

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	1
editorial	1
report	2
research in the field	3
events in the field	3

## news in the field

**German Youth Institute (DJI) study on the information-seeking behavior of children on the Internet**

**FTC strengthens kids' privacy**

**European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) opens on 11 January**

**JORNADA DE INTERNET SOCIAL - SOCIAL INTERNET DAY**

**FOSI's Annual Conference 2012**

**JIM study 2012 published**

## editorial

Dear Readers,

important steps towards the achievement of the aims of the project SocialWeb - SocialWork have been made.

Mid-October 2012, the first project partner and advisory board meeting took place to discuss the upcoming activities of the project. The past months were dedicated on the one hand to the elaboration of the methodology for the step-by-step evaluation and for the teaching/learning methods in the training and online learning units. On the other hand, the ex-ante survey on the basic knowledge and grade of the social workers' awareness for online safety of their target group of children and youths at risk has been successfully implemented and evaluated (results see newsletter report).

Furthermore, the development of the training curriculum was initiated and will be finalised for the trainings to start in spring 2013. Here, we are looking forward to collaborate with institutions from our partner countries that employ professionals working with children and youths at risk and are interested in the topic of digital media use in social work. Please do not hesitate to contact us at [cbretl@socialweb-socialwork.eu](mailto:cbretl@socialweb-socialwork.eu).

And finally: the upcoming **Safer Internet Day** on the 5th of February 2013 focuses this year on the importance of online rights and responsibilities and thus picks up *SocialWeb - SocialWork's* aim of a safer and more responsible online use amongst children and young people. Take part to make it bigger and better than ever before!

Yours  
Carolin Bretl,  
project manager

# report

## 81 % of respondents from social work state their need for training on social web appliances and their effects on children and youths

Evaluation is one of the main tasks of the project *SocialWeb - SocialWork* and constitutes the preceding and following steps to the development of the training curriculum and the implementation of the training campaign.

Since it cannot be taken for granted that professionals working with children and youths at risk are already acquainted with the wide range of web appliances the Internet offers - especially with the so-called social web gaining more and more importance in the life of children and young people - it is essential for the project *SocialWeb - SocialWork* to get a good overview of the content that is needed in a training for social workers and to better understand their learning needs and working circumstances. Therefore, a preliminary survey in the partner countries was implemented in the partner countries - Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Spain - from 17th of September 2012 until 5th of October 2012, to ask social workers about their awareness of online threats and risky online behaviour of children and youths.

This ex-ante survey represents the first evaluation wave within the project and comprises an overview of the working conditions, the current awareness and knowledge of Internet risks and threats as well as the actual educational approaches and activities of social workers in the respective countries. The survey results provide interesting and supporting information for the following modules of the training curriculum defined so far:

1. social web and its appliances,
2. understanding the internet usage of children and youths,
3. addressing children and youths appropriately with regard to their online behavior,
4. online risks and threats,
5. methods and ways of intervention in case of endangerment,
6. methods and ways of prevention of risky online behavior.

In total, 189 people working in the field of social youth work have answered to the questionnaire. The survey results show that the professions in this occupational area are manifold and differ widely in the participating countries. Nonetheless, the assumption that social workers might use the Internet less often than the population in average as their work was expected to be more focused on support and personal guidance for their young target group is not confirmed by the results. Actually it can be assumed that many of them are well acquainted with social web applications from either private or professional usage.

Results regarding the social workers' knowledge of children's and youths' Internet usage do not clearly indicate if they already know all types of activities and only observe some more often than others or if their observations are predetermined by what they already know and pursue themselves. It is obvious that more demanding tasks are less often observed than more passive activities like watching videos or consuming other content. Here, the training will provide for some space to try-out and get acquainted with less common applications - showing those applications as a reasonable part of young people's everyday digital life.

Although it can be assumed that social workers have their well-proven strategies how to address their young target group, the results suggest that most of them did not plunge into the everyday life of so-called digital natives so far. It becomes apparent that many of the respondents notice children and youths spending - in their words - "too much" time with digital media. Particularly communication via Internet is often mentioned. Many of them confirm that the children and youths communicate excessively via social networking services and some of them complain that their young target group does not communicate in reality. Therefore, the training will offer some time to focus on the question how to build trust between the social workers and their young target group in order to communicate the benefits of digital media use.

With regards to online risks and threats, the survey results reveal that only the risks of seeing sexual content and getting in contact with strangers have been observed by nearly half of the respondents, all other risks and threats were mentioned rarely. Again it might be the case that social workers really only seldom observe their target group being endangered or they might not be aware of the other risks and threats and therefore observe those less often. Thus, with regards to the training contents, it is necessary to support social youth workers in learning to define, distinguish and classify the existing online risks and threats and develop a deeper knowledge of the most relevant ones. The training will furthermore impart methods and ways of intervention in case of endangerment. The content will tie in with already employed measures like collaborative use of social media applications and mediation in case of conflict but also train new approaches.

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Photo: Bethel Fath, Social workers at Training Inklusive Internet

## report

Detailed knowledge of the background and functioning of digital media as well as of the business cases lying behind the collection of personal data f. e. are pre-conditional to the prevention of risky online behaviour. Statistical data in general show that there is a strong correlation between the educational level and digital literacy <sup>1</sup>. Less educated groups are less often using the Internet and if they do so at all they do not know all applications very well and thus do not benefit like others. For the children and youths here in question the effect might double because not only they themselves lack digital literacy but also their parents usually do not count for reliable and skilled sources regards Internet. Therefore, the training content is meant to enable social workers to fulfil that role and help them understanding potential endangerments to children and youths.

Although the survey results show that several strategies to address children's and youths' risky online behaviour are already in use by social workers, a vast majority of the respondents (81 %) stated their interest in a vocational training on the subject "children and youths on the Internet".

The survey results underline the appropriateness of the modular structure for the training curriculum which need not be followed in a linear path. They should function as a range of freely combinable learning items in terms of a toolkit to be able to adapt the content and the methods of teaching to the previous knowledge and the needs of the trainees.

<sup>1</sup> see f. e.: [http://www.initiated21.de/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Digitale-Gesellschaft\\_2011.pdf](http://www.initiated21.de/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Digitale-Gesellschaft_2011.pdf)

## events in the field

### Safer Internet Day 2013

05.02.13

### International media education seminar

14.02.13 - 15.02.13, Tampere

### Conference on "Online help for young people"

26.02.13, Brussels

### AJS Annual Conference on Cyber-Bullying

13.03.13, Leinfelden-Echterdingen

### Youth 2.0: Connecting, Sharing and Empowering?

20.03.13 - 22.03.13, Antwerp

### Moving Targets: Children and the Media

22.04.13 - 24.04.13, Genf

## research in the field

### How to cope and build online resilience?

by Leen d'Haenens, Sofie Vandoninck and Verónica Donoso, EU Kids Online

This report presents new findings on the coping strategies children use when bothered by something online, and whether or not they evaluate these as helpful. The focus of the survey is on resilience - the ability to deal with negative experiences online or offline.

The report identifies which children are most vulnerable in terms of harm experienced from online risks and which factors make some children more likely to use positive coping strategies that help them solve the problem and/or give them emotional support. Last, it considers resilience among children from a cross-country perspective.

The EU Kids Online survey that was conducted in 25 European countries provides detailed evidence on four types of online risks: sexual images, online bullying, sexting, meeting new contacts online. In total, over 25,000 European children were interviewed.

For further information please find the report enclosed (pdf-document (0.567 MB)).

[Please click here for more recent research in the field](#)

## contact information

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

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