Dear readers,

As ICT becomes more ubiquitous, and the barriers between on and offline worlds start to blur, especially in the lives of our youth, it is essential to provide the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in the minds of the students in promoting the notion of being a digital citizen. With the rapid expansion of access to technology, stakeholders can underestimate the simultaneous need for developing not only digitally literate, but also digitally mindful and informed young people.

As September celebrates the International Literacy Day on Sustainable Societies, and promotes the importance of literacy (including digital), it is paramount to consider developing appropriate knowledge and awareness when equipping with digital literacy in order for young learners to be able to critically assess the risk factors of Internet use and develop resilience to cope with them. Such competencies amongst young learners will be an essential factor to foster healthy and empowering digital environments for the future.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition!

Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions.

**Highlights:**

**Striking a Balance between Digital Opportunities and Related Risks (by UNESCO Bangkok, ICT in Education)**

*This article emphasizes the increasing importance of addressing the hyper focus on digital access through awareness, related policies and programmes to nurture a simultaneous culture of digital citizenship among youth and children.*

The exponential growth of ICT in the past decades has significantly reduced the cost of its provision and consumption, consequently enabling affordable access to technology for everyone, allowing easy access to information, people, services, and goods. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) estimated that, at the end of 2014, there were almost 7
billion mobile phone subscriptions (96% of global population) and roughly about 3 billion people (40% of global population) who had Internet access via mobile and/or fixed broadband subscriptions (ITU, 2014).

Without a doubt, the opportunities and benefits that ICT has brought to our lives are tremendous. ICT has undeniably revolutionized the way we learn, travel, work, engage and interact with one another, overcoming limitations set by distance, time, and other contextual barriers. The “catalytic potential of ICTs to advance development agendas and priorities”, as laid out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has been emphasized and seen as a vehicle to promote, enable, and support the three pillars of sustainable development, namely economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability (UNGIS, 2013). Armed with this realization, the proposed Education 2030 Agenda highlights the use of ICTs “to strengthen education systems, knowledge dissemination, information access, quality and effective learning, and more effective service provision” (Incheon Declaration, 2015). Furthermore, the draft Framework for Action includes ICT skills as a necessary skill that citizens should acquire to confidently thrive in this globalized, knowledge-based, and technology-driven world (Framework for Action Education 2030, 2015).

However, in as much as these digital technologies have brought about significant opportunities and benefits, the very same technologies have posed an array of social and ethical issues to contend with. All over the world, numerous concerns and issues have been raised, ranging from online safety and security to misuse of information, to health and mental hazards. The Asia Pacific region has not been exempt from stories of ICT abuse in the form of spamming, data theft, intellectual property infringement (plagiarism and piracy), excessive exposure to games and online activities, delinquency, health and wellness issues, cyberbullying, identity theft, fraud/scams, pornography, online sex trafficking, and radicalization. Public anxiety has been quite high on these issues – particularly those affecting children and adolescents. Some observations include:

- A Microsoft survey found that among 25 countries surveyed in 2012, China, Singapore, and India had the highest rates of online bullying – at 70%, 58%, 53% of surveyed children aged 8 to 17, respectively; while 33% of Malaysian children said they have been subjected to a range of online activities that some may consider to be online bullying (Microsoft’s Global Youth Online Behaviour Survey, 2012).
- An annual study by the South Korean government found that “2% of South Koreans aged 10-19, or about 125,000 people, needed treatment for excessive online gaming or were at risk of addiction” (Associated Press in Seoul, The Guardian, 2013).
- In Viet Nam, local reports connected the increase in juvenile crime and school truancy to the influence of and addiction to online games (CNN Wire Staff, 2010).
- In Indonesia, 70% of children surveyed said that strangers had tried to add them as a friend on a social networking site while 35% chatted with an online stranger who had tried to meet them in person (UNICEF, 2012).

In view of these challenges, young digital citizens need to equip themselves – from early years and with ample support from those around them – with a sophisticated set of knowledge, skills, and attitude towards safe, effective, and responsible use of these technologies, in order to take advantage of ICT’s abundant opportunities while being resilient in the face of risks. Growing interest on this topic is evident in more recent UNESCO ICT in Education forums. While celebrating the obvious benefits of using ICT in education, various education stakeholders from member states, institutions/organisations, and schools have expressed their concerns about the possible risks and downsides of using ICT. This conveys a sense of urgency from the education sector to secure expert guidance and good models on appropriate and
effective measures towards a deliberate, balanced, and systemic action to promote children’s safe, effective and responsible use of ICT. The demand for relevant research, policy responses, advocacy programmes, capability building, and corresponding resources has increased in response to the growing concerns about a lack of clear understanding of young learners’ actual perception of and behaviors in a digital world.

In response to this, UNESCO Bangkok has been undertaking the “Fostering Digital Citizenship through Safe, Effective, and Responsible Use of ICT” Project that aims to promote policy dialogue on the issues of the ethical, safe, and responsible use of ICT and in building the education sector’s capacity in fostering digital citizenship among children, by 1) providing member states with a sound evidence base to guide policy and practice, and 2) raising the level of consciousness among member states on digital citizenship through policy guidelines, advocacy campaigns, and educational resources. The recent publication “Fostering Digital Citizenship through Safe and Responsible Use of ICT: A review of current status in Asia and the Pacific” provides a synthesis of information on various policy responses, programmes, and initiatives implemented by governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector, gathered from a desk review and the Expert Meeting held in March 2014.

A more in-depth study is currently being conducted to take stock of current states on policy responses and national initiatives that promote digital citizenship to establish a clearer understanding of the various legal frameworks and policies, national curriculum, and other educational programmes being implemented in the region. Preliminary findings from 22 member states surveyed indicate that national campaigns are conducted to promote safe, effective, and responsible use of ICT. However, the majority reported that they do not have coordinating agencies or budgets to support for a systematic, evidence-based approach. In addition, despite prioritizing the development of basic ICT skills among students, the majority reported a lack of policies and/or programmes to foster cyberwellness, safety, and security within school communities. Furthermore, although it has been observed that younger children are being exposed to ICT, there is no concerted effort to promote cyber wellness within this early age group (i.e. pre-primary). The complete study report will be available in early 2016.

The “Policies and Initiatives to Promote Safe, Effective, and Responsible Use of ICT among Children: Asia Pacific Regional Consultation”, held on 9-11 September 2015, aimed to validate the initial findings of the policy review and to enrich the documentation with promising initiatives and perspectives of various stakeholders’ from the region. The discussions were meant to inform the refinement of the draft policy guidelines formulated during the first Expert Meeting in March 2014. These guidelines, expected to be available for distribution in early 2016, seek to guide member states in addressing the gaps, in both policy and practices, in promoting children’s safe, effective, and responsible use of ICT in the region, particularly in the education sector.

As this newsletter aims to highlight the importance of addressing digital risks among youth, this edition features an expert article by Katarzyna Pawelczyk from UNICEF, speaking about ICT opportunities and threats among youth and children. The Programmes and Projects section features articles on the experience of EU Kids Online and Net Children Go Mobile project; technology-infused curriculum and practices at a school in Singapore; the Cyber Wellness program by an NGO in Singapore, TOUCH; and Intel’s Digital Wellness programme. The News and Events section offers an overview of the few of the recent meetings, such as the EDUsummIT 2015, and the “Policies and Initiatives to Promote Children’s Safe, Effective, and Responsible Use of ICT: Asia Pacific Consultation”, as well as some upcoming announcements, such as the UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of ICT in Education, or the FIT-ED Call for Proposals on digital learning innovation in developing countries in Asia, and a few
conferences on digital media in USA, and on society, education and technology in Japan. In the Resources, readers can get acquainted with the Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers, a few useful publications by UNICEF, the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, and the World Bank. Finally, in the New Publications, reports by OECD and UNESCO feature science and technology indicators, the use of ICT devices by students, and lessons learned from research and experience on early childhood care and education.

References


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ICT Opportunities and Threats for Children (by Katarzyna Pawelczyk, UNICEF)

This article features an interview with the Project Manager for the Voices of Youth Citizens initiatives at UNICEF, which explores the current situation in regard to children’s digital realities, features positive and engaging examples of digital use, reflects on the remaining challenges and considerations for stakeholders, and provides recommendations for promoting and ensuring digital safety for our youth.

Kate Pawelczyk is the project manager for the Voices of Youth Citizens initiative in UNICEF, which explores the opportunities and risks for children and young people in a changing digital environment. She also supports UNICEF’s youth engagement through the Voices of Youth community, which gives adolescents and youth a platform to share their views, exchange ideas and connect globally. Kate has been with UNICEF for 7 years, spending 4 of those in the capacity of Communication Specialist at the Country Office in her home country South Africa. Kate did her undergraduate in journalism and media studies, and her postgraduate in development.

What is the current situation in regard to the digital realities of children and youth today?

For many children around the world today there are no artificial boundaries between being ‘offline’ and ‘online’. The environments that children find themselves in are increasingly digital, as much of their socializing, learning, civic engagement and entertainment happens online. In many countries, children and young people are among the greatest users of this technology. Even in countries where overall internet penetration is low, it is much higher among the 15-24 age group. ITU Statistics show that in countries like Madagascar or Bangladesh, even though the overall Internet penetration is very low, 2.1% and 6.3% respectively, amongst young people it is almost double that of the general population.

While this points to the fact that the digital know-how of children and young people is often vastly superior to that of the adults in their lives, we also know that this know-how doesn’t always translate into behavior that guarantees a rich experience online with minimal exposure to inappropriate or harmful content. Given the prominent role that digital tools are playing in the lives of children and young people, it is essential that those of us tasked with ensuring their well-being understand their digital habits to inform our policies, programmes, and other interventions.

What are some examples of engagement and empowerment of young people through digital?

Children and young people are the most active users of social media and other digital tools, but it is very important to remember that they are not just consumers, but the driving force of the developments and application of digital technology. They are not just finding entertainment or socializing; many young people are increasingly using the online world and tools to mobilize on important issues, to raise awareness and to have their voices heard.

I see this regularly in my own work. Voices of Youth – UNICEF’s global online youth community – is a space for young people to engage in dialogue and debate, to find inspiration, and to try to understand
how they can take action for positive change in their own communities. It is a blog where children and young people are the primary content contributors on a range of issues: from climate change, education, employment, gender. Each year we receive around 2,000 submissions.

Another example is our Voices of Youth Maps initiative, which we are using right now to empower young people to express themselves about climate change ahead of the Sustainable Innovation Forum 2015 (COP 21) later this year. Using a digital mapping tool, a group of UNICEF offices from around the world are working with young people to create maps that depict their social and environmental surroundings. Participants spend time learning how to identify issues and then go out into their communities and plot these on a map with photos and descriptions. More importantly, they learn how to use these maps as powerful advocacy tools.

Some more examples include:

- The U-Report initiative, a simple SMS-based system to empower young people to monitor and report on conditions in their communities, and to inform youth on important social issues. Starting in Uganda is has been implemented in around 15 countries (and counting), and has well over 1 million users.

- Platforms like Avaaz and change.org have given millions of people around the world a simple way to speak out and to garner support from fellow citizens. Change.org has more than 100 million users in 196 countries.

Young people themselves are also creating many of the digital opportunities, and shaping the digital landscape. In Ghana, young tech entrepreneur Regina Agyare started Tech Needs Girls, a movement and a mentorship program to get more girls to create technology. In Brazil, Paulo Rogerio Nunes introduced VOJO.co - a mobile blogging platform that makes it easy for people to post stories from inexpensive mobile phones – to give minorities in his country a voice when they lack access to the Internet. Last year, Kartik Sawhney, a visually-impaired computer science student from India, spoke at UNICEF’s headquarters about how he created a computer program that used different musical notes to ‘describe’ scientific graphs.

**What are the remaining challenges and considerations to keep in mind, and how can we ensure safe online experiences for young digital citizens?**

Looking at these examples, one cannot help but get excited. But in our excitement we cannot forget that there are millions of children and young people who have no access to digital technology. According to data from the ITU, around 4 billion people from developing countries are not online. We also cannot forget that the lack of access is more likely to be much higher among vulnerable groups – young children, females, children living with disabilities, out-of-school children, unaccompanied migrant children, etc. (ITU, 2015).

But the digital divide is not only about physical access. Ownership rates, usage patterns, quality, and cost implications vary hugely. Mobile only users have a significantly different user-experience than those who are using and accessing the Internet on laptops or tablets. There is a huge imbalance in the quantity and quality of content available in different languages on the Internet. We also need to consider and
address the disparities in information on digital media and digital safety received by young people growing up in different environments.

If we’re ensuring young people have access to digital tools, equipping them with skills, and giving them opportunities, we also need to also ensure safe online experiences. What happens in the online environment is largely a reflection of society, of the dangers children face in their homes, schools, communities and institutions. According to research, higher use usually means greater exposure to risk – be it content, contact or conduct. But risk is not the same as harm, and we need a clear understanding of the risks that children and young people might be exposed to and who the most vulnerable children are in order to design responses that allow children to capitalizing on the opportunities while minimizing risks.

**What do we need to do to promote and enhance digital safety and excellence among children and youth?**

We need to understand digital use and safety from the perspective of children and young people before we design digital safety information programs, or larger responses, strategies, policies, etc. We need to understand and listen to young people, creating spaces where they can express themselves honestly about their digital use, habits and behaviors.

Next, we need to integrate digital into all areas of learning for children. In 2015 ICT cannot just be a subject that is taught once a week in school. We need to help children develop critical thinking skills to assess online media and information.

We also need to balance digital safety messages with an emphasis on the usefulness of the Internet as a resource for galvanizing positive action, social accountability, or reporting problems in communities. We need to use the full spectrum of traditional and digital media in online and offline digital safety campaigns, and empower them by fostering young digital safety champions.

We need to remember the different age groups and their particular needs – children are not a homogenous group, especially when talking about online safety and digital skills. Specifically talking about ICT related violence, abuse and exploitation, the strategies that we are working on have to be part of wider national strategies to address violence, exploitation and abuse. We need to strengthen national child protection systems and support norms, attitudes and behaviors that prevent exploitation. And everybody has a role to play here: governments, parliamentarians, civil society, youth, teachers, parents, media, academia, and the private sector.

**References**


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Note: The opinions expressed in the articles included in this newsletter are those of the authors and editors, and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNESCO, nor of any particular Division or Office.

Programmes and Projects:

- The experience of EU Kids Online and Net Children Go Mobile in Europe: lessons from research and future challenges (by Giovanna Mascheroni)

Through the example of the EU Kinds Online research project, readers can learn more about evidence-based and informed policy initiatives on the theme of making the Internet a safer place for children. The project evaluated almost 400 research studies, and consequently identified content, contact, and conduct risks.

Giovanna Mascheroni is a Lecturer in Sociology of Communication in the Department of Sociology, Catholic University of Milan, and a Visiting Fellow in the Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science. She is part of the management team of EU Kids Online network, of which she has been the national contact since 2007, and she coordinated the Net Children Go Mobile project in 2012-2014.

EU Kids Online is a research network and knowledge enhancement project co-funded by the Safer Internet Programme (now Better Internet for Kids) of the European Commission to inform evidence-based policy initiatives to make the Internet a better place for children. From 2006-09, as a thematic network of 21 countries, EU Kids Online identified and evaluated the findings of nearly 400 research studies to draw out substantive, methodological and policy implications. The literature review informed the classification of Internet risks based on the position of the child in the communicative relationship: we therefore identified content risks, where the child is a receiver of mass-produced content (e.g. pornography); contact risks, where the child participates in an adult-initiated interaction (e.g. grooming or ideological persuasion); and conduct risks, in which the child is involved as an actor (e.g. cyberbullying, sexting). From 2009-11, as a knowledge enhancement project across 25 countries, the
network surveyed 25,000 children and parents to produce original, rigorous data on online opportunities and risk of harm.

From 2011-14, the network expanded to 33 countries to conduct targeted analyses of the quantitative survey and new qualitative interviews with children. In 2015 the network coordination passed from Prof. Sonia Livingstone, Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) to Prof. Uwe Hasebrink and the Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research, University of Hamburg.

In 2012 the European Commission also co-funded the Net Children Go Mobile with the aim of understanding whether access to the Internet by means of mobile devices (smartphones and tablets) posed new or more risks to children, and new challenges for parents and teachers. Coordinated by Giovanna Mascheroni at the Catholic University of Milan, the Net Children Go Mobile project replicated major parts of EU Kids Online’s qualitative and quantitative research in selected countries in 2012-14, adding a focus on mobile devices.

In almost ten years of research the EU Kids Online network developed a framework that contextualises the opportunities and risks of the Internet in the context of children’s everyday lives. In other words, children’s online experiences are shaped by socio-demographic (age, gender and socio-economic status) and psychological characteristics (such as the propensity to sensation-seeking, or relational difficulties), but also by the location and frequency of Internet use, the online activities, their digital skills. Beyond the individual level, we also focused on social mediation - parents, school and peer group – that influence children’s online experiences. The third set of influences that helped understand online opportunities and risks for children is a number of structural factors at the country level, namely the technological infrastructure that supports their communities and schools, or the national regulation of the Internet and the media system, or the religious and cultural values that inform the society. This combined model found empirical support in the main findings of the EU Kids Online survey:

1. The more children use the Internet, the more online activities they undertake, the more digital skills they gain and the more likely they are to climb the ‘ladder of online opportunities’ progressing from basic to participatory and creative uses of the Internet. Relatedly, the more children use the Internet, the more risk factors they encounter, and the higher the likelihood of self-reported harm.
2. **Not all Internet use results in benefits.** Online activities are neither beneficial nor risky *per se*. The chance of a child gaining the benefits depends on their age, gender and socio-economic status, on how their parents, teachers, siblings and peers support them, and on the positive content available to them.
3. **Not all risk results in harm:** the chance of a child being upset or harmed by online experiences depends partly on their age, gender and socio-economic status, and also on their resilience and resources (including digital and social skills) to cope with what happens on the Internet. So, the social mediation they receive as national regulation and cultural values shape the way children deal with online risks.
4. Age, socio-economic status, psychological characteristics, inequalities in digital skills and, partially, gender are factors that differentiate among individual children: children who are older, engage in more online activities, are higher in self-efficacy and sensation seeking, and have more psychological problems, encounter more risks of all kinds online. **In contrast, younger children, who undertake fewer online activities, have fewer skills, are lower in self-efficacy**
and sensation seeking, or have more psychological problems are exposed to less risks on the Internet but find them more harmful.

The recent replication of key parts of the survey by the Net Children Go Mobile project shows the degree to which children’s engagement with the Internet and mobile technologies is in fact changing rapidly: the smartphone is now the preferred device to go online for an increasing number of children. While providing access on the move, the smartphone is actually used most in the privacy of the child’s bedroom, thus fostering the privatisation of Internet access and use, and posing new challenges to parents in their attempts to manage children’s engagement with digital media. The comparison between the Net Children Go Mobile and EU Kids Online findings also shows that the correlation between risks and opportunities can actually be changed through policy interventions: whereas in Denmark, Italy and Romania the likelihood that a child is exposed to online risks increases as children take up more activities on a daily basis, in Belgium, Portugal and the UK more opportunities have not been accompanied by a rise in risks. This difference can be partially attributed to the e-safety curricula in schools, awareness raising initiatives, and a restrictive-protective approach by parents (which, nonetheless, is also commonly observed in Italy).

Finally, the qualitative study conducted in both projects helped us go beyond statistics and understand that not all the online practices that adults perceive as risky are considered problematic by children, and not by all children. Exploring the consequences of Internet use for children, then, meant also recognising that children are far from homogeneous and that they belong to different youth subcultures (fans, geeks, cívics, sharers, and experimenters).

We also learned that future research is needed in order to better understand the (positive and negative) outcomes of children’s engagement with the Internet, at a variety of levels.

All EU Kids Online report are available at:
http://lse.ac.uk/EUKidsOnlineReports

All Net Children Go Mobile reports are available at:
http://netchildrengomobile.eu/reports/

The EU Kids Online methodological toolkit is available at:
http://lse.ac.uk/EUKidsOnlineDataMethods

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Developing Good Citizens in the Digital Age (by Ben Morgan)

This article features the United World College of Southeast Asia in Singapore, which is using around 7500 school owned laptops and tablets every day, and infusing technology into their teaching and learning practices.

Ben Morgan has worked in international education for 20 years, working at the United World College of SE Asia (UWCSEA) for the last 13 of those. As the Director of IT and member of the senior management team, Ben has responsibility for all aspects of technology use at the UWCSEA based in Singapore. This includes both the educational use of technology to support teaching and learning, and the IT infrastructure and systems.

The United World College of Southeast Asia (UWCSEA) is a co-educational, K-12 international school in Singapore. With two campuses, 5,500 students, 550 teachers and 8,000 parents, we are a large community. We are also a technology rich community, with around 7,500 school owned laptops and tablets and many more personally owned devices on our network every day. We have been infusing effective technology use into our day to day practice in earnest for the last 5 years, and have recently become one of the first Apple Distinguished Schools in Asia. Whilst the use of technology in a concerted way is a relatively new aspect of the school, developing good citizens has been at the core of what we do from day one. John Dewey wrote in the 1930’s “The purpose of education has always been to every one, in essence, the same - to give the young the things they need in order to develop in an orderly, sequential way into members of society.”

It is common for schools and organisations to talk about Digital Citizenship, and indeed a quick search on the Internet will produce several digital citizenship curriculums and many more resources. The concern with this is that the emphasis is on the digital piece. All too often the delivery of these programmes is delegated to IT teachers in schools as part of the IT curriculum. Why? Because it is about computers and that is the realm of the computer teachers.

This approach is flawed for two major reasons. Young people do not separate their digital lives from their offline lives, they move seamlessly between these worlds. According to research from the Pew Centre “Ninety-two percent of teens say they go online daily, including 24 percent who say they’re online “almost constantly” Separation in schools is artificial and very unlikely to resonate with them. More importantly it ignores centuries of practice around developing good citizens in schools. History shows us that the development of good citizens is a three-way partnership in education - teachers, students and parents working together. I suspect the reason that many schools and parents delegate responsibility for digital citizenship to specialist IT teachers is due to a lack of digital literacy skills amongst staff and parents. Whilst we acknowledge that this can be the case, UWCSEA sees a different solution. Delegation to specialists is a very limited strategy and fails to recognise the seamless nature of digital tool use for many children. So instead we believe that the solution is to ensure that all teachers and parents are sufficiently digitally literate to participate in a meaningful way.
Hence at UWCSEA we have a programme of teacher training and parent development. Here we will focus on the parent events. We run three different types of events that help parents develop their digital literacy. The first are training sessions in digital tools, including office productivity software, online collaboration tools and social media platforms. The second type provide examples of how we use technology to support teaching and learning in the classroom. The third type of sessions are family orientated workshops. It is this third type of session that has the most impact and always generates the most positive responses.

One example of these sessions is aimed at Middle School families and is called “Growing Up Digital.” In this evening event, families come and focus on developing some agreements around the use of computers and digital media in the home. The evening's primary purpose is to provide space and time to begin the important conversations between Middle School students and their parents around how and when digital technology is used at home. The Growing Up Digital night acts as a prompt to begin these discussions, guided by our staff, who act as both facilitators and consultants with families. By giving families and specific time and a protocol to focus discussion, we've found that they’re better equipped to negotiate limits and establish healthy behaviors from the start. Doing so results in stronger partnerships between student, parents, and the school regarding digital learning and reduces distractions and conflict.

“I really loved the child-parent forum. It's the first time I've done this kind of thing with my child and it helped me immensely in opening up conversations later at home, building on what we had started at the workshop. Thanks for this lovely format. I hope we can do many more of these.” - UWCSEA Parent

To sum-up, our belief is:

- Creating good citizens has always been a fundamental function of education and teachers
- Our approach to developing good citizens in a digital age, should remain the same
- A partnership between digitally literate teachers, parents and young people
- With a positive approach to the opportunities that digital technologies provide
- Schools need to support students, staff and parents in becoming digitally literate
- With the shared aim of creating informed and resilient young people

Links to UWCSEA Materials:
- Educational Technology at UWCSEA - Website
- UWCSEA - Using Technology to Enhance Teaching and Learning - iBook on iTunes

Blog Posts:
- Parenting in the Digital Age
- Protection, Paranoia & Parenting
- Screen Time - A plague within your houses?

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TOUCH Cyber Wellness

This article features the TOUCH NGO in Singapore, which is supported by the ministries of the country as the leader and contributor to cyber wellness and media education.

TOUCH Cyber Wellness (TCW) is a key service of TOUCH Community Services – one of the largest multi-service Voluntary Welfare Organization (VWO) in Singapore. TCW is strongly supported and recognised by Singapore’s governing ministries, such as the Ministry of Social and Family Development, Media Literacy Council and the Media Development Authority, for being the trailblazer and active contributor to cyber wellness and media literacy education in Singapore.

TCW works closely with youths, educators and parents to cultivate respect, a balanced lifestyle, and responsible use of digital technologies to affect a positive and healthy cyber culture at home, in school and community.

Since 2001, TCW’s dynamic youth coaches have worked actively to promote cyber wellness, healthy gaming and online safety, reaching out annually to more than 120 schools and some 150,000 youths, parents, educators and counsellors through its action-research and evidence-based cyber wellness education programmes.

At its very own PlanetCRUSH Cyber Wellness Centres, TCW provides a healthy environment for youth mentoring groups, engaging workshops for youths and adults, as well as easy access to families and counsellors for consultations on cyber-related matters.

TCW is also the key agency in Singapore providing counselling on cyber wellness issues through its research-validated cyber wellness counselling approach and programmes. In light of this, TCW is the
Singapore Ministry of Education’s (MOE) selected agency for School Counsellors’ Training and Social Service Institute’s (SSI) sole agency in providing training courses for Social Work Practitioners on intervention methods for cyber related issues.

In terms of resources, TCW has developed a cyber wellness app for parents (notAnoobie) - a first of its kind in Singapore, providing a dedicated counselling hotline service (1800 377 2252 and cyberwellness@touch.org.sg) and several published resource books for parents and youths.

TCW also collaborates with like-minded agencies and corporations to promote cyber wellness efforts in Singapore. In their latest strategic partnerships, TCW pioneered into new areas and needs, developing cyber wellness curriculum for the preschoolers and special needs students.

On the international front, TCW has partnered with academic institutions in China and Indonesia to conduct digital citizenship education and equipping programmes for students and professionals.

In 2011, TCW was awarded the Singapore Youth Award, the nation’s highest youth accolade under the Community & Youth Services Team Category, in recognition of its commitment in encouraging holistic youth development through promoting cyber wellness, healthy gaming and online safety.

**Contacting TOUCH Cyber Wellness:**

Website – [www.planetcrush.org](http://www.planetcrush.org)

Email – cyberwellness@touch.org.sg

Facebook – [www.facebook.com/touchcyberwellness](http://www.facebook.com/touchcyberwellness)

Instagram - @touchcyberwellness
Empowering Youth Netizens through Intel’s Digital Wellness Program  (by Sattiya Langkhapin and Ploycarat Nana, Intel Thailand)

This article features the Intel’s Digital Wellness curriculum designed to promote awareness of benefits and dangers of Internet-based interaction, familiarizes students with the types of cyber threats, consequences and protective measures, and nurtures a strong character through cyber wellness values.

According to a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), in 2014, cybercrime costs $ 575 billion a year, $ 100 billion to US economy, and 0.8% of the global economy (CSIS, 2014). If cybercrime were a country, it would be 27th largest economy worldwide. The damage is not restricted to economy. A survey in 2014 revealed that 1 in 5 primary school pupils in Singapore has been bullied online (Tai, 2014). Nonetheless, technology is an integral part in the daily lives of today’s younger generations. Children and youth around the world account for a large proportion of the online community, from surfing the net, updating their lives on social media, to playing online games. Because of this, they are also more exposed to online exploitations that range from harassment, pornography, illegal activities and fraudulent scams.

Intel, as a leader in IT innovation and technology, was able to represent the efforts of the private sector in promoting safe and responsible Internet use at the recent conference hosted by UNESCO Bangkok and UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) about ‘Policies and Initiatives to Promote Children’s Safe, Effective and Responsible Use of ICT: Asia Pacific Consultation’ by highlighting the positive effects and best practices of Intel Digital Wellness Program.

The curriculum. Intel Digital Wellness curriculum was designed to promote awareness among children and youth on the benefits and dangers of Internet-based interactions, as well as responsible and informed decision-making within cyberspace, especially on social media platforms. The curriculum engaged young people aged 13-18 years old in schools across India through various hands-on exercises, case studies, scenario cards and many more.

The program. In July 2015, Intel collaborated with National e-Governance Division (NeGD) to organize India Digital Wellness Online Challenge as part of the Digital India Week. Students were asked to complete a series of questions based on their knowledge of digital wellness and decision-making within the cyberspace. The Challenge achieved astonishing results of almost 1 million participants, with 144 winners from across 36 states invited to participate in a national event and congratulated by top officials from India’s Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. Anoop Kumar Agrawal, President and CEO of NeGD, expressed that “... there was a dire need of introducing a fun and interactive way of making these users acquainted with the challenges. We are extremely delighted to see the response we’ve received”.

The sustainability model. In order to make sustainable change, it is critical to involve all significant stakeholders in the Digital Wellness Program as a national mission. Public-private partnership plays a key role in the long-term sustainability of such initiative. Therefore, platforms and mechanisms should be created to support more policy dialogues between relevant stakeholders at national and regional levels. Closer collaborations between the public and private sectors can allow key decision makers to share the different priorities for their governments and the gaps that the industry can fill in and contribute towards.
Intel’s Digital Wellness Program in India was just one example of how Intel works toward safe and responsible digital citizenship. Cyber Security Classroom Packet and Take Home Kit were developed and distributed to Grade 6-12 students in the US. At higher education level, Intel sponsored security curriculum in 33 faculties worldwide to build capacity for 3,500 computer science undergraduates. From technology development perspective, Intel Security continues to innovate on software and services with improved prevention and remediation of security vulnerabilities. It is Intel’s priority, aligning with governments worldwide, to ensure safe and secure cyberspace for young digital citizen, allowing them to take full advantage of the benefits of ICT, gain amazing experiences and innovate the world.

Online Resources:
http://www.thinkbeforeyoulinkinschool.com/

References


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News and Events:

*Policies and Initiatives to Promote Children’s Safe, Effective, and Responsible Use of ICT: Asia Pacific Consultation (9-11 September 2015, Bangkok, Thailand)*

This article features the recent Consultation meeting on the theme of ‘Safe, effective, and responsible use of ICT’, which brought together around 60 participants, including governments officials, representatives of international organizations, private sector and NGOs, teachers, parents, and students. The article also includes the voices from the meeting, reflecting on the importance of cyber wellness and digital citizenship.
Since 2014, UNESCO Bangkok has been undertaking the “Fostering Digital Citizenship through Safe, Effective and Responsible Use of ICT” project, aiming to promote policy dialogue on the issues of the positive use of ICT and digital citizenship. In light of this project, UNESCO Bangkok and UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office organized the “Policies and Initiatives to Promote Children’s Safe, Effective, and Responsible Use of ICT: Asia Pacific Consultation”, which brought together around 60 participants, i.e. government officials, representatives of international organizations, private sector and NGOs, teachers, parents and students. All stakeholders agreed that with the rapid proliferation and emergence of ICT, the myriad opportunities as well as risks should be considered and addressed. The widespread use of ICT has brought forth a range of social and ethical issues, some of which are online safety and security, inappropriate content, health and mental hazards. There is therefore an urgent need to equip young digital citizens with the appropriate knowledge, critical skills, and attitudes to leverage and enjoy the full spectrum of ICT benefits. All stakeholders were encouraged to develop and adopt a proactive approach towards fostering favourable and healthy environments in promoting responsible and safe use of ICT, especially among our youth.

The Regional Consultation aimed to share the findings from the policy review of the Asia Pacific region and its educational programmes, policies and practices; refine the draft of policy recommendations to develop a framework for policy guidelines; and formulate an Action Plan. The resulting guidelines address the gaps in promoting children’s safe, effective, and responsible use of ICT in the region. During the event, participants were acquainted with various impressive initiatives and research evidence from around the world, including the EU Kids Online and Net Children Go Mobile in Europe, UNESCO’s Media and Information Literacy Programme, ITU industry guidelines on online child protection, Intel’s Digital Wellness Program, and more, all of which contributed to rich discussions during group work and plenary sessions.

To share the participants’ impressions from the meeting, here are a few ‘voices’ collected during the consultation:

- “UNESCO’s strength is in bringing the right people together in order to move the agenda forward. The activities were well-structured with a great deal of information, active working groups, and as always, clearly set goals. I personally valued the networking opportunity, always having the chance to meet new knowledgeable people.” (Tony Brandenburg, ISTE)

- “I loved the methodology of creating a policy framework and guidelines. We have such a diverse group of people and countries working together to create a common understanding for ICT in Education, especially in fostering safe, effective and responsible use of ICT among children.” (Ronghuai Huang, Beijing Normal University)

- “This was my first experience of attending a UNESCO consultation and I was impressed with the diversity of viewpoints and experience. Participants of different ages, cultures, nationalities, language groups and life experiences were represented in the gathering and contributed to these deliberations. At the same time, the consultation was small enough for everybody to feel a responsibility to contribute. There was a great mix of expert presentations, collaborative discussion and goal-oriented activity. Outputs were clearly an important priority and this helped participants focus in an applied way. It was very interesting to see the development of policy in practice and I feel enriched by my involvement in this process. I am inspired to continue creating
and communicating relevant research to provide an evidence-base for policy.” (Leila Green, Edith Cowan University)

- “It is about time that Asia Pacific convened together and formulated a common vision, keeping in mind the diversity of contexts of the different countries. Children’s rights have long been advocated by UNESCO and UNICEF. In the 21st century and beyond, these rights also include their rights and responsibilities as digital citizens.” (Queena Lee-Chua, Ateneo de Manila University)

- “The meeting was very interesting. Uzbekistan has paid a lot of attention to children’s access to ICT, Internet, and consequently, we also need to be able to protect our children from information that is harmful to their health and development. I found it interesting to get acquainted with the experiences of other countries in the Asia Pacific region regarding this theme.” [trans. from Russian] (Abdurashid Khundibaev, Ministry of Public of Education, Republic of Uzbekistan)

For more information, please visit the Meeting website.

**Working group on Digital Safety and Cyberwellness at EDUsummit 2015**

(by Dr. Yuhyun Park)

*This article provides a brief description of the recent EDUsummit that took place in Bangkok by Curtin University and the support of UNESCO Bangkok.*

With tremendous advances in ICT digital technologies, every dimension of human life has been radically transformed. These changes are particularly impactful for our children who are born in this hyper-connected digital world. Their identities are no longer bounded by local, national, or global citizenry; they are also digital citizens. Undoubtedly, the technologies have brought significant benefits to children.

However, unintended negative side effects have also manifested from the rise in digital technologies. These consequences threaten children’s safety and human rights.

It is critical for national policy-makers and government leaders to realize the importance of digital citizenship for children so that they can be properly equipped with the core values, competencies and social and emotional intelligences to not only protect them from the growing number of digital risks, but also help them to creatively and responsibly use digital media and technologies as actively participating digital citizens.

Through the EDUsummit the global community of researchers and educators focused on the effective use of ICT in education. Since its inception in 2009, this event has established a network of experts who meet biannually to assess the status of the education system regarding ICTs. Similarly, the 2015 meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand, a product of collaboration between Curtin University and UNESCO.
Bangkok. Through the division of participants into nine Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), they were expected to collaborate on developing discussion papers and policy briefs on their respective focus areas. The TWGs explored themes such as smart partnerships, mobile learning, educational equity, assessment, creativity, indicators, digital citizenship and curriculum. With almost a hundred participants, the event itself provided opportunities to reflect voices from the Asia-Pacific region, as the compiled policy briefs are intended to be considered by the Ministers in the region. Participants had plenty of opportunities to work in groups, as well as provide cross-group feedback and suggestions.

In regard to digital citizenship and cyberwellness, the TWG 8 aimed to address this issue systematically and holistically from building a secure infrastructure to shaping a sustainable digital culture for children at the national and regional levels. These discussion were built on from March 2014, the inaugural expert meeting was held at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore in order to develop the first draft of a UNESCO policy guideline, and the Regional Consultation on Policies and Initiatives to Promote Children’s Safe, Effective, and Responsible Use of ICT held in Bangkok, Thailand in September 2015, to further enrich the draft policy guideline with additional evidences from the region.

At the EDUsummiT 2015 immediately following the Regional Consultation, members of the Technical Working Group 8 continued the discussion by exploring various challenges concerning children’s vulnerabilities to cyber risks, level of awareness among education stakeholders on various issues, network security, data privacy, evidence-based and system approaches to programmes, and relevant competencies, among others. Some of the group’s initial discussions focused on developing safe systems and infrastructure, question of data privacy and related policies, raising awareness of the impacts of technologies, ethical online behavior, evidence-based research, and collaboration, to name a few.

Finalized recommendations will be further elaborated and refined, with the support of data-driven evidence and analysis, towards publishing a UNESCO policy brief targeting the region’s education sector.

The members agreed to independently set up a Digital Citizenship Network in order to build a comprehensive, high-level framework and action plan to promote digital citizenship and cyber wellness through active production and implementation of publications and advocacy activities. Best practices from around the world and practical toolkits will also be introduced for interested stakeholders to easily adopt, localize and implement in their respective countries.
The UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Education.
The theme for the 2015 edition of the Prize is Pedagogical Innovation in the Use of ICT in Teaching and Learning. The prize is funded by the Kingdom of Bahrain and rewards individuals, institutions, and NGOs for projects and activities which demonstrate best practices in, and creative use of ICTs to enhance learning teaching and overall educational performance. The deadline for submission of all nomination files is 10 November 2015.

The Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development (FIT-ED) Call for Proposals
FIT-ED is calling for research proposals on digital learning innovation in developing countries in Asia. Four priority research themes are: MOOCs; Intelligent Tutoring Systems; Digital Game-Based Learning; and Learning Analytics. The deadline for submission is 21 October 2015.

2015 Digital Media and Developing Minds Conference (13-16 October 2015, Irvine, CA, USA)
Bringing together over 250 scientists and researchers, the conference aims to identify and report on the research on the impact of digital media, establish a dialog between medical and social researchers, exchange ideas, and meet funders, educators, and industry.
The Asian Conference on Society, Education & Technology 2015 (21-25 October 2015, Kobe, Japan)
The Seventh Asian Conference on Education aims to provide opportunities for networking, sharing latest research, and joining a global academic community.

Resources:

- **Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers (MIL)**
  This tool aims to provide educators with the main competencies on MIL, including pedagogical approaches for teachers to integrate MIL in their classrooms.

- **Children’s Rights in the Digital Age: A Download from Children Around the World**
  This publication unravels the stories of 148 children in 16 countries who took part in workshops to discuss opportunities and risks of using digital media. These discussions are reflected in this report.

- **Digitally Connected: Global Perspectives on Youth and Digital Media**
  This ebook is a collection of essays that provide various perspectives on youth experiences with digital media, with a special focus on the developing contexts.

- **Protecting Children from Cybercrime: Legislative Responses in Asia to Fight Child Pornography, Online grooming, and Cyberbullying**
  This World Bank regional study provides an overview of 17 Asian countries’ responses to online child abuse, especially in relation to child pornography and cyberbullying.

New Publications:

- **Students, Computers and Learning**
  This OECD publication looks at how students use of ICT devices have evolved in the recent years, further exploring how education systems and schools are integrating ICT into teaching and learning.

- **Investing against Evidence: the Global State of Early Childhood Care and Education**
  Part of UNESCO’s Education on the Move series, this book features lessons learned from research and experiences from different continents. It argues for reversing the trend of ‘investing against evidence’ so that children can utilize the benefits of quality ECCE.

- **Main Science and Technology Indicators**
  This latest OECD publication provides indicators that present the level and structure of the efforts of the OECD member countries, and seven non-member economies.

Next issue: The October issue will focus on the theme of EMIS and ICT supported planning. If our readers are interested in contributing to this edition, please do not hesitate to contact us.
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ICT in Education website: http://www.unescokk.org/education/ict
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