The Internet became the core of social life with social media. We trust in the positive energy and influence of social work to guide children and young people at risk safely through the challenges and support them to benefit from the great advantages of social media.

Stiftung Digitale Chancen (project coordinator)
Germany

Nobody's Children Foundation
Poland

RIAP Association
Lithuania

Fundación Esplai
Spain

Narodni centrum bezpecnejsiho internetu
Czech Republic

content

news in the field

6th International Conference 'Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online"

A Platform for Good Helps Parents and Teens Connect, Share and Do Good

UK's First Academic Research Institute to investigate the Science of Cyber Security

Kristina Schröder: "Intelligent Child and Youth Protection on the Internet calls for joint thinking"

New strategy for safer internet and better internet content for children and teenagers

editorial

Dear Readers,

welcome the first issue of the SocialWeb - SocialWork newsletter. With the quarterly project newsletter we would like to keep you informed on the current activities of SocialWeb - SocialWork, a knowledge enhancement project in the Safer Internet Programme funded by the European Commission coordinated by Stiftung Digitale Chancen, Germany with partners from Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland and Spain (see logos on the left side). From May 2012 to May 2014, the project partners work towards the projects' overarching objective: improving children's online safety by availing the positive energy and influence of social work on children and youths at risk.

The project strategy builds on the one hand on the social workers' detailed knowledge and acquaintance with the target group of vulnerable children and youths and addresses on the other hand sensitively their need for knowledge on digital media use in social work. We are therefore convinced that you will benefit from keeping track of the project's work and hope that you will use our interactive website to give us feedback.

Yours
Carolin Bretl, project manager

Social Web ·
· Social Work

report

Within the last years, the Internet and online activities have deeply found their way into the daily routines of children and youth. For the younger age group of 9 - 16 year old children and youths the EU Kids online survey 2011 states that "use is now thoroughly embedded in children's daily lives" with 93 percent of this age group going online at least weekly and 60 percent every day or almost every day. In addition, children are going online at ever younger ages.

When Neelie Kroes said at the Safer Internet Day 2011 "My aim is to get every European digital", she also mentioned that it is essential to ensure children's safety and security when discovering the Internet and its wonders. Although the Safer Internet Programme has promoted awareness on the opportunities and challenges of the Internet since its beginnings in the year 1999, there is still a lot to be done. And recent research reveals the necessity to focus on special groups of vulnerable children and young people. Potential causes for a higher vulnerability of young people are to be found in the children's social environment i.e. family difficulties up to family break-down, domestic violence, and emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse but also in the children's circumstances which means belonging to marginalised groups within society like asylum seekers, migrant population or travellers. In addition children with disabilities or special educational needs are considered as highly vulnerable with regards to risks and threats on the Internet.

When previous programmes were mainly based on education in schools new areas of work with children have now come into focus. Although nearly every child goes to school the above mentioned groups are less likely to get sufficient guidance from their school education if they go to school at all. Therefore, there is a need for additional efforts to accompany children and youth through the Information Society jungle and prevent them from risks and threats they may face while surfing the web.

With the project *Social Web - Social Work* a significant step towards more safety for children and young people at risk will be done. Nowadays that the Internet is not any longer a mere tool for information search but rather plainly the platform for social life it is only logically consistent to involve the area of social work in strategies for a safer Internet for children and youths. Based on the assumption that social workers are well acquainted with their young target group but might lack the knowledge of how to address online threats and risky behaviour the project has developed its work plan.

The project will

- provide face-to-face training courses accompanied by online learning units, materials and tools to professionals working with children and youths at risk,
- measure the effects of such a training provision for the improvement of Internet safety for vulnerable children,
- exploit and valorise the project's findings and results.

Considering the lack of knowledge on how social work so far deals with the challenges arising from the increased Internet usage of young people and what social work might contribute to more safety there is a need for a preparatory study in order to allow for the design of targeted training units and material. The results of this preparatory survey will provide a good basis to ensure that the training curriculum as well as the accompanying offline and online materials do not miss the mark. They will give an overview of working conditions and the social workers' current awareness and knowledge of Internet risk and threats as well as their actual educational approaches and activities.

The preparatory study was carried out in September and October 2012. In each of the participating countries social youth workers engaged with the target group of children and youths at risk have answered to a standardised questionnaire. First results from the study will be provided with the next issue of the quarterly SocialWeb - SocialWork Newsletter at the turn of the year 2012.

contact information

Please contact us via phone or email. We are looking forward to your comments and questions.

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events in the field

Informationsverhalten von Kindern im Internet
06.11.12, Berlin

7th Annual Internet Governance Forum Meeting
06.11.12 - 09.11.12, Baku

Child Safety Online Conference
15.11.12, Brussels

Praha bezpecne online (Prague-Safer online) conference
10.12.12, Prague

research in the field

Disadvantaged children and online risk

by Sonia Livingstone, Anke Görzig, Kjartan Ólafsson, EU Kids Online

The report 'Disadvantaged children and online risk" by Sonia Livingstone, Anke Görzig and Kjartan Ólafsson considers the inequalities in risk and safety issues regards children and youth. Based on the theory of the 'the knowledge gap," namely that the more information and guidance is available, the more it is generally taken up by the information-rich rather than the information-poor, the authors point out that just making resources available may increase inequalities.

The analysis is drawn on the EU Kids Online survey of 25,142 children aged 9- 16 who used the internet across 25 countries. To verify their assumptions the authors compared the risks and the resources, available to children from specific disadvantaged groups. These children are either disadvantaged by lack of economic or cultural capital or they are disadvantaged through social or psychic vulnerability.

The differences reported pinpoint the importance of targeting safety resources differently for different minority groups. At the end of the report, the authors give useful recommendations to providers, explaining the needs of disadvantaged children.

For further information please find the survey enclosed (pdf-document (0.721 MB)).

Please click here for more recent research in the field