly – hours per day)
- Devices used to access the internet (mobiles, PC)
- Location of access (home, cyber café, bedroom)

#### **2. Activities & Usage (incl facebook)**

- on-line activity (e-mail, gaming, study etc)
- What sites are used and why?
- usage of social networking sites

#### **3. Safety and 'danger' issues – understanding risk**

- Understanding of danger/risk - are particular groups or people at risk?
- Any concerns or safety issues
- strategies or rules to keep themselves safe?
- Who/where to go to for help

### **Workshop Notes**

All participants stated they had mobile phones which all had the facility to access the internet. The majority stated they had their own laptop or PC – more often the former which meant it was portable (and therefore they often used it in privacy). Some participants also mentioned access to an iPad and NetBook. In addition, there was often a main computer in a family room.

The majority of participants use their PC everyday, often several times a day. One person mentioned they only used it 3-4 times a week.

### **Activities and Usage**

The main activity participants discussed was facebook. Most had set up facebook accounts when they were 13 years old and tend to go on-line everyday, including on their way to school (via their mobile phones). Many mentioned 'peer pressure' to sign up – 'if you don't you feel left out'. Others mentioned the positives of being connected to organisations such as RYWU-NE and staying in contact with friends in different locations (and countries) stating it's an 'easy way of communicating with people'.

One person commented that it was sometimes safer to be on line as when the darker nights set in it's possible to 'poke' friends on-line instead of having to trail around outside where you live looking for them.



There was much discussion about how many friends participants had on facebook. Many stated they 'talk to their mates' and 'don't add anyone don't know' (however this was later contradicted). There appeared to be a certain pride in how many friends they had – on average they stated about 600 friends (due to accepting most people in their school) and some stated they do add people they don't know. One person stated she had over 2000 friends 'I accept people I shouldn't really' such as mutual friends - they request her so she accepts. There was consensus that facebook could be dangerous and there had been some experiences of the females being contacted by older men. However, participants agreed that it was about 'using your common sense' and felt that if they could 'see photo's and can see they have contacted other people you know they may be safer'.

Although many stated they 'shouldn't' accept mutual friends or people they don't know well, many appear to have done this. However, participants accepted people from school who are acquaintances rather than friends but they get to know them on facebook when they probably otherwise wouldn't have. In addition, some had met new people on residential courses and added them on facebook, chatted and got to know them and arranged to meet and again, without facebook probably wouldn't have got to know them. Participants seemed to have a general awareness of how to use facebook by deleting or blocking people and knew there were facilities to report people (e.g. they would report for nudity in photo's). However, although it is possible to set 'closed groups' on facebook, they rarely did this so if someone has lots of friends on from their school, this is open to all other 'friends' they have. FB more commonly used to contact people than text.

Positives of facebook were listed as being able to 'spy' on people, keeping in contact with people you've met e.g. youth work north west, and it being a useful diary e.g. people put events on. It was also a good topic of conversation - participants stated they have long conversations about facebook at school. Also many would check facebook on their phone to look someone up and see who friends may be talking about.

Sharing personal information e.g. where you live – some have listed the general area where they live rather than be specific and felt it was dangerous to put which school they are at, however, others have listed personal information such as their school (and use phone apps to tell people where they are). For example, a new app for phones was mentioned called 'places' where you can 'check in' e.g. put a status as being at home or at pizza hut – let all the other people know where you are.

Negatives of facebook were discussed, mainly about being able to make a fake account and some had experiences (through friends) of being harassed or accusations being spread without being able to tell who the instigator was. Another participant commented on pictures being spread via facebook e.g. a girl from a different school sent inappropriate photo's of herself to her boyfriend who then forwarded the photo's. Others reported that their facebook account got hacked as their password was accessed. Some felt twitter was worse than facebook as everyone can see what you put on.

#### **Other activities/usage:**

The internet was also used for studying - all school maths homework is set on-line – the learning platform used is 'mymaths'.

Gaming – only if bored – RuneScape was the 'in thing' 2 years ago and was about game battles – all mates have it, played with friends on the internet. All participants had heard about on-line gaming and the ability to play against other people but not many admitted to using it.

Many participants used the internet for shopping – e.g. eBay and generally have their own bank card or use vouchers for itunes. Accessing health information was mixed - some use it to look at symptoms, others don't.

Many participants stated at night they may sit at home watching TV with their family but have their laptop/iPad or phone on surfing the internet.

#### **Parental knowledge**

One participant stated (with others agreeing) that 'parents have lost control of what kids go on'. They were aware that Windows 7 has parental control and can block sites – but no-one thinks their parents do that - some stated they might for their younger siblings but in general parents don't seem to block sites. In addition, most participants stated their parents rarely chat with them about going on-line (some have parents as friends on facebook who write on their wall but this was tinged with embarrassment).

In general the consensus appeared to be that 'parents don't know who we are chatting to and what you get up to on the internet'. Many felt the technology has changed so parents are behind and don't know how to use it – some felt their parents couldn't copy and paste something. All participants felt they knew more than their parents. One person did state that her parents knew her passwords and her sister is protective and anything she does on fb is monitored by her sister.

#### **Internet concerns**

Despite the focus of discussion about internet usage being on facebook, of more concern appeared to be account hacking and bank account information being taken e.g. xbox account had their parents bank details on. In addition, downloading virus and Trojans via e-mails was also a concern.

The concept of safety was raised by the facilitator regarding on line activities. Some participants stated they would ensure the safety security settings are ok e.g. hidden info to friends only, whereas other don't use safety issues and their motto was 'if you wouldn't do it in life don't do it on fb – you wouldn't wander around the street half naked so don't put photo's of yourself on'.

Many were aware and could give examples of what the risks may be (e.g. ensuring you know who you are talking to) but most appear to be worried about financial information – e.g. 'if someone starts saying stuff you can shut the computer and walk away but not if they get your card details'. Some felt potential employers could look on fb and if there was anything 'dodgy' you wouldn't get the job. Others were concerned about the future for the internet, stating that some countries have banned the internet (Middle East) and Internet service providers are finding it hard to run. School site got hacked.

Asked which groups might be at risk, participants stated them, 'us – teenagers' or people who don't have that many friends in real life – those who are not socially confident and might make more friends on line – if someone tried to take advantage would worry for them if don't have many friends more tempted to talk. The most dangerous part is that people can make things up.

Many participants discussed the issue of being 'fraped' – this is when they have left facebook logged in then other people abuse your account by writing messages on your wall – many felt that was 'horrible' and caught many friends trying to do this via their mobile phones.

### List of issues from the internet – risks and dangers

Each participant was given 3 coloured stickers and from a list they had to rank their top 3 concerns (red their main concern through to yellow and green). The list was generated by researching internet safety sites and combining a list of the most common concerns).

Safety Concerns	Red (most concerned)	Yellow	Green
1. Identity theft	6	0	0
2. Harassment/bullying on line		6	1
3. Downloading a virus	0	2	5
4. Contact from unknown	2		
5. Privacy Sharing Information	0	0	1
6. Spam & phishing			1
7. Impersonation	0	0	0
8. Self harm			
9. Racist & discriminatory content	0	0	0
10. Indecent content			

Most issues were not of concern – the main concern was ‘Identity theft’ – especially buying something and therefore providing financial details. Harassment and bullying – when asked (during the main discussion) participants stated it wasn’t of concern as they could close their PC and walk away. However, it seems it is still of concern in this paper exercise (less comfortable to admit this as part of a group?). Downloading a virus was also of concern.

### Who to talk to about Internet safety

School ban certain sites but it is possible to go on proxy sites. However the blocking of sites was seen as very ‘frustrating’. The issue appears to be one of trust – participants felt if they were trusted then they would be rewarded. However, the point was made that many adults don’t have access to certain sites at their workplace. There were examples where one person typed in ‘suicide’ into searches at school – it was for a project but staff came and talked to the young person, therefore there is monitoring software but also positive that the staff came and asked the young person about it. Some participants stated that they felt schools were scared to talk about internet safety. Parents often didn’t know enough to talk to them about it, so there was resignation that they have to teach themselves. ‘Schools don’t want to get involved’. For many young people, their strategy is one of ‘common sense’, however, there was an opinion that schools have a responsibility to teach them although others thought some parents may complain to schools. There was awareness about negative news stories concerning ‘kids going missing’ and it was important to stop and ask yourself whether you ‘would do that face to face – it’s a good point but don’t think about it unless someone says it’.

Many participants didn’t ask their parents for permission to join sites – they would just join and are responsible themselves. Parents trust them but also don’t know what they are doing.

In general, participants felt the internet is positive - there are problems in life in general and ‘shouldn’t be scared of it’. For example, although identity theft was perceived to be easier on- line participants stated people can still get mugged in real life or suicide pacts happen in real life.



## APPENDIX 2 ONLINE SUPPORT

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) run by the Child Exploitation and On-line Protection (CEOP) Centre – “the UK’s national law enforcement agency that focuses on tackling the sexual abuse of children”.


[www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk)


*Site sectioned into pages for children, parents and those working with children*


<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/help/web/staysafe>

UKCCIS – child internet safety strategy:

[http://www.ceop.gov.uk/downloads/documents/UKCCIS\\_Strategy\\_Report.pdf](http://www.ceop.gov.uk/downloads/documents/UKCCIS_Strategy_Report.pdf)

 **Google** have a vested interest in making sure that good material and tools are available to protect and educate young people on using the Internet and to ensure that all users have a safe experience. Towards this end they have a family safety page (click on logo to read about the wide range of products and videos that can be accessed) which aims to provide parents and teachers with tools to help them choose what content their children see on-line as well as offering tips and advice to families about how to stay safe on-line. They also maintain that they work closely with organizations such as charities, others in our industry and government bodies dedicated to protecting young people. SafeSearch and YouTube Safety Mode can help control the type of content you see on these services.

 **Beatbullying** [Beatbullying](http://beatbullying.org.uk) trains young people as CyberMentors ([cybermentors.org.uk](http://cybermentors.org.uk)): they can then help, assist and support other young people on-line, promoting safe and responsible internet use, and acting as mentors and guides to young people on-line. CyberMentors ensures young people are safe on-line; they can report cyberbullying in a safe environment, and get the immediate support they need, either from another young person or a trained counsellor. It encompasses safe and responsible use of new technology, stimulates discussion around acceptable and unacceptable on-line behaviours, and educates young people so that they understand how they can deal with, or get help dealing with, bullying and other issues affecting their wellbeing.

 **action for children** [Action for Children](http://actionforchildren.org.uk) is a children’s charity that offer straightforward and easy to follow advice on internet Safety.

### **CyberMentors**

[CyberMentors](http://cybermentors.org.uk) is about young people supporting each other, and ultimately it leads to a better sense of on-line responsibility and citizenship amongst young people. CyberMentors trains young people to support each other on-line. They encourage young people who are being bullied, feeling a bit low, troubled by something and not sure what to do to contact a CyberMentors. The best thing about it is that CyberMentors are young people too. CyberMentors can be contacted via a secure chat room but there are also counsellors available for anything really serious. Furthermore some schools have CyberMentors available to talk face-to-face.

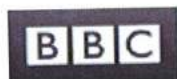




Thinkuknow is an education initiative by the Child Exploitation and On-line Protection (CEOP) Centre – the UK's national law enforcement agency that focuses on tackling the sexual abuse of children. Whether on a computer at school, a laptop at home, a games console or mobile phone, children and young people are increasingly accessing the internet whenever they can and wherever they are and this site helps parents and children to stay safe.



Mumsnet claims to be the UK's busiest on-line community of parents, where members pool advice, support and info on the tricky business of having and bringing up kids, and debate and discuss news, politics, education, travel, literature, health, fashion. The site tackles internet issues from the stance that it is likely to be the biggest single difference between their children's adolescence, and their own. Mumsnet state that most of what it brings is entirely positive – endless possibilities for information and communication, e.g. Mumsnet but are keenly aware that ICT –wise kids can run rings around their parents. Mumsnet's raison d'être is to make parents' lives easier and so help parents find the information they need about the possible risks their children face on-line and what measures – technical and non-technical – they can take to minimise them.



The BBC sets a very high standard for on-line safety of children on its sites. As well as general resources for adults, it offers a dedicated service for 6-12 year olds at CBBC which includes advice on how to stay safe. There are various resources and links and an on-line game for younger children to demonstrate the SMART rules to surfing on-line with Dongle the rabbit. The CBBC's award-winning news service, Newsround, has also filmed a TV special narrated by David Tennant which explores the potential dangers of the internet and gives advice to children about how to protect themselves.



The UK Council for Child Internet Safety has developed the Click Clever, Click Safe code, to help children enjoy the internet safely. The code has three simple actions: 'Zip it, Block it, Flag it'. The "Zip it, Block it, Flag it" campaign is backed by government investment, and will encourage children to:

**Zip:** not share personal, intimate details with strangers they have met on-line, while at the same time closing off some parts of the web to children by using security PINs or other parental controls.

**Block:** Block emails or any other contact from people or companies they do not know and block children from accessing certain sites.

**Flag:** Highlight any suspicious individuals, activities or websites to the relevant authority, including site administrators, teachers or even police.



Teachtoday provides information and advice for teachers, head teachers, governors and other members of the school workforce about the positive, responsible and safe use of new technologies.

There's lots of information about internet and mobile safety on the web already, but we wanted you to have a single place that answers some of the specific questions you might have as a teacher or other member of the school workforce – whether you're teaching five year olds or 18 year olds; whether you're an ICT expert or a complete beginner.

Teachtoday was developed by some of the UK's leading internet, social networking and mobile companies – many of whom are involved in the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) – in

association with organisations including European Schoolnet, Becta, the teaching unions and the National Association of Head Teachers.



The Digizen website provides information for educators, parents, carers, and young people. It is used to strengthen their awareness and understanding of what digital citizenship is and encourages users of technology to be and become responsible DIGital citiZENS. It shares specific advice and resources on issues such as social networking and cyberbullying and how these relate to and affect their own and other people's online experiences and behaviours. See, for examples [Young People and Social Networking Services](#) [Cyberbullying](#)

[Direct gov](#) includes a whole range of advice about keeping safe which also includes Internet safety dealing with: Cyberbullying; Illegal downloading and file sharing; on-line gaming; social networking

## Internet Safety Zone

Online Safety Advice by the University of Central Lancashire



Internet Safety Zone is provided by the University of Central Lancashire Information and helpfully targets information at three groups: Parents, the under 13s and the over 13s. Issues and approaches are different under each of the three heading groups. [The Worries](#) (site map – diff from list on home page and for each audience) includes, [Pornography](#), [On-line Grooming](#), [Suspensions of Child Abuse](#), [Illegal Content](#), [Eating Disorders](#), [Cyberbullying](#), [Cyberstalking](#), [Privacy and Data Protection](#), [identity Theft](#)



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FLiP is an example of a project where a number of stakeholders have worked closely together to achieve a successful outcome. Flip provides an online strengths-assessment and opportunities matching tool that allows young people to invite their network, through facebook and email, to tell them what they are good at. FLiP creates reliable profiles that clearly communicate transferable strengths. It shows a recommended list of current work, training and volunteer opportunities based on a young person's top strengths. The project has received funding from UnLtd ([www.unltd.org.uk](http://www.unltd.org.uk)) and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) ([www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk)) to develop and test a

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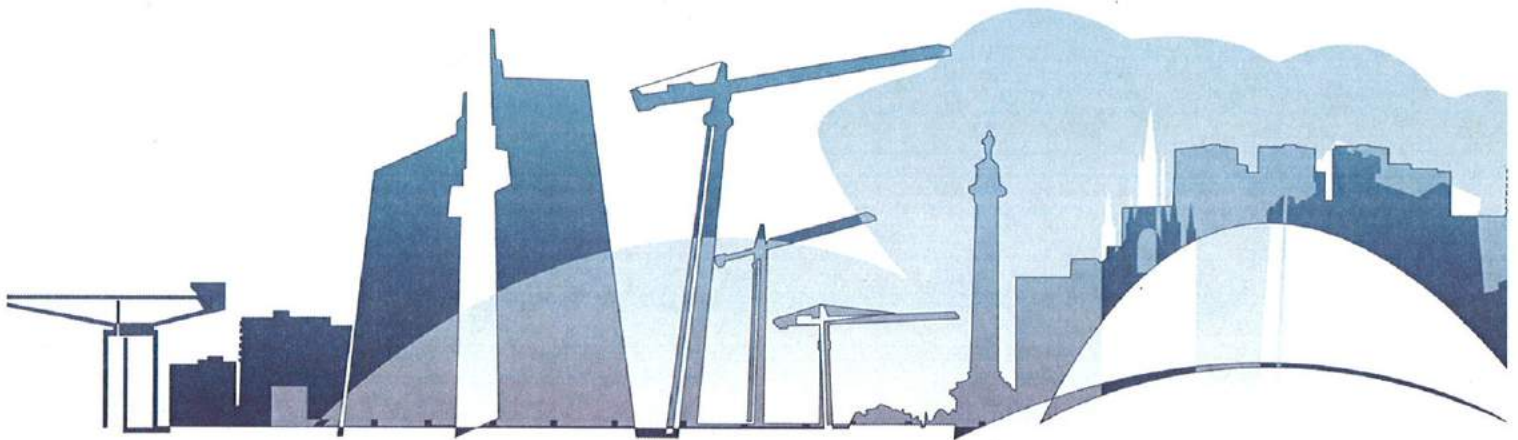
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