e m i l

7th meeting – Summary
22 April 2022

1. Welcome

Maria Donde welcomed the participants in the 7th meeting of EMIL – a thematic meeting dedicated to selected projects to "empower children & youth". Protecting minors is a fundamental issue for media regulators and one key challenge is to find a balance between protecting them and supporting their rights. In that context, media and information literacy and protection of minors work in pair.

Protecting minors is one of the key topics in EPRA activities in the first half of 2022, covering issues relating to age restrictions and access to pornography (VSP & Regulation workshop and AI Roundtable) and harmful advertising (EPRA Plenary session in Antwerp on 12 May). This meeting will focus specifically on empowering, i.e. giving children skills and agency to protect themselves and have a creative experience online and will involve young people to report on their experience.

2. Thematic focus: Empowering children & youth – What works?

➢ **Digital Citizenship: DigiGen project -** *Prof. Athina Karatzogianni, University of Leicester (UK)*

Athina Karatzogianni, Principal Investigator for the Horizon2020 DigiGen project, presented the work strands and the key findings of this 3-year project, coordinated in Norway, on the impacts of technological transformation on children and young people.

A 3-phase project:
1. Netnographic research with online interviews in Estonia, Greece and the UK to compare youth engagement in online civic activities, put in perspective with events in these countries at the same period (e.g. Black Lives Matter and Extinction Rebellion protests).
2. Digital storytelling workshop with young people involved in the production of online political discourse, asked to reflect on how the digital environment affected their choices and key strands in youth ideological online production.
3. Assessment of digital citizenship in educational systems based on analysis of 40 policy documents and how it relates to digital citizenship.

Key findings: digital citizenship is strongly affected by:
- Digital deprivation
- Education and socio-economic standing of the family
- Where one lives: strong divide between Western and Eastern Europe; with low percentages of digitally disengaged children in the West and much higher proportions in the East
- Fear of participation: bad experience as children (online harassment, trolling) can be a deterrent, while encouraging them to take part in class-chats can help in developing the ability to participate in online group communities.

⚠️ Lack of breadth of digital citizenship policies: Digital citizenship policies often revolve around improving ICT skills; however digital citizenship should be more about social engagement.

Discussion:

Maria Donde: It is important to link practices on the ground to policies, not least because policies determine funding.

Did young people involved feel that the rules by which people behave online are in line with what they want, or expect; do they feel that they have a voice?

➔ Children are aware of power relationships; they report different offline vs. online behaviours.
   o An 11-year-old indicated a drastic shift in a friend's behaviour: very nice in general, aggressive when playing on his own Minecraft server online.
➔ Rules are not always adapted. Moderation relies too heavily on algorithmic moderation.
   o Example of a disagreement on Twitter, after which one person reported the Facebook page of the other by vengeance and got them banned.
➔ Children don't trust schools and governments to take decisions on regulation of the digital world.

Project reports:
   ❖ [Online political behaviour and ideological production by young people](#)
   ❖ [Multimodal research: Youth becoming digital citizens](#)
   ❖ [Digital citizenship policy analysis](#) (Estonia, Greece and the UK)

[Presentation of the DigiGen project by Athina Karatzogianni](#)

Further information: Athina Karatzogianni: Athina.K@leicester.ac.uk

---

➢ **Què t'hi jugues? (What do you bet?)** *– Neus Riera, Monica Duran Ruiz (CAC-ES)*

Concept: A pilot project focussing on media literacy, video games and gambling, conducted in the Bellvitge and Virolai high schools with eduCAC's teaching unit and the Bellvitge Hospital

Objective: Getting teens (15-16 year olds) to become prevention agents in video games and gambling

Pilot phase: 3-phase pilot test:
   - Pre-assessment (Bellvitge Hospital – Pathological gambling unit)
   - Classroom intervention (based on eduCAC – Què t'hi jugues teaching units)
   - Post assessment (Bellvitge Hospital – Pathological gambling unit).

Outcomes: Scientific results will be published in one month. EduCAC currently works on improving the teaching units based on feedback from teachers.

Feedback on the project (Virolai high school) *– Students: Carla Gurrea & Alex Wheeler*
Learned that videogames have positive and negative sides. They can be enjoyed but one has to be aware of the risks.
   - Alex had prior knowledge mostly of good aspects of videogames, now has better knowledge of the negative aspects.
   - Carla had little knowledge and interest, knows much more now.

(Recorded) Interview (Bellvitge high school) *– Students: Àlex Antón and Ayesha Akhtar*
Interviewees have slightly different opinions on the incidence of videogames on people's lives:
-   Both can be considered gamers to a certain extent, but not gamblers
-   Alex has a more favourable opinion on video games and considers that playing doesn't affect his academic behaviour; balance is key
-   Ayesha believes gaming has a bad influence on her brother, who plays too much. She learned about lootboxes and the danger they represent for unaware gamers.

Antje vom Berg (LfM NRW-DE): Why target 15-16 year olds as gaming begins earlier?
Because eduCAC content is mostly designed for secondary schools.

❖   [Teaching units](#) (in Catalan)

[Presentation of the Què t'hi jugues? Project by Neus Riera (CAC-ES)](#)

Further information: Monica Duran: mduran.cac@gencat.cat

➢   **Presentation of Childnet international** *– Will Gardner (CEO at Childnet International)*

General approach: Listening to young people is key in Childnet's approach. There is an acknowledgement that young people manage risks every day and develop strategies that can be built on. The approach strongly relies on peer learning. Young people voice can be powerful, also for parents and carers and for policy makers.

▪   **Childnet's Digital Leaders Programme**

Concept: young people design modules to educate their peers.

Objective: Providing young people with tools to make a difference in their school/community. Allow young people to be a part of the solution, not for adults to delegate responsibility, but to get young people to actively participate.

Figures:
-   84% of digital leaders think they can make a difference in their school
-   95% of teachers say the programme has positively impacted their school
-   98% of digital leaders say they can help explaining to parents the issues young people face online

▪   **Childnet Film Competition**

Concept: Invitation for young people (aged 7-18) to create short films showcasing positive and inspiring uses of internet. Topic for 2022 "All fun and games? Exploring respect and relationships online. What can we all do to play our part?".

Categories: 4 categories in the UK (3 age categories and a story board category and an international category for everywhere else.

- ❖ Childnet Film Competition (UK)
- ❖ Childnet film competition – International Category

Deadline: films can be submitted until 8 June for the UK (**22 June 2022** for international category).

Presentation of Childnet's activities by Will Gardner (Childnet CEO)

Further information: Will Gardner: Will@childnet.com

> **Presentation of Webwise** – *Jane McGarrigle (Project Officer at Webwise - IE)*

Webwise is the Irish internet safety centre, an active member of the MIL Ireland network. Core areas of work are: education resources training for teachers, advising parents, listening to young people and providing answers.

- **Youth advisory panel**

Concept:
- 30-35 students, meet 6 times a year
- Acts as youth voice for schools, peers, friends
- supports development of education programmes
- contributes to Webwise awareness campaigns and online resources

Benefits:
- a great way to communicate with other youth
- better vector of information (as teenagers themselves, they are more relatable)
- also a good way to give advice to parents

Participants in the Youth advisory panel have made many media appearances, met political figures, spoken at youth conferences.

- **SID (Safer Internet Day) Ambassador programme**

Concept: a peer-to-peer youth programme giving students the opportunity to start an online safety campaign in their school, by themselves.

Objectives:
- encourage and support young people to address internet safety issues (cyberbullying, online rights, etc)
- train young people to lead awareness-raising campaigns in their schools
- involve as many people as possible across schools, groups and communities

- **Examples of youth Panel outputs**
- FAQ, reviewed by a legal expert, as part of resources available to all. The FAQ touches on various topics, such as the GDPR, what one can say online and minimal age to create social media accounts
- Talking points for parents drafted in consultation with Irish teens

More on Webwise:
- ❖ Webwise website
- ❖ Youth Advisory Panel
- ❖ SID Ambassador Programme

Presentation of Webwise by Jane McGarrigle (Webwise)

More information: Jane McGarrigle: janemcgarrigle@pdst.ie

3. Conclusions

Maria Donde concluded the discussion by emphasising the importance for regulators to promote projects such as those presented during the meeting and the value of listening to children and youth more. It is both possible and important to involve them in the policy-making process. The results will be better, and the children and young people would like to be involved.

4. Next steps

- The next EMIL meeting, initially planned for 15 July will be rescheduled because of the Czech EU Presidency Audiovisual conference, held on the same day, in which many EMIL members may be involved.

- The EPRA Secretariat, with the collaboration of some EMIL members, will develop a template for the EMIL member profiles discussed during the 6th EMIL meeting.