

Youth Protection Roundtable



youth protection roundtable newsletter nr. 6

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Ihr Potenzial. Unser Antrieb.



Save the Children
Italia ONLUS

news from the field

25.08.08 Cyber-games and friendships

25.08.08 New cyberbullying bill in California introduced

21.08.08 Social Networking Explodes Worldwide as Sites Increase their Focus on Cultural Relevance

11.07.08 USA: Internet Service Providers stop major sources of child pornography

YPRT editorial

Dear Readers,

the Youth Protection Roundtable is moving fast forward towards its goal to develop recommendations for youth protection on the Internet. These recommendations will be presented to the public during the **Final Conference** of the project, scheduled for **April 3, 2009** in Berlin, Germany. High-level representatives of the European Commission, governments, welfare organisations and companies will take part in a panel discussion and members of the Roundtable project will showcase best practice examples for the implementation of the recommendations. You are kindly invited to join the conference, early bird registration – free of charge – is open now under <http://www.yprt.eu/registration>

Games are besides social networking sites the most popular content on the Internet especially for young people as we have learned from the Young Roundtable in May. It therefore seems to be worth to take a closer look on this subject. The most important European fair for computer games, the 'Games Convention' took place in Leipzig, Germany, last week. The organisers have given themselves a small Code of Conduct to ensure that the legal regulations for youth protection are respected. All visitors received non-removable bracelets marking their age so that no underage person could get access to inappropriate games at the booths in the exhibition halls. But this type of 'youth protection' is likely to work only in the real world, while most children have access to computer games online and parents and pedagogues need help to guide them. Please read about new insights into this topical subject and take kindly note of the news, events and research in this newsletter.

Yours

Katharina Kunze

Katharina Kunze, project manager

YPRT report

Games, Games, Games

Every year in the end of August, the community of computer gamers convenes at the leading fair of video and computer games GC - the Games Convention - in order to learn to know the latest developments in this sector. Prior to the fair, the people who see to it that nobody gets bored in front of the computer screen, meet at the GC Developers Conference.

In 2008, Europe's leading developers' conference attracted about 1,200 participants from more than 40 countries, most of them coming from North America, Britain and Germany. The number of participants from Eastern Europe clearly rose, compared with the past years. The mostly young visitors will certainly not know what a lot of work the most popular computer applications require. At least two years of development pass between the idea and the marketable realisation of a computer game.

Many young people cannot image life without their digital leisure time organisers, and also young children playfully occupy themselves with computer applications for learning or entertainment. According to the 2007 JIM Study, for which 1,200 young people aged 12-19 in Germany were interviewed by phone, nearly half of them (45 %) have Internet access in their room - just as many have a game console. More boys (59 %) than girls (30 %) own a game console, and they use it more often: 50 % of the boys play computer games daily or several times a week, but only 17 % of the girls do so. There is also a difference concerning the educational level: 55 % of the pupils of Hauptschulen (lower secondary modern schools) have a game console, but only 34 % of the pupils of Gymnasien (higher secondary schools). The educational milieu also influences media adoption: young people with a high educational level adopt the world of media creatively and competently through different activities, while children and young people with a lower educational level adopt media more consumption-oriented (Source: *Helga Theunert, 2006: Neue Wege durch die konvergente Medienwelt, p. 196*).



The industrial federation BITKOM reported a 20 % turnover increase of consoles and games in Germany in the first half of 2008, compared to last year's period. Still new user groups are tapped; increases mostly concern young children and girls, who showed less interest in computer games until now. According to the 2008 KidsVerbraucherAnalyse, 63 % of the interviewed girls use hand-held devices such as the Gameboy, which means an increase of 13 % compared to the 2006 study. The share of the boys of 72 % has remained the same. Console games show the same tendency: 45 % of the girls (13 % increase) and 60 % of the boys (4 % increase) play with them. With increasing age, the interest in computer games decreases (according to the 2007 JIM Study): 40 % of the 12-13 year old children play daily or several times a week, while only 25 % of the 18-19 year old do so. The 2006 KIM Study exploring the media handling of 6-13 year old children confirms that the main phase of use coincides with adolescence: The share of the interviewed who own computer games and use them intensively is lower in the younger age groups – 43 % of the 6-7 year old children play less than half an hour per day, while only 23 % of the 12-13 year old do so.

The necessary critical distance concerning content and the self-restriction required for limiting the time spent with gaming can hardly be assumed for children and young people. Therefore reflected supervision by parents and teachers is required. But pedagogues, parents, teachers and social workers are often helpless when confronted with the fascination computer games exert on young age groups.

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Mostly they do not have any experiences with computer games and are therefore hardly able to judge the game activities of the young people and their impact so that they can align their education accordingly. The fears of arousing or increasing aggression, losing social contact or isolation of children and young people and compulsive gaming are opposed to the clearly positive effects of learning and acquiring computer skills. Computer games are used by young people mostly for entertainment; they banish boredom, but at the same time they give them the feeling of success, power and control. Thus they fulfil the need for recognition especially with children and young people at the lower educational level, which they often do not get at school. [Read more online...](#)

PEW: Digital Footprints

The Pew Internet & American Life Project released the study "Digital Footprints" that revealed that Internet users are becoming more aware of their traces on the Internet. For example 47 % have searched for information about themselves, in comparison five years ago only 22 % were looking for that. But 60 % of the interviewed Internet users are not concerned about the amount of information available about them online and 61 % do not feel compelled to limit it.

Privacy Implications of Fast, Mobile Internet Access

The user behaviour in the fast, mobile, participatory web is in the focus of a study published by the Pew Internet & American Life Project. The research finds that many Americans are jumping into the participatory web without considering all the implications. If nothing really bad has happened to someone, they tend neither to worry about their personal information nor to take steps to limit the amount of information that can be found about them online. On the other hand, if someone has had a bad experience with embarrassing or inaccurate information being posted online, they are more likely to take steps to limit the availability of personal information. These results correspond with previous outcomes regarding spyware (software that covertly tracks the navigation of users): Internet users who had not encountered spyware were less likely to view it as a serious threat and more likely to say it's just part of life online. For further information please have a look at the report.

Germany: Characteristics of pathological usage of computer games in childhood and adolescence

The "Zentrum für empirische pädagogische Forschung" at the University of Landau published a survey about the importance of computer games in the every day life of children and youths. 784 young people in the age of 9 to 20 years were asked to provide information about their life situation and their playing of computer games via an online questionnaire.

The study defines players who play more than two hours at school days at least 3-4 times a week and in addition show symptoms of addiction as pathological players. The study proves that these players are more often unable to cope with their present life situation and feel less integrated than other players. The computer has an overcoming function for them to regulate or to suppress negative emotions.

events in the field

18.09.08 - 19.09.08 Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online

Kyriad Prestige Hotel, ul. Towarowa 2, Warsaw, Poland

25.09.08 - 26.09.08 Safer Internet Forum 2008

Jean Monnet Building, Rue Alcide de Gasperi, Luxembourg

09.10.08 - 10.10.08 European e-Skills 2008 Conference

Thessaloniki, Greece

16.10.08 - 17.10.08 More Fun, More Risk?

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