

Inspire Foundation



**Measures to keep
children and
young people
safe online**

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Children and YP on line

- Technology as an enabler of wellbeing
- Opportunity far outweighs the risk
- Children and YP at the centre = responses need to understand opportunity and risk
 - Enhance the opportunity
 - Mitigate the risk

The opportunities...

- **Social skills and Digital literacy**
 - Ito and Boyd: “spending time online is essential for young people to pick up the social and technical skills they need to be competent citizens in the digital age”
 - Greenhow: “students using social networking sites are actually practicing the kinds of 21st century skills we want them to develop to be successful today”

The opportunities...

- Identify formation
- Education:
 - self directed learning
- Mental health and wellbeing:
 - Project CATCH-IT: managing depression in teens
 - www.reachout.com.au – users have double the help seeking skills than non-users

Where do young people turn for advice and support?

	2008 %	2007 %	2006 %	2005 %
Friends	85.1	86.0	86.4	87.3
Parents	74.1	73.6	74.2	75.7
Relative/family friend	61.0	63.3	64.0	64.9
Internet	20.3	19.1	16.8	15.7
School counsellor	11.5	10.8	11.6	10.8
Teacher	11.4	10.5	9.3	9.9
Magazines	11.2	11.6	13.5	12.7
Community agencies eg youth worker	11.1	11.6	9.3	9.9
Someone else in your community eg doctor, church minister	8.5	8.6	8.6	9.0
Telephone helpline	5.9	5.8	6.2	5.8

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

Mission Australia, 2008

Internet preferred to telephone helpline (3-6 times), teachers (2-6 times), school counsellors (2-5 times), community agencies/ youth workers (2 times), doctors/ministers (2 times)



The opportunities...

- Civic engagement:
 - www.actnow.com.au: user are more engaged in volunteering, social action and community decision making than non users
 - [Pew Internet & American Life Project](#): the gaming experience is rich and varied, with a significant amount of social interaction and potential for civic engagement

The risk

- Not fully known or overblown.
- Sexual predation:
 - US Internet Safety Technical Task Force concludes that children and teens are less vulnerable to sexual predation than many have feared.

The risks...

- **Addiction**
 - Kaohsiung Medical University in Taiwan:
Teenagers who are preoccupied with their Internet time may be more prone to aggressive behaviour.

The risks...

- **Bullying:**
 - Data suggestive that online bullying is less than offline bullying
 - "bullying and harassment, most often by peers, are the most salient threats that minors face, both online and offline."
- **Security and privacy.**

Recommendations from the research

- **US Internet Safety Technical Task:**
 - online risks "are not radically different in nature or scope than the risks minors have long faced offline, and minors who are most at risk in the offline world continue to be most at risk online."
 - child safety advocates need to take a more proactive role in helping teens understand the risk of engaging in relationships with adults

Existing proven responses

- **Personal safety (sexual predation), personal security (privacy), addiction and bullying are all countered off-line by education and resources.**
- **Focus on the most vulnerable – support services**

Generation gap?

- Ito and Boyd: "Adults tend to be in the dark about what youth are doing online, and often view online activity as risky or an unproductive distraction," it said, while "youth understand the social value of online activity."

Thank you



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Contact details

Kerry Graham

CEO

Inspire Foundation

Ph: 02 8585 9340

E: kerry@inspire.org.au

