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Pace of Change
Report

Research focused on how parents
and children differ in their use of
the internet

December 2015
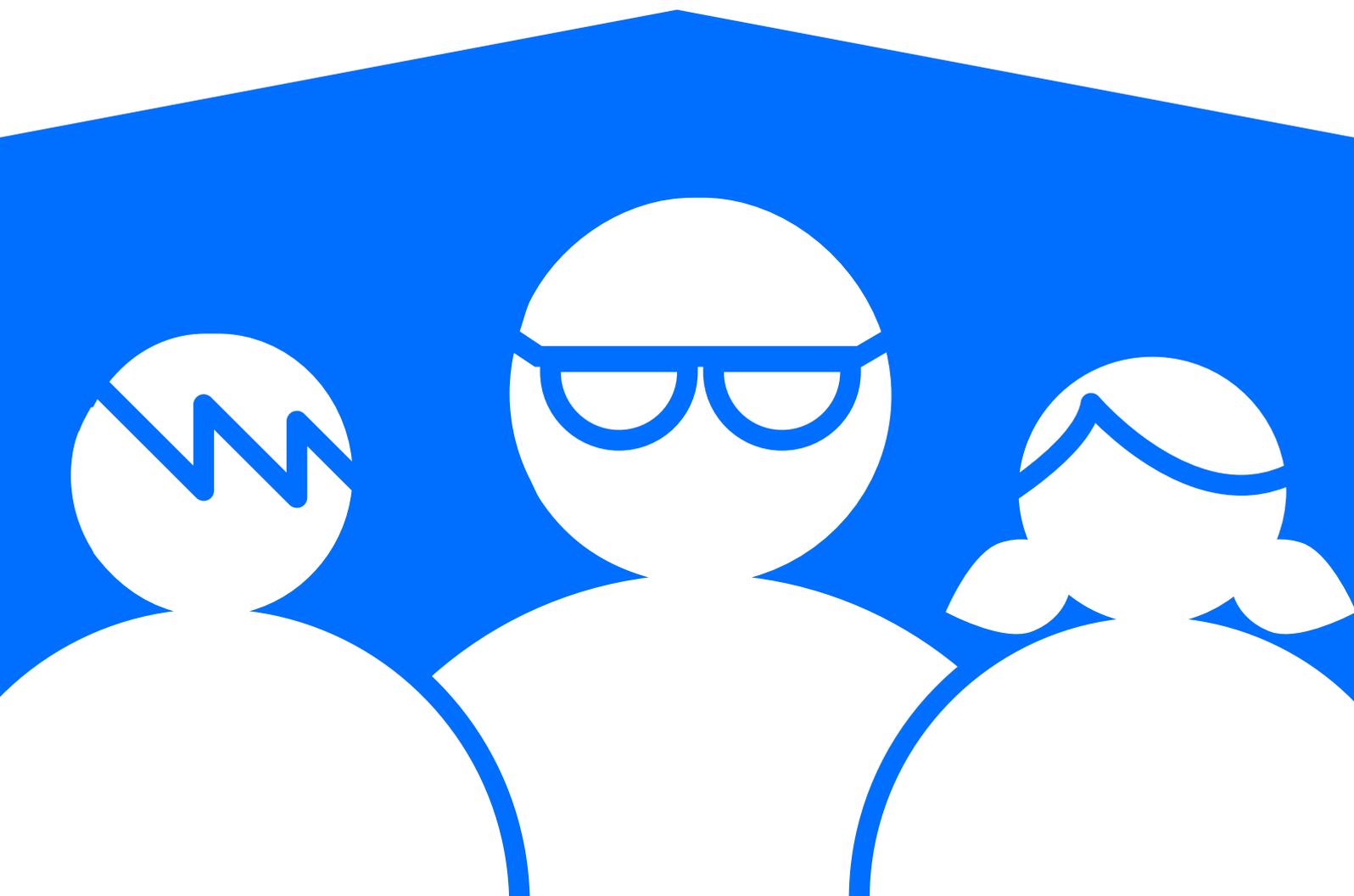
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INTRODUCTION AND FOREWORD

Over the last five years there's been a rapid growth in the time that we spend online and what we do. Whether it be skyping family and friends, sharing photos on Instagram or controlling our homes with smartphones, the digital world has crossed over to support us in the real world.

As this world grows in importance in our daily lives, we wanted to find out if there was a gap between parents and children's knowledge and use of the internet. We felt that understanding these differences could help parents to feel more confident about what information they need know, to help their children get the best online experience, as this new generation will never know the world without the internet.

METHODOLOGY

CHILDWISE were commissioned to carry out a UK wide study to explore the use and understanding of technology amongst children aged 7-17, and parents of children this age.

Research was required to understand the differential in use and understanding of technology, for instance whether children understand more about modern technology than parents do.

This research will be published at regular intervals, to monitor changes over time.

1001 parents of 7-17 year olds from an online panel of adults took part in a survey from Monday 14th to Monday 28th September 2015.

Children and young people aged 7-17 were interviewed as part of the annual CHILDWISE Monitor Survey. Children from schools from the CHILDWISE schools panel took part in an online survey during September / October 2015. Initial questions on use of technology were asked across 2014 children, with further questions on websites used and online safety asked across 1038 7-17 year olds.

SUMMARY

INTERNET USE

Parents of 7-17 year olds and 7-17 year olds themselves differ in their basic use of devices to access the internet, with parents sticking to more established methods, and children keener to be online across a wider range of less traditional devices.

- **Laptops**, plus mobile phones and tablet computers are parents' main access routes, followed by desktop PCs

- **Mobile phones**, plus tablets and laptops are the top devices used by children, and they are much more likely than parents to use games consoles, smart TVs, and iPods to go online

- Children's usage of portable devices such as mobile phones and tablets has implications for the level of parental oversight that is possible

Children's claimed internet use tends to be higher than that of parents, with children using some devices for almost twice as long as parents say they do.

- Parents' time online tends to be limited to **around two hours per device**, whilst children claim to use their mobile phones and games consoles **for nearer three hours a day**

Children and parents have very different reasons for using the internet, with parents using mainly for practical reasons, whilst children use for entertainment purposes.

- Parents are nearly twice as likely as children to **look up information**, and they are more likely than children to use the internet for **social networking**

- Children are much more likely than parents to **listen to music**, **watch video clips** or **play games**

Overall, children claim to spend significantly longer taking part in most online activities than parents do.

- Although parents are more like to use **social networks**, children who use them do so for twice as long as parents - similarly, children claim to **message friends and family** for twice as long as parents

- Children who **watch video clips** do so for two hours a day on average, compared to an hour for parents, and they **listen to music** and **play games online** for around 2.5 hours a day

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Children use a much wider range of social networks than their parents, with a preference for the more visual, new and exciting, which remain out of reach for parents.

- **Facebook** is the most popular social network among parents, and whilst popular with children, it is on a par with **Snapchat** and **Instagram**, used by only a minority of parents

- Children are far more likely than their parents to use newer video / photo based networks such as **Vine**, **ooVoo**, **Twitch**, and **Flipagram**

There are also clear differences in parents' and children's confidence levels in how to use social networking sites.

- Parents are more knowledgeable than children in using the most popular and established social networks, including **Facebook**, **Google+**, **Twitter** and **Pinterest**

- Children show more knowledge than their parents in how to use **Instagram** and **Snapchat**, and the knowledge gap is wider for newer sites, such as **Vine**, **ooVoo**, **Tumblr**, **Twitch** and **Flipagram**

Parents are best equipped to help their children use and be safe on well-established social networks, but struggle to keep up and help with the more modern social networks that children are keen to use.

- For social networks like **Facebook**, **Skype**, **Google+**, **Twitter** and **WhatsApp**, parents are knowledgeable, confident and comfortable, but apart from Facebook, children are using very different services to their parents, which their parents are less knowledgeable about

- The proportion of children using **Instagram** and **Snapchat** is greater than the proportion of parents who would be confident or comfortable to talk about them

- For some of the **up and coming** social networks such as Vine, ooVoo, Twitch and Flipagram, children's usage may be low at present, but likely to grow, and parents' confidence in using these sites is very low

- Amongst parents who say they know how to use the various social networking sites at all, **on the whole the majority were confident they**

could help their child set up an account, and even more comfortable about talking to their child about how to use these sites safely, suggesting that once armed with a little knowledge and experience, parents feel empowered to help their children

RISKIER APPS AND WEBSITES

Only a small minority of children say they use any popular apps which could be considered 'risky', due to the way children can meet, mix, communicate and share online with people that they don't know, or that allow them to do these sorts of activities anonymously

One in ten or fewer parents say that they know how to use some of the more risky websites and apps that we showed them, with some clear differences in depth of knowledge between parents and children.

- Parents claim a reasonable amount of knowledge of Ask.fm and Kik Messenger, but children in both cases are more knowledgeable

- For the apps that only a minority of children say they actually use, parents in each case, reassuringly, claim to be more knowledgeable than their children – at least for now

The proportion of parents who would be comfortable talking to their child about how to use these riskier apps safely is higher than the proportion of children using at present, but this number is still very low, and usage is likely to grow over time.

- Fewer than one in ten parents are confident they could teach their child to be safe on apps such as **WeChat**, **Tango**, **Meerkat**, **Meowchat**, **Periscope**, **Keek**, **Snog** or **MyLOL**

STAYING SAFE ONLINE

Overall, most parents and children don't think the internet is a safe place for children to be.

Children clearly think that they are more knowledgeable than their parents about the internet, but parents are divided on this.

Children are more likely than their parents to find it easier to be themselves on the internet than face-to-face, likely a result of being brought up as 'digital natives', with ever present online access.

Children are marginally more likely than parents to talk about private things online that they do not share with others face to face.

Parents are far more aware of promotional activity online than their children are - children across this age range tend to be more accepting of advertising online, especially as a trade-off for access to free apps and content.

The vast majority of parents have spoken at least once to their children about online safety.

- Most parents start to talk to their children about online safety when they are between the ages of seven and ten, **on average at 9 years old**, when most children will be using the internet independently

- The main event that triggers discussions between parents and children about online safety, are **relevant articles on the news** noticed by parents

The majority of parents use the different approaches listed at least sometimes to try to keep their children safe when using the internet, with some much more widely used than others.

- The majority of parents give their child the standard advice not to **give out personal information**, **meet up with / talk to** people they meet online, or click on any **links** they are unsure about

- A significant minority also set rules that **actively seek to control and limit their child's internet use**, such as parental controls, restricting the amount of time children can use the internet and when they can go online, or checking their child's browsing history
- For all of these rules, it is **mums that are more likely than dads to make sure these are always enforced**

Whilst only a minority of children take part in risky online behaviour, this does increase with age, as children test the boundaries of what they can and can't get away with, and boys are especially likely to take more risks and break rules, even from a young age.

- This behaviour includes going **online longer than they are allowed**, or at **times that they shouldn't**, **uploading photos and videos of themselves**, and **talking online to people they don't know**

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TOOLS FOR KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

Awareness of controls to help keep children safe online is high amongst parents, with around half using parental controls of some sort, but usage drops with age, as children require wider access to online content and are trusted with more freedoms.

- The most commonly used tools are **parental controls** - on home broadband, TV services and games consoles

The overriding reason that parents give for not using online safety tools more is that they trust their child to use the internet responsibly, and therefore don't feel the need to implement parental controls.

This level of trust increases with age, however, this trust may be misplaced, as risky behaviour also tends to increase with age.

GOING ONLINE

Which of these do you normally use to go online / on the internet / on websites?
*n=2011 children / 1001 parents*
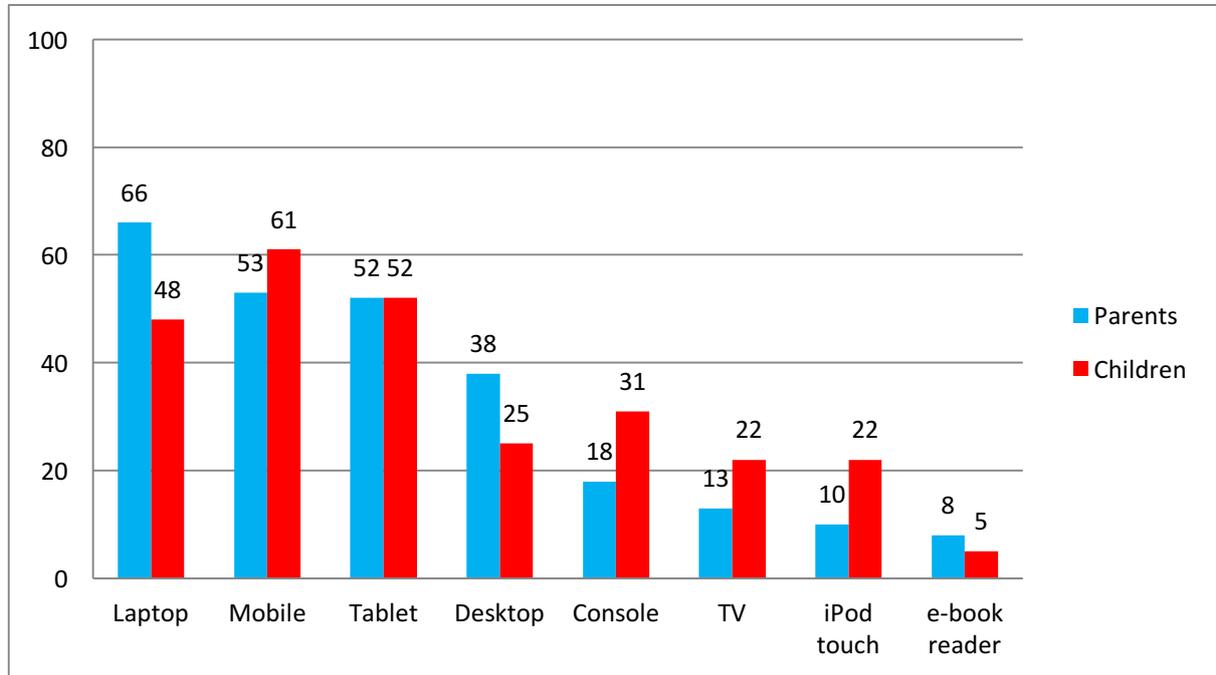
Parents of 7–17 year olds and 7–17 year olds themselves differ in their basic use of devices to access the internet, with parents sticking to more established methods, and children keener to be online across more, more current devices.

Two in three parents of children this age use their laptop to access the internet (66%), their main route to get online, followed by half using either their mobile phone or a tablet computer (53% and 52% respectively). The only other device of any real significance for parents is the **desktop computer**, used by two in five to get online (38%).

Children's main devices used to go online allow them to be more flexible in where they can access; they mainly use their mobile phones and tablets to do this, with three in five accessing on mobiles (61%), and more than half accessing on tablets (52%), whilst just under half of children use a laptop to access the internet (48%). Children are far less likely than parents to use a traditional desktop computer to access the internet (25% vs 38% of parents), but more likely to use less traditional methods of access such as **games consoles** (a very popular way to go online for boys), **smart TVs** and **iPods**. However, overall, parents and children use on average the same number of devices to access the internet (2.6).

Children's use of devices to go online by age
n=2011 children
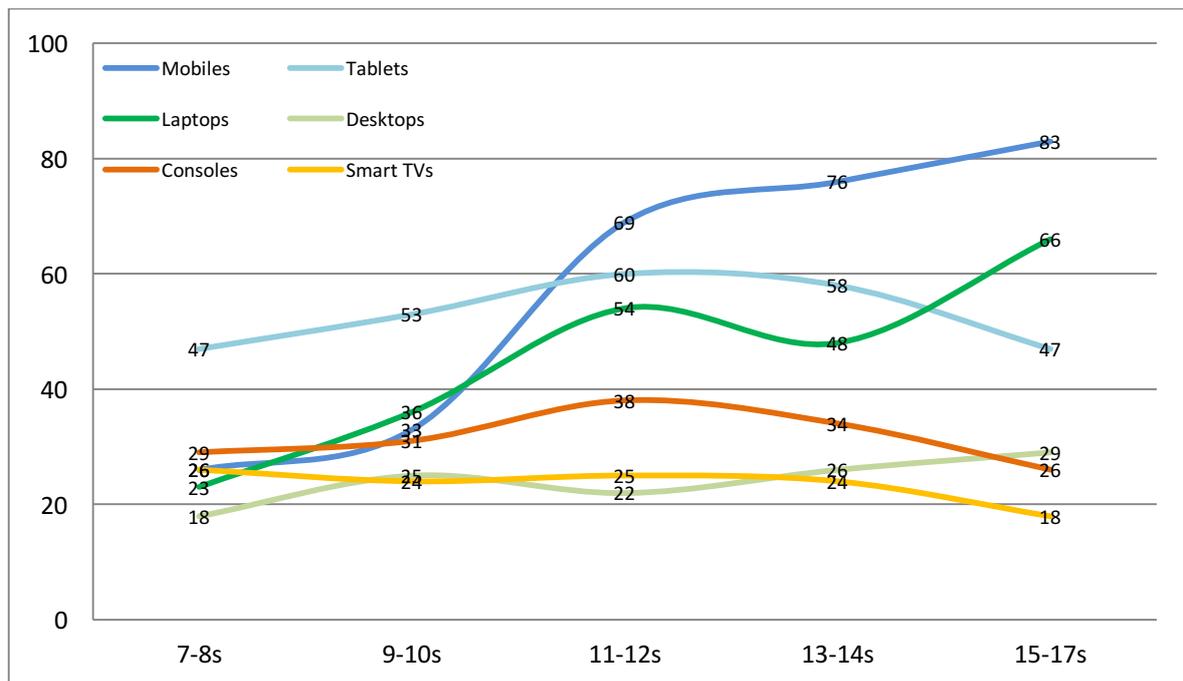
**Mobile phone** use is minimal amongst younger children, for whom the **tablet** is the main access device. Mobile phones really kick in at age 11, and by the age of 14-17, four in five are using these to get online (83%).

Similarly, **laptop** use for 7-10s is low, but rises to two in three for the oldest children (64%), when they become more proficient using a traditional keyboard.

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How long do you spend online on each of these on a normal day?
n=all children / parents using each device
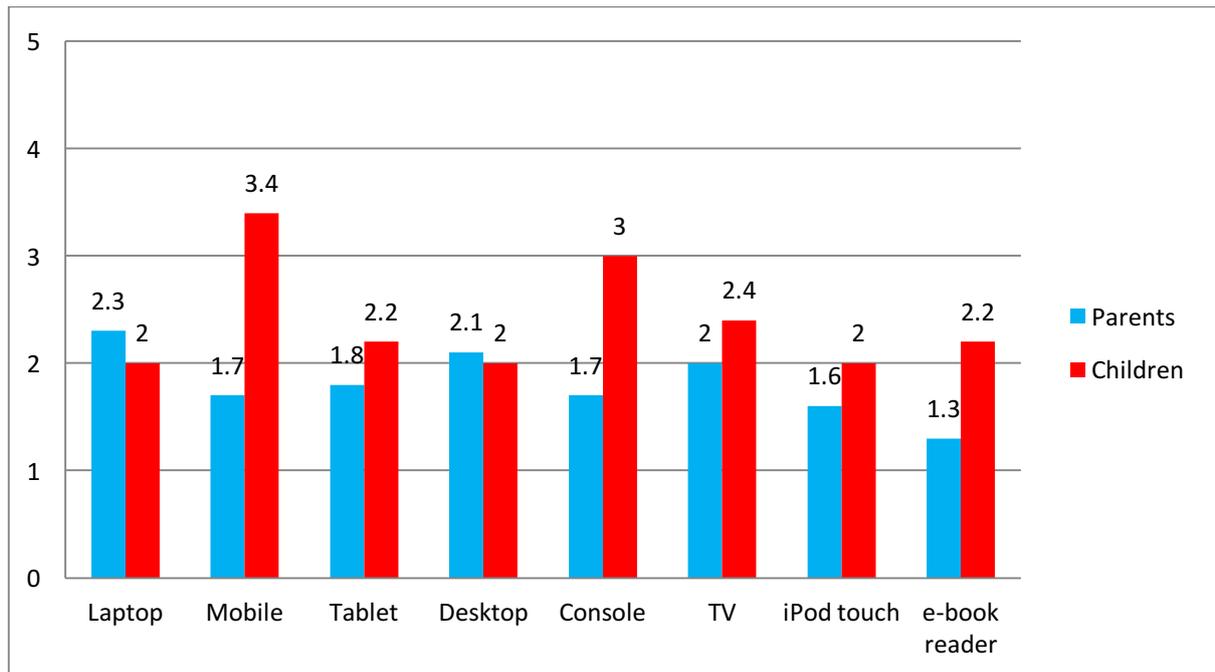
**Children's claimed internet use tends to be higher than that of parents, with children using some devices for almost twice as long as parents say they do.** This in part reflects parents being time poor, whilst children have the time to browse, explore and discover new things online, and have more motivation to do so.

Parents' use of the internet tends to be limited to around two hours or less per device, with laptops and desktops used for the longest periods, possibly reflecting their use of these devices for work purposes.

However, **children using mobile phones and games consoles to go online say they do so for three hours on average**, nearly twice as long as parents spend on these devices. Children also claim to spend more time than parents using all other devices, except for desktop computers where their usage matches that of parents, and laptops which parents use for longer.

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How long do you spend online on each of these on a normal day? – Boys vs Girls
n=all boys / girls using each device
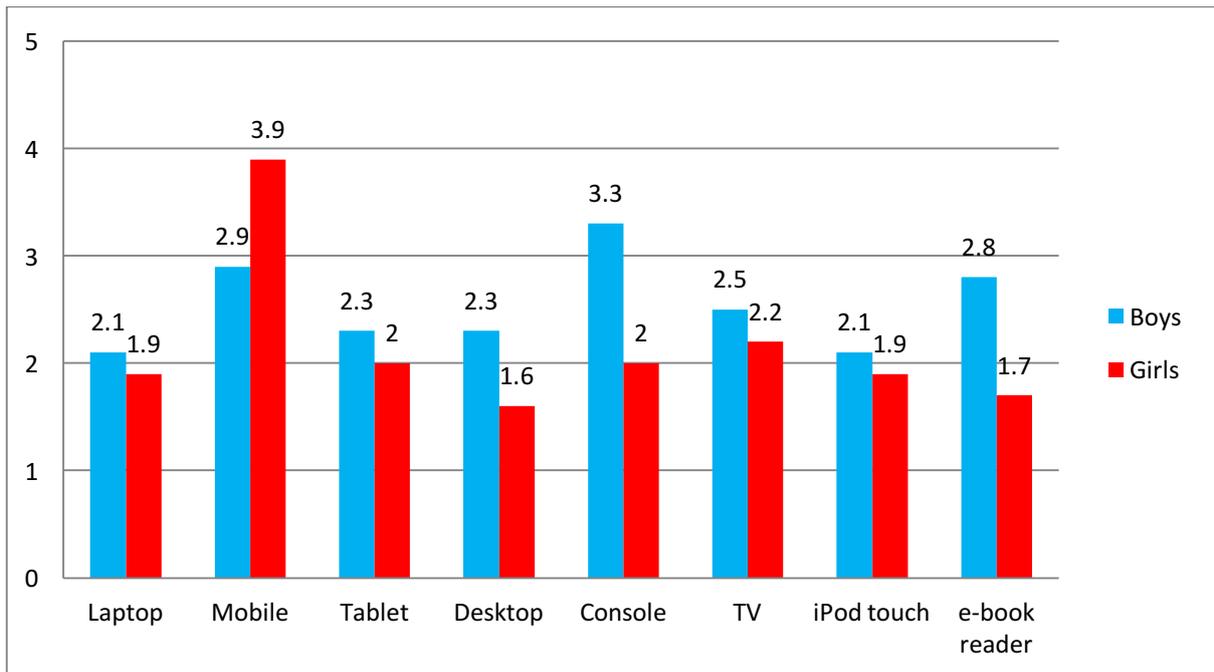
Girls claim to use their phone to go online for far longer than boys do (3.9 hours vs 2.9 for boys), whilst boys claimed usage of all other devices is higher, especially gaming devices such as consoles (3.3 hours vs 2.0 for girls), and desktop computers (2.3 hours vs 1.6), plus eBook readers (2.8 hours vs 1.7 for girls).

Children's time online on each device by age across all children
n=2011 children

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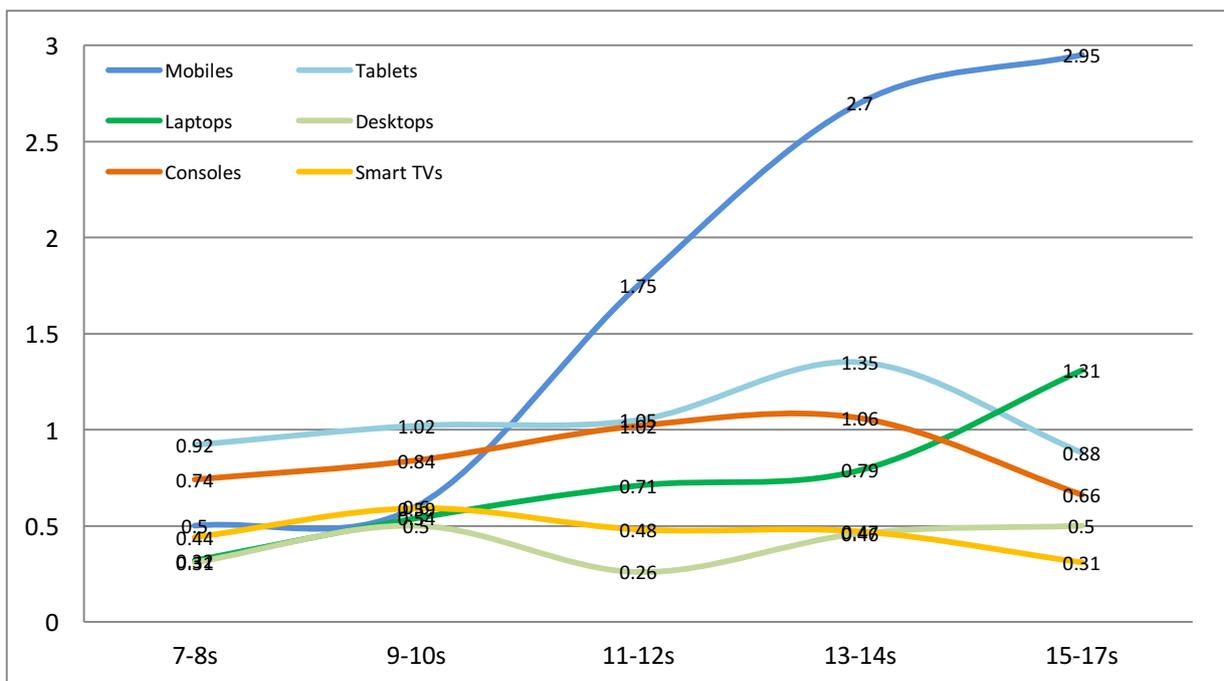
REASONS FOR GOING ONLINE

What do you normally go online / on the internet for?
n=2010 children / 1001 parents

Reason	Parents	Children
Looking up information	75	44
Using a social networking site (eg. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat)	59	50
Messaging friends / family	52	50
Playing games	44	54
Watching video clips	42	61
Listening to music	40	62
For child's homework	40	54
Uploading photos / videos / music	29	29
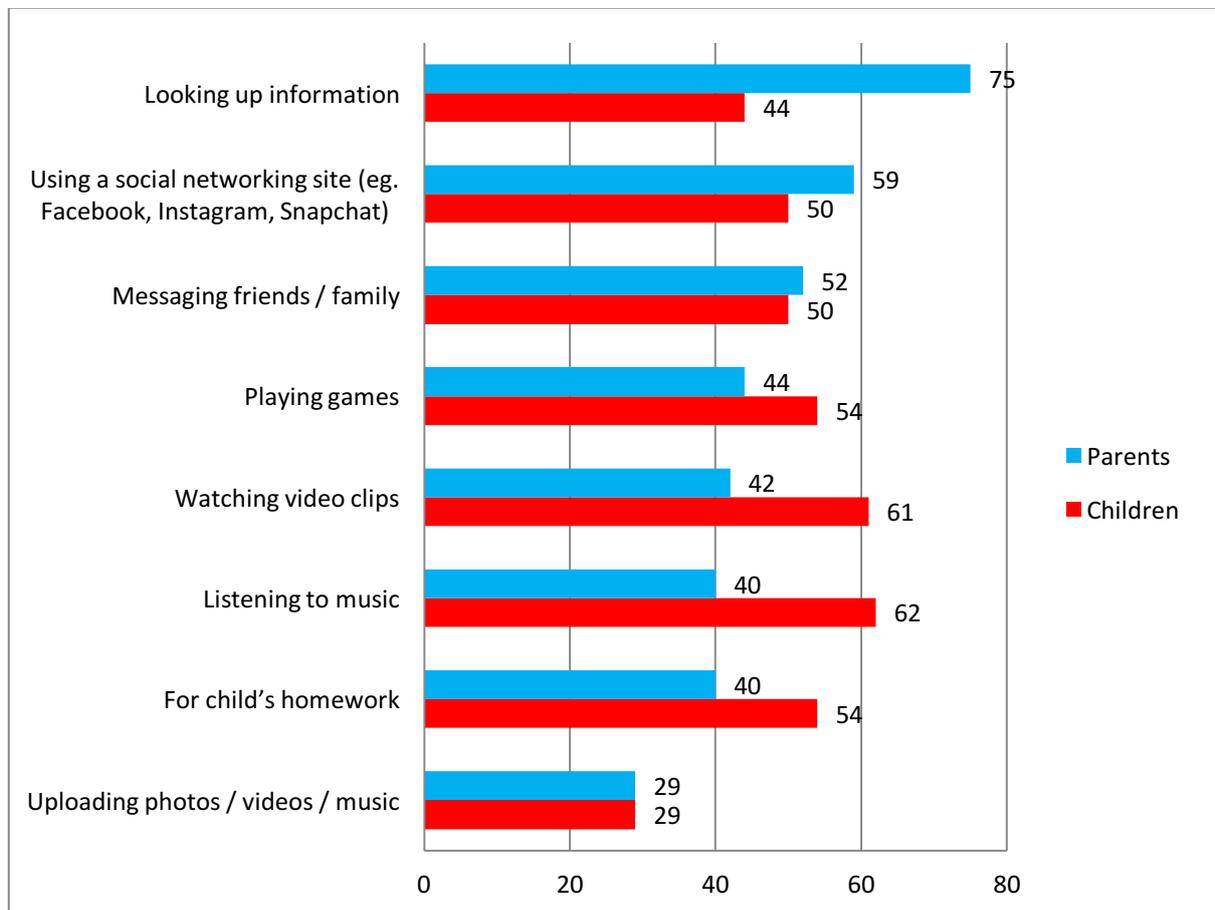
Children and parents have very different reasons for using the internet. Three in four parents use the internet to look up information, their most popular reason for going online (75%), but only two in five children say they use the internet for this reason (44%).

Surprisingly, parents are more likely than children to use the internet for social networking, with three in five parents going online for this purpose (59%), compared to half (50%) of children. This is most likely due to age restrictions on social networking for younger age groups, with the largest providers (Facebook, Twitter etc.) only allowing those aged 13 or older to have a profile. However, children's usage increases from just one in eight 7-10s using social networks (12%), up to three in four by age 14-17 (77%), when they are legitimately allowed to use most of the popular networks, and when they are more likely to use than parents.

Children are most likely to say they use the internet for entertainment rather than practical uses – three in five **listen to music** (62%), **watch video clips** (61%),

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or **play games** online (54%). The rollout of fast internet speeds across the UK have led to children using the internet predominantly as a media source in recent years.

Gender plays an important part in determining how both children and parents use the internet. Girls / mums are both more likely than boys / dads to use the internet for social networking, messaging, doing homework, uploading photos / videos / music, or looking up information. Boys / dads are more likely to be watching video clips, and whilst boys are more likely than girls to go online for games, by adulthood this difference is no longer apparent. Listening to music is more popular for girls, but later in life it is dads that are more likely to go online for this reason.

How long do you spend online doing each of these things on a normal day?
n=all children / parents using for each reason
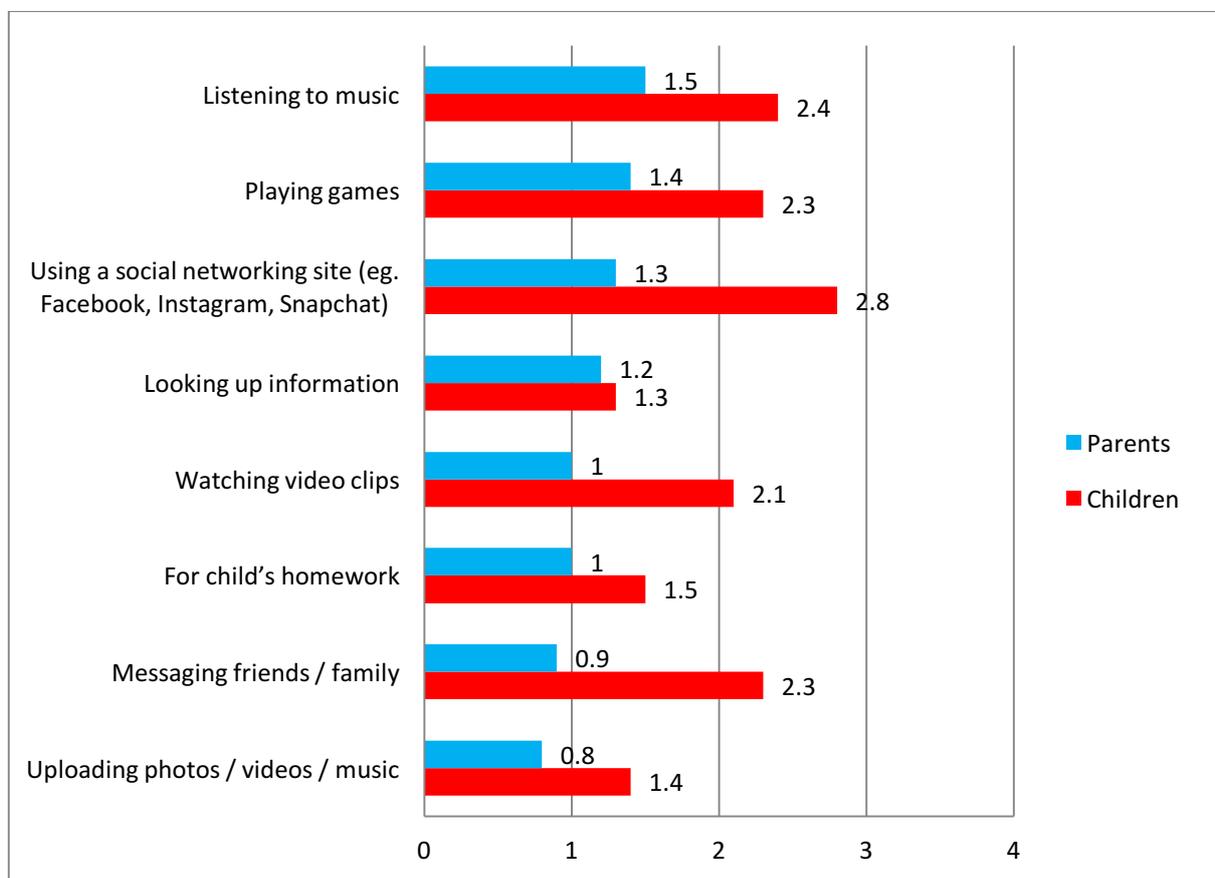
Overall, **children claim to spend significantly longer taking part in most online activities than parents do.** Children spend longer than parents doing all of the online activities listed.

Although children are less likely than parents to go online for social networking, those that take part claim to do so for almost three hours a day (2.8 hours), more than double the time spent social networking by their parents. Girls spend 3.2

hours on average, while boys spend 2.2 hours social networking, but this gender divide does not extend to parents' social networking use.

Children spend more than two hours a day **listening to music, playing games, watching video clips** and **messaging friends / family.** Boys spend significantly longer than girls playing games and watching video clips, but by adulthood this difference is no longer marked.

Of all the activities, parents spend the most time online **listening to music**, at 1.5 hours on average, followed by **playing games** for 1.4 hours, and **using social networks** at 1.3 hours on average.

Although three in four parents **look up information** online, their most popular activity, they only spend on average 1.2 hours doing this a day.

Uploading content is a minority activity for parents and children, but one which both boys / dads spend more time doing than girls / mums.

WEBSITES AND APPS USED

Which of these websites or apps do you normally use? – Social Networks
*n=931 children / 1001 parents*
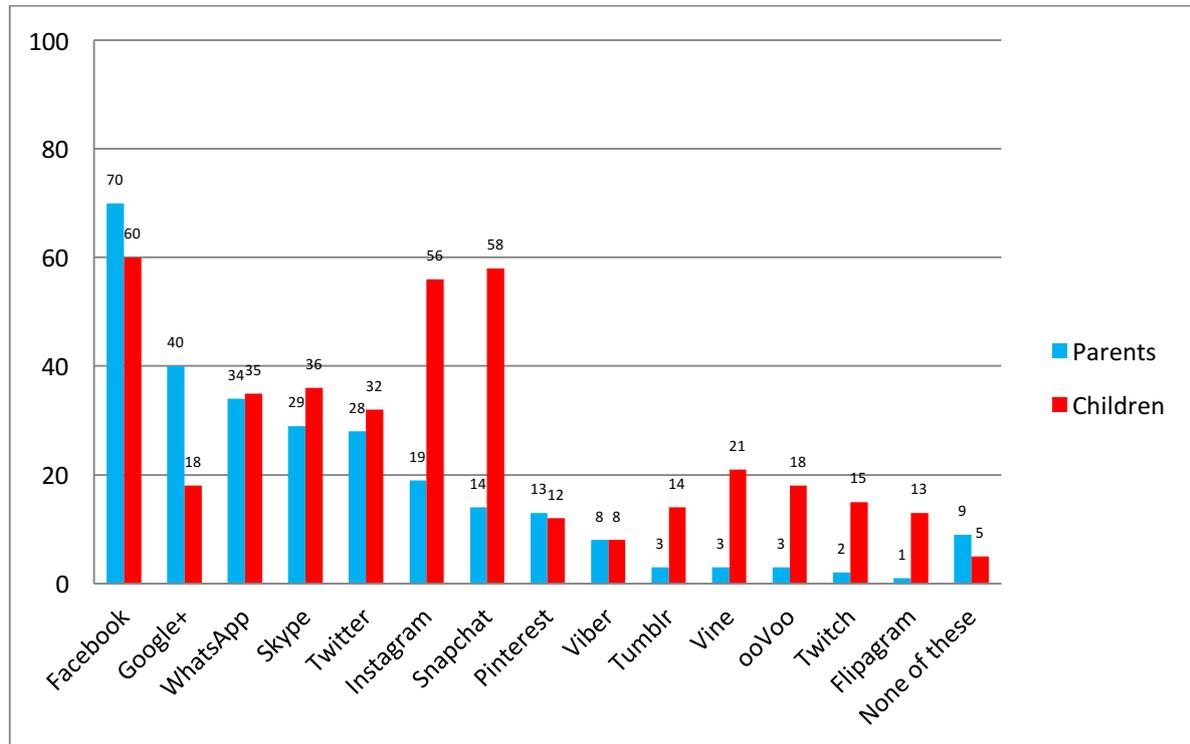
Children use a much wider range of social networks than their parents, with a preference for the more visual, new and exciting - children use 4.0 different networks on average, with parents using 2.7. Children's social network use rises with age, from 2.2 networks for 7-10s up to 4.7 networks on average among 14-17 year olds.

Facebook is the most popular social network among parents, with seven in ten using the site (70%, especially mums). Facebook is still popular amongst three in five children, but for them it is on a par with the more modern and visual **Snapchat** and **Instagram** (with girls using both of these more than boys do) - both of these are used by only a fifth or fewer parents.

There are clear differences in the networks used by parents and children, with more established networks having popularity among parents, whilst some newer, mobile-based networks are more popular among children. As well as Facebook, parents are much more likely to use **Google+** than children, whilst children are more likely to use **Skype**. For some networks popular with children, parents show little interest at all - **Tumblr, Vine, ooVoo, Twitch** (almost exclusively boys) and **Flipagram** are all at least four times more popular with children than adults.

Both parents and children are equally likely to use **WhatsApp, Twitter, Pinterest** (especially girls / mums) and **Viber.**

Which of these websites do you normally use? – General sites
*n=1029 children / 1001 parents*
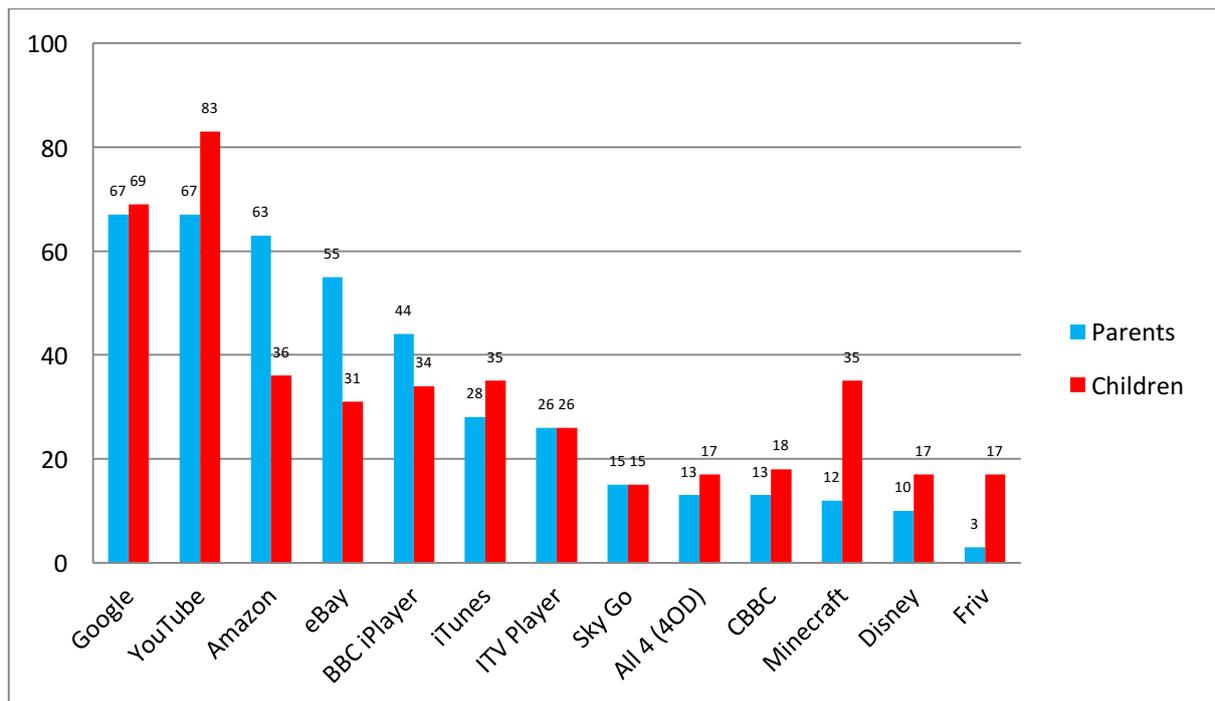
From a list of generally popular websites, children aged 7-17 are far more likely to say they use **YouTube** than any other website – more than four in five children normally use it (83%, especially boys), with **Google** their next most used site with seven in ten actively using (69%).

Two in three parents of 7-17s say they normally use **YouTube** or **Google** (both 67%), their most used sites.

Parents (especially mums) have a stronger interest in online shopping than children - three in five parents use **Amazon** (63%), compared with just one in three children, and over half of parents use **eBay** (55%) while just three in ten children use the site.

Unsurprisingly, children are more likely than parents to use entertainment and gaming websites targeted at their age group. One in three play **Minecraft** (35%, especially boys), compared with just 12% of parents, whilst around a fifth use **CBBC** (18%), **Disney** (17%) or **Friv** (17%), compared with far fewer parents.

Which of these websites or apps do you normally use? – Riskier apps
n=843 children
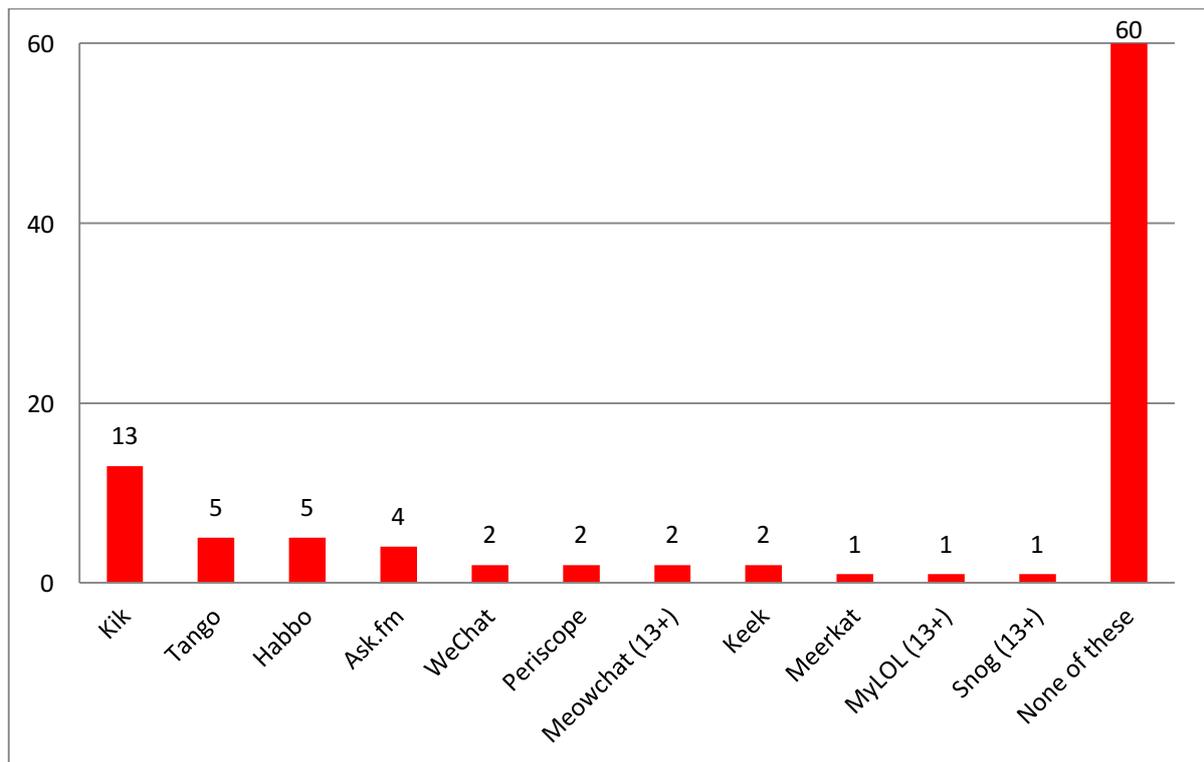
We showed children a list of apps that might are known to be slightly more risky than others due to the way children can meet, mix, communicate and share online with people that they don't know, or that allow them to do these sorts of activities anonymously.

Only a very small minority of children use any of these apps which could be considered 'risky', with three in five (60%) specifically saying they don't normally use any of these.

Kik Messenger is used by one in seven young people (13%). This instant messaging app allows users to contact anyone by typing in their username. Usage increases with age, from just 5% of 7-10s up to 19% of 14-17 year olds.

The other sites listed were only used by one in twenty or fewer. Keek and Periscope both encourage users to share videos, with the latter providing a live streaming service. Snog and MyLOL are both dating sites specifically designed for teens.

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KNOWLEDGE OF WEBSITES AND APPS

How much do you know about how to use each of these social network sites? (Showing % who know how to use a lot / quite a bit)
n=all children / parents answering
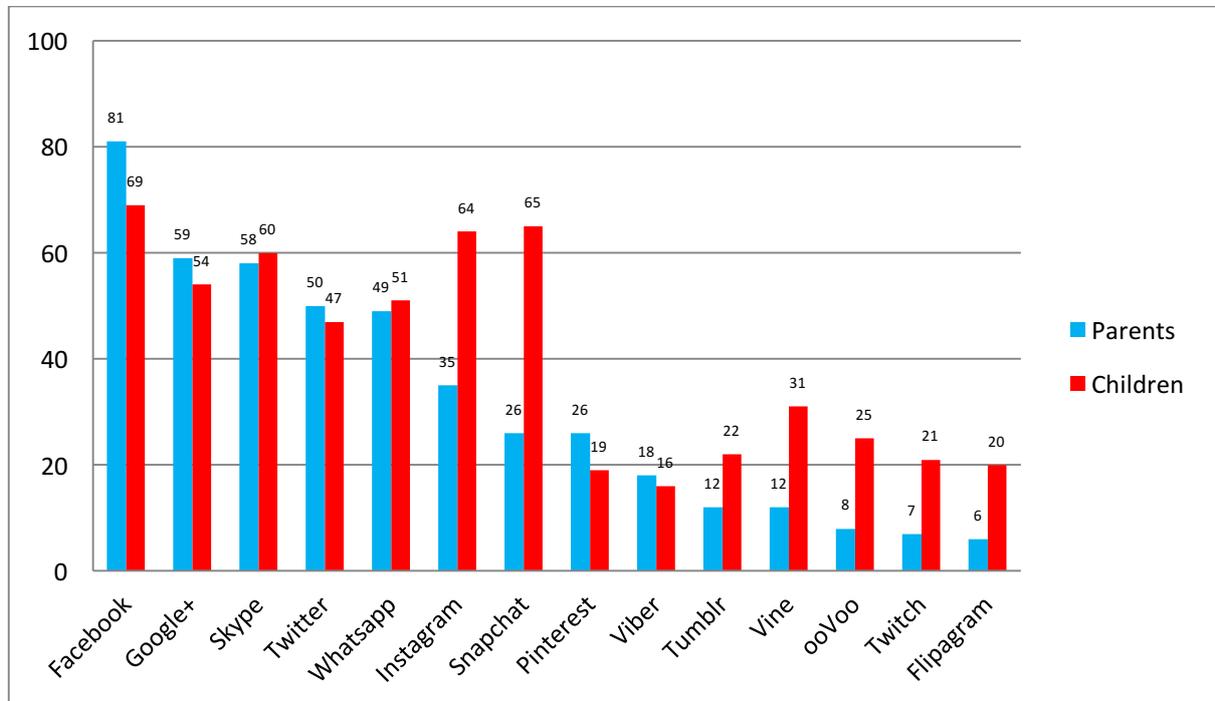
When we ask parents and children which social networking sites they know how to use, some clear differences appear in their confidence levels across the different networks.

Parents are more knowledgeable than children in using some of the most popular and longer-established social networks, including **Facebook**, **Google+**, **Twitter** and **Pinterest** (especially mums). These sites are the ones that parents use the most, and on the whole they are happy with how to use them.

Children are twice as knowledge as their parents when it comes to using **Instagram** and **Snapchat** (65% and 64% respectively), and in both cases, girls, who use these sites more than boys do, say that they know more about how to use them than boys.

Even bigger differences between parents' and children's knowledge emerge when we look at smaller, newer sites. Three in ten children know how to use **Vine** (31%), compared to one in eight parents (12%). Similarly, between a quarter and a fifth of children know how to use **ooVoo**, **Tumblr**, **Twitch** (especially boys) and **Flipagram**, whereas half as many parents say they know how to use these social networking sites.

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How confident would you be helping your child set up an account on each of these social networking sites?

How comfortable would you be talking to your child about how to use each of these social networking sites safely?
(Showing % confident / comfortable at all)

n=all parents who say they know how to use each site
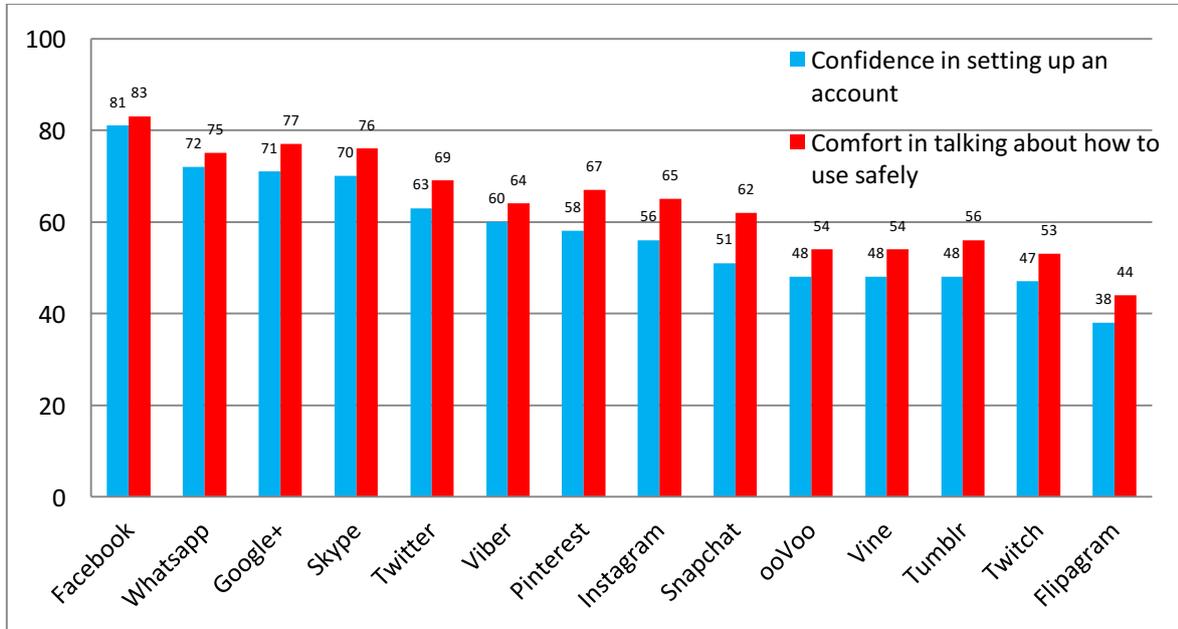
n=931 children / 1001 parents
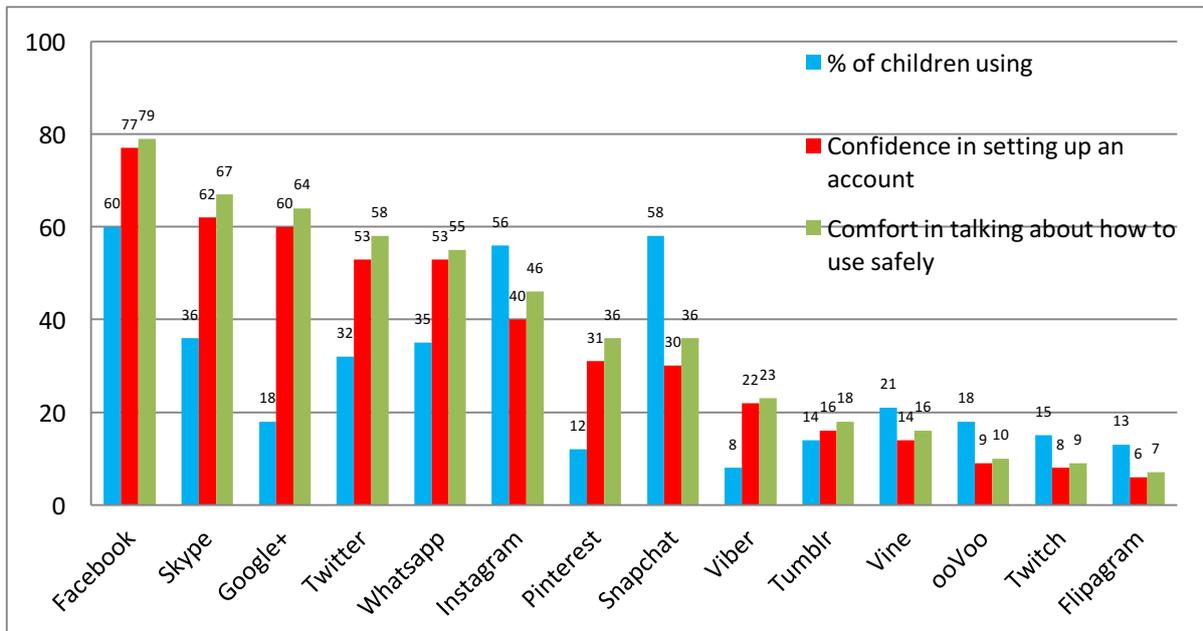
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Parents are best equipped to help their children use and be safe on well-established social networks, but struggle to keep up and help with the more modern social networks that children are keen to use.

For longer established sites like **Facebook**, **Skype**, **Google+**, **Twitter** and **WhatsApp**, parents are very likely to know how to use these, and the majority would be confident helping their child to set up an account, and comfortable talking about how to use them safely. But, apart from Facebook, children's use of these sites is quite low.

When it comes to **Instagram** and **Snapchat**, the two most popular social networks for children, the proportion of children using is greater than the proportion of parents who would be confident or comfortable to talk about them.

Children's use of Instagram and Snapchat by age, compared to parents' knowledge
n=2011 children / 1001 parents
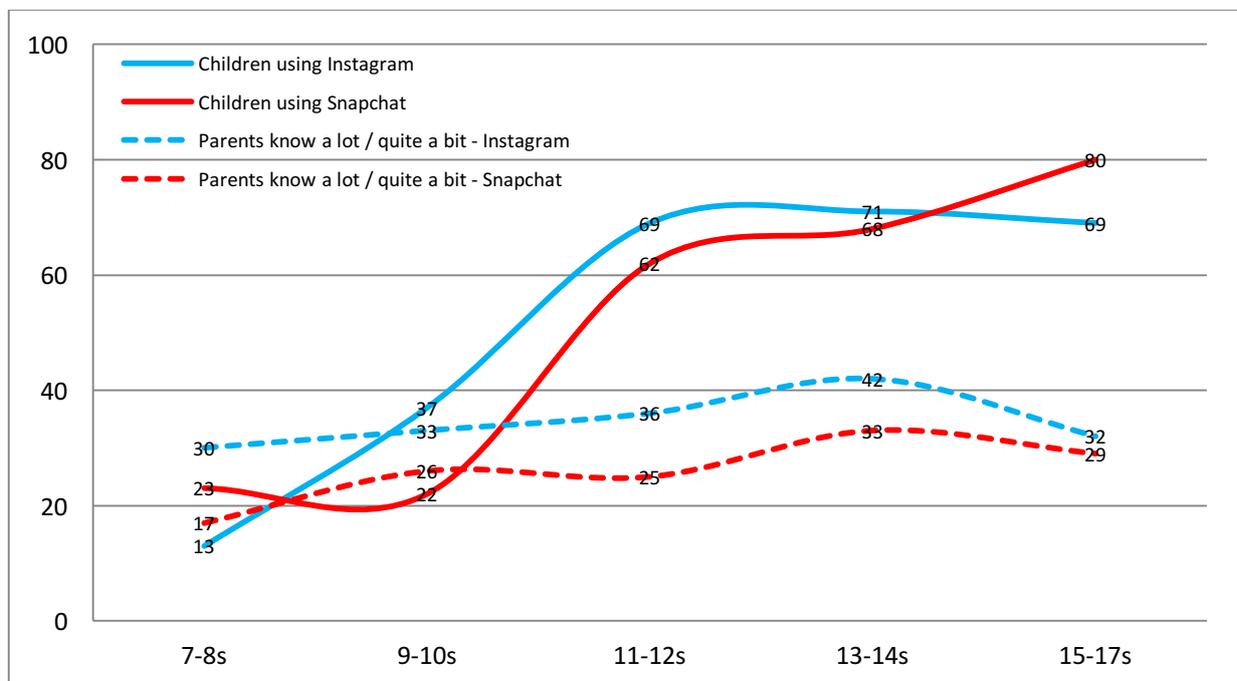
And for some of the up and coming social networks such as **Vine**, **ooVoo**, **Twitch** and **Flipagram**, children's usage may be low at present, but this is likely to grow, and parents' confidence in using these sites is very low.

One positive is that amongst parents who say they know how to use the various social networking sites, **on the whole the majority were confident they could help their child set up an account, and even more comfortable about talking to their child about how to use these sites safely**, suggesting that once armed with a little knowledge and experience, parents feel empowered to help their children.

How much do you know about how to use each of these apps?
(Showing % who know how to use a lot / quite a bit)
n=all children / parents answering
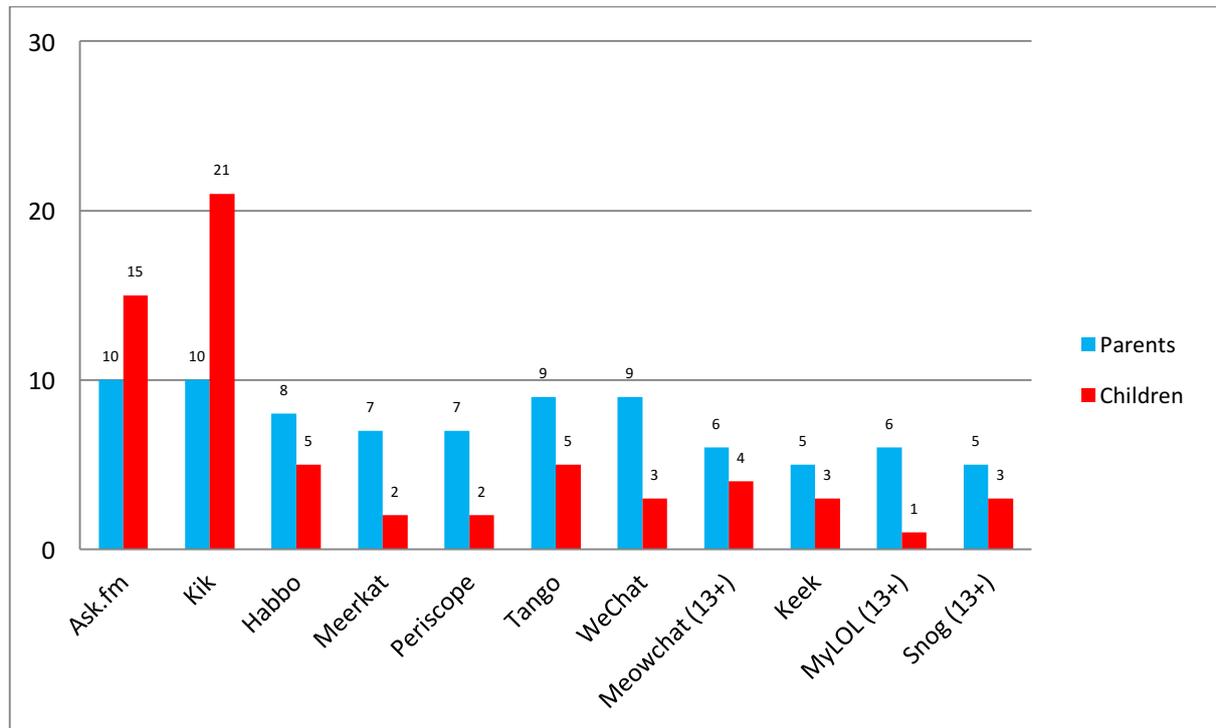
Only one in ten or fewer parents say that they know how to use some of the more risky websites and apps that we showed them, with some clear differences in depth of knowledge between parents and children.

The main app that children claim to know more about than their parents, is **Kik Messenger** – a fifth of children (21%) know how to use the popular messaging app, twice the proportion of parents who do (10%).

Only one in twenty children claim to use controversial site **Ask.fm**, but 15% have some knowledge of it, and one in ten parents also claim to know how to use it.

For the long tail of apps that one in twenty or fewer children say they actually use, parents in each case, reassuringly, claim to be more knowledgeable than their children – at least for now.

How comfortable would you be talking to your child about how to use each of these apps safely?
(Showing % comfortable at all)
n=all parents who say they know how to use each app
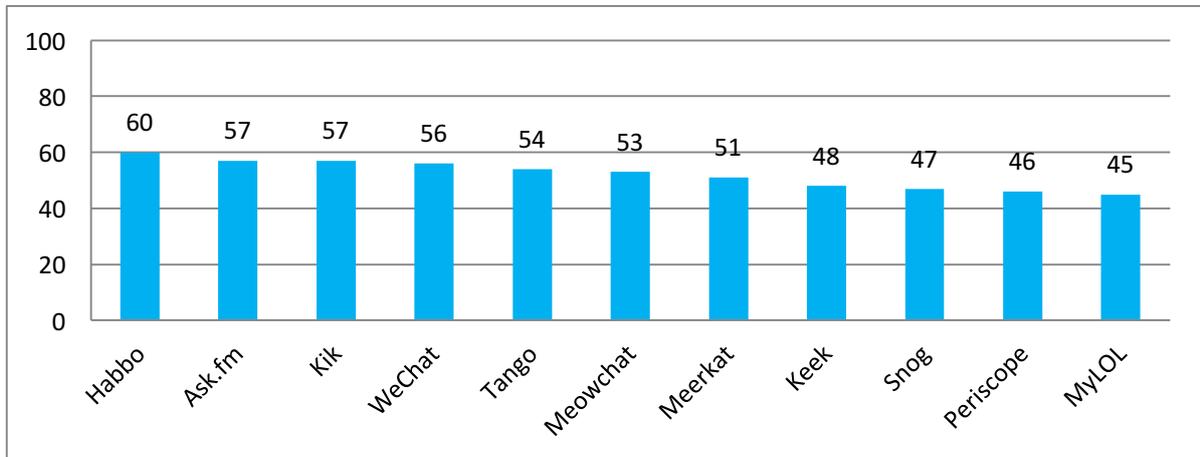
n=843 children / 1001 parents
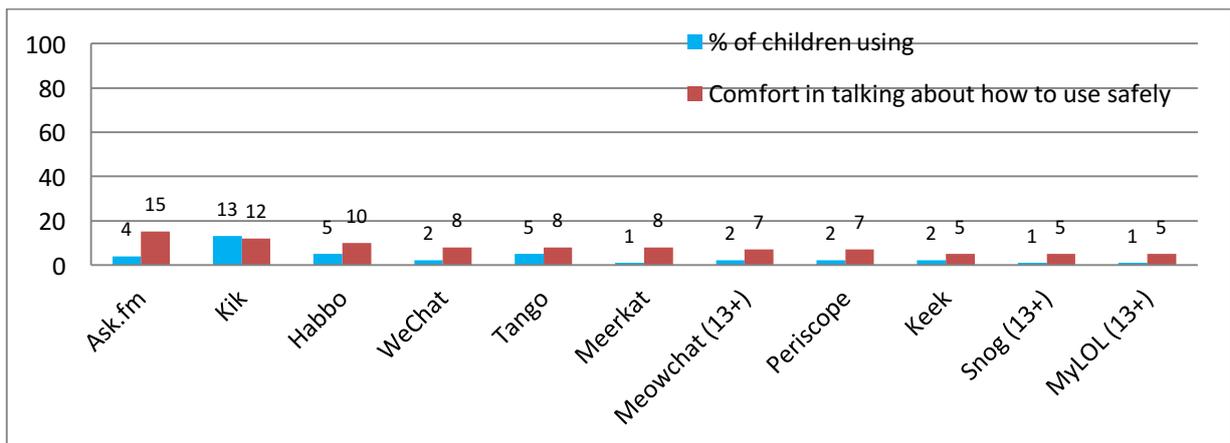
Because of the low level of usage of these riskier apps amongst children, the proportion of parents who would be comfortable talking to their child about how to use them safely is higher than the proportion of children using. But the number of parents comfortable talking about these apps is still very low, not more than one in ten for the majority of them, and children's usage of some of these apps is likely to increase over time.

Fewer than one in ten parents are confident they could teach their child to be safe on **WeChat**, **Tango**, **Meerkat**, **Meowchat**, **Periscope**, **Keek**, **Snog** or **MyLOL**.

STAYING SAFE ONLINE

How much do you agree with these statements?
 "There are lots of people trying to sell things to me on the internet"
n=936 children / 1001 parents

Parents	Children
Agree 73, Disagree 24, Don't know 3	Agree 45, Disagree 44, Don't know 11
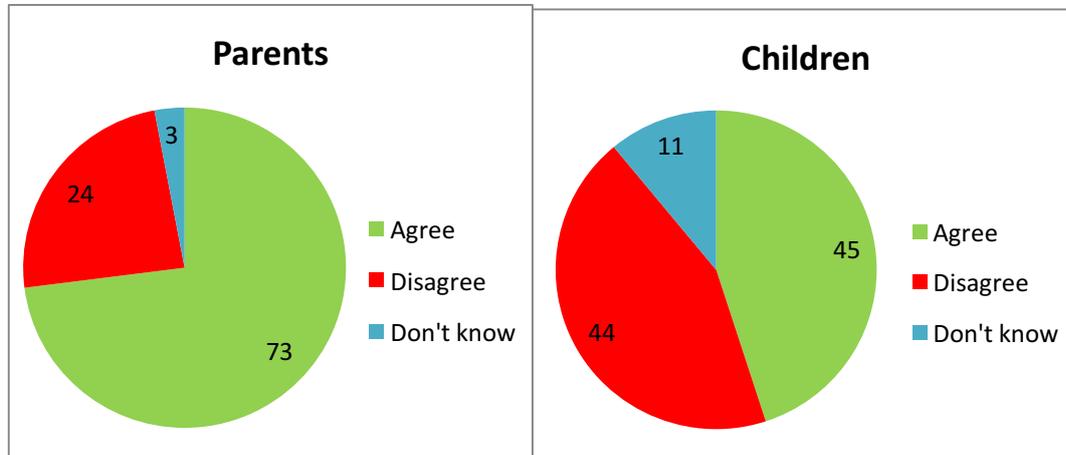
Parents are far more aware of promotional activity online than their children are.
The majority of parents agree to some extent (73%) that there are lots of people
trying to sell things to them online, whilst fewer than half of children do so (45%).
Awareness increases with age, from 37% of 7-10s in agreement, rising to more
than half (54%) of 14-17 year olds. Children across this age range tend to be more
accepting of advertising online, especially as a trade-off for access to free apps
and content.

"My children know more about the internet than I do"
n=959 children / 1001 parents

Parents	Children
Agree 48, Disagree 48, Don't know 4	Agree 73, Disagree 18, Don't know 9
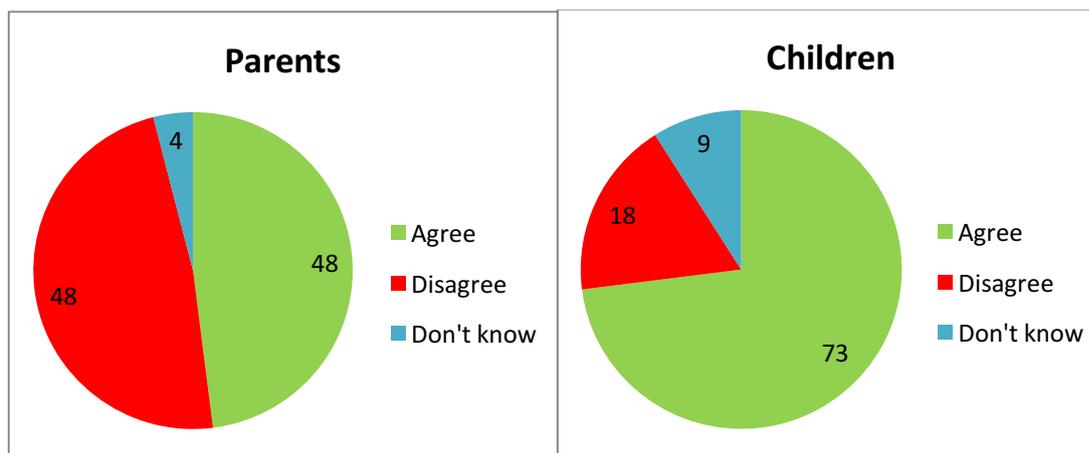
**Whilst parents are divided as to whether their children know more about the
internet than them, children themselves clearly think that they are more
knowledgeable.** Half of parents agree, half disagree (both 48%), but three in four
children (73%) think that they know more than their parents, rising from 45% of 7-
10s, up to 92% of young people aged 14-17.

"I find it easier to be myself on the internet than when I am with people face to face"
n=952 children / 1001 parents
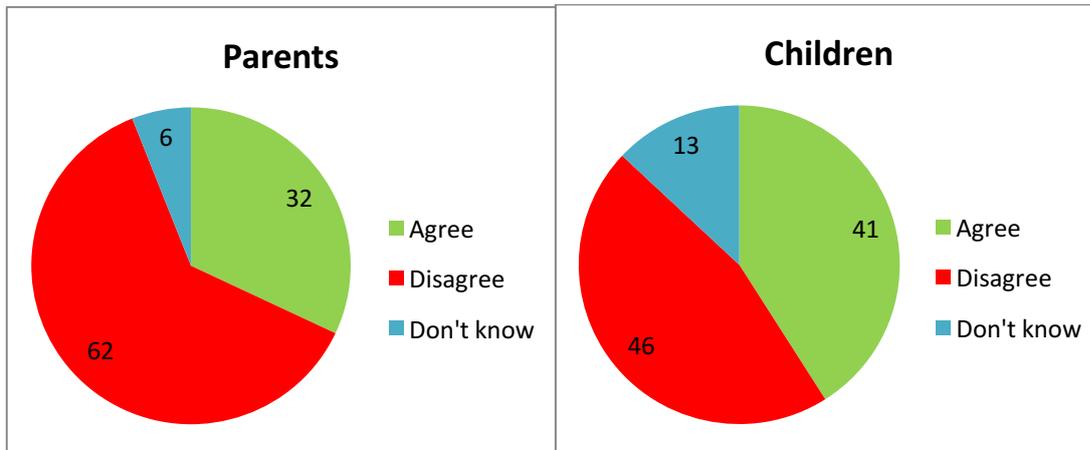
Children are more likely than their parents to find it easier to be themselves on the internet than face-to-face. Only a third (32%) of parents agree that they find it easier to be themselves online, whereas two in five children (41%), who have been brought up as 'digital natives', feel this way.

"The internet is a safe place for children to be"
n=947 children / 1001 parents
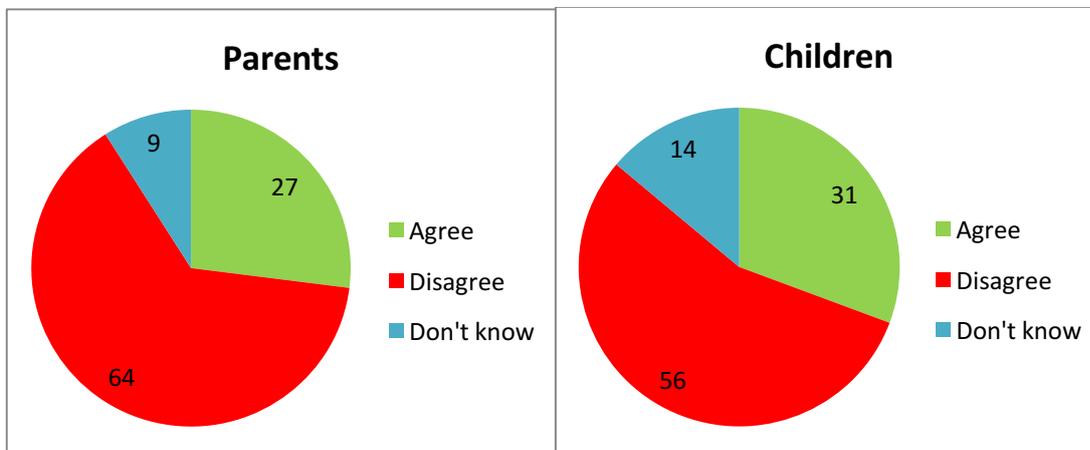
Parents are marginally less confident than children that the internet is a safe place for children to be. A quarter of parents agree with this statement (27%), compared with three in ten children (31%). Mums are less likely than dads to see the internet as safe place for their children (24% vs. 32%).

Younger children are more likely to see the internet as safe than older children. At age 7-10, a third (34%) agree - at this age, their usage is more moderated and they are less likely to access inappropriate content. By age 14-17, only a quarter

see the internet as safe for children (27%). Girls are much less likely than boys to see the internet as safe place for them to be (23% vs. 38%).

"On the internet I talk about private things which I do not share with people face to face"
n=947 children / 1001 parents
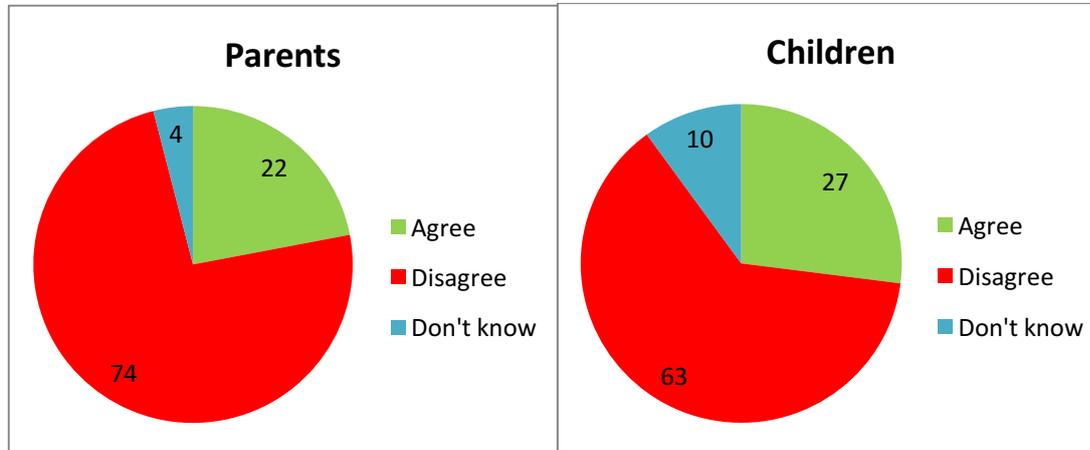
Parents

- Agree — 22
- Disagree — 74
- Don't know — 4

Children

- Agree — 27
- Disagree — 63
- Don't know — 10

Children are marginally more likely than parents to talk about private things online that they do not share with others face to face.

Their migration away from Facebook and Google+ over recent years, and their growing preference for apps such as Instagram and Snapchat, suggests that they like having some level of anonymity and privacy online.

The likelihood of children talking about private things online rises gradually with age, from a quarter of 7-10 year olds (24%), up to 30% of 14-17s.

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Roughly how old was your child when you first talked to them about staying safe online?
n= 911 parents who have talked to their child about internet safety
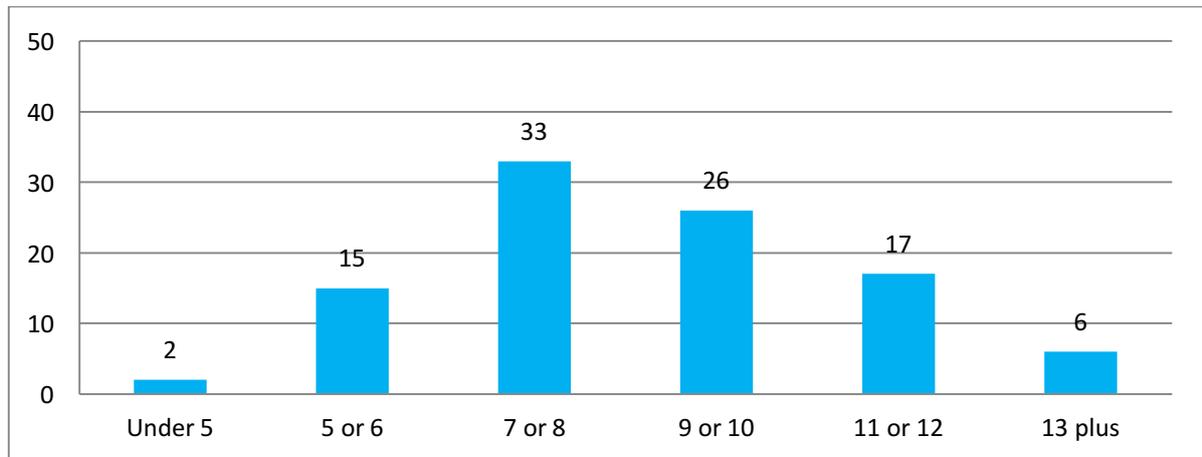
The vast majority of parents of 7-17 year olds have spoken to their children about online safety, with only 9% saying they have never done this.

The minority that **hadn't talked to their child** about staying safe online tended to be talking about a young child aged 7-10, who possibly is not yet independent enough to be exploring the internet completely alone. Dads were also more likely not to have ever talked to their child about staying safe online (56% vs 44% of mums).

Most parents talk to their children about online safety when they are between the ages of seven and ten, on average at 9 years old. By this age, most children will be using the internet independently, for entertainment purposes such as playing games, watching video clips and listening to music on YouTube. However, a minority of children this age are messaging online, using social networks and uploading their own photos and videos.

A minority of parents already have the discussion with their child about online safety before they reach 7 (17%), whilst a quarter (23%) wait until their child is 11 years or older.

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What sorts of things trigger conversations with your child about staying safe online?
n= 911 parents who have talked to their child about internet safety
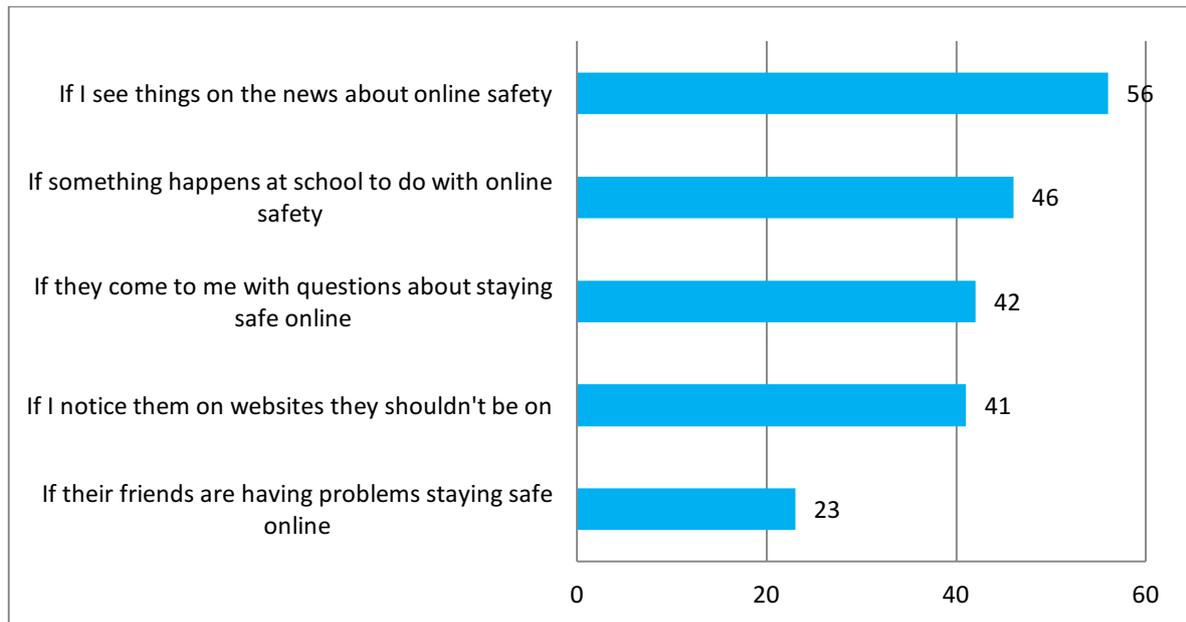
The main event that triggers discussions between parents and children about online safety, are relevant articles on the news noticed by parents. More than half of parents who have discussed things with their child (56%), say that if they see an article about, for example, cyberbullying or the dangers of online predators, that will be enough to make them sit their child down and discuss internet safety.

This sort of trigger increases with the age of the child, potentially as children get older they may pay more attention to news stories themselves and broach the topic with their parents. Mums are far more likely than dads to talk to their child about online safety after seeing it mentioned in the news (61% vs. 49%).

Just under half of parents say that specific events at their child's school act as a trigger (46%).

Two in five parents speak to their children about online safety if their **child comes to them with questions** (42%), or if they notice their child on **websites that they shouldn't be using** (41%). Mums are more likely than dads to pick up on behaviour like this.

Around a quarter (23%) talk about online safety with their child if their child's friends are having problems.

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WAY TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

Which of these things do you do to help keep your child safe online? (Parents)
n= 1001 parents

Statement	Always / Mostly	Sometimes	Never
I tell them not to give out personal information like their full name, address or telephone number	71	17	7
I tell them not to meet up with people they have only met online, not in real life	68	15	11
I tell them not to click on links that they are unsure about	63	24	9
I tell them not to talk / message people they have only met online, not in real life	58	25	11
I tell them not to upload photos / videos of themselves	45	34	16
I put parental controls on which limit what they can do online	41	28	23
I only allow them online for a set amount of time per day	31	36	28
I only allow them online at a certain time of the day	29	32	33
I 'friend' them on social networks so I can see what they are doing	29	23	39
I check on their browsing history to make sure they are going on appropriate sites	28	40	27
I set up their accounts for them on social network sites	28	27	36
I sit with them / nearby whilst they are online	18	48	29

Legend: ■ Always / Mostly ■ Sometimes ■ Never ■ Not sure / Don't know

The majority of parents use the different approaches listed at least sometimes, to try to keep their children safe when using the internet, with some much more widely used than others.

On average, parents always enforce around six of these rules and pieces of advice (5.7), with around half (48%) always advocating between 3 and 6 of them. One in seven (14%) always stick to just one or two of the rules, but one in eight (12%) always enforce 10 or more of the listed activities.

For all of these activities, **it is mums who are more likely than dads to make sure that these are always enforced.**

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The majority of parents always tell their child **not to give out personal information online** (71%), **not to meet up with people they have only met online** (68%), **not to click on any links they are unsure about** (63%), and **not to talk to / message people they have only met online** (58). These standard rules are important right across the age groups, and are more likely to be given to girls than boys.

Nearly half (45%) always stop their child from **uploading photos or videos of themselves online**, declining with age, but a high proportion considering the popularity of image based social networks such as Instagram and Snapchat, and video sharing as part of children's internet use.

Between three and four in ten parents set rules that actively seek to control and limit their child's internet use, all of which are more prevelant for younger children, dropping back as they become older and more independent. Four in ten (41%) always utilise **parental control tools** to limit what their children can access online, and three in ten **restrict the amount of time children can use the internet per day** (31%), or **only allow their children to go online at a certain time of the day** (29%). A further three in ten (28%) parents actively **check their child's browsing history** to make sure they are visiting appropriate sites. A minority of parents (18%) **sit near their child whilst they are online**, falling sharply from a third of parents of 7-10s (33), to just one in twenty by age 14-17 (5%). Mums are twice more likely than dads to do this, although this may be due to mums having a more hands-on role with childcare in general.

Rules regarding social media are generally more likely to be implemented as children get older. Three in ten parents regulate children's social media usage - 28% will s**et up their child's social network accounts**, while 29% **'friend' their child** on the social networks they use.

Which of these things do you do when you are online? (Children)
n= all children answering

Behaviour	Always / Mostly	Sometimes	Never
I make my profile on social networks private, not…	47	21	17
I report people / things I am not comfortable with…	22	30	31
Go online at a time when you aren't allowed to be…	19	22	40
Go over the amount of time you are allowed…	19	20	38
Clear the browser history so no one can see what…	18	19	42
I upload photos / videos of myself	14	43	31
I talk to / message people that I have met online,…	10	26	54
Turn off or get around any safety controls your…	9	10	53
'Unfriend' or block your parent(s) from seeing…	8	13	61
Change any social network setting that your…	8	10	56
I click on links when I'm not sure if they are safe or…	7	24	57
Use a proxy server to access websites or apps	6	9	39
I arrange to meet up with people in real life that I…	6	7	72
I give out personal information like my full name,…	4	14	70

■ Always / Mostly   ■ Sometimes   ■ Never   ■ Not sure / Don't know

In general, the proportion taking part in risky online behaviour at least sometimes increases with age, as children test the boundaries of what they can and can't get away with, and boys are especially likely to take more risks and break rules, even from a young age.

Looking first at positive online behaviour, half of children always make their **social networks private** so that only their friends can see them (47%), whilst a fifth of children (22%) **report content on social networks which they dislike or find uncomfortable**.

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Keeping your child safe online compared to risky behaviour, by age
n= all children / parents answering
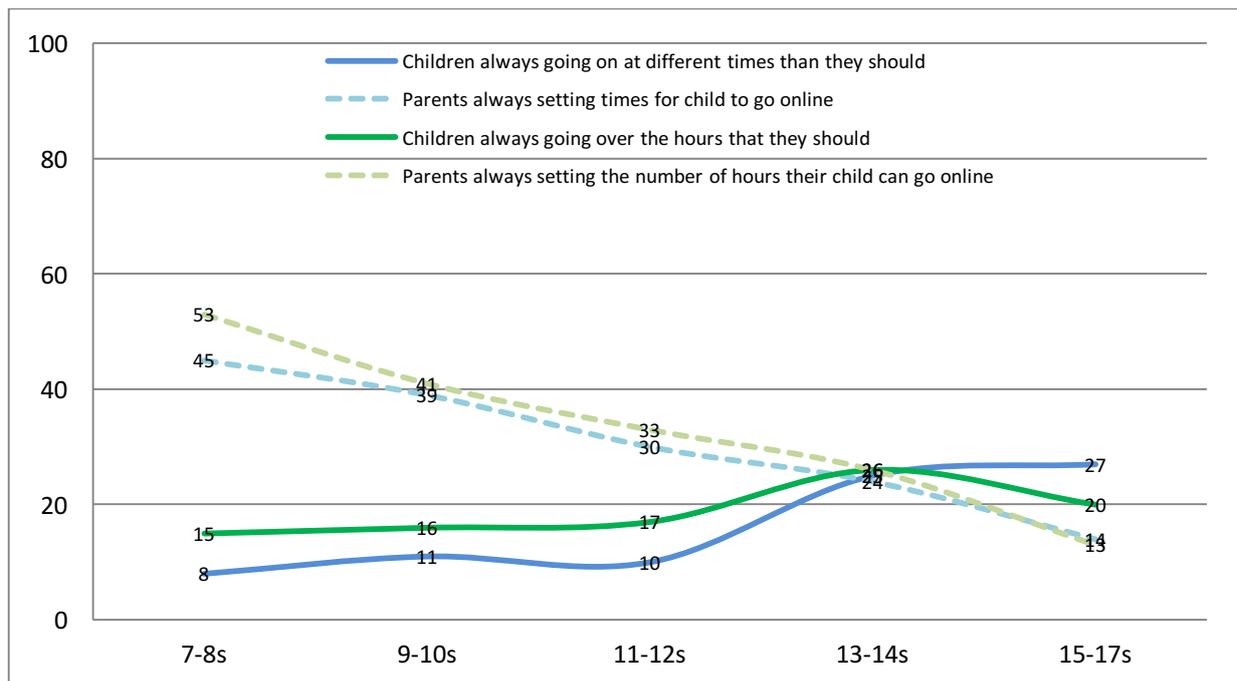
A fifth of children either **go online at a time of day when they are not allowed to** (19%, going against the 29% of parents who always set up rules like this), or **go over the amount of time they are allowed online per day** (again 19%, ignoring 31% of parents who always set time limits). Boys are more likely than girls to disobey these sorts of restrictions on internet use, and older children are most likely to go online for longer than they should or go online at times they shouldn't be online.

Three in five children (57%) say that they ever **upload photos / videos of themselves**, with 14% always doing this - unsurprising given the popularity of photo / video apps such as Instagram and Snapchat, and in spite of the fact that 45% of parents say that they always tell their children not to do this.

Despite the majority of parents always telling them not to, one in ten children say that they always **talk to or message people they meet online** (10%) – boys are more likely to do this, perhaps indicative of their online gaming behaviour.

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Keeping your child safe online compared to risky behaviour, by age
n= all children / parents answering
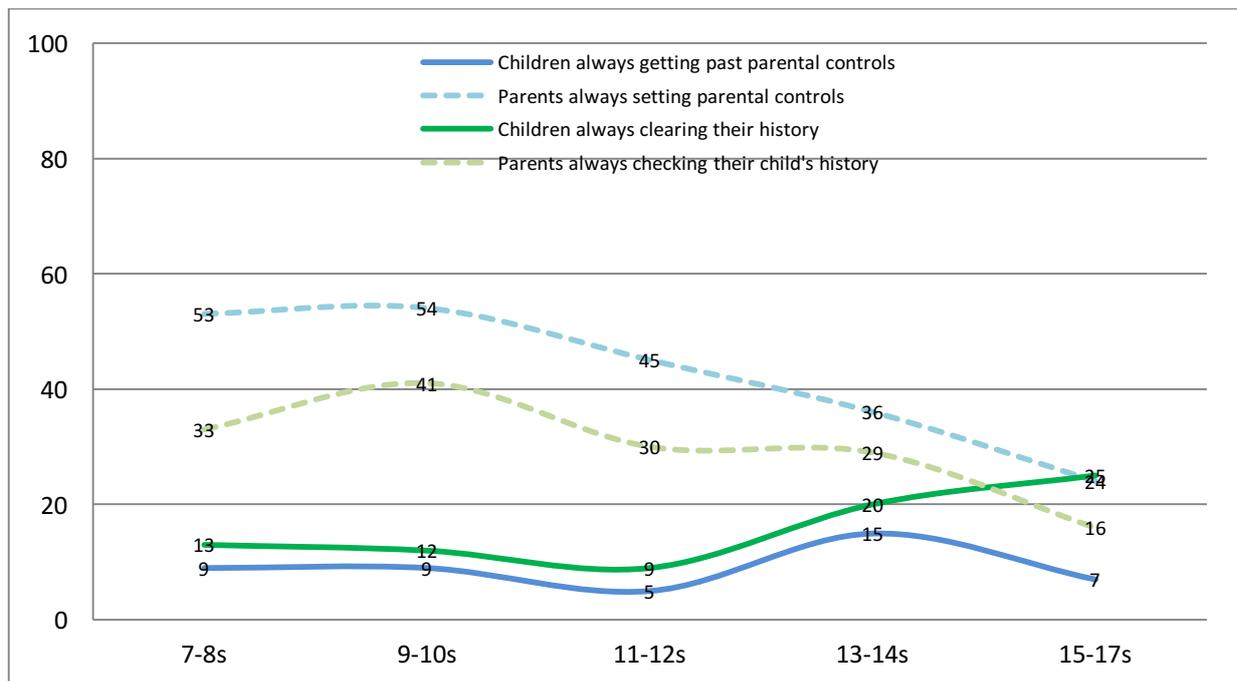
Nearly a fifth of children say they **clear their online browsing history** to hide what websites they have been visiting (18%) – compare this to the 28% of parents who always check their child's internet history. This increases with age, and boys are twice more likely than girls to always clear their history files.

Two in five parents set **parental controls on their child's internet use** – one in ten children (9%) say that they always turn these off or manage to get around them, with boys twice more likely than girls to be able to do this.

A minority of children always **'unfriend' or 'block' their parent** from seeing what they do on social networks (8%, boys more likely to do so than girls), or **change social network settings that parents have set up for them**, allowing them to do more on the network (8%, boys four times more likely than girls to always do this).

Three in ten children (31%) ever **click on links when they are unsure if they are safe**, with 7% always doing this – this is in spite of the majority of parents telling their child not to do this. Boys are four times more likely than girls to always risk clicking on unsafe links.

A small minority ever use a **proxy server** to access websites (15%), but almost half don't even know how to do this. Proxy servers can allow children to get around parental controls to access sites that would usually be restricted. Tech savvy boys are more likely than girls to always use a proxy server.

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Only a minority of children ever **give out personal information** like their full name, address or phone number (18%), with the majority sensible enough not to do this, whilst 13% of children say that they ever **meet up with people in real life that they have met online**. These two issues are at forefront of the concerns that parents have for their child's online safety, so parental warnings appear to be having an impact.

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Which of these specific ways to help keep your child safe online have you ever heard of or used?
n= 1001 parents
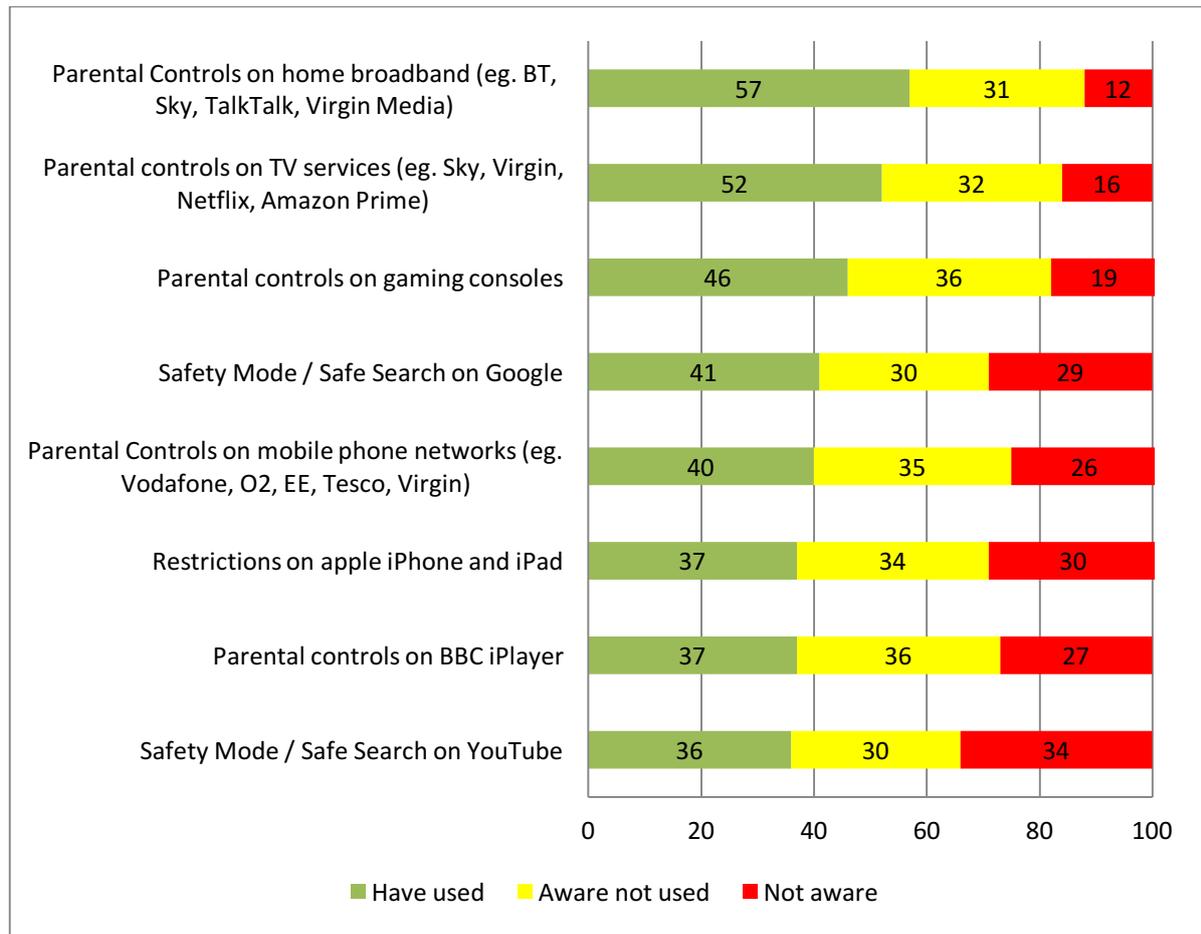
Awareness of controls to help keep children safe online is high amongst parents, with the majority aware of all listed tools, and around half using parental controls of some sort. For all possible ways to help protect children from unsafe content, usage drops with age, as children require wider access to online content and are trusted with more freedoms.

Nearly three in five parents use or have ever used **parental controls on home broadband** (57%). This is a standard method of controlling access, which can provide cover across different devices and web services accessed.

Just over half of parents have used parental controls on TV services (52%), such as services offered by Sky, Virgin, Netflix and Amazon Prime. These services restrict the television content children can watch to family-friendly programmes. Parents of girls are more likely to implement these sorts of controls (55% vs. 48% parents of boys).

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Nearly half (46%) have used **parental controls on games consoles**, which can restrict online usage or hide mature rated games or content.

Two in five (41%) have turned on **safety mode or safe search on Google**, to restrict the websites children can find when they search, however, three in ten (29%) parents are unaware that you can change the search settings on Google to restrict content.

Two in five parents apply **parental control to their child's mobile phone** through their phone network (40%). Younger parents, who are more likely to be aware of the features of modern mobile phones, are most likely to apply these controls (52%).

More than a third apply **restrictions on an iPhone or iPad** (37%), but a further third are aware but do not use these settings (34%), whilst three in ten (30%) are unaware you could restrict apple product usage.

37% utilise the **parental controls available on BBC iPlayer**, while 36% turn on **safety mode on YouTube**. A third of parents (34%) are not aware that you can apply parental controls to YouTube, despite this being one of the most popular sites among children and young people.

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Which of these things prevent you using online safety tools more?
n= 1001 parents
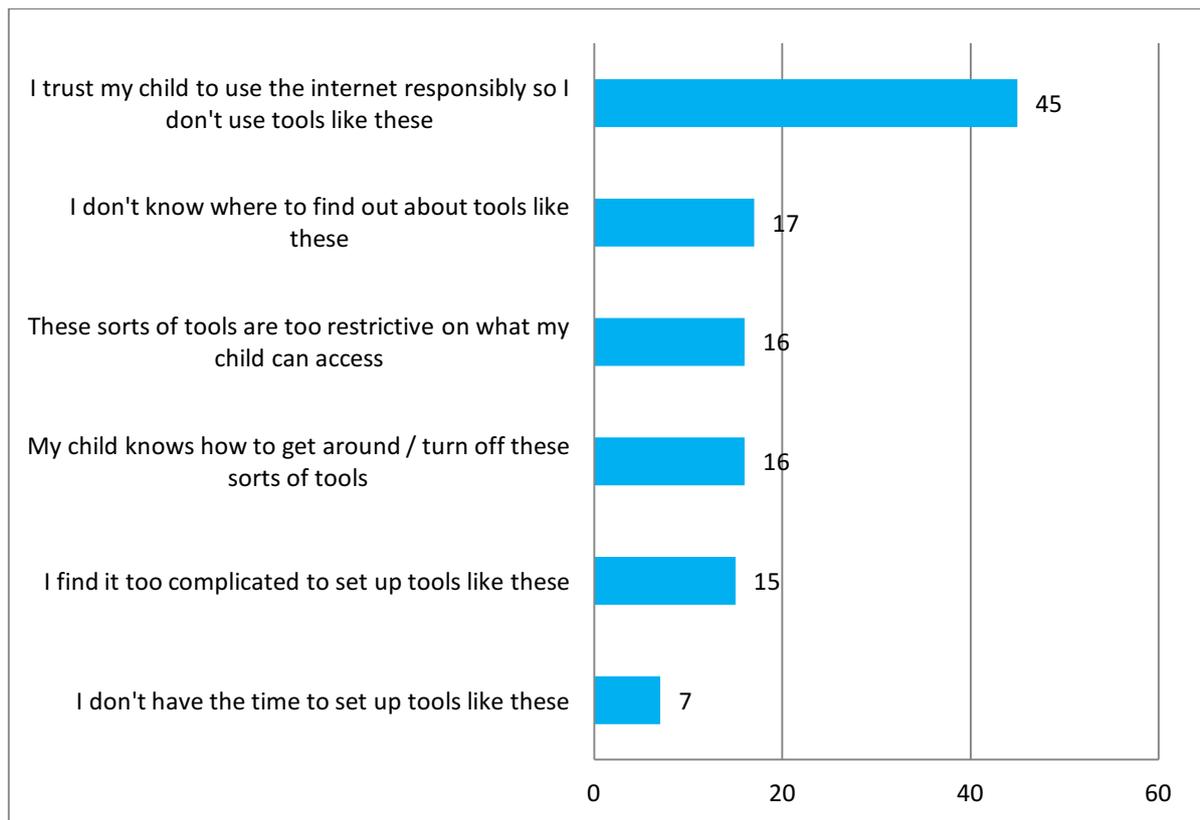
The overriding reason that parents give for not using online safety tools more is that they **trust their child to use the internet responsibly** (45%), and therefore don't feel the need to implement parental controls. This level of trust increases with age, with parents of older children (14-17 year olds) far more likely to trust them to use the internet safely with three in five (62%) confident of this, but even amongst parents of the youngest children (7-10s), three in ten trust their child enough not to warrant using parental controls more (30%). However, this trust may be misplaced, as risky behaviour tends to increase with age.

17% of parents admit **to not knowing where to find parental control tools**, whilst 16% feel **control tools are too restrictive on what children can access**, with parents of boys more likely to say this (18% vs 14% of girls).

A further 16% say their child **knows how to get around parental control tools** (increasing with child's age), while 15% admit to finding these tools **too complicated to set up**. A small minority claim they **don't have time** to consider setting up parental controls (7%).

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