

UNDERSTANDING THE USE OF ICTs BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

in relation to their risks and vulnerabilities
online specific to sexual exploitation -
A youth-led study in **LATIN AMERICA**



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INTRODUCTION

Globally, the Internet has become a fundamental part of our social life, as it not only provides the largest single source of information and reference materials found anywhere in the world, but also offers enormous communication possibilities at a global scale, through an ever growing array of online applications such as chat rooms, social networks, instant messaging tools and games. In an attempt to eliminate the digital divide separating the developed and the developing world (a U. N. Millennium Development Goal), institutions around the world have sought to make new technologies, especially those related to information and communication, more accessible.

Modern ICTs (Internet and Communication Technologies) have evolved from traditional land-line access to the Internet from a desktop computer, to smaller, portable and more affordable alternatives. A mobile phone, which is almost ubiquitous these days, can serve as a connection platform for Internet access. With the growing accessibility of technology and social networking, it is important to understand that a child's interaction and risk factors do not always revolve around the traditional Internet. Children's contextual vulnerabilities can arise out of the exchange of text messages, multimedia messages and connectivity to mobile Internet and social networks such as Facebook, all of which can entirely take place

through mobile phones. This is even more significant in the context of countries aggressively rolling out mobile phone networks, which are now accessing areas which were previously isolated in terms of Internet connectivity, due to the previously prohibitive costs associated with infrastructure development.

Along with all the benefits that the modern ICTs provide, they also create risks and vulnerabilities, especially due to the anonymity in online communications, rapidness of the interactions and the possibility to hide one's identity. Moreover, recent technical advances have made it possible to exchange in real time, high quality pictures and videos through various communication platforms, including fast emerging mobile phone networks, and different hand-held devices such as cell phones, personal digital assistants (including tablet devices such as I pads, hand held gaming devices, etc.). All of these technological advances enhance the communication possibilities but also the risks connected to them. A large number of cases reported show the harmful misuse of information and communication tools to target children. Incidences of cyber bullying among peers, Internet grooming of children by adults, intent of sexual exploitation and abuse, hacking and malicious use of personal information, posting of images for humiliation or for extortion for sexual favours or other demands, are growing more common across the

world¹. As such behaviour is not geographically restricted, children and young people can be affected anywhere in the world, basically wherever they access the online world and use such technologies.

In the last decade, the number of Internet users in Latin America and the Caribbean has increased steadily, due in part to the rapid development and implementation of ICTs in the region. Internet penetration, which is the number of Internet users in a country as a percentage of its population, has gone from 8.2% in 2002 to 18.8% in 2006², and reached 39.5% by the end of 2011³. These figures represent an almost 500% increase in one decade. Even though Internet penetration rates in Latin America still do not equal the average penetration of countries in the European Union or North America, which for most cases range from 60% to 97%, Latin America is the only developing region in the world that has surpassed the world average penetration rate, that stays at 32.7%⁴.

Governmental programmes developed to facilitate children's access to the Internet do not always provide for comprehensive mechanisms (e.g. policies and guidelines, online safety tools and training, etc.) to prevent situations where children are at risk of being victims of sexual exploitation online or situations where children may harm other children online. The lack of protection mechanisms can be attributed to various factors but a leading factor is adults such as parents, teachers and caregivers lack of understanding of the issues affecting children. Part of adults' lack of awareness can be attributed to the apparent complexity of the new technologies and the difficulty less technologically-prone adults may have interacting in these new mediums. Many countries also do not allocate enough resources for training such people due to other priorities. Additionally, there is a lack of resources and capacity within various disciplines such as in the law enforcement to pursue online crimes. But for many children who were born in an environment immersed in ICTs, cyberspace and social media constitute a natural way of socialising with one another, and some authors

further suggest that this generation of children's constant contact with the new technologies has resulted in them thinking differently than their parents, engaging in a new thinking process, and possibly even a new brain structure.⁵ Therefore, understanding how these 'native inhabitants' of cyberspace use and understand it is a fundamental and necessary first step in implementing successful policies and programmes to protect them from possible threats.

A limited amount of research has been conducted in Latin America on the dynamics of children's interaction with ICTs and their habits, methods and frequency of communication when online, as well as on how they perceive risks online and what strategies they currently can use to avoid harm, harassment and abuse in connection to ICTs.

Some of the most relevant studies have taken place in Brazil, Argentina and Costa Rica, and were carried out by Safernet⁶, Chicos.net⁷ and Paniamor⁸, respectively. These studies were mostly based on interviews with teenagers, and some of the studies also interviewed parents and teachers. Additionally, Fundación Telefónica⁹ carried out a comprehensive study of the situation in seven countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela), with data gathered from a very extensive sample of children ranging from 6 to 18 years of age. ECPAT's own study attempts to shed light about some unique ways in which children and young people are using modern ICTs in the region and reveal some fundamental issues and concerns that exist. These observations are meant to highlight some of the gaps in the current practices and also probe deeper into areas that might create vulnerabilities for children while they go online. Additionally, this study aims to provide an insight into child developmental factors and perspectives which need to be understood in greater detail in order to understand the growth and acceptance of newer forms of communications and relevant engagement among children.

1. Instituto Interamericano del Niño, la Niña y Adolescentes (IIN) (2011), *Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes e Internet*. Available at: <http://www.iin.oea.org/IIN2011/documentos/Explotacion-sexual-comercial-version-digital.pdf>

2. UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) (2008), *Information Economy Report 2007-2008*. Science and technology for development: the new paradigm of ICT.

3. Internet World Stats, updated on 31st December 2011. Available at: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats2.htm#americas>

4. Internet World Stats, updated on 31st December 2011. Available at: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

5. Marc Prensky (2001), *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants*, MCB University Press, Vol.9 No.5. Available at: <http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/>

6. Several documents in 2008 and 2009, available at <http://www.safernet.org.br/site/prevencao/pesquisas>

7. Chic@s y Tecnología. Usos y costumbres de niñas, niños y adolescentes en relación a las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación y Hacia un Entendimiento de la Interacción de los Adolescentes con Dispositivos de la Web 2.0. El caso de Facebook, both published in 2009 and available at: <http://chicos.net.ar/internetsegura/publicaciones.htm>

8. Conocimientos, Actitudes y Prácticas Asociados al Uso de Internet en Adolescentes. Informe sobre Estudio CAP en Colegios de la Región Metropolitana, 2010. Available at: <http://paniamor.org/interactivo/centrodoc/uit.html>

9. La Generación Interactiva en Iberoamérica: Niños y Adolescentes ante las Pantallas, 2008. Available at: <http://www.generacione-sinteractivas.org/upload/libros/Generaciones-Interactivas-en-Iberoamerica-Ninos-y-adolescentes-ante-las-pantallas.pdf>

Some of the main points raised by all these publications, including this youth-led study are:

- Most children today learn how to use ICT tools and go online at a very young age and do so mostly by themselves or with help from a friend, with very limited parental or school guidance. This is often caused by most adults lack of knowledge about the new technologies, particularly in terms of their reach, scope and functions beyond traditional computing.
- Children and young people are using the social networking platforms and instant messaging to communicate with known and unknown friends.
- Most teenagers are part of at least one online social network, where they almost always publish personal information such as their full names, home and school addresses and telephone number. Additionally, most are also sharing compromised images of themselves online, to gain attention and attract comments from other peer users.
- Popularity is often measured according to the number of friends that an individual has in these social networks, so it is a common practice for teenagers to befriend strangers online, in some cases even meeting them in the real life afterwards.
- Caregivers, such as parents or teachers, are generally absent from the teenagers' interactions online. They are very rarely part of children's friends lists, they seldom appear in photos, and if they do appear in photos almost invariably they are not tagged or identified. In general, caregivers don't know or have the capacity to control what their children or students do online. Moreover, teenagers rarely speak to their caregivers about their online actions, fearing censorship and forfeiture of their online privileges and only approach caretakers after getting in trouble. Usually teenagers do not consider their parents or other adults as a competent authority to guide them in their online activities.
- A high percentage of children usually access the Internet from Internet cafés, rather than from home or school, bypassing every form of control that could be put in place by parents or teachers, and leaving Internet café managers as the only adults that can possibly control the child's actions online. But in many cases, there are no guiding principles or codes of conduct for such operators and operators lack a framework of governance that would otherwise allow them to create a more protective environment in their establishments.

In summary, there is ample academic and anecdotal evidence of the high level of vulnerability that exists for many children using the Internet and communication technologies, and the correspondingly low level of control and guidance given by caregivers. The reports also highlight the need to create and make available proper educational resources that are appealing to children and young people and can be used to sensitise and empower children for their own safety.

This report is the result of a research project carried out by young researchers from the ECPAT's Youth Partnership Project (YPP) and other youth groups associated with ECPAT International in Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. This report examines ICT use of teenagers in their respective countries and the risks that they face, including the views and experiences of teenagers, school teachers and, for the first time, Internet café owners or workers. It is one of the first regional comparative studies carried out in the region about the topic, and even though the sample size of the study is small, it is expected to shed some light on the issue in order to influence the general public and decision makers to promote action in the education, media and public policy arenas to ensure the protection of children using the Internet in the region.

The five chosen countries give a very heterogeneous representation of the use of the ICTs in Latin America. Chile and Uruguay are relatively developed countries with Internet penetrations of 59.2% and 56.1%, respectively, while in Guatemala only 16.5% of the population uses the Internet regularly, and Mexico and Peru have Internet penetrations of 36.9% and 34.1%, respectively¹⁰. A very similar pattern is found when comparing the percentage of people having Facebook profiles in each country, with 54.5% of Chileans and 45.9% of Uruguayans having a Facebook profile, while 27.3% of Mexicans, 28.1% of Peruvians and only 13.1% of Guatemalans do¹¹.

Moreover, all countries except for Chile have implemented, to varying degrees, the One Laptop Per Child Programme (OLPC), which aims to provide each primary-school student with a laptop computer especially designed to be used as a learning tool¹². While the Programme in Guatemala is still barely in a pilot stage, and is implemented by the private sector in certain communities rather than by the government at a national level, Peru and Mexico have already started covering part of their rural populations, but still have a long way to go before reaching all of their children. Uruguay is the only country in Latin America, and the first country in the world, to fully apply the OLPC Programme at the national level, providing a laptop to each primary school student in the country. Even though these programmes do not generally

apply to secondary school students, which are the main focus of this research, all children that have been part of this programme, especially in Uruguay, have grown up using computers from very early on and as a result have unquestionable digital proficiencies, and will provide a very special case that will be analysed in the recommendations section.

ECPAT INTERNATIONAL

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography & Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) is a global network of NGOs and individuals working together for the elimination of every form of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). ECPAT was first founded in 1990 as a three-year campaign to end the commercial aspect of sexual exploitation of children in Asia, and then became an established and respected NGO comprised of more than 80 member organisations in over 75 countries working to end CSEC. Specifically, ECPAT has 12 members in 12 countries in Latin America. Many of these ECPAT regional/country members are actually national networks of local NGOs.

ECPAT works to build collaboration among local civil society actors and the broader child rights community in order to form a global social movement for the protection of children from sexual exploitation. ECPAT groups are involved in the implementation of various initiatives to protect children at local levels, including education, awareness raising, research and advocacy, while the International Secretariat based in Bangkok, Thailand, coordinates the network and provides technical support and information, while simultaneously representing the whole network at the international level, and advocating to key international policy makers such as the United Nations on behalf of the network.

YOUTH PARTNERSHIP PROJECT (YPP)

Child and Youth Participation, meaning the participation of children and young people in the decision making process on issues that affect them, is at the heart of ECPAT's strategy to eliminate CSEC. ECPAT especially aims to involve underprivileged children, who frequently are the ones most at risk of falling into CSEC.

In this context, the Global Youth Partnership Project for Child Survivors and Youth at Risk of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (YPP), has emerged as the most successful program to promote meaningful child and youth participation against the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Since 2009, the Global YPP has been successfully implemented in 11 countries in four different continents (Moldova, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, The Gambia, Togo, Cameroon, Guatemala, Chile, Mexico, Thailand and Cambodia). The Global YPP programme replicates the successful model of the pilot project implemented in South Asia (Bangladesh, India and Nepal), which is ongoing since 2005.

The main objectives of the YPP are:

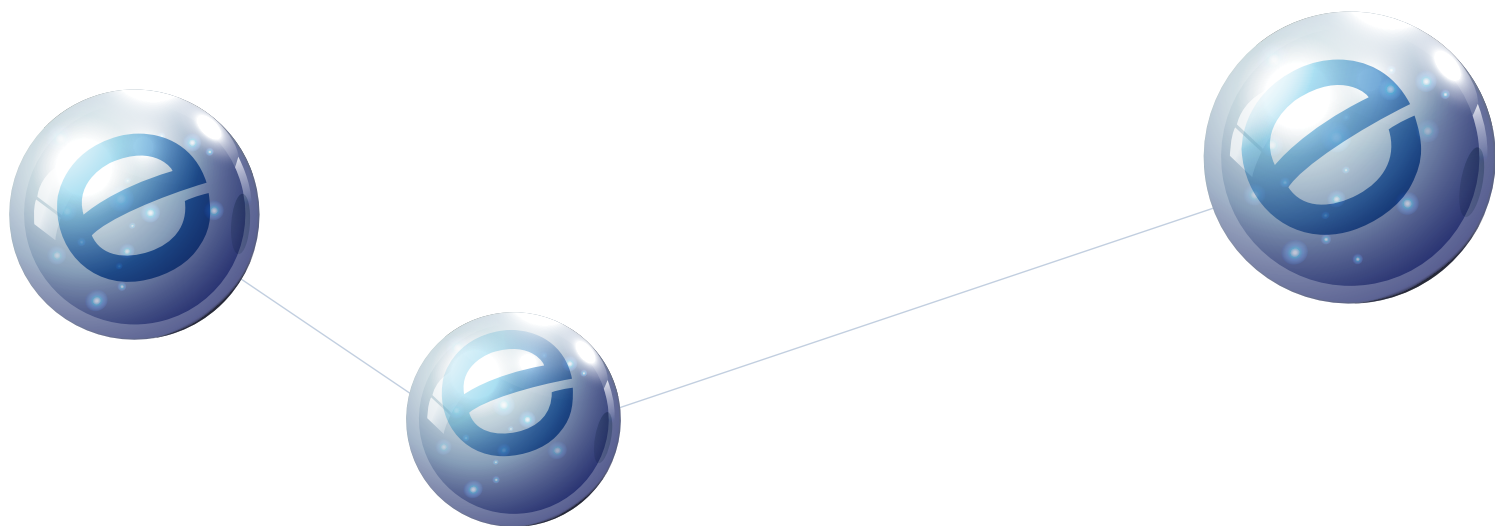
- Implement strategies that create and support youth participation initiatives in the fight against CSEC and trafficking;
- Develop the skills of Peer Supporters and YPP Partner Organisations to provide Peer Support Programmes and support to CSEC victims, and
- Empower young survivors of CSEC and at-risk youth to run advocacy campaigns that successfully lobby governments and raise awareness to protect children from CSEC and hold duty-bearers accountable.

In its three years existence, YPP has involved nearly four thousand children and teenagers directly in peer support training programmes and thousands of other children in the design and implementation of awareness raising and advocacy activities. YPP has reached several thousand children and adults in the countries where the project has been implemented.

¹⁰. Internet World Stats, updated on 31st December 2011. Available at: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/south.htm#> and <http://www.internetworldstats.com/central.htm#>

¹¹. Internet World Stats, updated on 31st December 2011. Available at: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/south.htm#> and <http://www.internetworldstats.com/central.htm#>

¹². <http://one.laptop.org/>



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Several international conventions and organisations highlight the responsibility that governments have to protect children from sexual exploitation, including child pornography. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)¹³ and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC)¹⁴, which were adopted in 1990 and 2002, respectively, require State Parties to criminalise any form of CSEC under their national law, specifically defining “child pornography” as “any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for sexual purposes”. All five countries that participated in this research have ratified both of these documents, and therefore have committed to protect their children against these actions.

Moreover, Convention no.182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)¹⁵, which entered into force in 2000 and has also been ratified by all five countries in this research, defines “the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances”, as one of the worst forms of child labour, the elimination of which should be prioritised in the national legislation of all State Parties.

Finally, all five countries, as part of the Organisation of American States (OAS), have also ratified the American Convention on Human Rights, which states that “every minor child has the right to the measures of protection required by his condition as a minor on the part of his family, society and the state”¹⁶. In 1994, the OAS also adopted the Inter-American Convention on International Traffic of Minors, which protects children from all forms of trafficking for unlawful purposes, including sexual exploitation, however, it does not explicitly mention child pornography¹⁷. Mexico¹⁸ and Chile¹⁹ have also been invited to accede to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, but none of them have signed nor ratified it yet.

Following the ratification of these international conventions, all five countries adopted laws penalising all forms of production, reproduction, distribution, purchase or sale of pornographic materials involving children²⁰. Additionally, the mere possession of child pornography, defined as the storage of pornographic materials involving children without the intent of selling or distributing in any form and for the personal use of the owner, is criminalised in all five countries except for Uruguay.

However, the Internet now is creating more opportunities

for child exploiters and child pornography users to access both child pornography and children directly with little or no oversight or regulation from law enforcement bodies. Therefore, it is important for countries to develop national legislation relating to child pornography, and protection of children when they use the Internet. As the Internet is not confined to national boundaries, harmonised legislation, international police cooperation and industry responsibility are required to effectively eliminate child pornography. Protection policies should especially involve private actors whose services are used to access the network and purchase child pornography, such as Internet Service Providers (ISPs), financial actors such as credit card companies and banks, and establishments providing Internet access to the general public, such as Internet cafés, schools, libraries, etc.

None of the five countries in this research have implemented any policy requiring ISPs or financial actors to report suspected cases of child pornography

or suspicious transactions. Also, only Peruvian²¹ and Uruguayan²² governments have addressed the role of establishments who offer access to the Internet, such as Internet cafés. In Peru and Uruguay, these types of establishments are required to install content filters in all computers used by children to block: websites containing pornography; chat forums or other types of communication involving pornographic subjects; and any other type of communication or information that could threaten the physical or psychological integrity of children or result in a violation of decency or public morality²³. Guatemalan²⁴ and Mexican²⁵ codes also include articles which state that children have a right to be protected against all information and materials that could be harmful for their welfare and that it is the state's responsibility to classify and regulate the access to all adult content. However, no specific rules have been yet drafted addressing Internet cafés or any other establishment offering Internet access in either Guatemala or Mexico.

¹³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm> [25th April 2012]

¹⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc-sale.htm> [25th April 2012]

¹⁵ International Labour Organisation, Convention No. C182, available at: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/ratific.pl?C182> [25th April 2012]

¹⁶ Organisation of American States, American Convention on Human Rights, available at: <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/b-32.html> [25th April 2012]

¹⁷ Organisation of American States, Organisation of American States Inter-American Convention on International Traffic of Minors, available at: http://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_B-57_Inter-American_Convention_on_International_Traffic_in_Minors.htm [27th April 2012]

¹⁸ <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1069971&Site=COE>

¹⁹ <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1417965&Site=CM>

¹²⁰ República de Chile, Código Penal Art. 366 & 374, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,LEGAL,NATLEGBOD,,CHL,,3db94a4f6,0.html> [27th April 2012]; República de Guatemala, Ley de Protección Integral de la Niñez y Adolescencia Art. 56 & Par. 3b, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,LEGAL,NATLEGBOD,LEGISLATION,GTM,,3dbe6b686,0.html> [25th April 2012]; República de Guatemala, Ley contra la Violencia Sexual y Trata de Personas, Art. 40 & 41, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,LEGAL,NATLEGBOD,LEGISLATION,GTM,,4a03e3d22,0.html> [25th April 2012]; Estados Unidos de México, Código Penal Federal Art. 202, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,LEGAL,NATLEGBOD,,MEX,,4c502b942,0.html> [25th April 2012]; República del Perú, Código Penal Art. 183, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,LEGAL,NATLEGBOD,,PER,,3e5365d84,0.html> [25th April 2012]; República Oriental del Uruguay, Ley 17.815/2004: Violencia Sexual Comercial o no Comercial Cometida contra Niños, Adolescentes o Incapaces, available at: <http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=biblioteca/pdf/6602> [26th April 2012]

²¹ República del Perú, Ley que Prohíbe el Acceso de Menores de Edad a Páginas Web de Contenido Pornográfico (Ley no 29139/2007), available at: http://www.minedu.gob.pe/files/288_201109141609.pdf [26th April 2012]

²² F. Melgar, Senado aprobó Control a Ciber Cafés, available at: <http://180.com.uy/articulo/Senado-aprobo-control-a-ciber-cafes> [27th April 2012]

²³ República del Perú, Ley que Prohíbe el Acceso de Menores de Edad a Páginas Web de Contenido Pornográfico (Ley no 29139/2007); F. Melgar, Senado aprobó Control a Ciber Cafés

²⁴ República de Guatemala, Ley de Protección Integral de la Niñez y Adolescencia, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,LEGAL,NATLEGBOD,LEGISLATION,GTM,,3dbe6b686,0.html> [25th April 2012]

²⁵ Estados Unidos de México, Ley para la Protección de los Derechos de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,LEGAL,NATLEGBOD,,MEX,,3e5224d67,0.html> [25th April 2012]

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by YPP in collaboration with youth groups associated with ECPAT in Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. The study is centred around a quantitative research analysing the social interactions of children aged 11 to 18 using new Internet-based technologies. This study followed the principles and methodology used for a similar research carried out by ECPAT International in Africa, with adaptation of the tools to the Latin American context.

TARGET GROUP

This research had three different target groups:

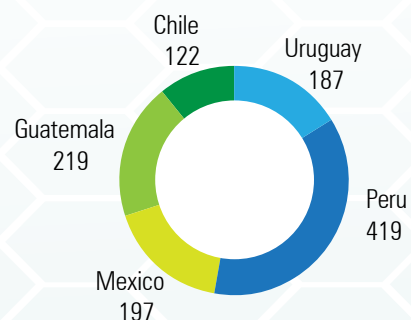
- **Children from 11 to 18 years old**

Children ranging from 11 to 18 years old were the main target group for this research. The age range was chosen for being the pre-adolescence and adolescence development periods, when children usually attend secondary school and start asserting their independence from their parents, often through rebellious attitudes that can take them to engage in risky activities and become especially vulnerable. All the individuals in this group used the same questionnaire, but they were divided by gender and into two different age groups (11-14, 15-18) during the analysis, as a means to separate pre-adolescents from

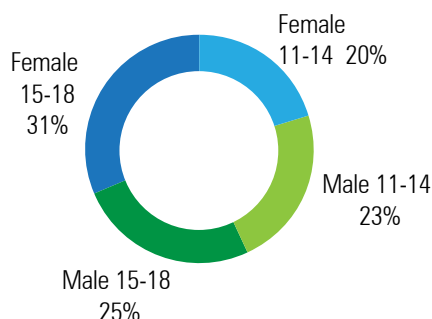
adolescents, in anticipation of different interests and dynamics from the two age groups.

1,144 children responded to the survey, distributed by country, age and gender as indicated below. While Peru is the most represented country in the study sample, this will be mostly a comparative study between countries, so the difference in the sample sizes should not bias the results. Moreover, Peru's larger representation in the sample doesn't seem to significantly affect the analysis by age and gender.

Children per country



Children per age and gender



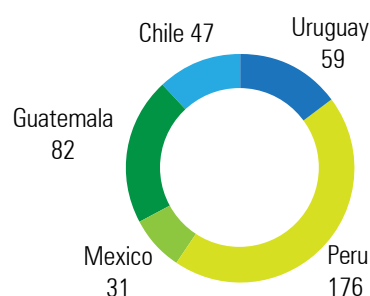
• School Teachers

School teachers play a very important role in the education of most children, not only transferring their knowledge but even their values and ethics. They are the most important adult presence that children usually get apart from their family members, and therefore share part of the responsibility safeguarding children. Moreover, nowadays many schools and classrooms are equipped with computers, which often offer an Internet connection to their students. Learning more about (1) teachers' personal knowledge about ICTs, (2) the information and education that teachers give to their students on these issues, and (3) the policies the school has on the use of the new technologies, are key elements to better understand the risks that children can face and how to reduce them. This research intended to interview mostly high school teachers imparting courses on ethics, computer science, social education or any other related fields in the schools where the targeted children were studying, but this was not always possible, and therefore other teachers teaching other courses or in different schools were also included.

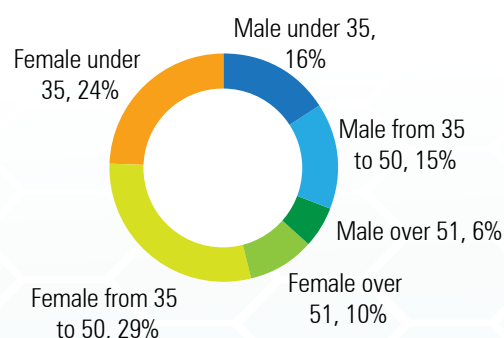
In total, 395 school teachers were interviewed, distributed by country, age and gender as below indicated. Clear age and gender differences among the school teachers interviewed can be observed. However, this should reflect the natural demographics of the teaching profession in Latin America, which according to this data is dominated by young females, mostly under 50 years old. In any case, this

uneven gender and age distribution of the teachers interviewed should not affect the results of this research, as all teachers have the same responsibility in educating their students, no matter their age or gender.

Teachers per country



Teachers per age and gender



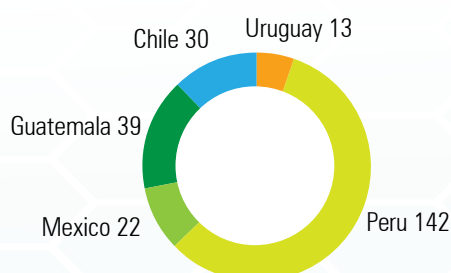
• Internet cafés

As many families in Latin America, particularly those from disadvantaged communities, don't have Internet access at home, both children and adults often go to the Internet cafés to access the Internet, often without any control from the café staff. For this reason, it is important to understand the policies, if any at all, in place for these establishments regarding Internet and ICT monitoring and regulation, as they are usually the only ones able to control children's use of the Internet. Considering the important role that Internet cafés play, this study tried to target those situated in the

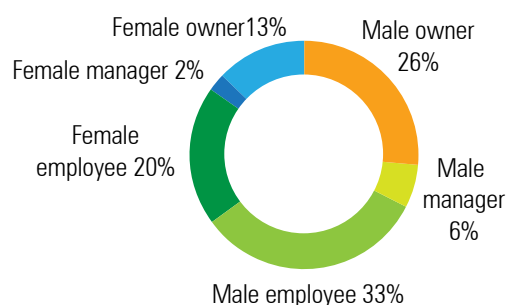
areas where the targeted children lived and studied, assuming that in most cases these are the Internet cafés that the targeted children use more often.

246 Internet café representatives participated in this research, distributed by country, gender and role as below indicated. In this case, Peru constitutes more than half of the sample, while Uruguay barely counts for a 5%. It is important to note that researchers in Uruguay had to reduce the size of their sample because of the difficulties they encountered in locating Internet cafés in their research areas, as most people in this country connects to the Internet from home, therefore reducing the number of Internet cafés available. In contrast, Peruvian researchers knowingly increased their sample size because of the high number of Internet cafés existing in the country. In any case, this data will also be considered on a country by country basis, so these differences in the sample size should not bias the results. However, it still should be noted that the small sample in some of the countries might not be significant enough to provide reliable results. It is also clear looking at these graphs that this is mostly a male occupation, with the number of men owning or managing this type of establishment doubling that of women.

Internet cafés per country



Internet cafés per gender and role



TARGETED AREAS

This youth-led study targeted mostly marginalised areas with low socio-economic standards in each of the five countries. These are the areas where ECPAT usually develops its work and therefore where its youth groups can get an easier access, and also these are the areas where children are in general most vulnerable and at risk of engaging in CSEC and other related activities. Guatemala is the only country that also interviewed children from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds that live in the centre of their capital city. The aim of including this social group from Guatemala was originally to enable a comparison of children from different socio-economic levels. However, as Guatemala was the only country that actually interviewed this group, this idea was rejected and this group was integrated with the rest of the sample from Guatemala.

The specific regions that were targeted in each country are:

Chile: Marginal areas in the regions surrounding the capital Santiago, mostly rural or urban with high unemployment rates, namely Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, Quillota, San Antonio and La Serena.

Guatemala: Areas of extreme poverty at Ciudad Quetzal, San Juan Sacatepéquez and Chinautla, at the poverty belt of Guatemala City, and areas in the centre of the capital comprising all of the social classes from lower to higher socio-economic levels.

Mexico: Marginal communities, both rural and urban, of Iztapalapa, La Merced and Xochimilco in Mexico City, and Tlalnepantla at Mexico State.

Peru: Marginal communities of Zona Sur, San Juan de Miraflores, Villa María del Triunfo and Villa Salvador in the capital Lima; urban areas of Huancayo and rural areas of Chanchamayo and Pichanaki in the Andean province of Junín, and urban areas of Loreto and rural areas of Maynas in the jungle province of Iquitos.

Uruguay: Urban areas of Malvín Norte and Centro Cordón and semi-rural area of Manga Piedras Blancas in Montevideo, all of which have a heterogeneous class distribution but are dominated by situations of poverty; suburbs Las Piedras and Ciudad de la Costa in Canelones, near the capital, and semi-rural area of Tala in the same province; tourist area of Maldonado on the coast to the East of the capital, and rural area of Treinta y Tres to the North of the country.

PILOT SURVEY

The three questionnaires (one for each target group: children, teachers and Internet café representatives) were prepared by ECPAT International and were tested on a reduced number of individuals from each target group by the young researchers in Guatemala, who volunteered to carry out the pilot project and were especially trained to do so.

Some of the main issues highlighted by this pilot project were:

- The wording of some of the questions was difficult to understand and had to be rephrased;
- Certain delicate questions made the interviewees feel uncomfortable and in some cases even become aggressive or refuse to continue answering the questionnaire;
- Children's questionnaires were too long, to the point that some children didn't manage to finish it or ended up replying randomly without paying much attention; and
- Some of the questions did not include all the possible answers.

This feedback was used to improve the questionnaires in order to avoid misunderstandings and uncomfortable or even dangerous situations for our young researchers.

DATA GATHERING

The young researchers in all five countries were trained on the use of the final amended questionnaires, and adapted them to the local context and language variant, in order to make sure that their peers would understand each of the questions. They also discussed methods to approach their interviewees, simulated interviews and possible scenarios and analysed any security issues that might arise and how to handle those particular types of situations. Before letting the young researchers implement the questionnaires by themselves, each interviewer completed a test run of the questionnaire with real interviewees, which was overseen by a responsible adult. The young researchers then began conducting the interviewing in groups of two or three. These groups were always in communication with their local ECPAT office via cell phone and had several documents issued by their local office certifying their participation in this research.

Most of the interviews with children were performed in class at school, often using course time given by some very collaborative teachers, or inviting students to stay a bit longer after class to answer the questionnaires. In some cases interviews were carried out during extra-curricular activities, or in a few cases interviewees were also approached in the streets, Internet cafés, bus stations and other establishments.

In the case of teachers, they sometimes filled their questionnaires in while their students were doing so, but in most cases they completed the survey during their spare time. Internet café representatives often preferred to take the questionnaires home and gave them back the next day, although some of them also filled them in immediately while they were working.

Most interviewees from the three target groups filled their questionnaires by themselves, with very limited participation from the young researchers, normally only in the case of confusion or questions about the survey, or in some cases the young researchers read the questions aloud while the interviewees marked their answers in private, in order to give them more privacy and freedom to reply with sincerity and without the fear of being judged. However, in a small amount of cases it was the young researchers that posed the questions one by one directly to the interviewees and marked the answers given.

ANALYSIS

Once all the data was collected, it was tabulated and sent to ECPAT International secretariat, which checked it, dismissed samples that were outside of the target group (children younger than 11 or older than 18) or not answering key questions such as their age and gender, and corrected some incoherent answers. After regulating the sample, ECPAT International analysed and interpreted the information, and wrote this report as a result. In order to improve upon the participative process, the young researchers were also asked to give their input regarding the interpretations of the survey answers. The youth researchers participation in this aspect of the process was seen as very important as they are themselves part of the main target group, and are therefore able in many cases to find explanations to some of the issues that would not have occurred to an external researcher, adding value and qualitative component to the whole quantitative research.

CHALLENGES

The whole research process went very smoothly, especially the data gathering process, which is usually the most difficult and delicate one. The young researchers were always very enthusiastic about the whole project and received very positive feedback from many of their interviewees, especially their teachers and peers. Interviews with the Internet café representatives were a bit more problematic, with some of them refusing to answer the questionnaire or being very tense when questioned, as they were scared of government controls. However, no serious problems relating to this issue ever occurred.

The only challenge found in working remotely with young researchers without experience was that it was very difficult to check their work until everything was completed and tabulated. Even though they were trained to check that all the questions had been answered correctly, many questions with no answers or questions with more than one answer were found. However, it was not difficult to correct some of these mistakes or to treat them just as blank answers without critically affecting the results, except for a couple of questions that a significant number of children had left blank, which have been properly commented on in this report.

Another challenge found in this research was some difficulty in assessing the truthfulness of some of the answers received. Most children were approached at school, and in some cases the interviews were even carried out in a face to face fashion. As a result, some of the interviewees may have hidden some actions that they had been involved in, because of being ashamed or too embarrassed to discuss them with the interviewer, or fearing that their teachers would gain access to these questionnaires and know about some of their secret activities. Because of this, the data presented in this report, and especially the last section dedicated to the dangerous activities in which children get involved, should be considered as indicative, as some of the numbers might actually be higher than reported. A similar issue might exist in the case of Internet cafés and teachers, as some teachers and representatives might have replied according to the existing legal requirements rather than according to their real actions, for fear of reprisals.

Different ways in which children access the Internet: Examining their online behaviour and practices.

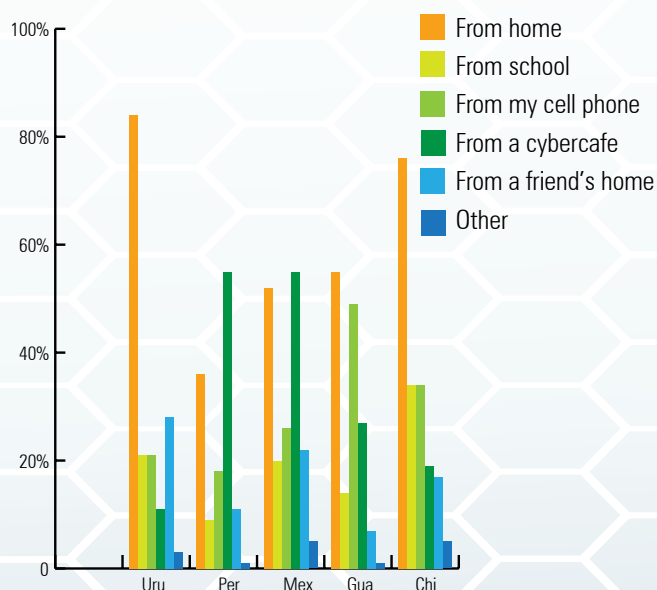
Not all children use the new technologies in the same way. Some of them have a computer at home, while others use the computers available at school or go to the Internet café. Some children use the new technologies mostly to communicate with their friends and family or meet new friends over the Internet, while others prefer to play or watch videos, and others use it just to do homework and learn how to use programmes. Regarding cell phones usage different children employ different uses, from the most basic uses of cell phones, such as calling and sending short message service (SMS), to the most advanced ones like exchanging files, taking pictures, listening to music or surfing the Internet.

In order to analyse the risks that children are exposed to when using these new technologies, it is important to first understand how children use the technologies: from where do they acquire and use them, and under what kind of supervision. It is also important to understand the primary activities children are engaged in during such interactions, which is what this chapter will try to discover. This chapter will first analyse the way in which children in each country connect to the Internet and how long they spend online, then study the activities they most often engage in and how they find their favourite sites. Following these two research questions, this chapter will examine how many of children have a cell phone and what do they mostly use it for, as well as the type of files they exchange through this device. Additionally, the children's use of Internet cafés will be discussed, analysing how many children on average go to the Internet cafés, when they go and why they go to the Internet cafés., Lastly, this chapter will examine the availability of computers at school.

CONNECTION MODES

82% of Uruguayan and 76% of Chilean children usually access the Internet from home, following the high rates of Internet penetration in these two countries mentioned above in the Introduction. In Peru and Mexico 55% of children interviewed accessed the Internet at Internet cafés. In Guatemala the most common access point seems to be the home computer, but comparing it with the low penetration rate of ICTs in the country, this could be considered a bias introduced by the inclusion of children from a higher socio-economic status in their sample. Additionally, 49% of teenagers in Guatemala say they mostly access the Internet from their cell phones, which according to the young researcher's opinion seems more reasonable due to the low prices of mobile Internet connection in the country and the greater affordability of cell phones over computers.

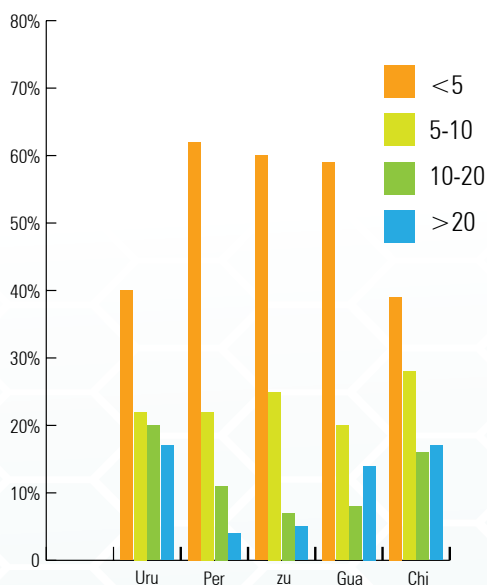
1. From where do you normally access the Internet?



Children in Uruguay and Chile mostly access the Internet from their own homes, while over half of Peruvian and Mexican children access the Internet from Internet cafés, and almost half of Guatemalan children use their cell phones for this purpose.

Following this same trend, Uruguayan and Chilean children use the Internet the most, with almost 20% using it for more than 20 hours a week. In contrast, only 5% of Peruvian and Mexican children interviewed claimed to spend so much time online. In the case of Guatemala, 14% of children use the Internet for more than 20 hours a week, and 59% use the Internet for less than 5 hours a week, showing a polarisation of the population most likely caused by the inclusion of children from higher socio-economic backgrounds in the Guatemala case study. It is important to note that all of the countries reflected the tendency of boys and older children to be online for longer periods of time than girls and younger children. According to the young researchers, this discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that boys and older children generally have more freedom than girls and younger children in pursuing their interests.

2. How many hours a week do you use the Internet?



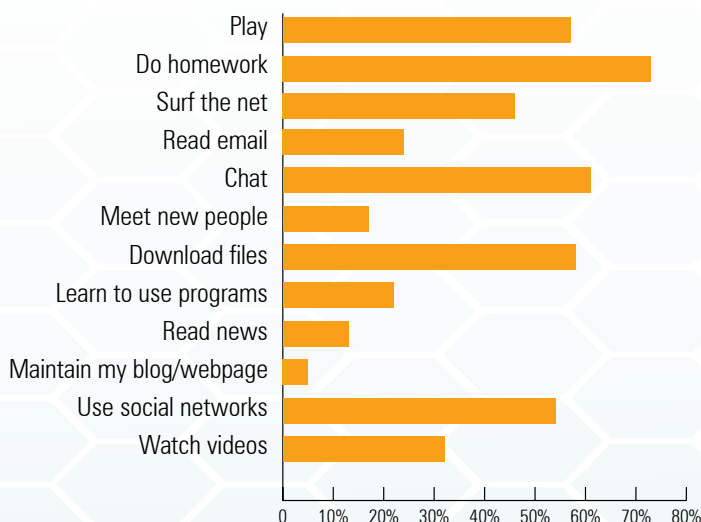
ACTIVITIES

73% of children interviewed in this study use the computer to do homework, making it the most popular use, followed by chat (61%), download files (58%), play (57%), use social networks (54%) and surf the net (46%). Still, 85% of all the children interviewed have a profile on a social network, with Facebook accounting for 91% of these profiles, and 70% of all children interviewed have an email address. Given the high percentage of child Facebook users in the sample, it is important to incorporate trainings on Facebook privacy settings to their education.

Children in Uruguay and Chile use the Internet more often and longer than children in the other three case-study countries.

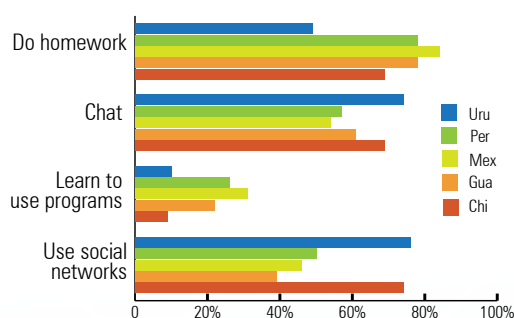
Boys and older children tend to spend more time online than girls and younger children.

3. What do you normally use the computer for?



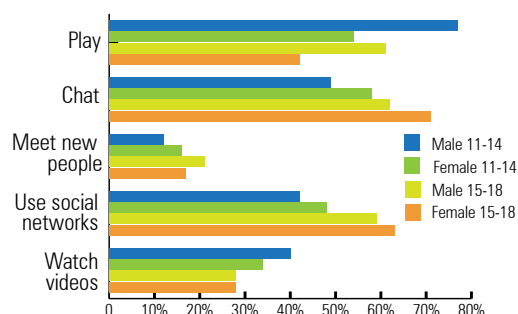
However, if we compare the data from the different countries, we can see that in countries with low ICT penetration rates, such as Guatemala, Peru and Mexico, activities such as doing homework or learning how to use programs are more popular. In contrast, in countries with higher ICT penetration rate such as Chile and Uruguay, using social networks and chats are much more popular. The direct correlation between higher Internet penetration and higher percentages of children using social networks and chats seems to suggest that in the region, more frequent access to the Internet is an enabler for opening up communication and using ICTs beyond traditional educational uses. The study suggests that children who have greater access to the Internet will eventually use it for applications beyond studies, and explore the medium further to engage in communications, making friends and profiling themselves online.

4. What do you normally use the computer for?



Children in Uruguay and Chile mainly use the Internet to chat and use social networks, while in Guatemala, Mexico and Peru they use it more often to do homework.

5. What do you normally use the computer for?

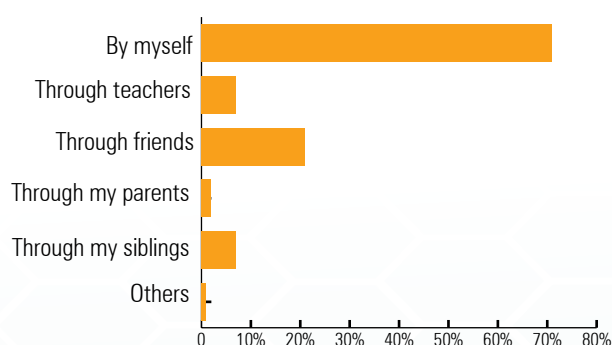


Similarly, activities such as watching videos and playing games online are more common among younger children than older ones, with boys in general being more interested in both videos and games than girls. In contrast, activities such as chatting and using social networks are much more popular among older children than among younger ones, with girls in general being more interested in these activities. Currently, older children have adopted the social networks and chat programmes as their standard communication tools, relying on these communication methods instead of the telephone, which is more expensive. Using social networks and chat programmes means a greater likelihood of bypassing traditional face to face social contact. However, a significant amount of children don't just communicate with their friends using these tools, but also use it to meet new friends. Interestingly, girls are equally interested in meeting new people across age groups, while boys seem to gain interest in this practice as they mature, even exceeding girl's interest in the older age group. According to the young researchers this is probably because girls start socialising earlier than boys, and use the Internet to look for sentimental partners and attempt to raise their popularity by having lots of virtual friends, while boys only begin this process after a certain age.

“ *Older children, especially girls, are normally more interested in chatting and using social networks, while younger children, especially boys, are more often interested in playing or watching videos.* ”

An overwhelming 71% of all children find the information they are interested in online by themselves, followed by assisted by friends (21%), and lastly assisted by siblings and teachers (7% each), and parents (2%). This fact demonstrates the very limited participation of responsible adults in regulating the online behaviour of the children in our sample. According to the youth researchers this is mostly because the resources that are pointed out by adults are not as interesting or appealing as the peer-selected resources. This information also points to the lack of awareness and comprehensive understanding amongst adults about the type of content and platforms that today's children find useful. Additionally, this information highlights the need for adults to familiarise themselves with such resources.

6. How do you find the pages you are interested in?



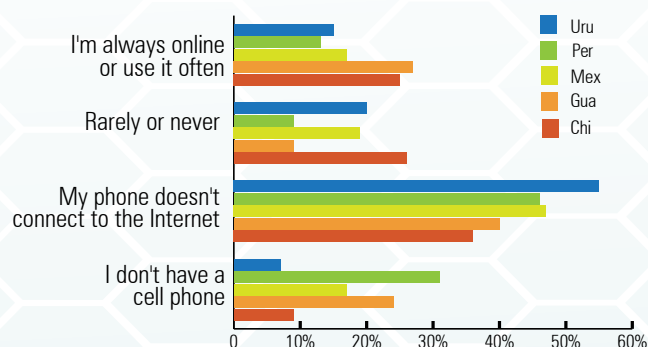
New developments in web technologies that offer interaction, regular updates and content creation by users while also being available via mobile platforms offer more opportunities and attraction to children as compared to static web pages. In response to this, traditional websites have reconstructed themselves by introducing more and more dynamic and multimedia content. Unless adults familiarise themselves with these platforms, they will not be able to identify the risks themselves, let alone guide and protect children. Non-familiarity with such applications sometimes results in adults automatically rejecting them, which does not allow the children to develop their capabilities to deal with the nuances that

come with such tools. For example, while using a social network, in an effort to express themselves, connect with friends and also look for new friends online, a child may post private information, come into contact with an adult that has bad intentions or be influenced by others to behave in a manner that can be potentially risky to him/her. Responsible adults must be able to understand the value of such platforms, the relevance of these tools for young people, and at the same time the risks that come with such communication methods. Absolute prohibition by parents and caretakers will give a wrong message to children and will likely be ineffective, as they will access these applications from other places, and not prepare them with the understanding to deal with potential problems and also can potentially lower their resilience.

“ *Most children find the websites they are interested in by themselves or, at most, through a friend. Generally adult participation in this process is almost non-existent.* ”

CELL PHONES

7. Do you connect to the Internet through your cell phone?

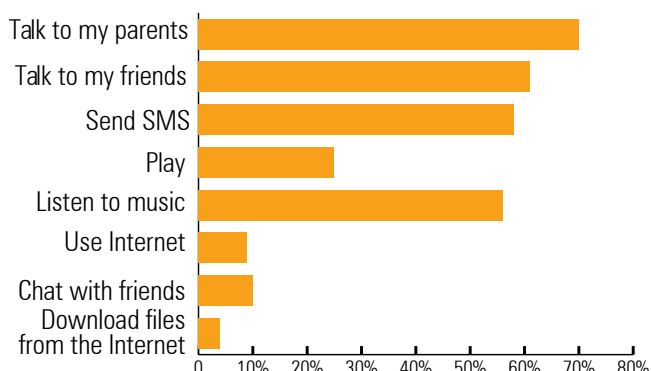


The use of cell phones to connect to the Internet varies among the different countries and even inside the same country, and does not follow any discernible pattern. 31% of Peruvian children and 24% of Guatemalan children do not have a cell phone, making these the two countries with the lowest cell phone penetration. However, while Peruvian children surveyed used the cell phone the least to connect to the Internet, in Guatemala the children interviewed connect to the Internet via cell phone the most, with 27% of children surveyed in this country being online most of the time from their cell phones. This is probably caused partly by the polarisation of the Guatemalan sample mentioned above, but the low prices of mobile Internet connection within the country are contributing factors as well. It is known that access to the Internet through cell phones is subsidised in some countries (in terms of data cost) by the providers, when it is used to access sites such as Facebook, but it is not certain whether the high percentage of children who access the Internet through cell phones in Guatemala is attributable to that fact. Moreover, it is interesting that the cost for the data for Internet through the cell phone is low, given the low penetration rate. Traditionally, the low penetration rate does not encourage the data providers to lower the price, as witnessed in other regions. It is in any case worthwhile carrying out further research to find the rationale for such anomaly in this country.

Similarly, while over 90% of children in Uruguay and Chile have a cell phone, 25% of Chilean children often connect to the Internet from it, but only 15% of Uruguayan children do.

Chilean and Guatemalan children exhibit the highest likelihood to go online from their cell phones.

8. What do you normally use your cell phone for?

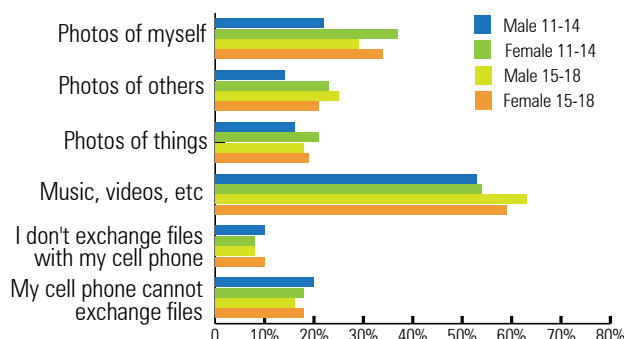


When asked about the three main activities they use their cell phones for, 70% of children in all five countries state that they mostly use them to communicate with their parents. They also use it to talk to their friends (61%), send SMS (58%) and listen to music (56%). Additionally, as many as 15% of the children interviewed mention uses related to the Internet, such as surfing, chatting and downloading files. This rate increases up to 25% of children in Guatemala.

The use of cell phones to connect to the Internet varies a lot, as it not only depends on the degree of socio-economic development within the country, but also on the price of the service and the terminals and the data plans offered by the national phone companies. However, nearly 20% of the children interviewed use their phones to connect to the Internet, and 15% of them state it is one of their main uses of their phone. Accordingly, this form of Internet connection should not be ignored when designing programs and policies to ensure children's protection. Moreover, it should be noted that most of our sample is formed by children from low socio-economic backgrounds, so the actual numbers of children using their phones to access the Internet should be expected to increase when adding the middle and higher income groups. Moreover, with the roll-out of the services, prices are expected to

A 15% of children on average in the countries studied use cell phones mainly for their Internet connection. This average reaches a 25% in the case of Guatemala.

9. Which type of files do you exchange through your cell phone?



Children using these devices to share files between peers can also result in compromised images taken through the cell phone (more and more devices come equipped with a camera these days) to be shared and then misused. Indeed, about 30% of all children exchange pictures of themselves through their cell phones, with girls in general doing it more often than boys, and about 20% of the children exchange pictures of others. So pictures that were initially exchanged just with close friends can very easily follow a chain of exchanges, be it by accident or on purpose, and end up in possession of a complete stranger who can use them for the wrong purposes.

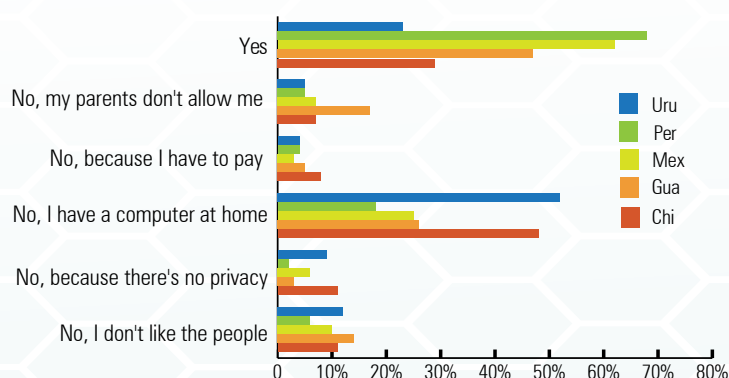
From the research it is clear that the cell phone operators are not doing enough to sensitise young users about such risks or promote general awareness through the development and distribution of guides and information resources to the public. Such engagement is strongly encouraged and schools should also introduce training and capacity building to bring these issues to the attention of teachers so that they can appropriately guide their students. Engaging children in discussions on how they use these tools and the challenges that using these tools may pose, as well as what they understand about the risks and dangers online and their opinions on the best possible mechanisms to use in order to educate them on such issues is also highly recommended. Also communication channels must be created whereby children are able to ask questions, learn more about using these technologies and feel free to address some of the misconceptions they may have regarding online safety and behaviour.

“30% of all children interviewed exchanged pictures of themselves with their phones, and 20% of them exchanged pictures of others.”

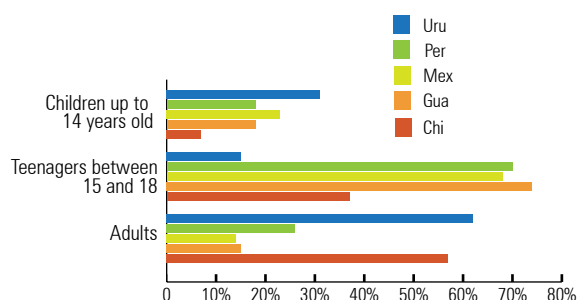
INTERNET CAFÉS

Peruvian and Mexican children are the biggest users of Internet cafés, with 68% and 62% of them using them respectively, followed by Guatemala (47%) and lastly Chile (29%) and Uruguay (23%), where children mostly connect from home. It is interesting to see that 17% of Guatemalan children don't go to Internet cafés because their parents don't allow them, explaining once more why so many of them use their cell phones to reach the Internet. Additionally, on average over 10% of children interviewed in the test countries (except Peru at 6%) do not go to Internet cafés because they are not comfortable with the type of people that frequent such places, which suggests possible risks in these establishments, which will be analysed in a section below. It is also worth mentioning that about half of the children in the 11 to 14 age group use these establishments, without any gender based differences, whereas in the older age group, boys use these places more (59%), while girls use them less (46%).

10. Do you go to Internet cafés?

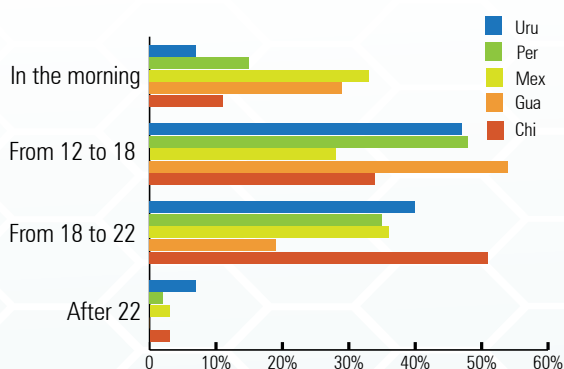


11. Who are your main customers?



Over two thirds of the Internet café representatives interviewed in Peru, Mexico and Guatemala say that their main customers are teenagers between 15 and 18 years old. It is surprising to see that in countries with a high ICT penetration such as Uruguay and Chile over 50% of the Internet café representatives interviewed say that adults serve as the primary clientèle that use Internet cafés the most. 31% of the Internet café representatives interviewed in Uruguay say that their main customers are children under 14 years old, doubling those saying that their main customers are teenagers (15%). This fact indicates a large user base of very young children at the Internet cafés, and suggests the need for greater protection measures in such establishments.

12. At what time do you usually go to the Internet cafés?

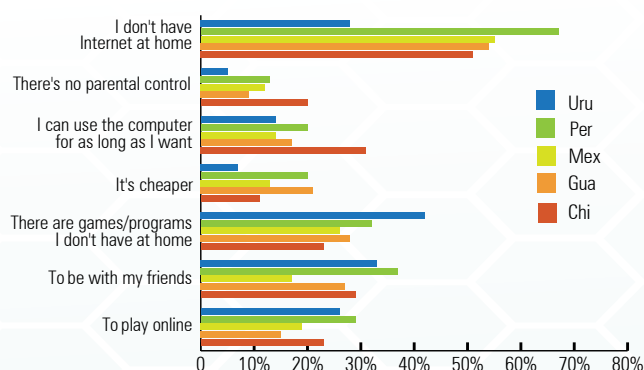


Most of the children going to the Internet cafés prefer to go in the afternoon, but older boys generally prefer to go in the evening. Chileans go to the Internet cafés in the evening more often than in any other country participating in the study, while a rather worrying 7% of Uruguayan children, mainly older boys, go to Internet cafés late at night, together with 3% of Chileans and Mexicans and 2% of Peruvians. The Internet cafés apparently allow children to stay in the cafés for extended periods, including late evenings when special child protection issues may

surface. Additionally, the fact that children need to return to their homes from the café late at night, frequently by themselves, might expose them to other risks.

The main reason for children to go to the Internet cafés is that they do not have the Internet at home. This reflects the situation of more than 50% of children going to these establishments in all the participating countries except Uruguay, and it is especially common in Peru. Apart from this, another important reason to go to the Internet café is that it has programs and games available that the children do not have at home. This is especially true in Uruguay, where this is the main reason to go to these establishments. Being able to use the computer for as long as they want and escaping parental control also seem to be important reasons for children in Chile to go to the Internet cafés, but they are not as relevant reasons in the rest of the countries. Boys are in any case the ones most often going to the Internet cafés to play online or use programs they don't have at home, and 35% of older teenagers, both boys and girls, use these establishments as meeting places, while young girls do it more often than young boys, probably because they find these places more suitable to hang out with older boys.

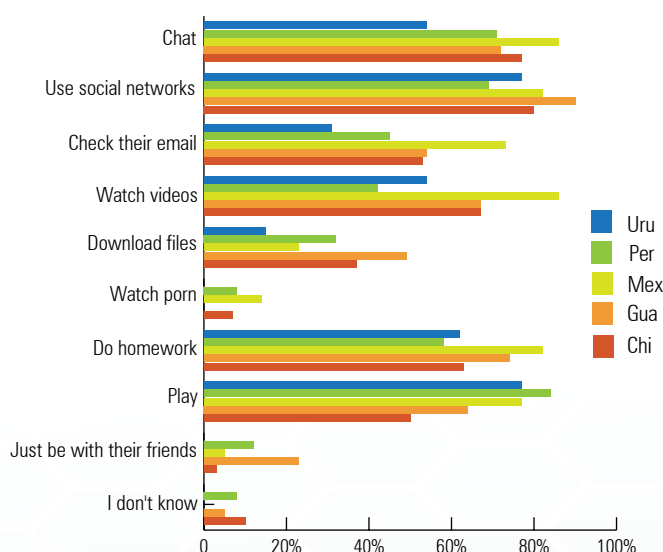
13. Why do you go to the Internet cafés?



Avoiding parental control and using services that are not available at home are important reasons to go to the Internet cafés for children in Chile and Uruguay.

According to Internet café representatives, the activities that children do most frequently in their establishments are playing games, using social networks, chatting and doing homework, followed by watching videos and checking their email, even though significant differences can be found between the different countries, which can be seen in greater detail in the corresponding graph. Interestingly, 23% of Guatemalan and 12% of Peruvian Internet café representatives say that children come to their establishments to be with their friends, without even using the computers, and very few Internet café representatives think that children watch pornography in their establishments, with only representatives from Mexico saying that it happens in more than 10% of the cases.

14. What do children normally do at your Internet café?

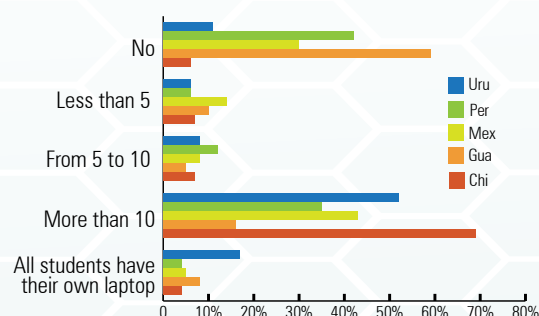


SCHOOL

Among the countries surveyed, Guatemala featured the lowest number of computers in school, with 59% of children saying that their schools have no computers at all for their use. Peru and Mexico are in a slightly better situation, with 42% and 30%, respectively, not having computers for student use, and Uruguay and Chile are the most advanced in this aspect, as only 11% and 6% of children say that they have no computers in their school. Additionally, 17% of children in Uruguay say that all students in their school have laptop computers, following the OLPC programme implemented by the Uruguayan government, which, as was pointed out earlier, is still not totally implemented at the secondary-school level. Also 8% of children in Guatemala say that all students in their school have laptops, but it is probably a bias introduced by the children from high socio-economic backgrounds, as none of the schools in Guatemala that were approached for this research have implemented OLPC programmes.

The above figures give a general picture about the pervasiveness of the online tools amongst the children in the 5 countries, but there are issues that need to be examined in more detail. The fact that boys play more online games than girls can expose them to certain traits of behaviour and offenders intent on soliciting boys might use this fact to befriend them through various online gaming platforms. Similarly girls within certain age groups exhibit characteristics (such as going to specific interest websites, exchanging certain types of information and also posting their images online more than boys) that need to be studied to understand and address specific vulnerabilities.

15. Do you have computers at school?





Awareness about online risks faced by children and young people.

One of the best ways to prevent children from getting themselves into risky situations is to raise their awareness of the issues which can arise out of interactions online. One way to do this is to explain to them the risks and consequences of some of their actions and how to avoid getting into risky and possibly exploitative situations. It is also useful to inform them about ways in which seemingly simple and unintended actions can be misused and how people with wrong intentions can harm them or mislead them if those activities are not reported. Since ICTs and the corresponding applications are evolving at such a fast pace, the impact of such applications and tools cannot always be predicted or known. However it is important to understand that even though direct contact or physical presence is not always a key factor in the interactions within the online environment, the reach and permanence of such interactions can be just as real and impact the child mentally and emotionally, and can also potentially cause severe harm if not dealt with properly. Thus, understanding the basic features and characteristics of online tools is very important. The lessons learned from this process can be later applied to any other form of modern communication devices and platforms, irrespective of their apparent complexity and forms.

This chapter will discuss how awareness is being created in the five Latin American countries that have been studied and also what might be missing in such processes. To address these issues, the study has carefully analysed the education given at schools regarding new technologies, the risks and vulnerabilities that arise out of using such

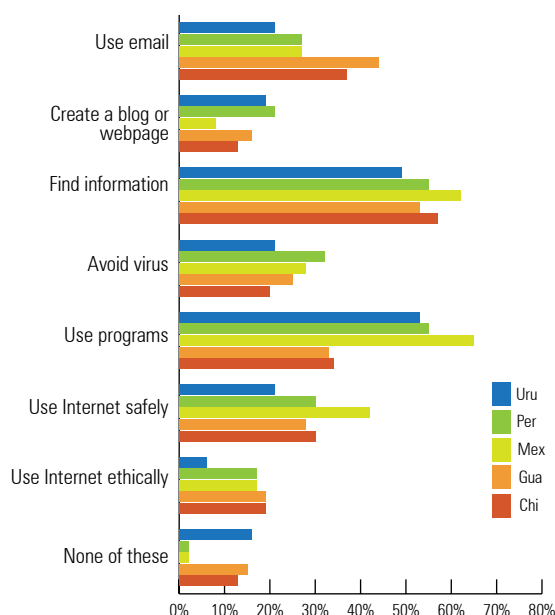
technologies and applications, relevant prevention measures, as well as the information that is given to children about online risks at Internet cafés and the materials that are made available to them to help them combat such issues. This chapter will concentrate mostly in the awareness on the risks that children face when using the Internet, without addressing specifically the risks that might arise when using other new technologies such as the exchange of files from cell phones, even though some of these might also be covered indirectly.

AWARENESS AT SCHOOL

Teachings in all five countries related to safe Internet usage seem to be less prioritised than computer teachings that centre around generic computational aspects such as how to find information or how to use computer programmes. However, safe Internet usage is still a relatively common topic taught in classes in the region, especially in Mexico, while it seems to be slightly less common in Uruguay. This lack of education about Internet safety in Uruguay is especially worrying, as the country is in the process of providing each child with its own laptop computer. It is also surprising to see that the two countries with the highest ICT penetration, Chile and Uruguay, are also the two countries where children receive less education about computer use in general, with around 15% of children interviewed saying that they have been taught nothing about computer use at

school, the same proportion as in the country with the lowest penetration, Guatemala. In Mexico and Peru, only 2% of the children have not been taught anything about computer use at school.

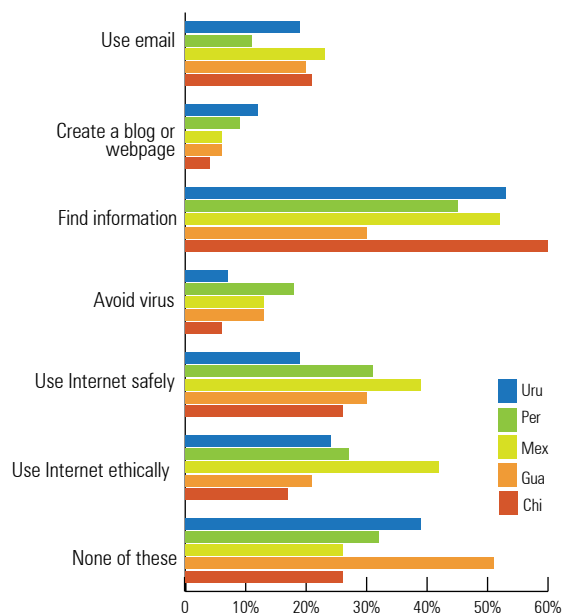
1. At school did they teach you to...?



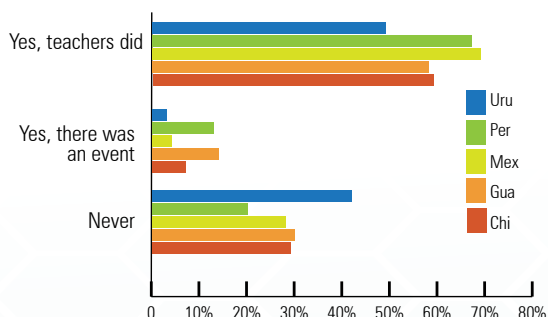
The information received from teachers presents a similar picture, reflecting very similar percentages of teachers interviewed teaching about Internet safety. The teachers interviewed generally claimed to teach about Internet ethics much more frequently than the children interviewed stated they were taught about it. This discrepancy can be attributed to a different understanding of Internet security and Internet ethics, as both concepts are intertwined. The number of teachers not teaching anything about the use of computers to their students is quite high in all cases, but this is understandable, as the number of allocated teachers for such trainings seems to be quite low.

Only about 20% of Uruguayan children, 30% of Peruvian, Guatemalan and Chilean children and 40% of Mexican children receive education about Internet safety.

2. Have you taught your students to...?



3. (Have you ever been told at school about risks online?)



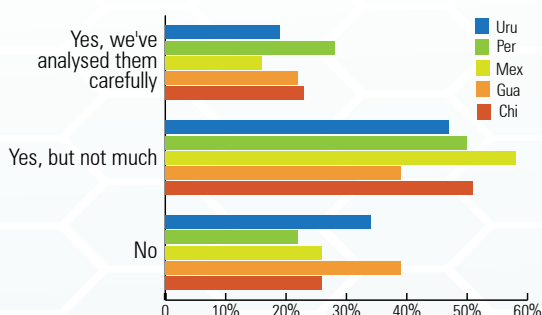
When asked specifically about awareness raising regarding online risks at school, Peru seems to be the country with the best mechanisms, with only 20% of the children interviewed in this country saying that they have not been informed about such issues in their schools, followed by Mexico, Guatemala and Chile, each with about 30% of their children not being told about these risks. Finally, Uruguay is the country that does the least to educate their students about these issues, with 42% of the children interviewed claiming to not have ever been told about these risks. This is a rather worrying fact for a country where most kids can access the Internet every day from their own homes, and illustrates

the possibilities of children in those situations putting themselves at risk much more often than children in any other country.

40% of Uruguayan children, 30% of Chilean, Guatemalan and Mexican children, and 20% of Peruvian children have never received any information about online risks in school.

Some of the children interviewed have attended events on the topic of Internet safety, especially in Guatemala and Peru, but most of them have been told about this issue by their teachers. Still, around 50% of teachers in all participating countries have only spoken about risks online superficially, while only around 20% of the teachers have analysed the risks carefully with their students, and over 20% of them have never spoken about this topic to their students, especially in Guatemala and Uruguay. While there's no need for all teachers to speak about online risks to their students, more efforts should be made to evaluate the education that children are receiving on this topic, as these numbers might also indicate that these topics are only treated superficially and not given all the importance they should be getting.

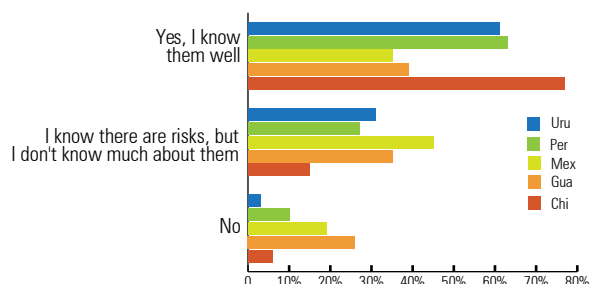
4. Have you spoken to your students about risks online?



When asking the teachers about their knowledge of children's risks online, Uruguayan teachers are among the ones claiming to have the best knowledge about these issues, along with teachers from Chile and Peru. This fact makes the low rate of educational access on these topics in Uruguay even more surprising. Mexican and Guatemalan teachers have lower rates of awareness, with 19% of Mexican teachers and 26% of Guatemalan teachers recognising not to know anything about risks online. This

fact calls for a thorough evaluation of the education given on these issues to children in these two countries.

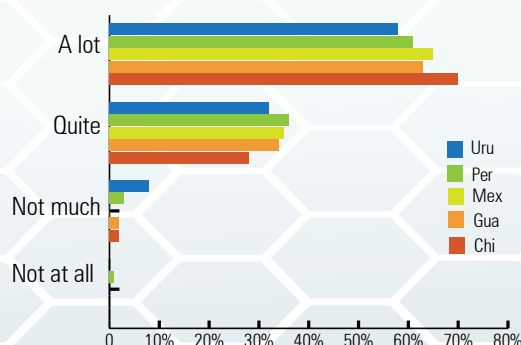
5. Do you know the risks that children are exposed to when using



Teachers in Mexico and Guatemala do not to know much about online risks for children.

When asking the teachers about their knowledge of children's risks online, Uruguayan teachers are among the ones claiming to have the best knowledge about these issues, along with teachers from Chile and Peru. This fact makes the low rate of education and knowledge among children on these topics in Uruguay even more surprising. Mexican and Guatemalan teachers have lower rates of awareness, with 19% of Mexican teachers and 26% of Guatemalan teachers recognising not to know anything about risks online. This fact calls for a thorough evaluation of the education given on these issues to children in these two countries.

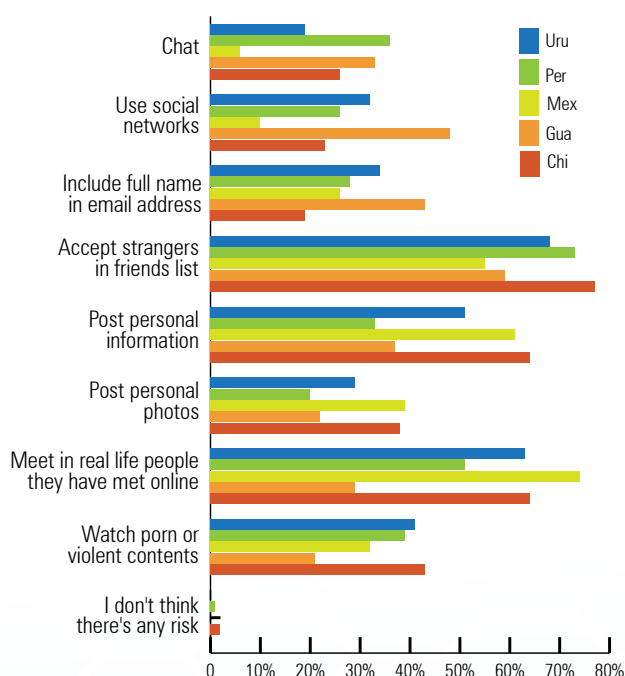
6. How important do you think it is to speak about Internet security to your students?



PERCEPTION OF RISKS

According to teachers, accepting strangers on friends' lists is the activity that entails more risks for children, followed by children meeting in real life people they have only met online, and children posting personal information online. However, teachers' perception of risks change depending on the country: for example in Guatemala, teachers think that using social networks and including their full names in their email addresses is more dangerous than posting personal information and much more than children meeting in real life with people they have only met online.

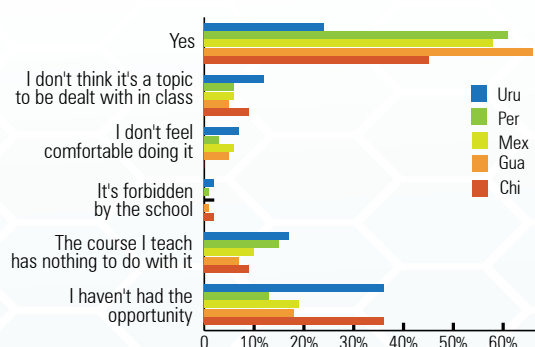
7. Which actions do you think are riskier?



Teachers in Chile, Uruguay and Peru also consider watching pornography or violent images to be dangerous, while Guatemalan teachers think that this is the least dangerous activity. Posting personal photos (not specified which kind of photos) is only considered to be significantly dangerous by Mexican and Chilean teachers, while Uruguayans, Peruvians and Guatemalans consider it one of the least dangerous activities. Apart from this, the activities that are generally considered to be less dangerous are chatting, using social networks and including the full names in email addresses, in different orders depending on the country, except by teachers in Guatemala, who consider these to be some of the most dangerous activities.

Even though teachers in Guatemala and Mexico don't consider watching pornography as an especially dangerous activity, they speak about it in class the most, similar to teachers in Peru. In contrast, teachers from Chile and Uruguay, who consider pornography more risky, speak about it in class the least. In most cases, teachers say that they haven't spoken about it because of not having the opportunity, especially in Chile and Uruguay. This suggests a lack of structured education related to Internet use and security in these countries. Also significant is the number of teachers who think that this is not a topic to be dealt with in the classroom.

8. Do you speak to your students about pornography?

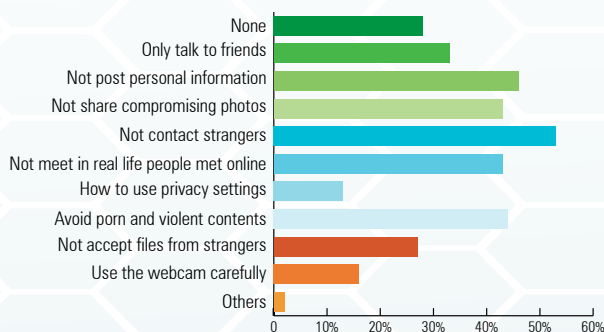


Posting personal photo is only considered to be significantly dangerous by Mexican and Chilean teachers, while Uruguayans, Peruvians and Guatemalans consider it one of the least dangerous activities.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The most popular prevention strategy that teachers in all countries teach their students is to not contact strangers, followed by not posting personal information, avoiding pornography and violent contents, not meeting in real life with someone only met online and not sharing compromising pictures. This is not surprising considering the teachers' perception of the main risks that were presented above. However, when analysing the data by country it can be noted that, for example, only 31% of Uruguayan teachers tell their students to avoid pornography and web sites with violent images, even though 41% of them think that it is one of the most dangerous activities, or that only 35% of Mexican teachers tell their students to not share compromising pictures, even though 39% of them think it is risky to share personal photos of any kind. Accordingly, the reason for the lack of education in some of these topics in some countries is not only a lack of awareness among teachers, but also that even when they know that some actions are dangerous, some of the teachers do not try to educate the children on strategies to avoid them. Interestingly, using privacy settings is the least-taught prevention strategy in most of the test countries. Additionally, 28% of teachers interviewed say that they do not teach any prevention strategies to their students, but again this might be because of not being related to their courses. As has been explained in the methodology section, even though the project initially tried to target teachers teaching courses related to computer use, ethics or social education, some teachers responsible for other courses were also included in the sample.

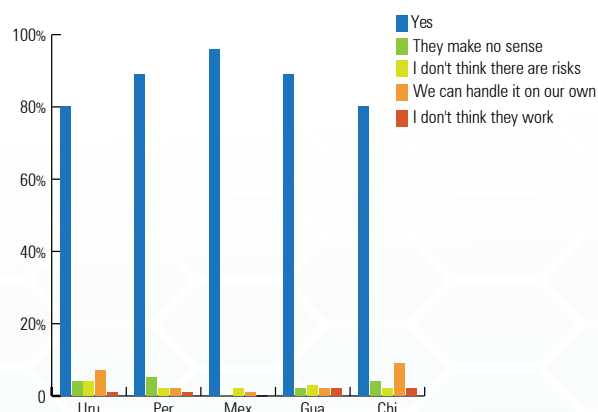
9. Which prevention strategies have you taught your students?



Many teachers do not proactively apply their knowledge and awareness of online risks to educate their students about these issues.

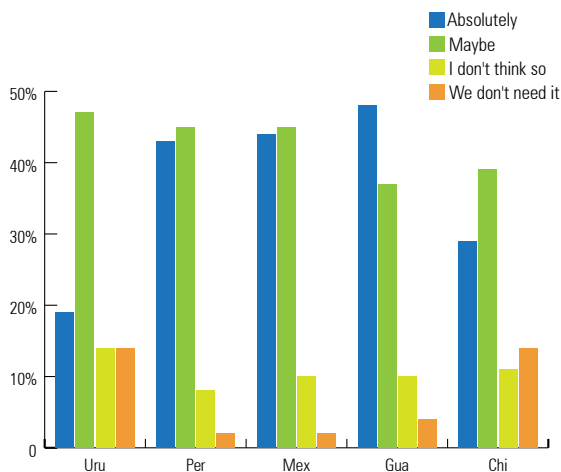
While a big majority of the children interviewed agree with the prevention strategies they have been taught, there is still a significant number of sceptics. In Uruguay and Chile 20% of the children, mostly older males, do not agree with the prevention methods, mostly because they think that they can handle the risks by themselves. This logic can be both understandable and worrying, considering that most children in these two countries use the Internet daily from their own homes, increasing their level of command and self-confidence in using these tools, but also increasing their probability of encountering risk if not following any of the prevention strategies suggested.

10. Do you agree with the methods they taught you?



Moreover, only 19% of children in Uruguay and 29% of children in Chile have trust in their respective teachers' capacity to help them make safer choices regarding Internet usage. An additional 14% of children in both countries think that they don't need their teachers to teach them anything about Internet safety. Trust levels are better in the other participating countries, with over 40% of children in Peru, Mexico and Guatemala believing that teachers can definitely help them more safely use ICTs. However, nearly 10% of children in these three countries have absolutely no trust in teacher's capacity.

11. Do you think teachers can teach you how to make a safe use of the Internet?



Children in Chile and Uruguay have low levels of trust in their teachers' capacity to teach them how to use Internet safely, and 20% of them do not agree with the prevention methods taught.

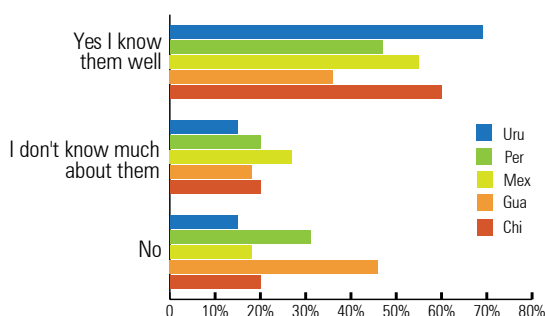
The information in these last two graphs suggests that a peer-to-peer approach of awareness raising about Internet safety should be implemented. This recommendation is especially pertinent in Uruguay and Chile, where a reduced but still significant number of children seem to trust their own counsel on these issues more than trusting their teachers. As a result it is likely that they will listen to their peers more than they listen to their teachers.

AWARENESS IN THE INTERNET CAFÉS

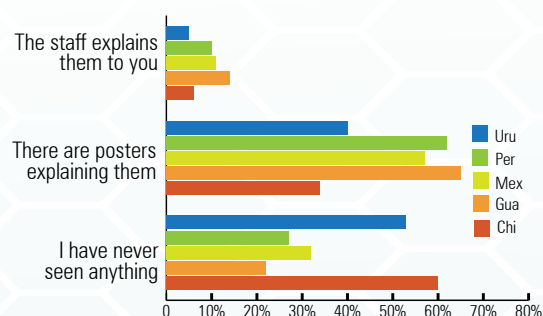
Internet café representatives in Guatemala and Peru claimed less experience and knowledge about the risks that children face when using the Internet, compared to their counterparts in Uruguay, Chile and Mexico. However, Internet café representatives in Uruguay and Chile don't

seem to be interested in passing the knowledge they claim to have on Internet safety on to the children visiting their establishments, as 53% of children going to Internet cafés in Uruguay and 60% of those visiting Internet cafés in Chile say that there is no information about risks online present in the Internet cafés they visit. Conversely, Internet cafés in Peru, Guatemala and Mexico seem to put much more effort in protecting the children visiting them, as although the Internet café representatives in these countries claim less knowledge on the issues, around 60% of children going to these establishments in these countries say that there are posters alerting them about the risks, and in over 10% of the cases the staff even directly explains to them the risks they might encounter online.

12. Do you know any risks that children face when using the Internet?



13. Is there any information about risks online at the Internet café?

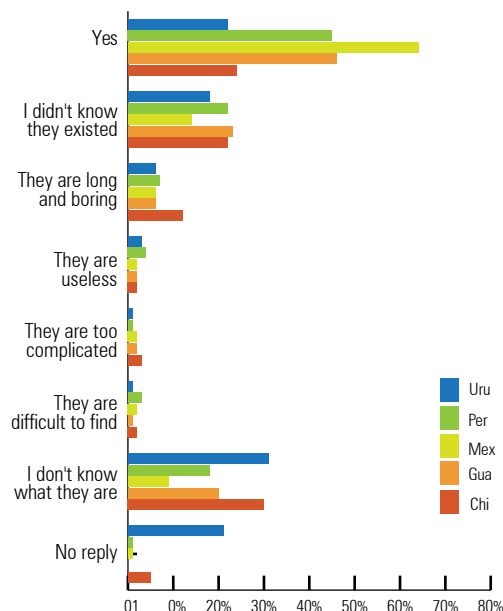


Most Internet café representatives in Chile and Uruguay claim to know much about risks online, but many of them do not give any information about these risks to the children visiting their establishments.

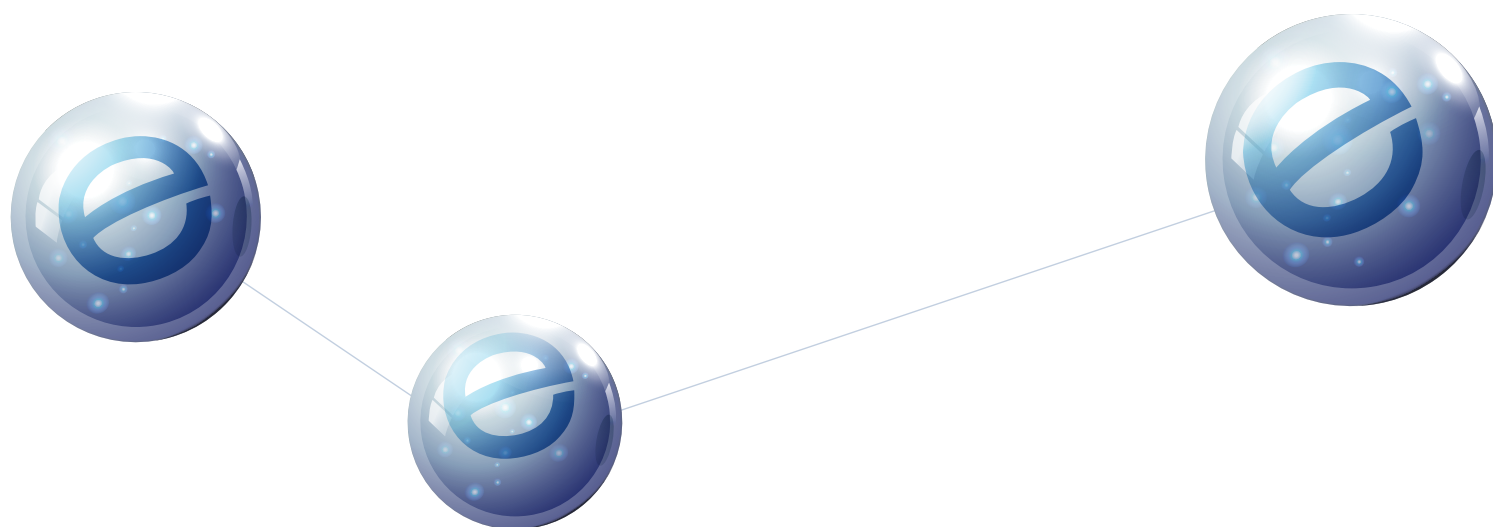
SELF AWARENESS

The study shows that the Mexican children interviewed were the most concerned about their own safety when using the Internet, and to this end, they tried to inform themselves about the risks more than what was observed in other countries, as 64% of the Mexican children interviewed have read some kind of safety guidelines they found online. On the contrary, Chilean and Uruguayan children are the least concerned about their own safety, with only 23% of the children interviewed having read any safety guidelines and 30% of them not even knowing what the guidelines are. This fact is quite worrying coming from two countries where most children use the Internet daily from their own homes. The most important reasons for not having read these guidelines is not knowing that they exist, and that they are too long and tedious to read. Therefore, more information should be given to children about the availability of these guidelines, and the guidelines should take a more child friendly form to encourage children to pay attention to them.

14. Have you ever read online safety guidelines?



“ 65% of Mexican children and 45% of Guatemalan and Peruvian children have read online safety guidelines, but only 20% of Chilean and Uruguayan children have done so. ”



Policies and practices to ensure the safety of children online

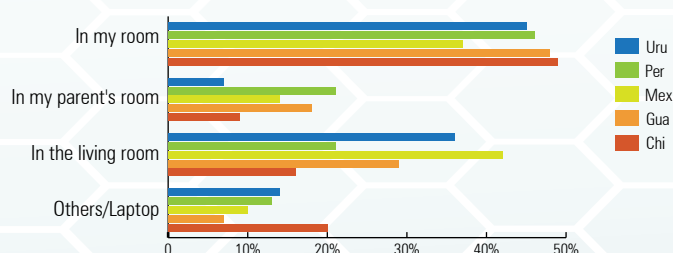
Another common way to prevent children from engaging in risky activities online is by placing barriers to their engagement in these activities, in the form of filters, rules, policies, or the unavailability of specific services. This chapter will discuss these types of prevention measures. It will first examine the measures taken at home, with reference to common practices that are often used to safeguard children's online experiences, such as the location of the computer and the degree to which children are controlled by their parents when surfing the Internet. Following this examination the policies implemented in the Internet cafés will be analysed, as a significant portion of the children interviewed use these kind of establishments to connect to the Internet. Policies and practices around the use of cell phones outside the regular monitoring of parents and teachers in school settings will also be addressed.

According to the data collected, almost half of the children having Internet at home have a computer in their own rooms (except for Mexico, where it shows a lower figure of 37%). Traditionally from the Internet safety standpoints, having the computer in a common area is preferable for the safety of the child, as it allows parents to keep an eye on the activities of their child without being too intrusive and it also forms a natural deterrent from children intentionally browsing inappropriate sites or exhibiting risky behaviour such as publishing inappropriate images of themselves, etc. Even though such measures have been supported by child safety advocates in the past, it is worth noting that with children receiving access from cell phones, Internet cafés and friends' places such practices do not necessarily ensure the child will be protected from inappropriate content. Nevertheless, it is a good practice to have the main computer through which a child can access the Internet in a common area of the home where parents can also engage with them in their online endeavour and promote a sense of collective experience which is usually beneficial for the child. From the data obtained through the survey it is quite clear that many children in these countries do have their computer placed in their own rooms, providing them with an isolated space to explore their online ventures. This can be beneficial for pursuing education, conducting research and completing homework within the comfort and peace of their own space, but can also offer potential opportunities for child sex offenders to actively seek children in such situations.

Mexico is the only country where the number of children who have the computer in the living room (42%) is higher than the number of children who have it in their own

AT HOME

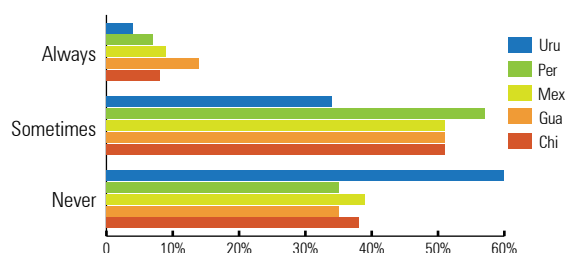
1. Where is your home computer located?



room (37%). Following are Uruguay and Guatemala, with 36% and 29% of children, respectively, stating that their computer is in the living room, while in Chile only 16% of the children go online from this common space. It has to be noted, though, that some of the children indicated that they have a computer both in their own room and in the common area, which changes the scenario and should be dealt with in the same manner as those having it in their own rooms only.

Additionally, 20% of Chilean children interviewed, and over 10% of the children interviewed in the other countries except for Guatemala, say that their home computer is located in a different room, generally a common but a relatively secluded area, such as a studio or library, or, in most cases, that the computer is a laptop, so they can take it wherever they like. It is not clear though if they share this laptop with other family members, so it is difficult to assess the level of security on the computer. Also, some children interviewed stated that their parents used the location of the computer as a reward and punishment system, letting the child have it in their rooms when they behaved good, but taking the computer to the living room or other areas when they had to be punished.

2. Are your parents with you when you use the Internet at home?



Older children from all countries have more freedom in this sense, with more of them having a computer in their own rooms and less having an adult with them when they use the computer. This is probably because older children usually resent having their parents with them while they are active online, and because they are generally thought to be more mature and able to stay out of trouble, or manage their own problems if they arise, but as will be highlighted in the next chapter, they are actually the ones more often engaging in risky activities and experiencing dangerous situations.

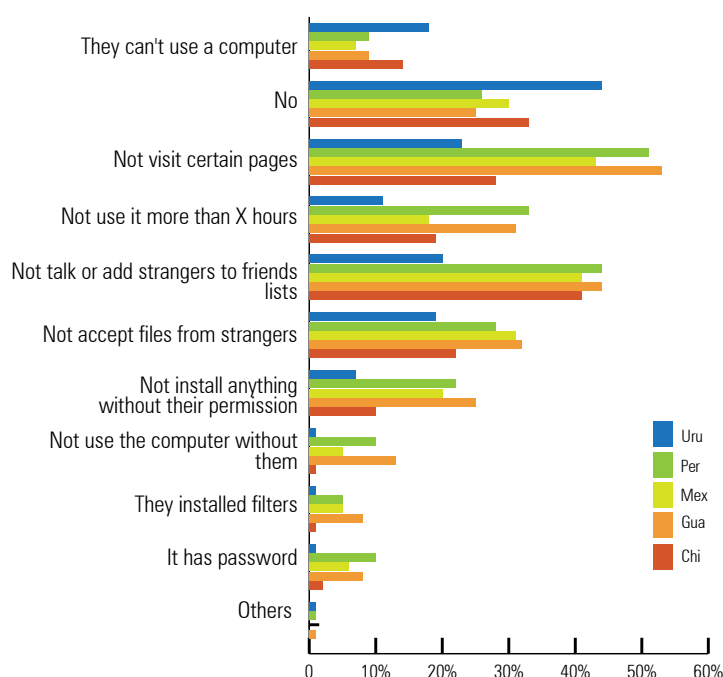
45% of the children interviewed who have Internet at home have the computer in their own rooms, except for Mexico, where it is more common to have the computer in the living room. In some cases the computer location is also used as a reward and punishment system.

Less than 10% of the children interviewed say that their parents are always with them when they use the Internet at home, and around 35% of them claim that their parents are never with them. This figure of children claiming that their parents are never with them when they use the Internet reaches 60% of the children interviewed in the case of Uruguay. It is therefore quite clear that even in the cases when the computer is located in a common area, parents often let their children use the computer without any control, possibly because of a lack of time, lack of interest or lack of knowledge.

Less than 10% of the children interviewed say that their parents are always with them when they use the home computer, while 45% of the children interviewed, and 60% in the case of Uruguay, say that they are always solo during their online activities.

Another way parents control their children's behaviour, both online and offline, is by setting up rules for them to obey. However, over 25% of the children interviewed in all of the participating countries say that their parents have not set any rules for them regarding their computer use. For Uruguay this reflected the situation of 44% of the children interviewed, which means that almost half of the children in this country (where most of the children have a computer at home) can do virtually everything they want online without any kind of control or guidance, which increases the odds to be potentially contacted and influenced by outsiders.

3. Did your parents put any rule to your usage of the home



Among the rules that the rest of the children interviewed do receive, the most common one is not to visit certain websites, presumably those containing pornography or violent contents. The second most common rule given to children is not to talk to strangers or add them to friends lists, with over 40% of children interviewed in all countries except for Uruguay (20%) saying that their parents have forbidden them to do this. Not accepting files from strangers and not installing anything without the permission of their parents was also featured in the list of rules proscribed by parents. Chilean and Uruguayan parents were much more permissive in these respects than parents in the other countries. Parents installing filters or locking the computer with a password so that their children cannot use the computer without their permission are a minority, with less than 10% of parents in all countries having resorted to this measure.

One explanation for the lack of rules is that, according to the children interviewed, some of their parents don't know how to use the computer. This is especially common in Chile and Uruguay, where around 15% of the children interviewed said that their parents cannot use a computer, while it gets slightly better in Mexico, Guatemala and Peru, where just under 10% of the children interviewed said that their parents cannot use the computer. This

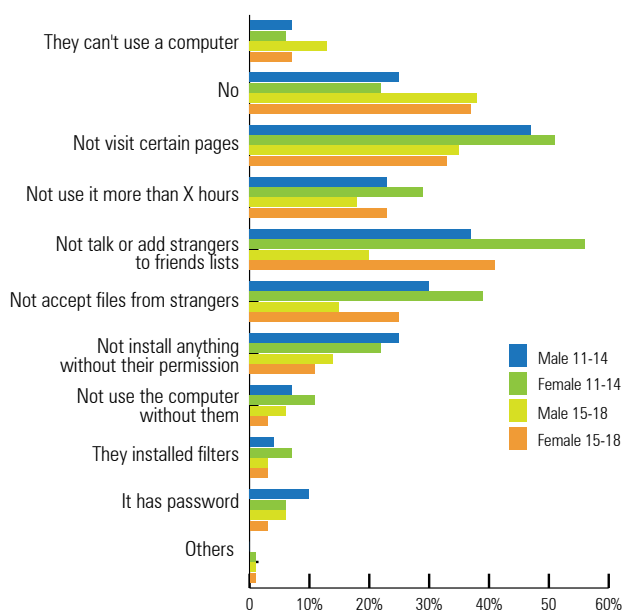
data shows an important generational gap, especially in countries with a high ICT penetration, where most children have computers and Internet at home, but where a significant percentage of their parents don't know how to use it, and therefore cannot control their children's online activities. Interestingly, the gap gets narrower in countries with a lower penetration, with less children having Internet at home but also more of their parents being able to use it.

30% of the children interviewed have no rules when using the home computer, reaching almost half of the children interviewed in the case of Uruguay, where almost 20% of the parents do not know how to use the computer.

30% of the children interviewed have no rules when using the home computer, reaching almost half of the children interviewed in the case of Uruguay, where almost 20% of the parents do not know how to use the computer.

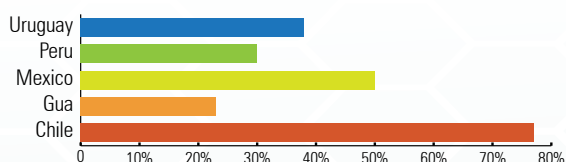
When analysing by gender and age, it is interesting to see that girls are told not to interact with strangers much more frequently than boys, while boys are usually told not to visit certain pages or not to use the computer or install anything without the permission of their parents more frequently than girls. Younger children are usually more monitored than older children, either because older children are expected to be more mature or because they are considered to be too grown up for such regulations to be exercised. Girls from 11 to 14 who were interviewed say more often than any other group that the rules apply to them, while males from 15 to 18 claim that less often than any other group.

4. (Child) Did your parents put any rule to your usage of the home



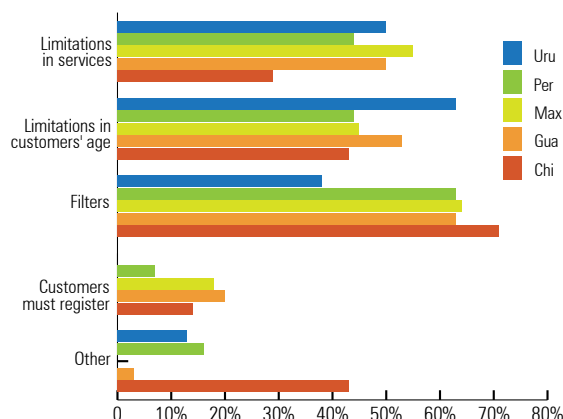
AT THE INTERNET CAFÉ

5. Internet cafés that have not implemented any policy



According to the data collected, 77% of Chilean Internet cafés have not implemented any protection policy by themselves, nor have they been obligated by any other institution. Instead, Guatemalan and Peruvian Internet cafés seem to be much better regulated, with only 23% and 30% of their representatives saying that they have not implemented any policies, followed by Uruguay, where 38% have not implemented any policy, and Mexico, where half of the sample have not implemented any policy. Even though the differences among the participating countries are obvious, all of them are far from successfully ensuring a safe environment for children to use these establishments, with a significant number of them still offering services to children without any limitations or regulations.

6. Which policies are installed at your Internet café?



Among the Internet cafés that offer some kind of regulation, the most popular form is installing filters, with about 60% of the Internet café representatives having installed these in every country, except for Uruguay, where this policy doesn't seem to be so popular. Instead, in 63% of the Uruguayan Internet cafés which participated in this study and had some policies installed, these were related to customers' age, while 53% of the Internet cafés in Guatemala and around 45% of those in the other countries had implemented rules related to customers' age. The registration of customers seems to be highly unpopular instead, with less than 20% of the regulated Internet cafés in the study asking their customers to register, and none asking to do so in Uruguay.

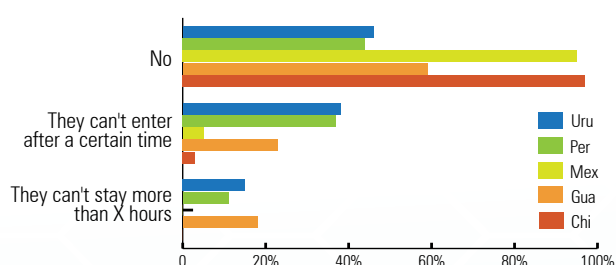
However, when examining the whole sample, it is noticeable that while almost all Chilean and Mexican Internet cafés allow children into their premises at any time during the day, in Uruguay and Peru about 38% of

77% of the Chilean Internet cafés do not have any policies

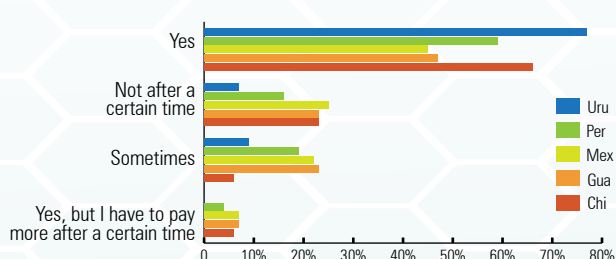
the Internet cafés interviewed have implemented time restrictions and do not allow children inside after a certain time, and about 12% of them do not let the children stay for too long. The children interviewed displayed a totally different version of this policy though, as Uruguay comes out as the most permissive country in this sense, with

77% of Uruguayan children interviewed saying that they are allowed in the Internet cafés at any time. Mexico, instead, comes out as the most restrictive participating country, with 25% of the Mexican children interviewed saying that they are not allowed in the Internet cafés after a certain time. Unfortunately it is difficult to assess if the differences in responses between children and Internet café representatives are caused by the relatively small sample of Internet café representatives interviewed, or perhaps caused by the different policies used by different staff members in the same establishment, or by the children interviewed not having ever attempted to go in the Internet café at night, or by the Internet café representatives not being completely truthful in the interviews for fear of reprisals. In any case, over 40% of the Internet café representatives interviewed in all the participating countries did not have any time limitations for children, and over 40% of the children interviewed in all the participating countries claimed that they can access these establishments at any time. These responses lead to the belief that the current situation regarding children's use of the Internet cafés does demand stronger policies and more stringent enforcement.

7. Is there any time limit for children to be at your Internet café?

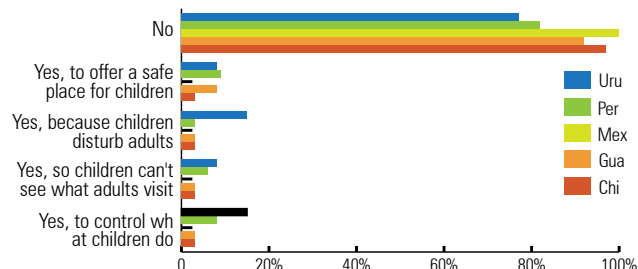


8. Can you enter the Internet café at any time?



“Almost all of the Internet café representatives interviewed in Chile and Mexico allow children in at any time, and over 60% of the Peruvian and Uruguayan children interviewed say that they can enter Internet cafés at any time, even though only 40% of the Internet café representatives interviewed in those countries say so.”

9. Do you have a special place for children?

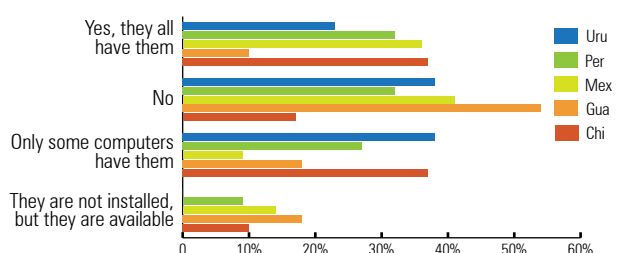


Even more rare is the existence of special spaces for children in the Internet cafés. Almost none of the Internet cafés interviewed have such setup in Mexico, Chile and Guatemala, while only around 20% of those in Uruguay and Peru state having special places for children. In both Uruguay and Peru, the main reasons to install these separate places for children is to control children's activities and offer them a safe place from where they cannot see the sites visited by adults, but in the case of Uruguay it is also very common to separate children so they do not disturb adults.

“Only about 20% of the Internet cafés interviewed in Uruguay and Peru have a special space for children, while it is almost impossible to find these special designated spaces in the other participating countries.”

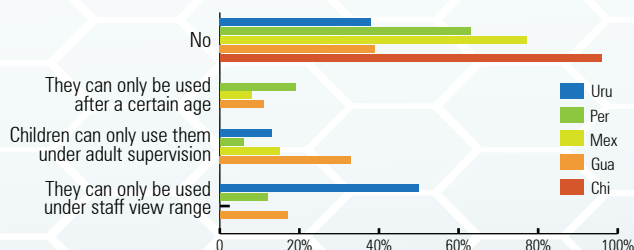
Another issue concerning the Internet cafés is the use of webcams, especially in establishments that offer a certain degree of privacy to their customers. This phenomena could lead to children being lured to show themselves in a compromised state (such as posing without clothes) in front of these web cameras without anyone noticing or preventing them from doing it. 54% of the Internet cafés surveyed in Guatemala do not have any webcams available, while over 60% of the Internet cafés in the other participating countries have them available in some form. Having webcams available upon request is an easier way to control their use, but it is the least popular arrangement among the Internet cafés interviewed, with none of them employing it in Uruguay, and only around 10% in the other countries.

10. Do you have webcams and/or microphones in your computers?



As for the policies on webcam usage, only the cafés interviewed in Uruguay and Guatemala seemed concerned about the risks they pose, with around 60% of the cafés interviewed in these two countries limiting webcam use in some way. While it is very common in Guatemala to allow children to use webcams only under adult supervision, in Uruguay it is more usual to restrict its use to computers that can be easily controlled by their staff, to prevent misuse.

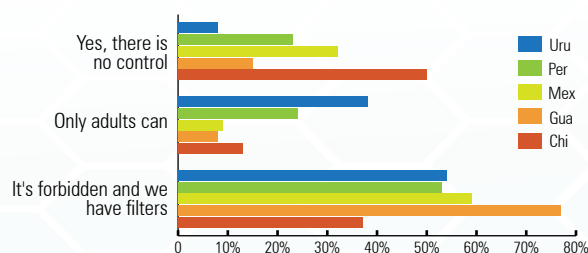
11. Are there any limitations in the use of webcams?



Over 40% of the Internet cafés which have webcams available have no limitations regarding webcam use, and almost none of them have any limitations in place in Chile.

Finally, most Internet cafés seem to have some sort of control over the web sites that are visited in their establishments. Internet cafés in Uruguay seem to have the most control, while those in Chile seem to have the least control. Pornography is totally forbidden and avoided through filters in most of these cases, but some of them, especially in Uruguay and Peru, prefer to allow adults to visit pornographic websites, while forbidding access to these sites for children. This information is however contradictory with the earlier question about the policies implemented, as the percentage of establishments claiming to limit the access to pornography is in general higher than the percentage of Internet cafés interviewed who claimed to be implementing any kind of policy.

12. Is it possible to watch or download porn in your Internet café?



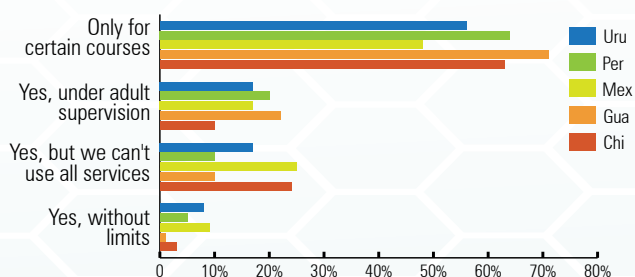
Half of the Internet café representatives interviewed in Chile have absolutely no control over the websites that their customers are allowed to visit.

In any case, most of the Internet café representatives interviewed who are applying any sort of measures against the viewing of pornography in their cafés seem quite determined to prevent it, as only around 7% of the Internet café representatives interviewed in each country said that they would probably change these rules if they lost customers for this reason, while the remaining 93% claimed that they preferred providing their services to customers that were not interested in watching pornography, or that it was illegal for Internet cafés in their country or area to provide access to pornography.

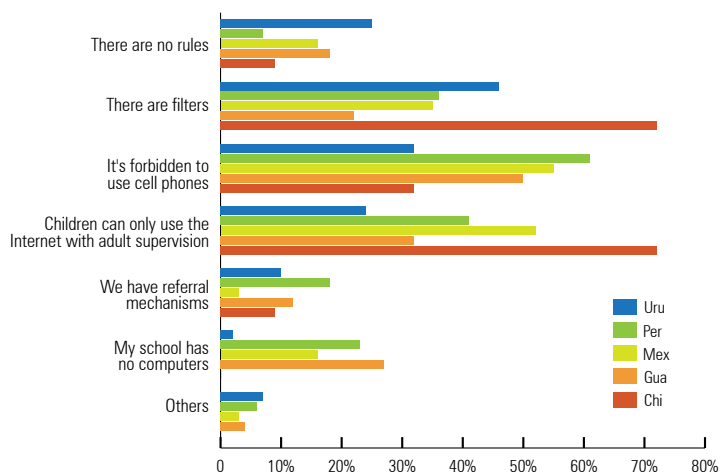
AT SCHOOL

Access to the Internet from schools is in general much more restricted and controlled than in any other environment, with under 10% of the children interviewed having computers at school saying that there are no restrictions. These figures are even lower in Guatemala, reaching just 1%, and 3% in Chile. Over half of the children interviewed claimed that they can only use the computers for certain courses. This type of limited computer use at schools is not ideal, as it means that children cannot use school computers for their own leisure activities and have to go to the much less protected environment of the Internet café if they don't have a computer at home. Around 20% of the schools that participated in this study have opted to offer Internet connection to their students only under adult supervision, except for Chile, where this measure is much less popular. Instead, around 25% of the schools in Chile and Mexico prefer to restrict the Internet services that can be used by children.

13. Can students use the school computers?



14. What are the school rules regarding new technologies?



But the teacher's version is quite different, with 25% of those interviewed in Uruguay and around 17% of those in Mexico and Guatemala saying that their schools have no rules regarding the use of the new technologies. Also, the teachers interviewed said that children were allowed to use the school computers under adult supervision much more often than the children interviewed claimed to be able to use the computers at school. This contradiction was most evident in Chile, where 72% of the teachers interviewed said that students were allowed to use the computers, while only 10% of the Chilean children interviewed claimed the same. This discrepancy could be attributed to teachers considering the use of the computers for courses as use under adult supervision.

According to the teachers interviewed, 72% of schools in Chile have content filters installed, but the use of these tools is not so widespread in the other participating countries, where less than 50% of the teachers interviewed said that their schools do have filters installed, while only 22% of the Guatemalan teachers interviewed said so. This is an issue that cannot be overlooked, as even though most children cannot use the school computers for their own leisure, having so many public educational institutions providing unrestricted Internet access to their students is a serious issue. Also, only around 10% of the teachers interviewed said that their schools have referral mechanisms to provide support to

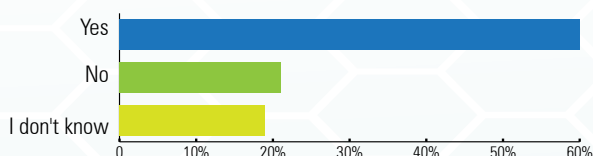
children that have suffered any kind of abuse online. This is another important matter that should be highlighted and improved.

Less than half of the schools participating in the study have installed content filters in the computers that their students use, except for Chile, where controls are installed in 70% of the participating schools.

FROM THE CELL PHONE

60% of the children interviewed who access the Internet from their cell phones say that they can access every page they want without any restriction, while only 21% of the children interviewed say that they have found some restrictions in their browsing, and 19% claim not to know if they have any restriction, as they don't use the Internet that often or just use it for certain specific activities, that are allowed anyway.

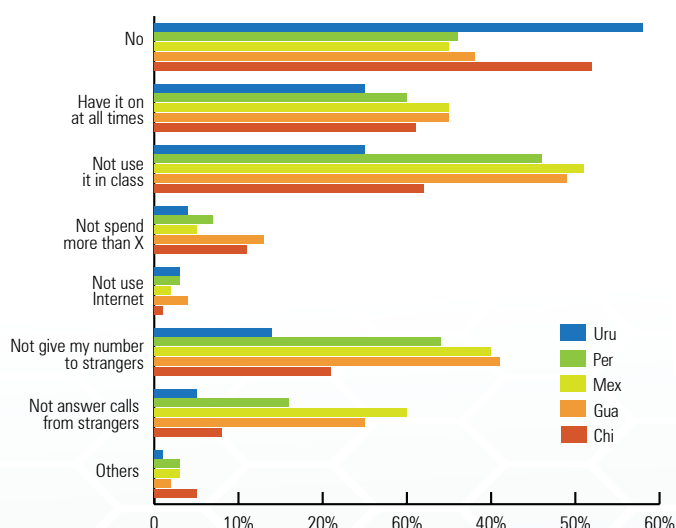
15. Can you access any page you want from your cell phone?



60% of the children surveyed who have Internet access on their cell phones can access any website they want, while over 50% of the children interviewed from Chile and Uruguay and 35% of those from the other participating countries do not have to follow any rules regarding the use of their cell phones.

Very few of the children interviewed (around 3%) said that their parents forbid them to use the Internet from their cell phones. The most popular rule that parents issue to their children regarding the use of cell phones is not to use the phone during class. Apart from this, other popular rules are to have the phone on at all times, not to give their number to strangers and not to answer phone calls from strangers. 58% of the Uruguayan children interviewed, 52% of Chileans and about 35% of Mexicans, Guatemalans and Peruvians say that their parents have not set any rules regarding their use of their cell phones. This indicates that parents in Uruguay and Chile seem to be much more permissive and less concerned about the risks caused by cell phones to their children than parents in Guatemala, Peru and Mexico.

16. (Child) Did your parents put any rules to your cell phone usage?



Possible Risks encountered by children and young people while online

The specific risks that children take and the security problems they face will be analysed in this chapter. This chapter will address, among other things, how children handle these situations and who do they tell about them when they encounter these risks, as well as their participation in cyberbullying and their motivations to engage in it. Also this chapter will review the knowledge base and perceptions of the teachers interviewed regarding the security problems that their students are facing. Lastly, the specific issues faced by children in the Internet café environment will be discussed in this chapter as well.

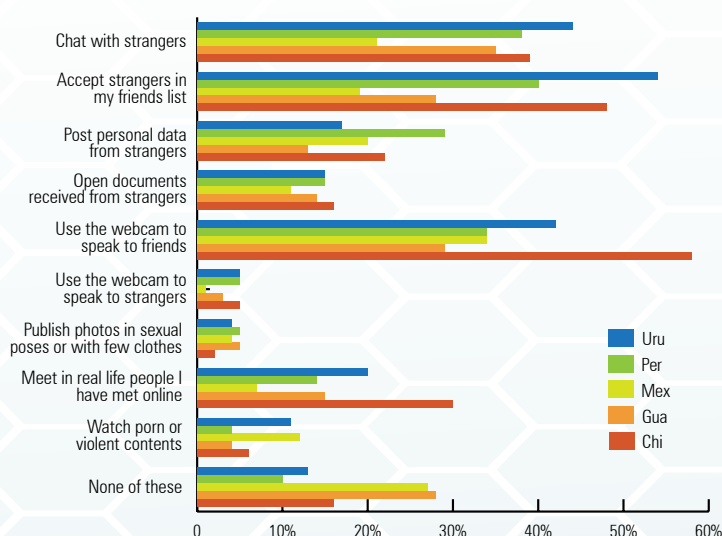
differences between the responses of the children from the participating countries. Chile is by far the country where children interviewed use the webcam the most to talk to their friends, while accepting strangers in friends lists and chatting with them are less common amongst the children interviewed in this country, but still very high. The children interviewed from Mexico displayed a similar pattern, with more children using the webcam to talk to their friends than chatting with strangers or adding them to friends lists, although the numbers of children engaging in these activities in Mexico are much lower than in Chile. The most common potential risk taken by the children interviewed from Uruguay was accepting strangers to friends lists, followed by chatting to strangers and using the webcam with friends, while for the children interviewed from Peru and Guatemala the popularity of all three practices was equal.

RISKS AND SECURITY PROBLEMS

Most of the children in the sample recognised having at some point participated in potentially risky activities online, even though they might have not thought the particular activities to be risky in the moment. 27% of the children interviewed from Mexico and Guatemala stated that they have not participated in any of the potentially risky activities they were questioned about²⁶, while only 10% of the Peruvian children interviewed, 13% of the Uruguayans and 16% of the Chileans stated that they have not engaged in any potentially risky online behaviour.

The three most common potentially risky activities which the children interviewed mentioned are: chatting with strangers, accepting strangers in their friends lists, and using the webcam to speak to their friends, even though there are significant

1. Have you ever done any of these?



²⁶ It is worth noting that not all of the activities presented in this graph and paragraphs are in themselves risky, but they might imply some risks if not practiced with caution.

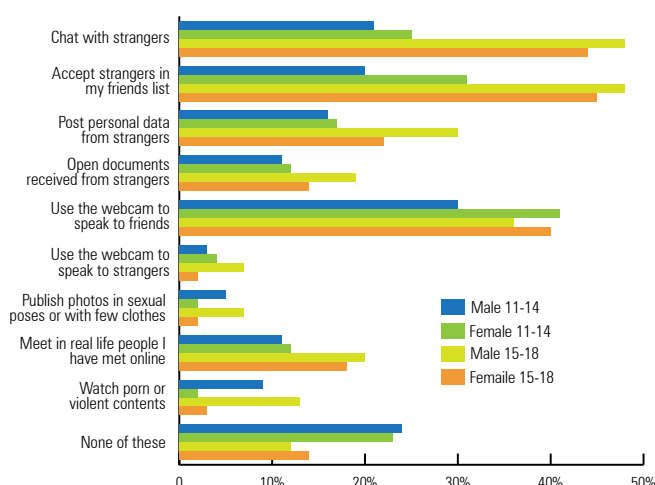
Other common potentially risky practices mentioned by the children interviewed included meeting with people that children have only met online, posting personal data and accepting files from strangers. Children interviewed from Chile and Uruguay stated that they meet strangers offline the most frequently, while children interviewed from Mexico seemed to do it the least frequently. Similarly, Peruvian children interviewed post their personal data the most, while those from Guatemala do it the least.

Children using a webcam to speak to strangers and posting sexual pictures of themselves are very uncommon, with less than 5% of all children interviewed engaging in either of these behaviours, probably as they are some of the most clearly dangerous activities. Pornography does not seem to be very popular either, with only 10% of the children interviewed from Uruguay and Mexico reporting watching pornography, while the children interviewed from the other countries doing so averaged around 5%. However, it is possible that the children interviewed on this topic have not been completely sincere in their survey responses, as they were mostly completed at school, so they might have feared that their teachers would gain access to the data.

Over 70% of the children interviewed from Mexico and Guatemala and over 85% of those in Chile, Uruguay and Peru have engaged in online activities that could imply some risks.

Analysing the data by gender and age, it is clear that older children are taking more risks, especially interacting with strangers, and that boys engage in these activities more often than girls. Boys are also the ones watching pornography more often, and, surprisingly, they are also the ones posting sexual pictures of themselves more often. This trend among the boys interviewed tends to show it is actually boys that are more commonly seeking approval of their appearance from their peers, without realising that this practice can be dangerous. Conversely, the girls interviewed seemed to be more aware of these dangers.

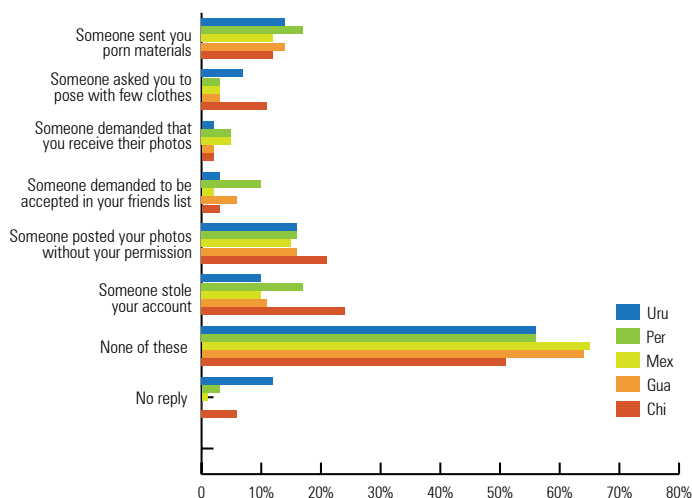
2. Have you ever done any of these?



The older children interviewed, especially the boys, report engaging in potentially risky online activities more often, including posting sexualised images.

The Mexican and Guatemalan children interviewed are the ones that claimed to have had fewer problems using the Internet, with 65% of Mexican and Guatemalan children interviewed claiming that they had never experienced any of the dangerous situations that were presented to them in the survey. This information corresponds with the responses from this group discussed above about taking less risks comparatively than children from other countries. Instead, 56% of Uruguayan and Peruvian children interviewed stated that they had not experienced issues when using the Internet, and about half of the Chilean children interviewed claimed the same. But the study results also show that more than one third of the Latin American children who were interviewed for this study have experienced some sort of dangerous situation while using the Internet, with this number going up to 50% in the case of the Chilean children interviewed.

3. Have any of these ever happened to you?

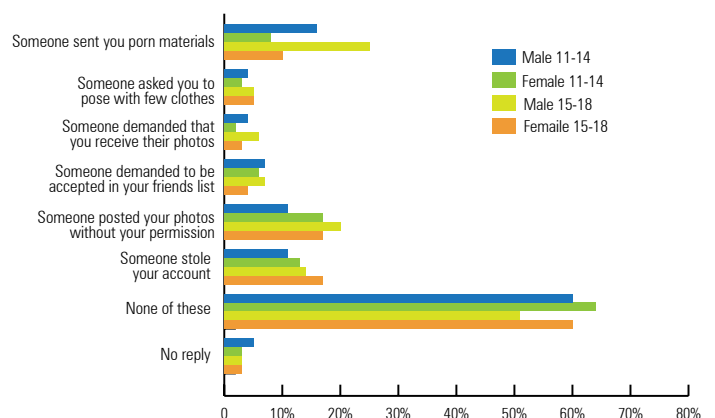


The most common dangerous situation claimed to be experienced by the children interviewed is having their pictures posted somewhere online without their permission. The next most common disturbing situations are receiving pornographic materials, and also getting one of their online accounts stolen. Someone stealing an online account seems to be a much more common occurrence for the children interviewed in Chile and Peru than in the other participating countries.

Serious situations such as strangers demanding to be accepted in a children's friends list, strangers demanding that the children receive their photos, or strangers asking the children to pose in sexual ways or partially or totally nude, are much less commonly mentioned responses by the children interviewed. However, they still affect around 5% of the children interviewed in each of the cases. 11% of the Chilean children interviewed and 7% of the Uruguayans have been asked to pose in sexual ways, and 10% of the Peruvian children interviewed and 6% of the Guatemalans claim to have been demanded to accept a stranger on their friends list.

Nearly 40% of children interviewed in Mexico and Guatemala and almost 50% of the children interviewed in Chile, Peru and Uruguay have experienced some dangerous situations while using the Internet.

4. Have any of these ever happened to you?

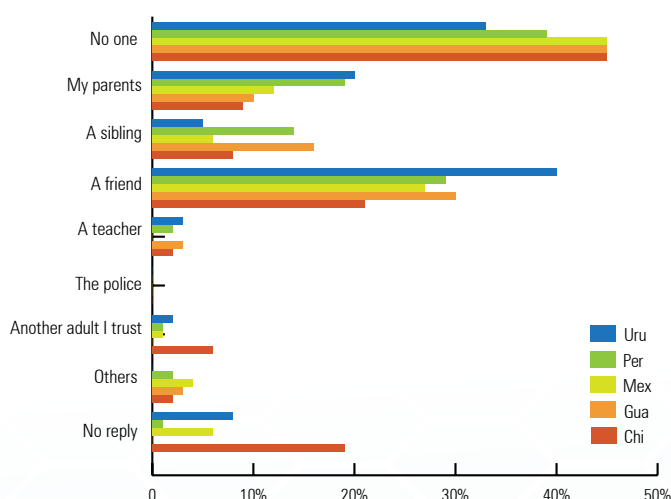


When analysing this data by age and gender it is clear that boys from 15 to 18 years old are the ones experiencing dangerous situations most often, including 20% of the boys interviewed from that age group having their photos posted without their consent and 25% getting sent pornographic materials. Moreover, despite most popular conceptions, boys from 15 to 18 get asked to pose naked just as much as girls their same age, while boys from 11 to 14 seem to be asked this same thing slightly more often than girls in the same age bracket. It is important to note that the sample in this last case is so small that it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from this data, but it is still quite clear that boys are as much in danger as girls in this respect, if not even more.

The boys interviewed reported experiencing dangerous situations more often than the girls interviewed, and against popular conceptions, boys are as prone to be asked to pose naked in front of the webcam as girls are.

A significant portion of the children interviewed that had mentioned any of the dangerous experiences presented above did not tell anyone about them. This is especially true of the children from Chile²⁷, Guatemala and Mexico, although the numbers of children from Peru and Uruguay who did not report the incidents are still quite high. Those that did tell someone about it spoke mostly to their friends. Speaking to family members is much less common, with the Uruguayan and Peruvian children interviewed reporting to be more confident telling their parents than the rest of the children. Speaking to teachers or to any other adults is very rare, not reaching more than 3% of the children interviewed in most cases, while no one in the entire study reported anything to the police or to any other organisation.

5. Who did you tell about it?

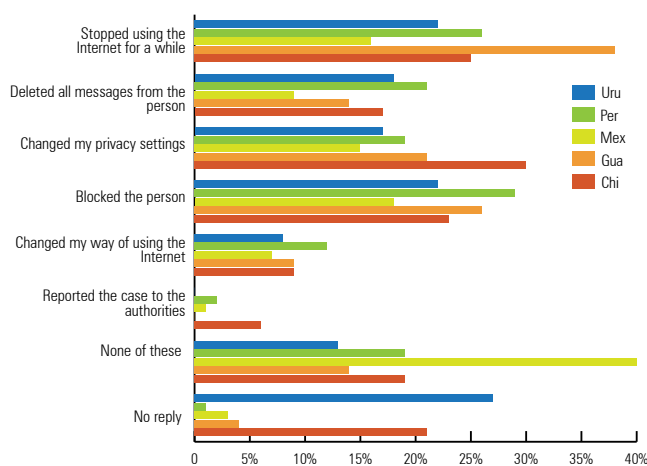


Analysing by age and gender, the older children, especially boys, tend to be the most reserved when experiencing any of the situations presented above. The older children interviewed were also much more prone to speak to their friends, especially in the case of girls, while younger children interviewed spoke to their parents almost as much as to their friends.

Over one third of the children interviewed who experienced security problems did not tell anyone about them, and whenever they did, they mostly told their friends.

While the limitations of the sample size prevent further analysing the data by the respective dangerous situations encountered, this data again shows the need for the implementation of peer to peer programmes to handle this issue, as this research shows that most children prefer to confide in their peers rather than in their parents, and almost none of the children interviewed confided in their teachers.

6. Did you do any of these in consequence?



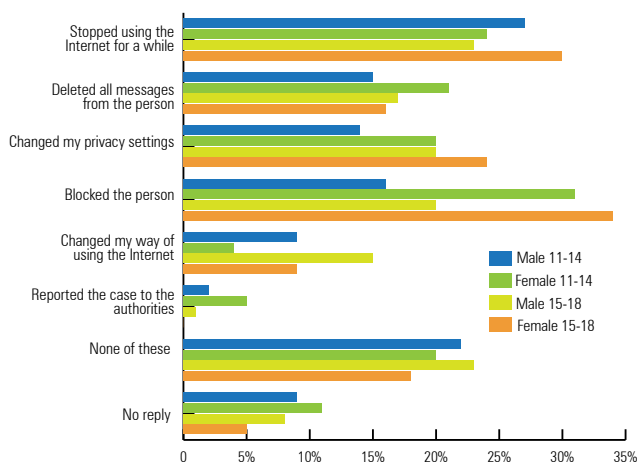
After experiencing one of these upsetting situations, many of the children interviewed did something to try to avoid having the same problem occur again. Mexico is the only country where a significant number of children interviewed did nothing in consequence of any incidence²⁸. The strategies implemented by the children interviewed were many, with no one strategy being significantly popular over the others. The Guatemalan children interviewed seemed to often stop using the Internet for a while when something negative happened to them, the Chilean children interviewed seemed to prefer changing their privacy settings, and the Peruvian children reported often blocking the person. However, all of these strategies, as well as deleting all messages from the person that created the situation, are quite similar in popularity with the children in all the participating countries. In any case, almost no one reported the cases to the authorities, except for 6% of the Chilean children, and just around 10% of the children overall altered their usage of the Internet.

²⁷ In the case of Chile, 19% of the sample did not answer this question, so the numbers here presented might not be accurate

²⁸ 21% of the Chilean children and 27% of the Uruguayans did not reply to this question, so again the conclusions for these two countries might not be very accurate

Analysing by gender and age, it is again older boys taking the least actions to avoid future dangerous situations, followed by younger boys, younger girls and finally older girls. The girls interviewed were clearly more prone to block the person who created the situation, while the boys interviewed, especially the older ones, were the most prone to change their online behaviour, maybe realising that they were creating the problems themselves by engaging in risky activities.

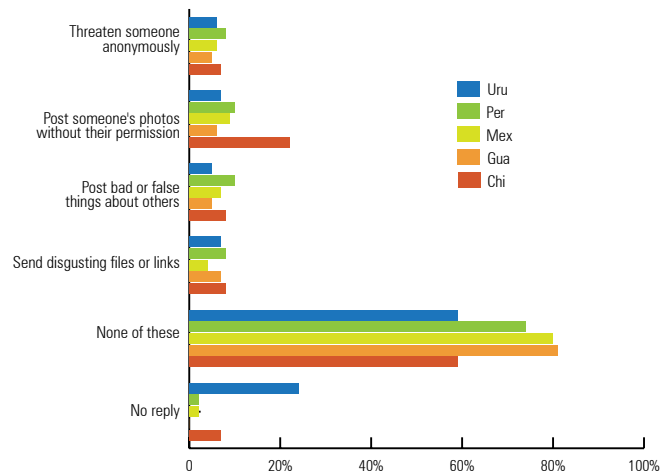
7. Did you do any of these in consequence?



Children themselves can often be the ones creating uncomfortable situations for their peers. Even though 80% of the Guatemalan and Mexican children and 74% of the Peruvian children interviewed claimed that they had never done anything negative to their peers, only 59% of the Chilean and Uruguayan children interviewed made the same claims²⁹. However, there doesn't seem to be a special preferred practice in any of the countries, with most of the peer-peer situations being carried out by less than 10% of the children interviewed in each country, except for Chile, where 22% of the children interviewed have posted someone else's photos without their permission.

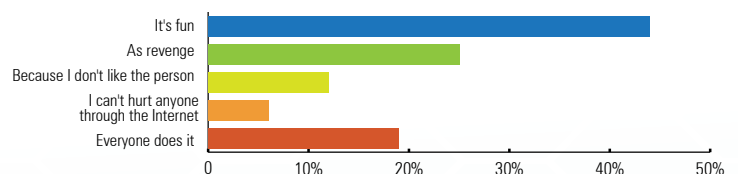
Around 20% of the children interviewed in Guatemala, Peru and Mexico and around 40% of those in Chile and Uruguay have bullied someone online, mostly because they think that it is fun.

8. Have you ever done any of these?



The main reason children reported for doing any of these things is simply because it is fun, followed by doing it as a form of revenge or because everyone does it, while just a few of the children interviewed think that they cannot hurt anyone through the Internet or do it as a form of bullying, because they don't like the person they are targeting.

9. Why did you do it?

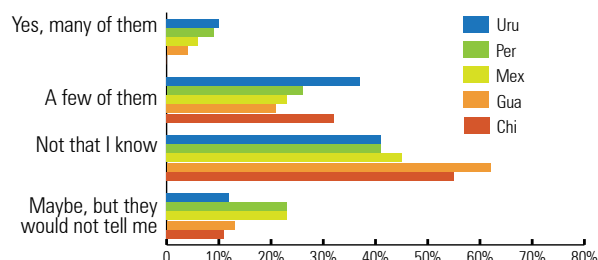


TEACHERS' PERCEPTION

Even though students don't normally speak to their teachers when they experience upsetting situations or face risks online, over 30% of the teachers interviewed in all countries, almost reaching 50% of those interviewed in Uruguay, recognise that some of their students have experienced security issues while using the Internet. Still, 10% of the teachers interviewed in Uruguay, Guatemala and Chile and 20% of those in Peru and Mexico say that their students would not tell them about their problems anyway.

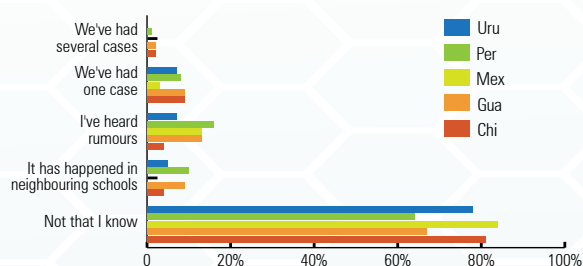
²⁹ It should be noted that 24% of Uruguayan children did not answer this question, therefore it is assumed that they are at the same level that the Guatemalan and Mexican children.

10. Have any of your students ever experienced any security problem using the Internet?



More isolated are the cases of grooming through the Internet, with only a couple of teachers interviewed in Peru, Guatemala and Chile reporting that they have experienced several of those cases in their schools and about 8% of the teachers in all countries except for Mexico saying that they have known of at least one case. Still, about 20% of the teachers interviewed in Chile, Mexico and Uruguay, and 35% of those in Guatemala and Peru, know about some cases, be it directly or just by rumours, or through contacts in other schools. Accordingly, even if the cases are isolated, they are still quite present in school life, and based on their prevalence they should not be ignored.

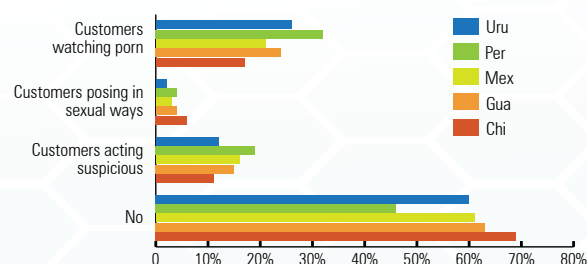
11. Have you had cases in your school of children being groomed through the Internet?



RISKS IN THE INTERNET CAFÉ

Internet cafés are often considered by parents and by some of the children interviewed to be dangerous places, and as was said earlier in the section about online behaviour and practices, a number of children interviewed do not go to this type of establishment because their parents don't allow them or because they do not like the people that go there. Indeed, when asking the children that do visit the Internet cafés if they have ever seen anything suspicious, over one third of the total sample and half of the Peruvians have seen something there that could be considered harmful to them. The most common thing the children interviewed said that they had seen was customers watching pornography, especially in Peru. Also, around 15% of all the children interviewed had seen customers acting suspiciously in the Internet cafés. However, posing in sexual ways in the Internet café doesn't seem to be so common, but most customers would probably do this in places where they cannot be easily seen, so it might happen more often than children can report it. Some Internet cafés in Peru even offer private rooms equipped with drinks, tissues and even condoms, in order to give the maximum privacy and comfort to customers engaging in cybersex.

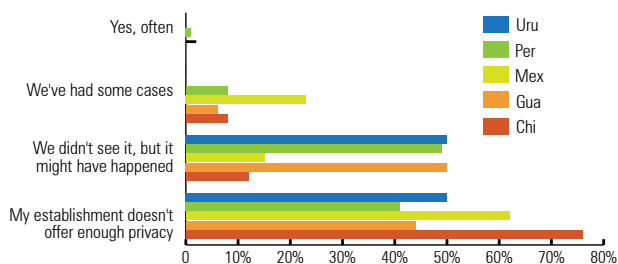
12. Have you seen any of these happening at the Internet café?



Over half of the Peruvian children interviewed have seen some suspicious activities going on at the Internet café.

Actually, 50% of the Internet café representatives interviewed in Guatemala, Peru and Uruguay said that this activity might have happened in their establishments without them realising, while Internet café representatives in Chile and Mexico mostly claim not to offer enough privacy to their customers. Still, 23% of the Internet café representatives in Mexico and around 8% of those in Chile, Peru and Guatemala have at some point found people posing in sexual ways in front of the webcam. The Internet café representatives from Uruguay who were interviewed claimed that sexual activity has apparently never occurred in their establishments, but in half of the cases they recognised that it might have happened without anyone realising.

13. Have you ever seen anyone posing in front of the webcam in sexual ways at your Internet café?



“20% of the Mexican Internet café representatives interviewed have seen in their establishment someone posing in front of the webcam in a sexual manner.”

Last but not least, it does not seem to be too common for adults in these countries to use the Internet café to get in contact with children, as fewer than 5% of the children interviewed for this study reported being contacted in there by adults with possible bad intentions (making comments that upset the children or inviting them to meet outside). However, the case of Peru should be looked into more carefully, as the number of Peruvian children interviewed who claimed to have been contacted in the Internet cafés with possible bad intentions reaches 10%.

Analysis and Recommendations

The data and figures presented earlier in this study are based on the responses obtained from the surveys conducted. Even though the drafters of this questionnaire undertook every effort to make the questions clear and easy to understand, it is possible that some of the respondents were not able to fully grasp the meaning of some of the questions or were not able to provide a frank opinion due to certain factors, such as the presence of teachers during the questioning conducted in the schools. However, the survey does manage to present the general situation of Latin American children's use of ICTs and reflect on those particular conditions.

The countries surveyed varied in terms of economic conditions, modernisation and also in the structure through which ICTs were introduced or used by people. The adoption of technology is also not uniform across the countries surveyed, with certain countries such as Chile and Uruguay showing more ICT roll out than others. One common denominator in all these countries is the fact that children are finding the opportunity to explore and use these tools and platforms. The presence of children from all social strata and cultures in these platforms confirms the growing appeal to children of establishing a profile for communicating with peers and also strangers.

Considering the huge need for and the positive aspects of the modern ICTs, it is important to keep a healthy balance between risks and opportunities and to make scientific observations about the links between the perceived risks and their potential harms. Even though risks should be minimised for children in the online space through effective protection mechanisms, it is important to bear

in mind that opportunities and risks go hand in hand, and that completely curbing the positive opportunities as a means of eradicating the risks may be counter productive, as some of the cases illustrate.

Carefully analysing all the data that has been presented in this report, it is clear that even though significant work has been done in these five countries to improve the safety of children online and reduce the risks they face, much still has to be done to achieve a satisfactory level of protection. This chapter will summarise and analyse some of the most important issues raised in this report, country by country, suggesting actions that could be taken to improve the situation and ensure safe Internet use for all children.

CHILE

Chile is one of the countries with the highest ICT penetration. In Chile most children have Internet access at home, mostly from their own rooms, and use the Internet almost every day and for long periods. Chilean children especially use communication tools such as chat and social networks, with very low control from their parents. Moreover, cell phone connection is also quite widespread, and a rather high number of Chilean children are always online through their cell phones.

Children from Chile who were interviewed for this study seemed to be very familiar with the ICT tools and quite proficient in using the different applications, possibly

due to their early introduction to the computer systems. Moreover, the children interviewed in most cases seemed to manage fine within the digital landscape in terms of their usage and functionalities. The children's familiarity with computer systems does not however ensure that they are able to fully mitigate the potential risks that they might face online, such as responding to cyberbullying, online solicitation, or exposure to inappropriate content.

The fact that children in Chile tend to grow up with self taught knowledge of the ICT tools might also create a false impression regarding their awareness of online risks and vulnerabilities, distancing them from their parents or guardians, whom they may consider incapable of providing necessary support in relation to the new technologies.

Similarly, the Chilean teachers interviewed do not find themselves in a comfortable position from which to guide their students. This could be attributed to (1) the preconceived notion among the children that, regarding technology, there is not much to learn from teachers and (2) the fact that there is no general educational training for teachers within Chilean schools on understanding the Internet safety issues.

The parents of the Chilean children interviewed do not seem to be very concerned about their children's Internet security. Few of them have set rules on their children's computer and cell phone usage. There seems to be a significant generational gap in Chile, with many children having the Internet at home without their parents knowing how to use it. Moreover, one of the main reasons children go to the Internet cafés in Chile is to escape parental control. This finding demonstrates that even in the case in which parents put rules on their children's computer usage, children in Chile can very easily avoid these rules by going to the Internet cafés. The Internet cafés in Chile seem to be extremely permissive, not very well regulated, and offer very limited information on risks related to Internet usage and any possible prevention measures, even though the Internet café staff typically claims to know a lot about these risks.

According to the data collected in this survey, there have been a number of cases of Chilean children undertaking potentially risky behaviour online, such as communicating with strangers (including strangers who had requested children to post nude photos online), and having their profile information stolen due to inadequate privacy protection. Another online risky behaviour uncovered by this research is the fact that many Chilean children have shown interest in meeting people that they do not know in real life. It is recommended that special programs to

build the capacity of the parents and teachers on Internet safety be created in order to equip them with greater awareness, to encourage greater interaction with children and to bridge the gap that exists in understanding the new technologies.

At the same time, it is also important to thoroughly educate Chilean children on the possible risks online and the prevention measures they can take, possibly through peer to peer training programs. Peer training is a good option as children seem to trust their peers much more than they trust their teachers. Also, safety guidelines should be converted into a child friendly format, so that children could learn about these issues by themselves, in the same way that they have always learnt everything related to computers. Internet safety curriculum should be standardised and implemented in the schools and capacity of the teachers enhanced to provide suitable guidance to students. This training should also involve digital literacy programs through which teachers can be trained on modern ICTs in schools.

Finally, Internet cafés should be regulated and limit their services available to children to ensure children's safety and online protection, in an effort to avoid encouraging children to go to these establishments as a means to avoid their parents' rules and be able to use computers without any kind of control. Developing a Code of Conduct for these providers is encouraged to make them adopt standard systems and also address standard protocols for situations of vulnerability if they arise within their businesses.

GUATEMALA

The information collected from Guatemala presents almost the exact opposite situation of that observed in Chile: low ICT penetration and few children having Internet access at home (even though the results of this research point otherwise, but as the youth researchers in this country have said, the high rate of home computers found in Guatemala should be attributed to the inclusion of children from higher socio-economic backgrounds, and not taken as a general trait). In Guatemala, there are many schools which are not equipped with computers or IT equipment and if there are computers in the schools, they are often not connected to the Internet. Additionally, not many of the children interviewed accessed the Internet from Internet cafés, which is surprising for Guatemala, which exhibited a tendency of less Internet access from home.

One reason for the lower rate of Internet café attendance could be that Guatemalan parents don't let their children go to these places for fear of the unknown and uncertainty about what goes on within such spaces. Also another reason is that in Guatemala not that many children interviewed have a cell phone, but, surprisingly, many of those who have a cell phone use it to connect to the Internet, as it is the cheapest, the most fashionable, and for many the only, way to get online.

The Guatemalan children interviewed mostly used their access to computers and Internet to do home work, rather than for other activities such as participating in social networks, playing games or downloading or uploading content that is found in other places. Even though the Guatemalan children interviewed claimed that use of social networks is pretty low, online chatting was still found to be a relatively popular activity. Children in this country have the highest trust in teachers' capacity to teach them about the use of computers, as compared to other countries, even though the Guatemalan teachers interviewed, themselves, recognise not to know too much about it. Also, Guatemalan children are, together with Mexico, among those taking the least risks and facing the least problems while using computers.

Even though the above facts may appear to be good news, it has to be noted that these are not caused by the existence of a comprehensive educational curriculum and awareness programs on safety issues. The education that children receive on computer use in general is still rather low, even though an important part of this education about computers is related to Internet safety. Most of the Guatemalan teachers interviewed seem to think that it is very important to speak to their students about the possible risks online, but the teachers interviewed claimed their knowledge related to these risks to be rather limited. This fact negatively affects the information teachers can give to students about this issue, despite the fact that the teachers interviewed intended to help, as shown by the high amount of them who spoke to their students about pornography. The situation is similar for Internet cafés, with Guatemala being the country where Internet café staff claim to know the least about risks online, but at the same time being the one participating country where Internet cafés seem to give more information about these risks and are most regulated.

Guatemala should prioritise and invest in giving training to their teachers on the new technologies used by children and the corresponding risks online, as many teachers interviewed expressed during their needs assessment. These trainings would enable teachers in Guatemala

to transmit this knowledge to their students, taking advantage of the high levels of trust children still have in them and the keenness that teachers expressed to engage in prevention programs and implement such strategies. Also Internet café staff in Guatemala should be trained to improve the policies and awareness in this kind of establishments, even though almost 20% of the Internet café representatives interviewed in Guatemala consider their establishments to be already safe enough. Expanding the ICT infrastructure should be coupled with parallel investment in development of capacity building, training and resource development of teachers, parents and children across other sectors (such as private IT sectors and service providers).

Additionally, more research in Guatemala should be undertaken specifically on children's access to the Internet through their cell phones, as it seems to be a quite common but a rather uncontrolled access point in this country.

MEXICO

Mexico's case falls in between that of Chile and Guatemala. ICT penetration in Mexico is fast growing, with more children receiving Internet access from home than in Guatemala, but a high amount of Mexican children interviewed still have to go to the Internet café to be able to access the network. Still, home computers in Mexico seem to be in general shared with the whole family, as they are mostly located in common places within the home and most parents know how to use them. The computers are therefore mostly used for homework or learning, while practices such as chatting and use of social networks are rather low in this country amongst the participants interviewed. Mexico is one of the countries where less children engage in risky activities, even though a number of the children interviewed have reported watching pornography online, and one of the countries where less of the children interviewed have had any negative experiences while using the computer.

Mexico is also the country where children get the highest amount of education about the use of computers, including Internet safety, and one of the countries where teachers talk the most to their students about potential risks while using ICT tools and going online, including pornography. Mexican teachers consider these issues to be very important, even though many of them claimed not to know much about them. Moreover, Mexican children's trust in their teachers is still very high, most of the children

interviewed agreed with the prevention techniques they had been taught, and a surprisingly high amount of them had even read safety guidelines online. Also, Mexican schools seem to be the ones most often offering Internet access for their children outside school hours, usually under adult supervision or limiting the services available, in an attempt to reduce the number of children going to Internet cafés. However, this initiative was not very successful apparently, as even though the use of school computers to access the Internet is higher in Mexico than in most other countries, it is still much lower than the use of Internet cafés.

In spite of some Internet cafés trying to make efforts to educate their customers on online safety and risks, in general the Internet café operators interviewed have yet to implement robust Codes of Conduct or policies to ensure a better policy framework, as the study shows that the practices within the Internet cafés in Mexico do not ensure a safe environment for children. Mexican children can in general access the cafés at any time, without any limitation to the content. The large number of incidents in Mexico where customers were able to pose in sexually suggestive ways in front of the webcams present in the cafés seems to point out that very little monitoring happens, and that the cafés are not under the pressure of authorities to prevent such acts from being committed.

In Mexico, there seems to be an understanding of the need to train and educate teachers and also to provide a safer environment in schools to protect children. The schools in Mexico in most cases have developed initiatives to educate children on online risks and provide them with alternative ways to use the ICTs safely. These efforts need to be sustained. As mentioned above, the Internet cafés must be made to be more proactive and enforce policies that will help them address misuse of their services, but for this to happen their understanding of the issue and commitment to protect children should be strengthened.

PERU

Peru is in a similar situation to Guatemala, with the difference being that fewer children in Peru connect to the Internet from home and even fewer do it from their cell phone or from school, leaving most of Peruvian children to connect from the Internet cafés. Peruvian children also use computers mostly to do homework and learn, but the popularity of chat programmes and social networks is increasing. Surprisingly, the data indicates that the children interviewed from Peru engaged the most in

potentially risky activities, especially communicating with strangers and posting their personal information online.

This is actually quite a surprising outcome, as Peru seems to be making significant efforts to educate their children in the use of new technologies in general, offering the most information and awareness about Internet security, and teachers claiming to have quite good knowledge about the issues and a rather high level of trust from their students. But as the young researchers themselves recognised, the education they get in the Peruvian school system tends to be very unappealing and repetitive, which causes them to pay less attention in schools and not practice what they are taught in real life. This seems to point out the futility of education systems that do not recognise the need to involve children in their design process or evaluate the system's effectiveness.

Awareness raising efforts and regulations in Peruvian Internet cafés also seem to be quite high, but sadly the knowledge of the café managers and staff members regarding risks online is rather low. Peru is also one of the few countries where some of the Internet cafés offer special spaces for children, even though the number of establishments offering it is still quite limited, and it also has the highest number of Internet cafés not allowing children to come in after a certain time, according to the Internet café representatives interviewed. Still, the Peruvian children interviewed gave conflicting versions of the situation, with very few of them stating that they cannot enter the cafés after a certain time and many of them stating that they can download everything they want and that they have seen other customers watching pornographic contents. This conflicting information in a country with clear laws regulating the services that can be offered to children in Internet cafés, might suggest that some Internet café representatives interviewed in Peru might have replied according to the law and not to their real policies for fear of retaliation. Moreover, there does not seem to be much control with the use of webcams, and a high number of establishments within Peru offer highly private settings to their customer, some even offering private rooms, which can cause real concerns for child protection.

Overall, the study shows that Peru is trying to promote the safe use of the Internet at school, but they are not doing it in a way that is attractive to the students. Peru is also one of the few participating countries that have included policies especially dedicated to protect children using the Internet cafés. However, enforcement of these regulations might not have been very successful, creating a security breach. Peru should work together with its Internet cafés

to increase the security of these establishments, enforcing the regulations implemented but also training them in online risks for children and how can they be avoided. Also the education that children receive at Peruvian schools about this issue should be reviewed, as even though teachers claim to give a lot of information on prevention of risks and the Peruvian children interviewed seem to have high levels of trust in their teachers, it looks like their teachings are not attractive enough for the children.

URUGUAY

Uruguay has a very similar situation to Chile, with the special characteristic that it has implemented the “One Laptop Per Child” programme almost to 100% of the population attending Uruguayan primary education, and is now doing so in the secondary education too. Accordingly, Uruguayan children don’t just have a computer at home, but actually grow up with their own laptop, the “ceibalita”. The attachment of Uruguayan children to their computers is of course extremely positive for education, but also involves some threats that should be seriously examined.

One of the main principles of the OLPC programme is that the focus is not on computer literacy but on learning in general. Children are supposed to learn how to use the computer by themselves, while they play with it, with absolutely no specific training on computer use coming from adults. As a result, in many cases it is actually children that end up teaching the adults how to use the computers. This means that children also get almost no education on computer safety or risks, while at the same time they lose all trust in adults’ capacity to teach them anything related to computers, as has been shown by the results of this survey.

The “ceibalitas” obviously have filters and other security features, but some of the risks that children can take are difficult to control from an automated system, and can be only addressed through awareness raising and personal control. Moreover, Uruguayan children growing with these “downgraded” computers will soon discover all the features available in “real” computers, and will start using their parents’ computers or going to the Internet café to use these. Actually, Uruguay is the only country where children under 14 years old (the age group where most children have received laptops from the government) go to the Internet cafés more often than teenagers, and this research shows that the main reason for Uruguayan children to go to the Internet café is the availability of

programmes and services that they cannot access from their home computers.

As in the Peruvian case, the Uruguayan Internet cafés seem to be relatively well regulated, with special spaces for children in some establishments, time limitations in most of the cafés, and limitations both in webcam use and in the access to pornography. The main difference with Peru is that in Uruguay, Internet café representatives claim to be very knowledgeable about risks online, but provide almost no information to their customers. In any case, the children interviewed again seem to have a different version of the regulations, with most of them saying that they can enter the cafés any time they want (Uruguay is actually the country with more children going to the Internet cafés late at night) and a significant number claiming that they can download anything they want. Uruguay, like Peru, has implemented laws regulating Internet cafés to protect children, so Uruguayan Internet café representatives might have responded according to the stated law rather than according to their real policies fearing the consequences of this survey. Moreover, the sample of Uruguayan Internet cafés is so small that it is difficult to make reliable conclusions out of the data.

In any case, the worst threat in a country like Uruguay, with a very low use of Internet cafés, is actually at home. As has been said before, the “ceibalitas” can offer some degree of protection to children, but cannot protect them from all possible risks. At the same time, it is not rare for Uruguayan children to have a “real” computer at home that they can use, usually with no control from their parents. This situation, coupled with the very low education and awareness on risks online they get, have resulted in the Uruguayan children interviewed being among the children (1) taking the most risks, especially when interacting with strangers, and (2) experiencing the most dangerous situations, with even a relatively high number of the children interviewed being asked to pose naked in front of a web camera.

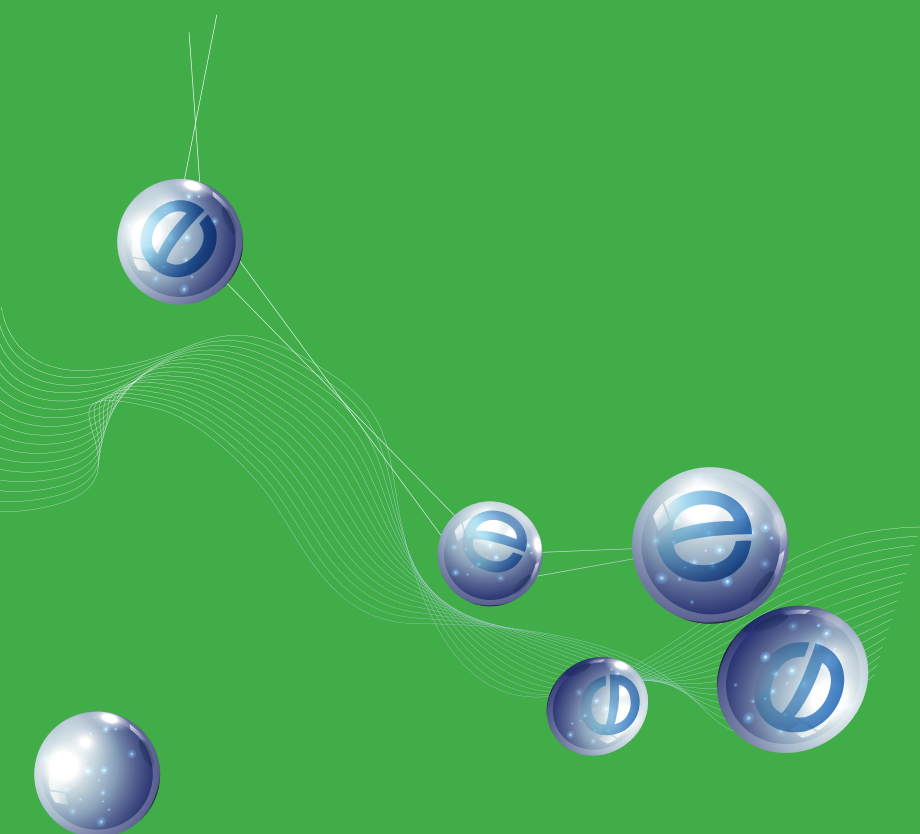
For these reasons, Uruguay should re-evaluate the basic principles of its OLPC programme, to include awareness raising on risks online. Actually, considering the low degree of trust that Uruguayan children interviewed have in their teachers, this awareness raising should probably be done through peer support programmes, or through games and applications in the “ceibalita” itself, as that is the learning tool children have in this country. Also the enforcement of the Internet café laws in Uruguay should be revised, but this is just a secondary concern, as in

Uruguay only about 10% of the children go to this type of establishment.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations given here are all quite similar, and could be summarised in the next points, together with some more general recommendations relating to the legislative process:

- Peer to peer awareness raising programmes should be implemented, especially in Chile and Uruguay, where children do now show trust in their teachers.
- Parents are encouraged to engage more with their children in relation to the online activities they undertake from a very early age as applicable, with an eye on learning what these new technologies do and how those can be enhanced for their children. Moreover they should also get familiar with the applications and tools to better understand the positive aspects of these new tools to enhance the opportunities for their children in acquiring new knowledge and skills and also get better orientation of the actual risks involved while online, so they can better guide them to mitigate such risks.
- Adequate training and capacity building of parents on Internet safety should be prioritised by the states and supported by the private sector. Awareness campaigns are good for raising issues but the actual knowledge and capacity building of the parents should be done through distinct programs- these can be conducted at a community level through NGOs or other specialised agencies or through government run programs. The private sector (such as IT and Internet industry along with mobile operators), can help in creating resources for them in this regard.
- Teachers should receive training to improve their understanding of the possible risks online, especially in Guatemala and Mexico. Teachers should also be encouraged to discuss these issues with their students, especially in Chile and Uruguay. They should also think of methods to make their teachings on this issue appealing to children.
- All countries should work with their Internet cafés to provide a safer environment for children in these establishments. There should be clear guidelines and permissible practices governed by law, but a punitive approach, like the one adopted in Peru and Uruguay, doesn't seem to be as successful as expected, so it should be combined with a more collaborative approach, including training and awareness raising among Internet café owners and staff members.
- Safety guidelines should be made child friendly and given an attractive and interactive format, in order to encourage children to learn about them in the same way as they learn everything else about the use of computers.
- Specific research should be done about children's use of cell phones, especially in Guatemala, to know more about the contents they access, type of phones they use, social interactions they engage in (such as using Facebook or other social networks) and also the prevalence of using cell phones to take and distribute compromising images through MMS, Bluetooth, etc. Moreover, it is also important to research the amount of advertisement that the children are subject to (including adult materials and sexualised contents) through the mobile services.
- Laws regarding child pornography and protection of children against any form of commercial sexual exploitation should be harmonised in the whole region, and brought in line with the international treaties dealing with these issues. This is especially important in the case of the new technologies, as they are usually not limited by borders and national policies as physical actions are.
- All countries should involve Internet Service Providers and financial actors such as banks and credit card companies in the protection of children, introducing policies requiring them to monitor and report suspected cases of child pornography or any other kind of sexual exploitation of children and suspicious transactions.
- Establishments for receiving reports of online abuse and exploitation (such as hot-lines) should be prioritised and made available to children and young people, irrespective of whether they use the Internet tools from home, schools, public spaces such as Internet cafés or through their cell phones.



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