'GREEK CHILDREN USING SOCIAL MEDIA: SOCIAL NETWORKING RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND THE ROLE OF PARENTS'

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Introduction

One of the key findings of EU Kids Online I[1] was that children's use of the internet continues to grow, with the most striking rise taking place among younger children; to set the record straight, 60% of 6-10 year olds were online by 2008; 34% of them are going online on their own computer; 65% of them are more likely to use the internet at home compared to 57% who are more likely to use it at school (Livingstone and Haddon, 2009). As a result, the proliferation and streamlining of internet technologies in everyday life raises a number of questions concerning access and inequalities, the nature and quality of use, the impact on children's social and educational development, as well as the balance between online risks and opportunities for children and their parents (Livingstone and Bober 2006). Recently, the way children and young adolescents are using new, online technologies has attracted considerable academic attention (Facer et al. 2003; Holloway and Valentine 2003; Livingstone and Bober 2005; Livingstone and Helsper 2007, *inter alia*); research suggests that the advent of new media is only *changing* the functions and uses of old technologies, and hardly completely displaces them. Furthermore, most studies indicate that the everyday uses of the internet are characterized not by spectacular forms of innovation and creativity, but by more mundane forms of information retrieval, music and movie downloading, and communicating with friends, old and new (Buckingham 2006).

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[1] Funded by the European's Commission Safer Internet Programme, *EU Kids Online I* is a thematic network that run between 2006-2009, and aimed to identify, compare and draw conclusions from existing and ongoing research on children and online technologies in Europe. For more detailed information, see www.eukidsonline.net.

Academic interest in the relationship between children and young adolescents and online technologies has only recently taken off in Greece. In order to fill this research void, and on the basis of the EU Kids Online I findings, this chapter will present research results from the Greek Children Go Online project (*Παιδιά και Διαδίκτυο* στην Ελλάδα: *Ευκαιρίες και Κίνδυνοι*) which run between October 2008 – October 2009); it will focus on the social networking practices employed by young children and adolescents in Greece, and on the risks embedded and the opportunities afforded by this use according to children and their parents. The chapter starts with a theoretical conceptualization of childhood and the link between online opportunities and risks; following this, it discusses the social networking reality for Greek children and their parents.

Children and life online

The internet has become increasingly accessible for children and young people – at school, in public libraries or at home. With the growth of broadband technology children and young people have faster, easier and more immediate access to online information than ever before, while at the same time more and more children and young people have mobile phones with internet access. These technologies offer a range of opportunities unheard of in previous generations – opportunities for learning, for play, for communication, for skill development, for creativity and for having fun. Indeed, young people find that mobile media and the internet provide a much valued resource for identity construction and mediation of social relationships (Peter, Valkenburg and Fluckiger, 2009), which in the process, enable them to develop new online competences and literacies.

High internet use is compatible with high encounter of risk and vice versa- which means that there is a positive correlation between use and risk (Hasebrink et al 2009). On this basis, EU Kids Online constructed a classification of countries in terms of children's online use and risk, based on available evidence. High use, high risk countries are either wealthy Northern European countries or new entrants to the EU, whereas Southern European countries tend to be lower in risk, partly because they have fewer chances for use to offer. Bearing this in mind, I would like to draw attention to three points.

First, online opportunities and risks need to be at equilibrium, otherwise there is a chance of missing out on opportunities whilst minimizing the risks. When it comes to children, any degree of risk is seen by many as unbearable. Concerns about risks to children and young people have lead some to argue that we live in a *'risk?*averse *culture'* which, in the process of protecting children from risks, makes them more vulnerable by denying them opportunities to develop risk identification, as well as those assessment and management skills that can help children and young people keep themselves safe and eventually grow up. Least we forget that risk taking is part of child development and self actualization, in the sense that children must take risks in order to grow intellectually, emotionally and socially (Livingstone 2009: 156). Taking risks is part of the drive to learn and to succeed, especially in adolescence where it is an important part of identity construction, something children do and get pleasure from (Madge and Barker 2007), whilst we should refrain from fighting 'our children's battles' (Byron 2009: 13).

The unprecedented speed of internet development and diffusion has fuelled public anxieties regarding internet-related risks – one reason being that children adjust more swiftly in the online environment compared to their parents, to the extent that parental expertise and authority is exceeded by children's ability to move around this technology and evade parental control. This ambivalence can be evidenced in the rhetoric of children as the 'digital generation' (Tapscott 1998) (sometimes also referred to as the 'digital natives' – Prenski 2001), whereby technology is seen to offer a new kind of empowerment for the young, and is producing a generation gap between users of different media, while children may be depicted as potential victims of the very same technology.

Second, a pervasive wave of negative media influence builds moral panic and creates an endemic culture of fear of new technologies. As with other media before them, online technologies have been more often greeted with fear and suspicion rather than being welcomed as valuable educational tools. Media effects have long been an area of academic study- back in the 1930s and the late 1950s, looking at cinema, 19th century popular theatre, comics and television (Barker, 1984). There is a 'perpetual recurrence' of questions (Buckingham 2008) that have been studied historically in relation to new forms of media as they are developed – usually surrounding concerns about moral values and typically in relation to violence and sex. The current framing of internet culture as an unmanageable source of threat for children's safety is just the latest manifestation of a long tradition of concerns relating to the introduction

of new technologies, dating from the introduction of the telegraph and the telephone (Marvyn, 1990).

The media invariably prefer to draw social and parental attention to the emerging risks and concerns regarding internet technology rather than to its creative and educational potential – thus promoting a notion of the internet as a scary and sinister place, the access to and use of which need to be regulated and controlled (Livingstone and Bober, 2006: 94; Tsaliki and Chronaki 2008). Parents, in most cases being the 'digital immigrants' rather than the 'digital natives', are alarmed by the negative media representations of online technologies and forget the considerable opportunities afforded by the internet.

Further evidence from the EU Kids Online (content analysis in 14 of the 21 countries participating in the project, Haddon and Stald, 2009), consolidates that media coverage distracts attention from potential benefits of the internet to focus public attention disproportionately on the risks. In all countries examined, the majority of press coverage on children and the internet is concerned with risks rather than opportunities (64% of the news stories were risk-related compared to 18% related to opportunities)[2].

Third, the predominance of screen entertainment media, and the emergence of the so-called 'bedroom culture', has led us to a zero-risk society, where, as Tanya Byron puts it, safety is constructed on the basis of the most vulnerable child (to abuse) (Byron 2009). The conception of childhood has been a site of contestation, views ranging from those arguing that childhood is a peculiar invention of modernity (Ariès 1962) with pre-modern societies having no understanding of it, to others claiming that the concept of childhood is prevalent in all societies, though what is meant by it and its defining features varies across cultures. According to a modern and Western view of the child, children are seen as vulnerable, weak and dependent (Archard 2006). In fact, a large body of work has looked into the role that ideas of childhood have played in the West since industrialization (Cunningham 1995; Holland 1992), whereby 'child' means 'natural innocence' and 'hope for the future'. The cultural shift from the productive role of children in the household and the wider economy (Cunningham 2006) to the contemporary 'extension of youth', as formal education has been extended from early to late teens along with a commensurate rise

[2] In Greece, content risks, mainly pornography, account for over half of the risks covered in the press (Haddon and Stald, ibid.).

in the average age of leaving home, means that children are staying younger for longer, at home, and financially dependent on their parents (Livingstone 2009).

As the outside is being construed as 'unsafe' for children, street culture is in decline and parents see the home as a safe sanctuary for children's leisure and exploration; subsequently there is pressure for families to embrace a media-rich home to compensate for the loss of the outdoors (Livingstone, 2002; 2009). It is hardly surprising, then, that children will increase their indoor activities (online activity or video gaming) if their outdoor opportunities for play, exploration and socialisation are constrained. Yet, in the attempt to shield children from supposed offline risks, we inadvertently push them online towards similar or other risks that we may not have thought about as much.

Children live in a risks-opportunities continuum

On the internet, as in everyday life, opportunities and risks are inextricably linked, since what constitutes an opportunity for some, may be a risk for others: for those who make friends online, there are others who risk encountering 'stranger danger', for those who seek information about sex or politics, there are those who may accidentally come across pornographic or racist content. Research shows that the range of benefits and risks experienced by children are positively correlated, which means that the increase in opportunities goes hand in hand with an increase in risks and vice versa (Livingstone, 2004; Livingstone and Helsper, 2008). The same goes for skills, in the sense that the more experienced and skilled users are more likely to encounter more opportunities and risks compared to the less competent users. In other words, children with good internet skills, take up more opportunities online and are thus exposed to more online risks.

Following available evidence across Europe, the EU Kids Online network found that, when age is also taken into account, older children and teenagers are more prone to experiencing more online risks than younger ones, though it can be argued that as youth gain experience and skills with age, they are more capable of coping with them successfully; younger aged children, nevertheless, may come across fewer risks, because they use the internet less as a result of their modest online skills, but, once they encounter them, they may lack the appropriate coping skills.

When it comes to gender, it seems that gender differences in internet use are waning, as there are now few differences in internet access and amount of use between girls and boys; nevertheless, girls and boys have different preferences for online activities, which exposes them to different types of online risk (Hasebrink et al. 2009). Specifically, boys are more likely to seek out offensive or violent content, access pornographic content or be sent links to such content, meet somebody they met online, offline, and give out personal information. Girls are more likely to be upset by offensive, violent and pornographic material, chat online with strangers, receive unsolicited sexual comments, and be asked for personal information-though they are reluctant to give it to strangers. Both girls and boys are at risk of being cyberbullied (Livingstone and Haddon 2009).

Furthermore, there is a chance that seemingly negative or 'inappropriate' content may create positive opportunities for youth. Children may develop strategies for coping with 'inappropriate' material and it can be a source of information and contribute to the process of actively developing their own values and beliefs (Byron 2008: 26).

When thinking about risks and benefits on the internet, I have adopted the EU Kids Online grid set out below in Table 1 (Hasebrink et al. 2009) to give some structure to the broad ranging set of factors that constitute internet 'risk' and 'opportunity' in this area. It is important to remember that there is overlap between some of these categories and that boundaries are sometimes blurred.

Table 1. Classification of online risks and opportunities for children. Source EU Kids Online.

		Content: Child as recipient	Contact: Child as participant	Conduct: child as actor
OPPORTUNITIES	Education learning and digital literacy	Educational resources	Contact with others who share one's interests	Self-initiated or collaborative learning
	Participation and civic engagement	Global information	Exchange among interest groups	Concrete forms of civic engagement
	Creativity and self-expression	Diversity of resources	Being invited/ inspired to create or participate	User-generated content creation
	Identity and social connection	Advice (personal/ health/ sexual etc)	Social networking, shared experiences with others	Expression of identity
RISKS	Commercial	Advertising, spam, sponsorship	Tracking/ harvesting personal information	Gambling, illegal downloads, hacking
	Aggressive	Violent/ gruesome/ hateful content	Being bullied, harassed or stalked	Bullying or harassing another
	Sexual	Pornographic/harmful sexual content	Meeting strangers, being groomed	Creating/ uploading pornographic material
	Values	Racist, biased info/ advice (eg, drugs)	Self-harm, unwelcome persuasion	Providing advice eg, suicide/ pro-anorexia

After classifying available research within the EU Kids Online network, it was clear that internet access and use is far more researched than online risks. A closer, cross-national comparison of available evidence shows that there is more research on risk for teenagers, especially regarding contact risks, while younger children are under researched (but when they are, the focus is on content risks rather than other types of it) (Livingstone and Haddon 2009: 11).

For the purposes of this chapter, I focus on a particular kind of contact risk, provision of personal information and privacy risks, and as to how this is related to a contact opportunity, social networking; I also explore the digital literacy skills young users have developed and their level of expertise when online before I examine the equivalent literary skills of their parents and discuss the kind of mediation they employ. Let me foreground, however, this analysis by providing some contextualization of social media first.

Social Media

Back in the eighties, shopping malls were the safe haven where teens could hang out in public (Ortiz 1994); gradually, they were forced out of such public spaces, along with streets, parks and libraries (Buckingham 2000), and became increasingly monitored when outdoors, because of a street culture that was perceived as threatening (Livingstone 2002). Today, teen practices of sociability have migrated to networked public spaces, where kids 'hang around' for the same purposes they did in parking lots and shopping malls, to negotiate identity, gossip, support one another, jockey for status, collaborate, share information, flirt, joke, and goof around.

Teenagers and young children are spoiled for choice when it comes to what kind of social media[3] they use to interact with other, whether that might

[3] I adopt Dana Boyd's definition of the term "social media" according to which such media 'refer to the set of new media that enable social interaction between participants, often through the sharing of media. Although all media are in some ways social, the term "social media" came into common usage in 2005 as a term referencing a central component of what is frequently called Web 2.0 [….] or the social web. All these terms refer to the layering of social interaction and online content. Popular genres of social media include: instant messaging, blogs, social network sites, and video/photo-sharing sites' (boyd 2008).

be social networking sites (SNSs), instant messaging (IM), or mobile phones; SNSs[4] are becoming increasingly part of children's and teens' everyday lives, allowing them to socialize with broad peer groups, whereas other social media such as instant messaging (IM) and mobile phones allow them to interact one-to-one or in small groups. By means of the social media, teenagers and children are able to extend their interactions transgressing physical boundaries, to the extent that they complement their private communication through messaging and mobile phones with social media that support broader peer publics (Boyd 2008).

Members use SNSs for a number of purposes, the main motivation being communication, interaction and maintaining relationships (Dwyer, et al. 2007). Other popular activities include finding friends, dates, and jobs; networking or looking for new acquaintances; extending one's network; updating others on activities and whereabouts; sharing information, photos, videos, and music; receiving updates about events; inviting people to events; getting updates from friends; presenting an idealised presentation of oneself; sending messages privately; posting public testimonials (Boyd & Ellison 2007; Dwyer, et al. 2007).

Giving out personal information and getting closer with SNSs

For many young people, creating and networking online content is becoming an integral means of managing one's identity, lifestyle and social relations. SNSs offer a number of affordances to them, facilitating communication among increasingly widening circles of contacts, and enabling convergence among the, until recently, separate activities of email, messaging, website creation, diaries, photo albums and music or video uploading and downloading. In this respect, using this type of social media, from the user's point of view, is more than ever before translated into creating as well as receiving content, with unprecedented user control. As a result, even the language of social relationships is being reframed, as today, '… people construct their 'profile', make it 'public'

[4] Boyd and Ellison (2007) have defined SNSs as web-based services that allow individuals to (a) construct a public or semi-public profile; (b) communicate with other users with whom they share a connection; and (c) view and navigate through their own list of connections as well as those of others.

or 'private', they 'comment' or 'message' their 'top friends' on their 'wall', they 'block' or 'add' people to their network and so forth' (Livingstone 2008: 394).

Contrary to what is usually the case when technological progress outstrips academic research, there is a rapidly expanding body of empirical research investigating how people create personal profiles, network with familiar and new contacts and participate in various forms of online community (?oyd, 2008; ?oyd and Ellison, 2007; Hinduja and Patchin, 2008; Lenhart and Madden, 2007; Livingstone 2008; Papacharissi 2002; 2009). It transpires that despite the potential for global networking, most people's contacts remain local, reinforcing already existing study or work contexts- especially among teenagers; furthermore, although niche networks are often geographically spread, interest in 'strangers' or distant others is minimal (Livingstone 2008: 395). Identity construction and the search for intimacy, arguably, motivate much SNS communication, yet it is the blurring of public/private and the implications for privacy that usually catch public and policy attention. Privacy is defined in various ways[5], from Giddens's account of 'intimacy [as] the other face of privacy' (1995: 94 cited in Livingstone 2009: 108), to 'the right to be left alone, to be able to keep one's information away from the public domain, to be protected from control by others, to decide what personal information to share with others, to know what personal information is being collected by others […]' (Livingstone ibid: 110).

With respect to privacy, different SNSs have different approaches- sometimes, user profiles are by default visible to anyone, as in Friendster, Tribe.net, and Hi5. MySpace offers members the option to chose between a 'public' or 'friends only' profile, while Facebook, ever since the mid-2008, changed from being a totally open site[6], to a more private one: members' profiles, contact information and additional data are now visible, readable and searchable by friends only – unless otherwise chosen by each member (Taraszow et al. 2009).

[5] On concepts of privacy, see also Taraszow et.al, 2009.

[6] Up until the beginning of 2008, by default, Facebook members' contact information and additional data – rarely available on other SNSs (e.g. personal interests, education, work) – was openly available to every other member, as were members' profiles. The fact that privacy settings were by default set to 'public' (meaning they became available to the public and did not include restricted access) and access to the profiles from any internet user was very easily achieved, meant that Facebook was open to all. Things changed in mid-2008, by introducing default privacy settings (Taraszow et al. ibid).

SNSs users seem either not concerned about their privacy or not aware of the loss of privacy they suffer during their time online. Contrary to consumer reports regarding concern over privacy, SNSs that encourage their users to reveal and exchange personal information abound. Meanwhile, adults are concerned about governmental and corporate invasion of privacy (e.g. through the central collection and storing of data about citizens and consumers), while teenagers eagerly disclose personal and private information on such sites, what Barnes calls (2006) the "privacy paradox" (2006: 3). It would seem that the privacy paradox occurs when users, especially teenagers, are not aware of the nature of the internet in general and SNSs in particular. When using SNSs, teenagers divulge personal information to strangers as well as to friends, and even though social networking sites do not force users to reveal personal information, they actually encourage them to do so. As a result, users end up disclosing personal information without realizing the implications for their subsequent loss of privacy.

What complicates further the issue of privacy within SNSs is that young users must and do disclose personal information to sustain intimacy with their networks of friends, yet they wish to be in control of this disclosure. As they do this, their own privacy is undermined, one reason coming from the way SNSs classify contacts: using a binary classification between 'friends' and 'anyone', social networking sites fail to capture the subtleties of teenage and children's privacy (where 'private' may mean 'public' to friends but private from parents); another restriction comes from limitations on their internet literacy: not everyone knows how to manage their privacy effectively and accurately (Livingstone 2009: 113).

GR Children Go Online: Research design and methods

The GR Children Go Online (GRCGO) project (Παιδιά *και* Διαδίκτυο *στην* Ελλάδα: Ευκαιρίες *και* Κίνδυνοι) was designed along the lines of the UK Children Go Online original study (Livingstone and Bober 2005, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/399/), adopted to the Greek reality.

The GRCGO project conducted a survey of 9 to 18-year-olds in Attica, the largest prefecture in Greece, which was then followed by a number of interviews, examining young people's Internet use in detail. The Greek project, similarly to the British original, balances online risks and opportunities

encountered by youth in order to contribute to academic and policy frameworks on children and young people's Internet use. Following the classification of online risks and opportunities of EU Kids Online I (Hasebrink, Livingstone, Haddon and Olafsson 2009), Greek children and teenagers were seen as recipients, participants and actors of online risks and opportunities in terms of content, contact and conduct (see Table 1).

The survey was questionnaire-based, using the original UKCGO questionnaire, translated and adopted for the Greek audience[7]; it was conducted at 24 schools across Attica with the help of M.A and undergraduate students from the Faculty of Communications and Mass Media at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens[8]. The schools, spanning across the last three grades of primary education (dimotiko), the three grades of lower secondary (gymnasio), and the three grades of upper secondary education in Greece (lykio), were selected following the administrative classification of school units of the Greek Ministry of Education, and mirror the socio-demographics of the prefecture of Attica[9].

[7] The questionnaire had been previously revised and approved by the Greek Institute of Education, and formal permission to access schools was granted by the Ministry of Education as is the formal procedure in Greece in similar cases. Following the adjudication of the Institute of Education, two sets of questionnaires were compliled, one targeting ages 10-14, that is, including the 1st and 2nd grade of gymnasio, and one targeting ages 15-18, that is, including the 3rd grade of gymnasio, and the three grades of lykio. Final research questionnaires monitored by Despina Chronaki.

[8] See Acknowledgements.

[9] For the list of participating schools, see Acknowledgements. The distribution between public and private schools in the sample (7 public to 1 private) reflects the total student population in primary and secondary education in the prefecture of Attica in 2008. The initial aim was to target 600 students altogether, on the basis of an average cohort of students of 25 people per class. As a result, GRCGO would survey 525 pupils in *public* primary and secondary schools (175 pupils X 3 levels of education) and 75 pupils in private one (25 pupils per level of education, i.e. dimotiko, gymnasio, lykio). Along the way, we discovered that either some schools were not working out (for example, in one case, the Principal was hesitant about granting us permission to conduct the survey on the grounds that the school had been over-exposed to surveys and everyday practice and schooling was disrupted too often to allow it to happen again), or that we did not collect the number of questionnaires we expected. Therefore, we made up for the 'loss' by accessing additional cohorts of pupils in the school units that were more open towards our research.

The fieldwork was carried out at school by the teams of researchers (undergraduates supervised by the team of post-graduate students) at agreed times and dates. Pupils were given instructions how to fill in the questionnaires and were supported by the team of researchers in the classroom. Formal consent to take part in the survey had been asked from a parent for younger children, as is the usual procedure in Greece, and only those pupils with permission took part in the project; for older teenagers, informed consent was obtained. 627 pupil questionnaires[10] were collected between February and April 2009 from schools in Attica, to which another 148 were added upon[11], bringing the total number up to 775. A parent questionnaire was also handed out in the classroom, and pupils were asked to return them within a forthnight; on arrival, they were collected by the GRCGO researchers.

In order to see through the nuances and the different contexts that usually go amiss when using quantitative methods, in-depth, open-ended interviews were scheduled. In the end of the parent questionnaire, parents were asked to state their availability for an inhome, face-to-face interview with them, and then, separately, with the child. Out of 775 parent questionnaires, only 266[12] were returned (243 from Attica and 23 from Kos), and of them, only 30 parents (from Attica) agreed to make themselves available for an interview; in the end, 20 inhome interviews were conducted with parents and children (not together but each one in their turn, alone with the interviewers, unless otherwise required by the interviewees). Interviews were taped and transcribed.

Discussion of research findings

The Greek context at large

Official statistics show that, in Greece, 67% of 10-11 year-olds (4th, 5th and 6th grade in primary education) and 78% of 12-15 year olds (1st, 2nd, 3rd

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[10] The age breakdown of the questionnaire is as follows: 348 children questionnaires for ages between 9-14 (4th, 5th, 6th grade of primary school, 1st and 2nd grade of lower secondary school, i.e.gymnasio); 279 teen questionnaires for ages 15-18 (final grade of gymnasio, 4th, 5th and 6th grade of lykio).

[11] In addition to the schools in Attica, a school in Crete and another one in Kos offered to join us; we decided to include them in the survey, hence the total number of questionnaires comes up to 775 (26 from Crete and 122 from Kos).

[12] There were 162 children's parent questionnaires, and 81 teenagers'.

grade of gymnasio) were using the internet in 2008. On a weekly basis, almost half of the youngsters get online, with younger children being slightly heavier internet users (47%) in comparison to older ones (43%); this trend is reversed if we look at daily internet use, whereby only 16% of 10-11 year olds are online compared to 41% of 12-15 year olds. Gender differences are disappearing, with girls slightly overcoming boys (76%: 70%) in overall use. When it comes to the amount of use, on a daily basis boys are slightly heavier uses that girls (39%: 33%), only to be overtaken by them on a weekly basis (43% of boys *vs* 46% of girls) (Greek Observatory for the Information Society, 2008). This corroborates the trend found elsewhere whereby internet use increases with age, and differences in internet access and amount of use between girls and boys are decreasing (Livingstone 2009; Livingstone and Haddon 2009).

When it comes to the location of internet access, home is the predominant locus for two thirds of children (77%), compared to a quarter of children who access it from school (27%); interestingly, 21% of them access the internet from an internet café, and 20% from a friend's or relative's house, which raises questions regarding proper supervision and possibilities of risk encountering (Greek Observatory for the Information Society, 2008).

Diffusion of social media among the Greek youth

Social media have just started attracting academic attention in Greece, though at first glance, research focuses on adults instead of children. Among internet users, 88.2% use different types of social media at least one per month, and consider social media as a way of life and an information source (Ta Nea, Τα 'κοινωνικά ΜΜΕ' *σε* άνοδο, 14 March 2009).

Of the various social networking sites available, MySpace and Facebook have been the most popular amongst teenagers in the US between 2004-2007 (Lenhart and Madden 2007). However, interaction with social media is scarce among young children and teenagers in Greece. Although the preferred online activity for 67% of 10-15 year olds in 2008 is online gaming and downloading (of photos, games et.c.), followed by seeking information for coursework (56%) and emailing (41%), only one third of them uses the internet for chat or Instant Messaging (30%), and a mere 8% has their own blog. The picture for social networking sites is dimmer since almost 2/3 of children and teenagers (64%) abstain from such sites. For those few who do take part, Hi5 is the most

popular medium (27%), with MySpace and Facebook barely having a presence (5% and 4%) (op.cit.)

GR Children Go Online

So what is the case in point with Greek children and teenagers? What kind of decisions do they make when it comes to sharing personal information with distant others? How well aware are they about breaches of privacy and the risks related to it?

What kind of parental control is exercised regarding their online activity and how effective is it in safeguarding them?

Online activities

When asked about their online activities (what do you do when online?), younger children (10-14) mention social networking fourth (10% for boys: 12% for girls), coming after a. downloading content (movies, video clips, music, for about half of them), b. searching for information (for about half of them), and c. looking for the new film releases (about 16% of them). For older teenagers (15-18), social networking, along with searching for information, is the second most popular online activity (for about a third of them) – while for almost two thirds of them, getting online to do what somebody else asked them to look for is what they do the most. From a gender point of view, girls, overall, outperform boys, regardless of the age cohort, in online activities.

More specifically, given that Greek academic research on SNS practices of young children and teenagers is by and large lacking, and that, overall, children and teenagers in Greece do not favour SNSs particularly, it is hardly surprising that the uptake of social networking is significantly low in the lower age group (about one tenth of 10-14 year-olds) only to pick up with the older teens (about one third of 15-18 year olds) (Tables 2 and 3). As discussed earlier, gender differences in online activity are waning to the extent that girls demonstrate a relatively stronger predilection towards social networking in relation to boys, a trend that increases with age: almost 35% of girls aged between15-18 have created an SNS profile compared to 30% of their male peers.

Table 2. Children aged 10-14: 4th-6th grade of *primary school*, 1st and 2nd grade of *gymnasio*

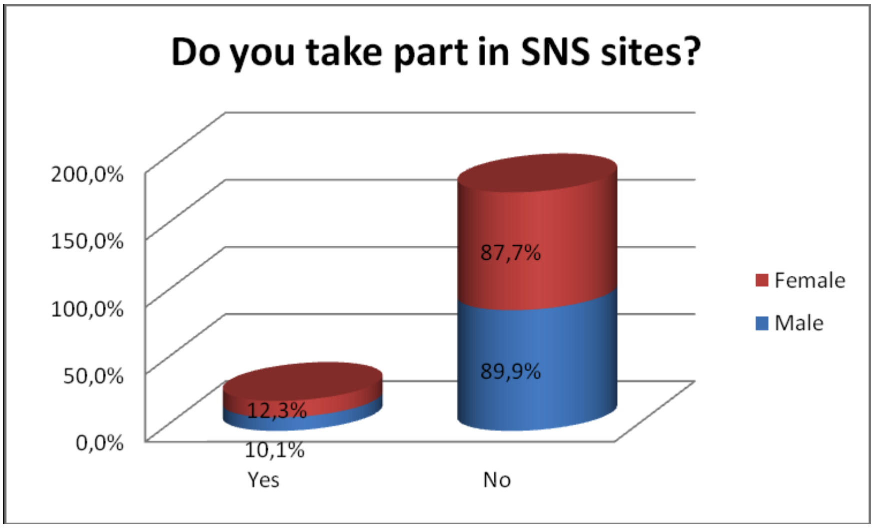
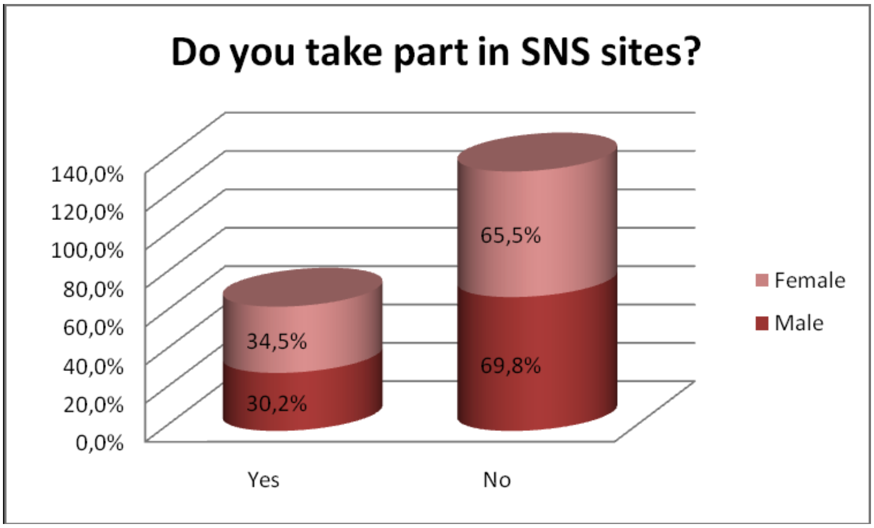


Table 3. Children aged 15-18: 3rd grade of *gymnasio*; 1st-3rd grade of *lykio*



Type of websites

As far as the kind of websites they do visit when they go online, age makes a difference, with younger children taking up social networking less often in relation to older teenagers, as Tables 4 and 5 show.

Table 4. Children aged 10-14: 4th-6th grade of *primary school*, 1st and 2nd grade of *gymnasio*

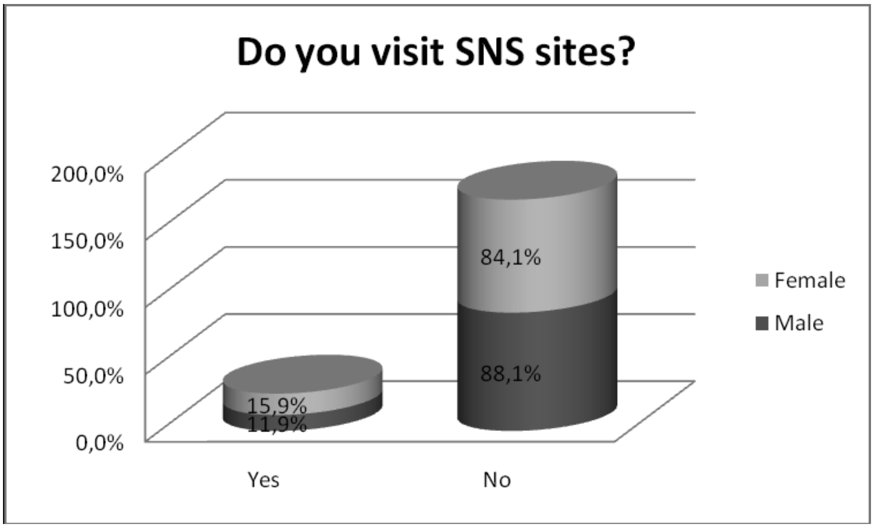
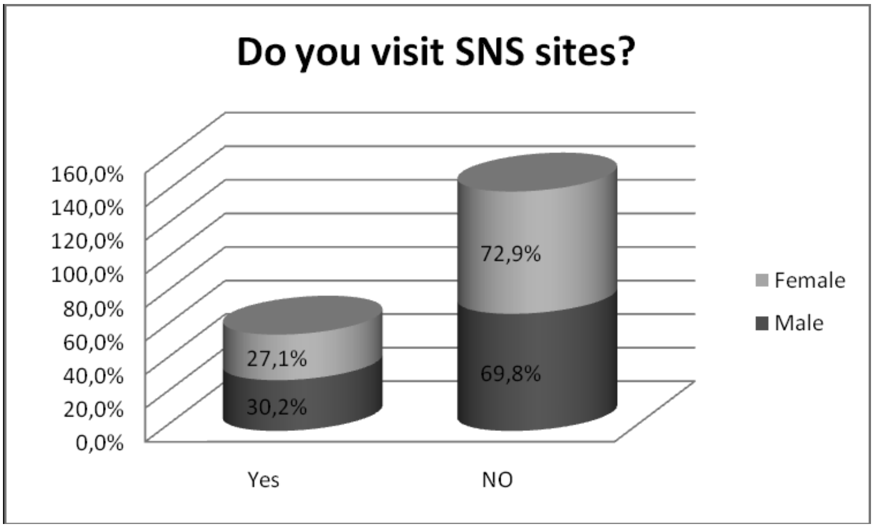


Table 5. Children aged 15-18: 3rd grade of *gymnasio*; 1st-3rd grade of *lykio*



However, even when an older teenager used to have a profile, things do not always work out, and social networking may be realized via other social media than SNSs, such as msn, or even email, and the mobile, as in the case of 15 year-old Panagiota:

> *… I used to have Hi-5, but I deleted it, now I don't have anything… I meant to swap Hi-5 for Facebook, but then I couldn't be bothered… [..] All of my friends are on Facebook, … [I stay in touch] via msn; I use the mobe as well, though I text more often.*

If children in Greece have not caught up with SNSs yet, what happens with other social media? over one third of older boys and just about a third of older girls use instant messaging on a daily basis; younger children may use IM less in relation to older teens, but there is still 22% of young boys and 18% of girls who do. Parental control and the rules they set may contribute to the overall low penetration of the IM culture amongst younger children:

> *I wasn't aware of it [msn] until I went upstairs to some girlfriends of mine; they are older [gymnasio and lykio], so their parents allow them to [use it] (Anna, 10 years old).*

The use of chat rooms is very limited, whether on a daily or weekly basis, and with more than half of the older boys and almost 2/3 of older girls never using chat rooms, that's hardly surprising. The picture remains practically the same with younger children, as almost 2/3 of them never use chat rooms, regardless of gender:

> *I think I'm still young to get into chat. I know kids even from gimnasio who don't do chat as yet. I don't even want to know what this chat is (Panagiotis, 11 years old).*

However, the fact that 5% of young boys and almost 4% of young girls use it daily- a slight increase from the 3% of daily use for older teens- may be an indication that, gradually, this is a generation more in tune with social media. Finally, regarding email practice, older teens use email much more than younger ones: more than half of older boys and about 2/3 of older girls compared to about 40% of younger children; the percentages of everyday email use (14% for young boys and 8% for girls: 15% for older boys and 9% for older girls) may be another indication that the younger generation of children in Greece is steadily in the making.

So, if SNS sites are not on the top of children's and teenagers' list, what kind of websites do they visit? Overall, younger children seek global information on Google and other search engines, they look for fun in online and video gaming sites, they visit music websites, as well as sports-related and user-generated-content websites.

In any case though, even with older children, social networking is not very popular, especially when compared to other, more popular websites, such as googling in search of global information, and visiting sites related to music, online and video gaming, sports, TV and movie entertainment, humour, and hobbies. Gender difference when it comes to visiting social networking websites is not significant for either younger or older children.

There are, however, significant gender variations for certain website preferences. For example, predictably, 40% of 10-14 year-old boys visit sports sites (half of the 15-18year-olds), as opposed to only a tenth of younger and older girls; for over 60% of younger and over 75% of older girls, music websites is the second most popular choice following Googling, compared to just over 40% of younger and almost 70% of older boys; over half of the younger and older boys visit online and video gaming sites compared to one third of the younger girls (this drops to almost one fifth for older girls; this may be because younger users are more accustomed and open to a gaming culture, and in this sense it would be interesting to see if these youngsters will value gaming so high in their late teens).

Everyday practices

The above picture would make more sense if the context of these children's everyday practices was taken into account. Consistent with evidence that shows that in Greece, as in other South Mediterranean countries, children's internet use is low in comparison to other European countries (Livingstone and Haddon 2009), younger children in Greece are only now beginning to make the internet a daily habit. How do older teenagers compare with younger children in terms of their everyday practices? What other practices compete with children's use of social networking sites?

With almost 30% of younger girls and 20% of boys not spending any time online per day, there is a weak majority (18% of younger boys as opposed to 25% of younger girls) who spend up to 30 minutes per day online, followed by 15% of children who stay online for maximum one hour per day. In the older age group, there is 27% of older girls and 19% of boys stating they never go online, which shows that time online has barely improved among older teens. The majority of older teens spent anything between 30 minutes to 2 hours daily online, though percentages of use range between15%-18% for older

boys; boys outperform girls in time online. Parental control regarding rules on time spent online is set for about half of the younger children and around 20% of the older teens.

At the same time, about half of younger children never use social media such as a mobile (though less girls are never using it in comparison to boys), and of those who do, around 20% use it for up to 10 minutes per day; just about 16% of younger girls get to use a mobile for a maximum of 30 minutes per day compared to 10% of boys. When it comes to texting, again, with the majority of younger children never using SMS (values ranging between 60% for boys and 47% for girls, again indicating that less girls never use a mobile than boys), this is definitely a new-media-generation-in-the-making. The highest percentage of texting is for a maximum of 10 minutes for around 15% of children (again, with girls slightly overtaking boys). The use of the mobile, starts to grow as teens get older: overall, there are more teens talking on their mobe compared to younger ones, though older boys talk significantly more than older girls for shorter periods of time per day (30% of boys talk a maximum of ten minutes per day, compared to 16% of girls; about another 30% of boys talk for up to thirty minutes per day compared to 18% of girls); older girls spent more time communicating on their mobile every day in relation to boys (up to two hours, 10% of girls vs 5% of boys; up to 5 hours, 13% of girls vs 4% of boys). Similarly, use of texting has also increased with age, hence there are significantly more older teens exchanging SMSs in relation to younger ones, while the rate of those who never use it has more than halved, with girls being the heavier users; almost one thirds of boys and a quarter of girls spent a maximum of 10 minutes per day texting, while 17% of girls and 13% of boys text for a maximum of half an hour; when it comes to longer periods of time (between 1 and five hours), gender differences in texting culture are minimal and percentages range between 8% and 4%; for texting more than five hours per day, a significant 17% of older girls texts as opposed to 3% of boys.

What else do Greek children and teenagers do on a daily basis? Younger ones spent varying amounts of time on homework (girls spending more time than boys doing homework), either one, two or three hours per day; they play electronic games (this being perceived, probably, as a boy-thing, there are considerably less boys who never spent time on such games than girls, 15%: 40%), boys more than girls overall, though when the time concerned does not exceed 30 minutes, both genders find themselves equally occupied (about a quarter of them); they spent time watching television, when it is one hour per

day, girls watch more than boys (30%: 25%), when it is two and three hours per day, boys overtake girls (21%: 18%, and 18%: 9% respectively); they read for pleasure, from 30 minutes to 3 hours per day (a 20% of them, on average); and they spent time with their family (up to 5 hours per day for 15% of them, on average). Youngsters also hang out with their friends, perhaps not so much on a daily basis (14% for boys: 8% for girls), but definitely a few times per week (over a third of them, both boys and girls).

Older teens spent definitely more time per day doing their homework compared to younger ones, the majority studying between 1 and more than 5 hours on a daily basis, and more boys studying for shorter periods of time than girls; regarding television watching, older teens watch less television overall in relation to younger ones, with minimal differences between genders; the majority, just above one fourth, of older teens spend up to two hours per day watching television. Time spent on reading for fun has also decreased with age, hence there are about three times as many older teens stating that they never read at all in relation to younger children, and with more boys reading for shorter periods of time per day in relation to girls. More of the older teens spent time with the family on a daily basis, though, understandably, for shorter periods of time, percentages peaking at one and two hours per day; online gaming remains a favourite pastime for more boys than girls (12% of boys: 36% of girls never spent time on internet gaming), while hanging out with their peers is something few of them do on a daily basis, given the heavy workload of older teens in Greece (12% boys: 8% girls), half of them manage to meet up regularly with their friends a few times per week (up from over a third for younger children).

Risk awareness, maintaining privacy and digital literacy

According to recent research findings targeting the so-called 'Media generation' in Greece (to signify those born at the early eighties and are thus used to new technologies), young adults are not concerned about protection of privacy since they believe that a. they have nothing to hide, b. they have the necessary skills to control what kind of personal information they will give out, c. they are confident that their ISP will take measures if necessary, and d. they trust the other users (Kathimerini, 'Κοινωνική δικτύωση για νέους μέσα από 350 ιστοσελίδες', 27-6-2009). What happens with young children though?

Consistent with the definition of privacy as managing rather than preventing access to personal information, children are more interested in maintaining their privacy in relation to others within (e.g. parents, adults, peers) rather than outside their social network. What kind of coping strategies do children and teenagers employ in order to maintain and control their privacy?

A substantial number of youngsters seem reluctant to give out personal information easily when online. For example when asked whether they trust their favourite site to offer their personal information, young children in their majority say they never do (64% of boys: 75% of girls) – look at 11 year-old Panagiotis who says in a matter-of-fact tone of voice:

> *No, because I've been informed how dangerous this is,*

Similarly, when 10-year old Cleopatra is asked what she would do if her favourite websites (with games) asked her for personal data, she replies:

> *I would stop playing those games.*

Over 80% of boys and girls (more girls than boys) never give their personal information when asked (Table 6); half of the youngsters (more girls than boys) always read the terms for privacy safety, and around 30% of them read them sometimes (again, more girls than boys). Significantly, this may well be the result of parental mediation, since provision of personal information is one of the things ruled out by parents for almost 70% of young boys and 75% of girls:

> *… I call my mom and ask her, and if she sees it is a dangerous site [and] can give us a virus or [asks] us to give very personal information, she tells me not to join, but it requires a few [personal data], e.g. [if there is] no risk of being ripped off, or contracting a virus, then she lets me go on (Anna 10 years old).*

As stated above, internet use and expertise increases with age, and subsequently, children's online behaviour attracts more online risk; this is evidenced in the case of older teens. Less than half of the older boys (48%, down from 64%) and 68% of the girls (down from 75%) say that they never offer their personal information on their favourite site – for example, 15 year-old Panagiota distinguishes between her friends and strangers regarding offering personal information on her favourite site, msn:

Table 6. Children aged 10-14: 4th-6th grade of *primary school*, 1st and 2nd grade of *gymnasio*

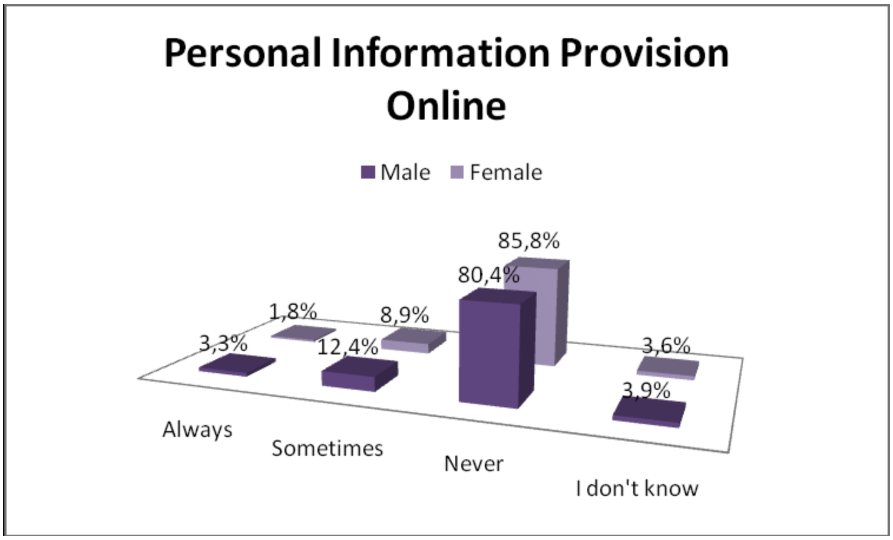
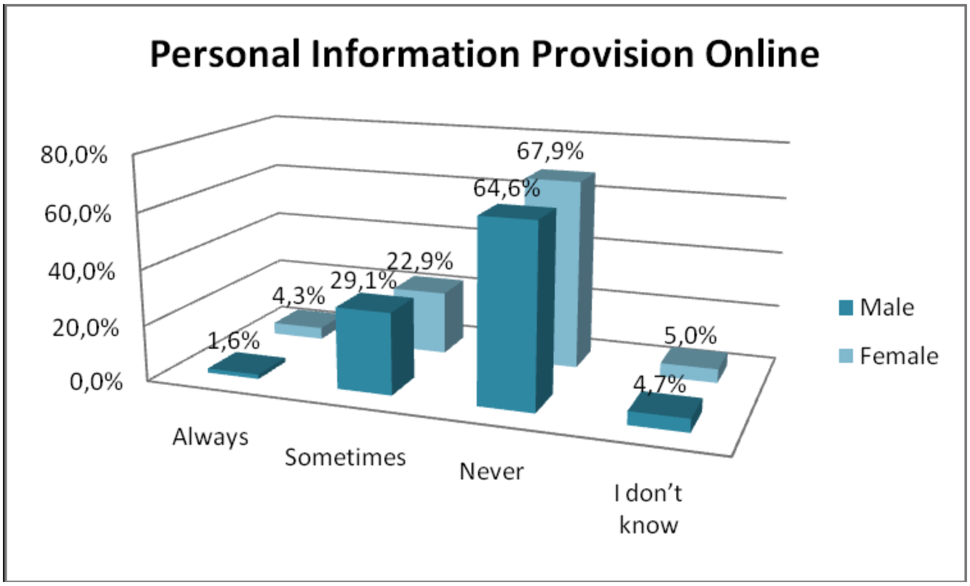


Table 7. Children aged 15-18: 3rd grade of *gymnasio*; 1st-3rd grade of *lykio*



Let's say, on msn, if it's a friend (who asks), it's OK; But, never to a stranger.

Around 65% of older teens (more girls than boys) never give their personal information once asked (down from over 80%) (Table 7); one third of them read the terms for privacy safety sometimes (similarly to younger children), whereas 31% of boys and 45% of girls always reads them. Parental mediation works differently with older teens, as parents allow them now more agency and refrain from setting privacy rules; as a result, provision of personal information is not one of the things parents ban for 72% of older boys and 55% of older girls.

Similarly to other youth cultures (Livingstone and Bober 2005), pretending to be somebody else seems to be a common strategy for both younger and older children in Greece: 60% of younger boys and half of younger girls have given false names online, around 15% of boys and 10 of girls have changed their gender and nationality online, while about one third of those youngsters have lied about their age; another 15% of young boys and almost 20% of girls have lied about their physical appearance.

Falsifying their personal data is something older teens are better at, who, being either more savvy or more playful when online, give false names (2/3 of older boys and over half of older girls); lie predominantly about their age (more than half of the older boys compared to a third of the girls), though less about their gender (13% boys: 8% girls), nationality (17% boys: 5 girls) and appearance (13% boys: 17% girls). Significantly, what needs to be remembered when looking at these findings is that, especially regarding SNSs, very often youth *chose* to falsify their identity in a humorous and joking way when constructing their online profiles. In fact, sometimes, children use the profile as 'just a front', a placeholder within their network, rather than a self-portrait with accurate personal information; others construct their profiles as a joke together with their friends, and keep updating them for fun, this making perfect sense within the peer group. In cases of inaccurate age information, children may lie about their age under the peer group belief that they are too young to have access on a particular site; though some of them may later to wish to amend this falsification, they are not always capable of doing so (Livinstone 2009: 104-5).

This may alienate younger users, who, not knowing enough about the affordancies of SNSs, sometimes decide against it. See for example the reluctance of 10 year-old Alexandros to join Facebook, on the grounds that

I've been warned that you may get fooled on Facebook and be given false information.. I never wanted to join this Facebook…

This, in conjunction with the fact that the worst fear for younger children is getting in touch with dangerous adults (stranger danger) (53% boys: 59% girls), partly explains the slow uptake, yet, of social networking among Greek youth.

So the question comes up, this being a digital generation in-the-making, exactly how competent children and teenagers are? What is their perceived level of expertise, and how literate are they regarding the risks they might encounter?

A staggering 88% of younger children are aware of online risks compared to 84% of older boys and 91% of girls; this indicates that the younger generation of internet users in Greece are gradually developing awareness regarding online safety.

I don't think it [the internet] is safe. I take all precautions possible, being a child and all. My parents have installed an antivirus programme (Anna, 10 years old).

Two thirds of them have been informed about internet safety from their families, followed to a lesser extent by the media (around 20%) and then from their friends and their school (between 15-17%)- as in the case of 11-year old Panagiotis:

My parents have told me all about this; and I've seen it in commercials [referring to the awareness raising campaign of the national awareness node, www.saferinternet.gr],

and 10 year-old Anna:

I now do more things [online] because I learned more about risks; at school, we had classes about the internet and the PC… our teacher talked to us [about risks], we asked questions, and now I am aware and prepared.

For older kids, family is still the main source of information on internet safety (51% boys: 66% girls), followed by friends and the media in equal measure (one third of older teens), and school (around 15%).

As discussed above, in line with findings which show that internet skills consolidate with age, older teens come across as more assertive and confident regarding their level of expertise compared to younger children – though having

said that, about 45% of both young boys and girls rate themselves as average internet users (compared to 42% of older boys and 56% of older girls), which in my view is positive. When it comes to being internet experts, older teens, predominantly boys, see themselves as such (45% of older boys: 26% of girls, as opposed to 37% of younger boys: 25% of girls). According to their own views, more younger children always find what they are looking for online in relation to older ones, with boys, predictably, coming across as more confident than the girls (41% of younger boys: 28% of younger girls compared to 30% of older boys: 18% of girls). The combination of a high level of risk awareness and the confidence exuded, by younger children especially, is particularly encouraging about the new digital generation in Greece.

If this is the case with Greek children, what exactly happens with their parents when it comes to the extent to which they understand and use the internet? Or the degree to which they understand their offspring's online practices, particularly when it comes to social media, and the privacy risks the latter may encounter?

Parental attitudes towards online technologies: issues of online privacy and mediation practices

The European context

Exploring the role of parental mediation becomes increasingly important when the present call to build parental regulation into policy is considered, thus devolving the regulation of children's access and use onto parents. Having said that, parental mediation of children's internet use has only recently started to attract considerable academic and research interest and attention (Lobe et al. 2009). This is hardly surprising because, similarly, academic literature on the strategies used by parents and adults in order to modify or counteract undesirable effects of other media took a while before it flourished. It was not until the eighties that it was argued that parents employ three types of regulation for their children's television viewing, which could then be transposed to the internet as well: restrictive mediation (e.g. setting rules about or restricting exposure); active mediation (e.g. talking to children about the medium and its content); and co-viewing with their children (Valkenburg, 2004: 54-55). Others

(Livingstone, 2002) define parental regulation of children and young people's media use in terms of 'evaluative guidance' (when parents seek to influence children's reactions by means of discussion) and 'restrictive guidance' (when parents wish to regulate media access, including the time spent on particular media).

When it comes to how children and parents cope with online risks, there is considerable variation across countries: in some countries, including Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, Iceland and Norway, almost all children who go online have parents with considerable internet skills. In others, including Greece, Cyprus and Portugal, where barely half of children go online, parents generally do not use the internet and hence are hard-pressed to monitor their children online. Going deeper into the relationship between parents and children regarding parental perception of what constitutes risk for their child, the 2005/6 Eurobarometer survey reveals a negative correlation between parental perception of online risk experienced by their child and the parent's confidence that their child is able to cope with online risk (see Hasebrink, et al., 2009).

Given the importance of parental mediation in the way children conduct themselves online (e.g. Livingstone and Helsper, 2008a), Lobe et al (2009) examined the role played parental mediation in children's experiences of online risk. Probed the impact of different strategies of parental mediation (talking, setting rules and restrictions, using software) across 18 different countries and using Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), the study confirmed, first and foremost, the significance of parental mediation. In countries where parental mediation strategies are weak or absent, children encounter high risk experiences on the internet. Parental mediation strategies do not seem to work in the same way across different countries. In some countries, inter-personal mediation strategies – like parents talking to their children and setting restrictions – have a greater effect. In other countries, the use of filtering software appears to be the strategy that may prevent children from being exposed to high online risk. Country-specific and cultural differences thus become paramount, which indicates that there is no easy one-fits-all solution to parental mediation regarding children's online risks (Lobe et al, op.cit.)

Following a socialization approach to parental mediation, Kalmus and Roosalu (2010) argue that the factors behind cross-national differences in parental strategies are multilateral, and based on earlier distinctions of parental mediation (Kirwil 2009; Kirwil et al. 2009; Livingstone and Helsper 2008b; Lwin et al. 2008), propose four sum indexes of parental mediation:

- Social mediation (staying nearby when the child is online; sitting with the child when s/he goes online; asking/talking to the child what s/he is doing or did online);
- Monitoring mediation (checking the computer later, to see which sites the child visited; checking the messages in the child's e-mail account / instant messaging service; checking whether the child has a profile on a social networking site / online community);
- Restrictive mediation (not allowing the child to spend a lot of time online; to talk to people they don't know in real life; to use e-mail / instant messaging tools; to use chat rooms; to create a profile in an online community; to access certain websites; to download / play music, films, games; to buy online; to give out personal information);
- Technical solutions (filtering software; monitoring software).

The authors make the hypothesis that the extent and character of child-rearing practices, among them mediating children's online activities, depend on the amount of parental attention available to the kids at home as defined by different welfare and gender regimes. Using secondary multi-dimensional analysis of the most recent pan-European survey data, they provide a typology of parents based on their strategies of mediating children's Internet use, and a classification of European countries according to the predominant parental types, and discuss the significance of macro-level variables in explaining cross-national differences in parental strategies. Their study eventually confirms their assumption about the interplay of multilateral factors behind cross-national differences in parental mediation (ibid.).

Following their classification, Greece, along with the other Mediterranean familialistic countries such as Portugal, Italy, Cyprus, Malta and Spain, is marked by the predominance of 'socially-oriented' parents. With women's low labour force participation and modest availability of public childcare, children spend their time more regularly with an adult nearby, which obviously facilitates social interaction with a parent also when the child goes online.

Parental attitudes in Greece

According to the Eurobarometer (2009), Greek parents are considerably lagging behind other parents in the EU countries, with only 54% of them using

the internet (compared to 84%, EU27 average); 35% set no rules and restrictions to their children's internet use (25% in EU27), and only 17% of them uses filtering or surveillance software of online content (27% in EU27). At the same time, while 49% of Greek parents were regulating television use by their children (compared to 41% in EU25), only 8% of them set rules for internet use – the lowest percentage across the EU, with the exception of Hungary (5%) (EC 2006). It could be assumed that this is due to the fact that Greek parents do not enjoy the necessary digital expertise and literacies that would allow them to monitor and control children's internet use sufficiently.

This is also reflected in the *Greek Children Go Online* project, in the sense that out of 750 parent questionnaires distributed, there was a turnaround of only 242; in my view, this should be interpreted in terms of parental ignorance and neglect regarding their children's online uses and attitudes, and reinforces research evidence that shows that the average Greek parent is a digital immigrant rather than a native. Interestingly enough, 81% of those parents with young children, and almost 60% of those with older teenagers, replied that they are internet users.

This finding may be contextualized in two ways. At first, the particular social demographics of the respondents should be taken into account: the majority of them comes from a middle class background, is well educated and lives in rather affluent municipalities across Athens (attention though- the post code in Greece does not always coincide with social class), whereas quite a few of them have children in private education. Secondly, the above findings reinforce the notion discussed by the EU Kids Online network (Livingstone and Haddon 2009) that parents of younger children are using the internet more, in the attempt to protect their youngsters from possible harm, whereas, parents of older teens tend to rely more on their offspring's internet skills and experience and do not feel compelled to use the internet, unless they want to themselves.

When asked to comment about their online practices, only a quarter of either parent group, replied that they were not using the internet because of a number of barriers; for almost half of the parents with younger children, not having enough time was the main obstacle for not going online, followed by the belief that people get too much dependent on computers (a quarter of them). For the parent group with older teens, the main reasons for not using the internet was that it was either too slow (so, these parents haven't heard of the fast internet), too expensive (again, these parents are not familiar with particular bundles of services which introduce cheap internet offers), or not safe enough

(parents as digital immigrants who are technophobic and thus stay away from the medium) for just over a quarter of them in each case.

If they are not avid online users, where do Greek parents get their information regarding the internet? Bearing in mind that there is a chance all parents responded to this question, regardless of their use or non-use, about one third of parents with younger children get their information from the mass media (TV, the press, radio), 17% from their friends and 7% from their children, whereas for parents with older children, traditional mass media stand for the main source of internet-related information to a much larger extent (52%), followed by their friends and their children (26% in each case). This indicates that, indeed, parents with younger children may be more in tune with digital media as opposed to those with older ones, something that the level of parental digital expertise points to, as well.

Considerably more parents of young internet users consider themselves good at finding the information they are searching for online in comparison with parents of older children (72%: 54%); setting an email account (34%: 15%); sending IM (16%: 11%); installing filter software (9%: 7%); and manage technical problems (11%: 5%), one probable reason being because these parents had to tackle these tasks for their young children (Tables 8 and 9); conversely, as older teens are more skilled users than their parents, adults do not engage in these activities unless for their own goals (in which case, they fall into the 'digital immigrant' thesis).

Table 8. Parents' Computer Skills (9-14 year-olds)

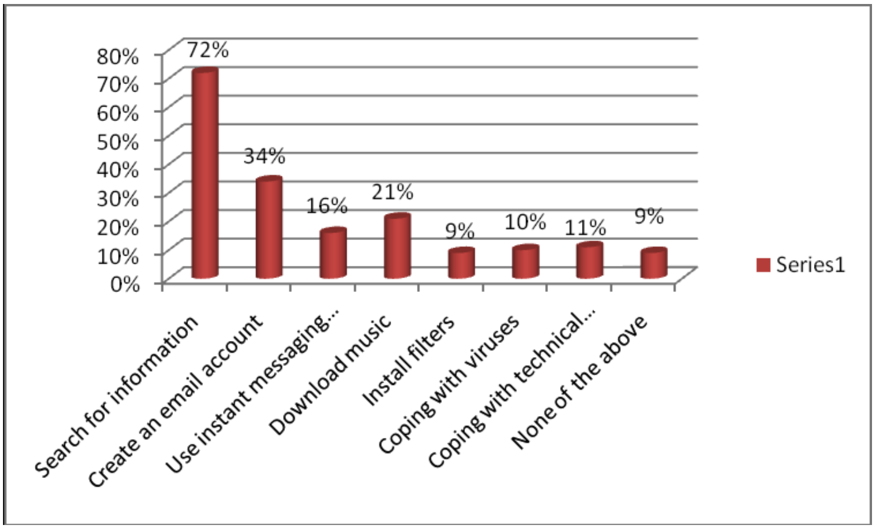


Table 9. ParentsÕ Computer Skills (15-18 year-olds)

Table 10. ParentsÕ Perceived Level of Expertise (9-14 year-olds)

When asked about their perceived level of online expertise, Greek parents do not exude extreme confidence, as would be expected, rating themselves for the most part as ÔaverageÕ internet users, and with very few of them appointing themselves as ÔadvancedÕ users, let alone ÔexpertsÕ. Having said that, parents w younger children come across as more self-assured (Tables 10 and 11).

Table 12. Parents Banning online Activities (9-14 year olds)

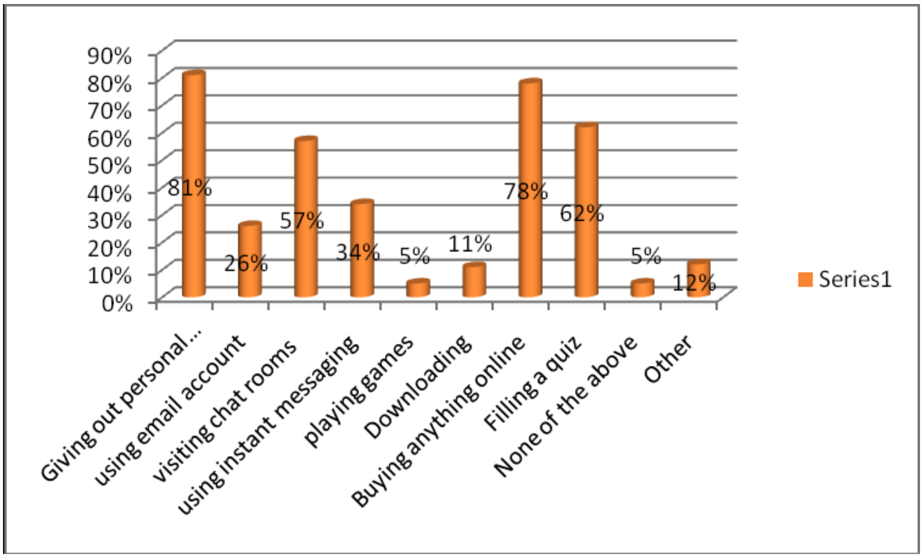
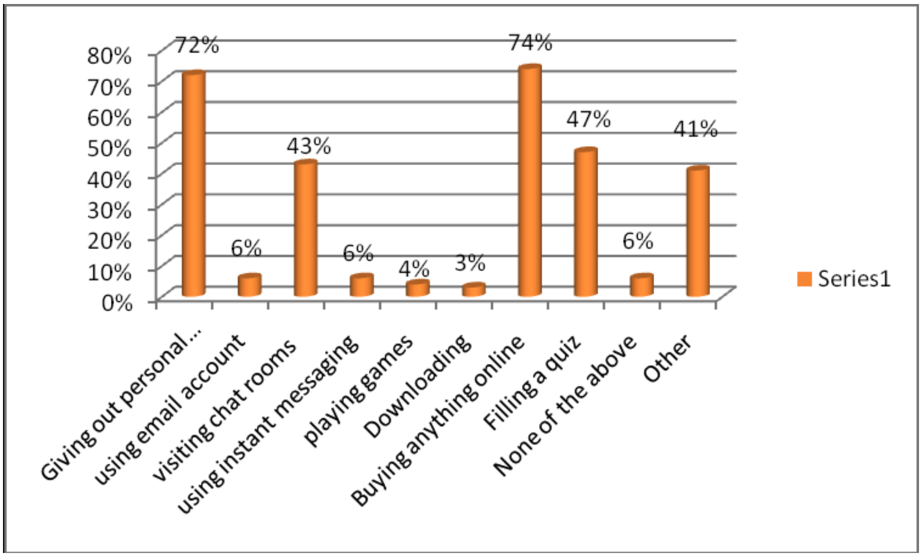


Table 13: Parents Banning online Activities (15-18 year olds)



Conclusions

This chapter addressed the void that exists in Greece regarding the relationship of young children and teenagers with online technologies and some of the risks and opportunities embedded in their patterns and practices of use. Following evidence from the Greek Children Go Online research project and drawing from the EU Kids Online I project as well, this chapter focused on the use of social media by young Greek users and especially questions of privacy and digital literacy.

The ubiquity and quick spread of online, networked technologies among children and teenagers is without precedent in the history of technological development and has forced governments, policy makers and online providers alike to identify the risks of internet use and develop strategies and tools to make sure these risks are kept to a minimum.

At this point, I would like to stress a number of issues: first of all, let us not forget that online activities are correlated in practice with risky activities regarding online content, contact and conduct, suggesting that what for an adult observer may seem risky, for a teenager is often precisely the opportunity they seek (Livingstone and Helsper, 2007). Risk, however, is a probabilistic assessment of the likelihood of harm: hence, exposure to risk is not necessarily problematic, as not all risk results in harm (Millwood Hargrave and Livingstone 2009); furthermore, children learn resilience through exposure to 'manageable' levels of risk (Coleman and Hagell 2007, Schoon 2006); while not all children are equally vulnerable to harm (Finkelhor et al 2009).

Second, careful negotiation between the opportunities (for identity, intimacy, sociability) and risks (regarding privacy, misunderstanding, abuse) afforded by internet-mediated communication is needed. Online risks for young users may arise from confidence that they know, judge and trust the people with whom they are intimate, as well as from the possibility of being neglected or excluded from the peer group (identity as connection); from the children's willing, sometimes naïve, self-display of personal information to a wide circle of contacts, not all of whom are close friends; as well as from limited internet literacy.

Third, just like in the offline world, potential risks to children can never be totally eliminated- there is no way the internet be made completely safe. Thus, much as what happens with risk management for children in the offline world (where supervision and monitoring decreases with age as we judge our

children to be more competent to identify and manage risk), we must work on building children's resilience to risky online material so that they have the confidence and skills to cope safely.

Fourth, there is need for a shared culture of responsibility with families, industry, government and others in the public and third sectors – a multi-stakeholders governance (Bauwens et al, 2009)- all of which are playing their part to reduce the availability of potentially harmful material, restrict access to it by children and increase children's resilience. The discussion of policy making regarding internet safety for children is more often than not driven by the political currency of the risk debate. In this we must not forget that part and parcel of child development is a spirit of enquiry, which should not be hampered. In this way, the wave of anxiety amongst researchers, politicians, parents and the media will not necessarily construct the internet as a 'risk amplifier' (Wolak et al, 2007).

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Dimotiko (primary education)

1st Cholargos
2nd Nea Ionia
1st Ayia Varvara
3rd Argyroupoli primary school
72nd Athens (Thisio)
Leontio (patissia) (multiple cohorts to make up for two schools who decided not to take part in the survey)

Gymnasio (lower secondary education)

3rd Ayia paraskevi
3rd Nea Ionia
1st Koropi
1st Ayia Varvara
3rd Argyroupoli
2nd Elefsina
40th Athens (Grava complex)
Leontio (Patissia)

Lykio (upper secondary education)

3rd Ayia paraskevi
3rd Nea Ionia
1st Koropi
1st Ayia Varvara
3rd Argyroupoli
2nd Elefsina
40th Athens (Grava complex)
Leontio (Patissia)

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