

A STUDY ON CHILDREN'S SAFETY ONLINE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA



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Note on the edition





Note on the edition

Being exposed to the effect of technological globalisation, the Republic of Moldova has become a country, with an increased rate of usage of informational technologies by the population on a daily basis. Today, almost every teenager has access to Internet, using several devices: cellphone, smartphone, tablet, laptop or computer. Today, more than ever, children and teenagers prefer the Internet as a source of information in favour of a library and live communication is often replaced by communication in cyberspace.

However, besides the possibility of broadening the horizon of knowledge and unlimited communication, Internet use can have serious negative effects on children and teenagers. Lately there has been an increase of concerns on behalf of parents, teachers and organisations targeting the youth on issues of online safety. For several years, the staff and volunteers of the International Center “La Strada” have held information seminars targeting teenagers, concerning the dangers to which they are exposed online and the aspects of Internet safety. The activities aimed at informing and preventing the exploitation of children, including activities through informational technologies have been developed with the full support of the Ministry of Education, an old partner of the International Center “La Strada”. These campaigns aimed at raising awareness among target groups, focus on segments such as pre-

vention of human trafficking, prevention of domestic violence and promoting a safer Internet for children.

The lack of statistics or research at a national level, that would shed light on the interaction of children with the virtual environment, as well as the need to understand the online behaviour of children, behaviour that implies certain risks that they are not aware of, have inspired the International Center „La Strada”, to conduct a study in 2011, and the data obtained regarding the behaviour of children online was rather alarming. The informational portal www.siguronline.md, managed by the International Center „La Strada” which creates the possibility of reporting children abuse in cyberspace and that of illegal and harmful content, has reported cases of intimidation of children online. Simultaneously, during informational activities, children continue to report worrying aspects of their online behavior. All of this has led to the necessity for ongoing data collection in the field, together with information seminars, and further research on the matter. This study is based on the analysis of information obtained through a questionnaire applied to a sample of 939 children, which are Internet users from different regions of Moldova (excluding Transnistria), between the ages of (12-16 years) who were staying at summer camps in 2013.

This study aims to inform teachers, parents and the individuals involved in the education of children, including civil society representatives, regarding children’s behaviour online in Moldova. We hope that the information provided in this study will serve as a catalyst for the unification and consolidation of efforts of all ac-

tors whose primary focus is children: the active users of new informational technologies. The content of this study is divided into four chapters. The chapter entitled „Child safety online- conceptual clarifications and current approaches” aims at familiarizing the readers with the theoretical aspects of tackling child safety online.

The chapter entitled „The objectives and methodology of the study” addresses the objectives and research methodology. The chapter called „The results of the study” presents the relevant results of the research, and finally the last chapter includes a number of recommendations for different actors in the field.

Executive Summary





Executive Summary

The current study was prepared on the basis of data obtained by conducting a research on online safety of children in Moldova, carried out by the International Center “La Strada” during June-August 2013, which was aimed at collecting information about children’s behaviour online. In addition to analysing data, the study includes recommendations for specialists interested in ensuring the protection of children online.

The research method consists of the survey based on a questionnaire applied to a sample of 939 children from 235 different regions of the country, that are in camps designed for relaxation and recovery of children and adolescents, in the summer of 2013.

The study aimed to investigate the practices of Internet access and online activities and behaviour of children in cyberspace, with particular emphasis on the study of the main risks online: contacting people that children do not know in the real world, online communications and proposals of a sexual nature, exchange of personal data, exchange of photos and videos with people they met online, offline meetings with people they met online, accessing pornographic materials, etc.

Internet access during the day

- Over 68% of children between 12-16 years old, access the Internet between 14.00-22.00 hours.

- More than ¼ of children access the Internet in the morning hours, which is a time designated for studies (during the school year).
- Boys access the Internet more often in the morning (32%), while girls – during night hours (15.6%).
- Children from urban areas access the Internet during night hours (16.7%) more than children from rural areas (13.3%).

The length of time children spend on the Internet

- 35.3% of children spend 1-2 hours online, while 28.6% - spend from 3 to 4 hours.
- Approximately 12% of children spend more than 7 hours online.
- A third of the children who access the Internet during the period between 22.00-8.00 stay longer than 7 hours in cyberspace.
- The older the children are, the longer is the duration of Internet usage
- The living environment determines the duration of Internet access, the urban habitants surpassing those in rural areas.

Internet access devices

- 55.4% of children and teenagers use a single device for internet connection, 30.4% - use two devices, 11.3% - three devices and 2.9% - up to four devices.
- 3/4 of the interviewed children use the computer as a device for internet connection, ¼ use a laptop and approximately 1/5 access Internet from a mobile phone.
- Between the hours 8.00-14.00 the tablet device is used more often (30.4%), mobile phone (26.1%)

and smartphone (22.8%), while between the hours of 14.00-22.00 – a PC is used (62.6%).

The purpose of accessing the Internet

- Accessing the Internet is aimed primarily at viewing profiles on social networks (85%).
- Approximately 80% use the Internet for academic purposes, especially girls and rural students.
- The webcam is used by 34.5% of respondents. Most often appearing in this category are boys and children living in rural areas.

Online behaviour of children

- Approximately 70% of children surveyed (mostly girls and children from rural areas) have sought new contacts via the Internet in the past 12 months.
- Approximately 12 % of respondents mentioned sending video sequences to a person known only through the Internet, that has not been previously met in real life.
- 19.7% of children added people they have never met before to the friend lists of the social networking sites and have exchanged data with someone who they have only met by online communication.

Problems that children have faced on the net

- 60% of children have encountered viruses and/or spam, and 53.5% indicated that their passwords

have been hacked on one of their social networks.

- 13.3% of respondents viewed Internet pornography unintentionally.
- 12% of children do not know how to react to certain offensive situations that they may stumble upon on the Internet.
- 30% of the respondents would not take any action, and would ignore these situations, and about 7% of teens would conceal them.
- Only 35.1% of teens would notify their parents, especially girls and 12 year olds from rural areas.

Online communication of a sexual nature

- 47.3% of children who made acquaintances online and whom they communicate with exclusively in the cyberspace, where asked to meet in the real world.
- More than 11% of the children indicated that Internet acquaintances have made indecent proposals. This is especially indicated by 12 year olds (29.9%).
- Sexual topics are discussed by 7% of the total number of interviewed children, amongst which are 15 year olds (31.8%), 16 year olds (25.8%), boys (66.7%) and children from urban areas (53%). However, most often these topics are discussed among children who access the Internet from 14.00-22.00 hours (62.1%).
- Over 50% of the adolescents in the study met at least once with persons they met online (excluding relatives)

**Child safety online-
conceptual clarifications
and current approaches**





Child safety online-conceptual clarifications and current approaches

Statistically, the number of Moldovan households connected to the Internet indicates a continuous growth. According to the Centre for Electronic Governance, the share of households that had Internet connection in 2013 was 62%, thus 9% more than in 2012. The increase in the number of households connected to the Internet denotes an imperative increase in the use of Internet in everyday life, the most active users being children and teenagers. Their Internet activity is directly linked with online child safety issues.

The concept of „online child safety” provides for the possibility of children to enjoy all the benefits that the Internet offers today. These opportunities help to develop children’s psychological and emotional balance, thus restrictive and repressive measures taken by parents in respect to their children’s Internet activity is completely ineffective. In addition to the fact that prohibition to use the Internet can limit children’s access to tremendous opportunities to seek and find new information, to learn and communicate with people from other countries and to learn new languages, these measures are also counterproductive. This behaviour adds to children’s curiosity and generates a more acute and imprudent behaviour on their behalf. At the same time, it is time to recognise the downside of the extraordinary opportunities the Internet has to offer. Na-

mely, the more children go online to enjoy the benefits of the World Wide Web, the more they are confronted with both accidental or premeditated risks.

In order to understand children’s behaviour online and the risks they face, we proposed a set of research questions in this study.

- How much time do children spend online and what are their goals?
- What devices do children use to access the Internet?
- What is the nature of their activity in cyberspace?
- What are the topics of online communication and what kind of proposals do they receive from others?
- What problems do children face on the Internet?
- How do children react to unpleasant situations caused by the Internet and do they inform their parents/adults about these situations?

These are some of the questions that we need to know the answers to, in order to understand which risks the children face, and to develop/promote effective prevention campaigns. In the past years, employees and volunteers of the International Center ‘La Strada’ were involved in activities informing young people and their parents and teachers about the risks that children may face online. Together with this study, we attest the same conclusion, that children are insufficiently informed or unaware about the risks they may face online and their parents do not know the technical possibilities to cope with risk prevention. In this respect, the most effective strategy to prevent risky online behaviour of children,

requires the combined efforts of parents, the public and private sector, with that of the children themselves, in order to avoid risk.

It is gratifying that in the last three years teaching staff and parents are aware and pay more attention to this problem. Between 2011 and 2014, in the context of the bilateral cooperation between the International Center "La Strada" and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova, hundreds of informational seminars were held for the students of grades VI-IX, as well as for children in summer camps. These seminars aimed at teaching them how to protect themselves in the virtual environment from abusive actions and content, how to develop a responsible attitude towards the posted content, as well as the possibilities to report potential abuse. The activities aimed at raising awareness of young people in 2011, were preceded by a set of questionnaires, the analysis of which served as the basis for the study of online child safety mentioned above, and outreach activities conducted in children's camps during the summer of 2013 served as the basis for the current study. Moreover, to facilitate access to information regarding safe behaviour of children in the online environment, the International Center "La Strada" created and manages the informational portal www.siguronline.md. Its primary goals are to act as a central point for online safety issues with regards to children in Moldova, to ensure a higher degree of awareness for children, parents and teachers on how to achieve online safety, to provide citizens a national contact point to report harmful content and illegal behaviours, including sexual abuse material, and to advise children and adolescents who have been contacted by strangers or who have stumbled upon offensive con-

tent online, or have become victims of cyberbullying, online identity theft, or simply have been confronted with various problems online. During the period March 2013-June 2014, the portal was visited by over 30,000 unique visitors and about 200 advisors were provided online on various problems that children and their parents faced, in the online environment.

The online reports, and discussions with young people, allowed us to identify the alarming situations in which children were engaged in activities of a sexual nature, faced with online identity theft and placement of information of an offensive character such as the distribution of pornographic material. A child's perception of his online status as an invisible or anonymous one, makes him believe that he cannot be identified and punished for his actions.

Although a lot of the risks found in cyberspace, exist in the 'physical world' as well, the interactive nature of the Internet (especially when children know more about the Internet than their parents, teachers, librarians, and others) makes it a difficult task to protect them online. In addition to this, the majority of ordinary means, applied in the 'physical world' cannot be transposed in cyberspace. A pedophile cannot enter a school yard and pretend to be another child. However, in an online chat he can. A child cannot easily look through a pornographic magazine, at a newspaper stand, whilst online he can be lured into the traps of pornographic content, whether legally or illegally placed there. In order to fully benefit from the opportunities that the Internet has to offer, one must eliminate all of the risks associated with it. However, the children are not always aware of



these risks, and their parents often have insufficient knowledge when it comes to modern technologies and to possible solutions to problems that their children may face online. Children have always been 'prisoners' of elevated interest in the face of new discoveries and new challenges. Especially the possibility of communication without border, that the cyberspace offers today. Often they are tempted to trust a stranger on the Internet. In addition to being more vulnerable than adults, in the face of an adult sexual abuser due to the fact that their social skills are not sufficiently developed in order to identify signals that predict risk, such as simulated praise or a manipulative remark, that abusers resort to often during conversations. Abusers may exploit a child's lack of life experience and their need to feel noticed and flattered. A significant concern for parents and specialists working with children, the users of the Internet, is presented in the following situations.

Abusers who harass children

There are sever reports in the press about pedophiles that use chat rooms in order to lure children into meeting offline. According to reports in the national press, chat rooms are the most popular online activity for children, and most of them are not monitored. Through them, adult strangers can directly contact children. The 'safe' ambiance of being at home, in combination with a feeling of trust, that children naturally have at a certain age, makes them forget that these individuals are strangers. This enables the abuser the task of 'hunting' a child who would never enter in contact with a stranger in the 'real world'. The development of informational technologies and the evolution of the

Internet creates new possibilities for the pornographic enthusiasts to commercially exploit children, promoting the development of child pornography distribution networks. In today's conditions, material containing child pornography is produced and distributed by informational technologies with amazing speed and boundless virtual spaces. Those who are in possession of child pornography use the internet to exchange material, to access them in news exchange groups and to have access and communicate in 'Peer to Peer' systems. They use the newest and most advanced technologies, enabling and facilitating the exchange and sale of child pornography. More recently, sexual abusers use mobile devices to actively communicate in chat-rooms and social networking sites, and other Internet communication facilities in order to become acquainted and recruit children and ultimately exploit them, which presents a high risk for children, the regular users of informational technologies.

Children's access to pornographic content

Parental control in respect to the viewing of pornographic content does not extend to the cyberspace. Pornographic content can easily be accessed by children online. They can be exposed to this content both intentionally and unintentionally, and they can also be re-directed without their consent to certain adult sites.

Adding friends online that the child has never met in reality

Contacting people, that children have never met in reality, is a frequent occurrence. Eight out of ten children claimed

that in the last year, they searched for new acquaintances, that they have never met in the physical world and whom they added in the friend lists of their social networking sites. The same number of children also claimed during the informational seminar that they have been contacted online by people they have never met before (both from Moldova and from other countries). Out of all the children who were questioned, 79 % met new people from other countries online (excluding relatives)

Offline meetings with people met online

Offline meetings of children with people they have only met on the Internet bears risks that may result in serious trouble. That's why it is reasonable to exclude the-

se meetings, taking into account the fact that, children between the ages of 12 and 16 years of age, cannot yet rely on protective factors, needed to feel relatively safe (e.g., common sense, reason, sensible self-defense experience).

Cyberbullying

Harassment can take many forms: verbal, physical or psychological. It can also cause a variety of effects, including low self-esteem and emotional and physical distress. Victims may also develop anxiety resulting in fear of attending school or encountering difficulties with assignments. In some extreme cases, this may lead to suicide.

Having the disturbing information from the study conducted in 2011 on a representative sample of children aged 12-16 years, has enabled us to look into this issue further. In the current research, we have looked into the risks that children are facing online, in addition to the benefits of the Internet. This study shows that despite several warnings, surfing the web in an unsupervised and uninformed manner, bears negative effects. Below we will present, the identified effects resulting from the current study.

Online communication of a sexual nature and indecent proposals

Reports of informational seminars show that every tenth child, who met online with people from other countries, received an indecent proposal. According to survey results, online proposals by individuals from other countries, referred to the exchange of personal photos (23%), exchange of contacts (22%), the proposal to meet (21%) to exchange links/websites and files (15%), and indecent proposals (7%). Among the topics of conversation with people from other countries who interviewed children have met online featured: music /

photos / games (28%), hobbies (18%), education (14%), relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend (13%), and sexual subjects (6%). Four in ten children surveyed admitted to an exchange of compliments with strangers of the opposite sex.

Exchange of personal data, photos and videos with individuals met online

Of those surveyed, 4 out of 10 children say they have exchanged data with people they met online. Every third child interviewed sent their photos, and every sixth child sent a video sequence people they met onli-



ne. Every fourth child preferred to present himself as a different person than he was in reality.

Offline meetings with people met on the Internet

5 out of 10 children surveyed, indicated that they had at least once met up with someone they met through the Internet, and 1 in 10 children said that they did not meet up but had the intention to, at the time of the questioning. The geographical location of people known online and met up with offline varies, however the top 3 countries that prevail are: Russia, Romania and Italy. The survey data shows that only 32% of children inform their parents about meeting offline with online acquaintances; 61% inform their boyfriend / girlfriend, 30% tell their peers, 17% inform an adult they trust, and 18% keep it a secret. Survey results show that in 48 percent of cases, the age of the people befriended online and met offline was often similar to theirs, in 43 percent of cases they were 16-20 year olds, 4% - 21-25 year olds and in 4% - 26-38 year olds. Children who meet offline with online acquaintances are most often girls aged 15-16 years, mostly from rural areas.

Online access of pornographic content

Although this subject was not approached while questioning the children, qualitative data obtained through

interviewing specialists, and through discussions in focus groups with the children and reports of seminars, we've seen that the majority of children of a certain age group, have voluntarily or involuntarily accessed such material.

Cyberbullying

In the research conducted by the International Center "La Strada" in 2011 children and specialists have reported cases where children's profiles on social networks were hacked and new profiles were created containing uncensored information with defamatory content or indecent images.

In this context, the present study aimed to collect current information on the character of Internet usage among children and their behaviour in cyberspace, especially identifying the risks they face online today. The study also draws the attention of organisations and actors involved, and suggests a set of recommendations to improve the situation in the field of online browsing and risk prevention by implementing the necessary measures for the safe usage of Internet by the children from the Republic of Moldova.

**The objectives and
methodology of the study**





The objectives and methodology of the study

The aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to analyze the way the Internet was used by children aged between 12 and 16, from the Republic of Moldova, especially their online behaviour, in view of establishing the risks for their safety and health.

In order to accomplish this aim, the following objectives have been established:

- determining the time of day and the duration of time that children spend on the Internet;
- determining the devices used to access the Internet;
- elucidating the purposes behind children's Internet usage;

- identifying the problems that children face when accessing the Internet;
- analysing the online behaviour of children with potential hazardous effects (accessing pornographic material, looking for new acquaintances online, meeting up with people they met online, exchange of personal data, photos and personal videos)
- determining the actions of children as a result of disturbing things found on the Internet;
- identifying topics discussed online that reveal risk of sexual exploitation.

Research methodology

A questionnaire-based investigation method has been used in analysing the practices and behaviour of children online. It has been applied to a sample of 939 children aged 12-16 years who are Internet users in 235 localities of Moldova (excluding Transnistria) in period the period between June and August 2013 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of interviewed children by geographical area and children's residence area

Geographical area	Rayons/cities
Chişinău	Chişinău Municipality and municipal communities
Nord	Edineţ, Bălţi, Soroca, Glodeni, Drochia, Ocniţa, Sângerei, Briceni, Făleşti, Floreşti Rayons
Centru	Orhei, Şoldăneşti, Rezina, Ungheni, Ialoveni, Teleneşti, Străşeni, Hânceşti, Dubăsari, Criuleni, Călăraşi, Nisporeni, Căuşeni, Anenii Noi Rayons
Sud	Cahul, Leova, Ştefan Vodă, Cantemir, Comrat, Cimişlia Rayons

However, a limitation of the research is low representativeness of the sample, which in the period of the study included only children who were resting in summer camps and had experience using the In-

ternet. In this respect, the sample is a probabilistic, multistage, representative age group of 12 to 16 year olds. The margin of error is 3.12%, for a confidence level of 95%.

A study on children's safety online in the Republic of Moldova

In formulating the questions for the questionnaire psychologists and sociologists with an extensive experience working with children, were consulted. This was done in order for the questions to be harmless for the psyche of the respondents, but also to be understood / to correspond to their age group. In the 2011 study, the questionnaire was adjusted with 10 pre-coded qu-

estions (see Appendix). As in the previous study, the process of self-administration was applied, which is a procedure that is suitable for an investigation of this kind. Thus, each child received a questionnaire that required a completing time of 5-7 minutes. The statistical analysis of data was performed using SPSS Statistics 17.0.

The results of the study





The results of the study

1 Practices regarding Internet access and online activities

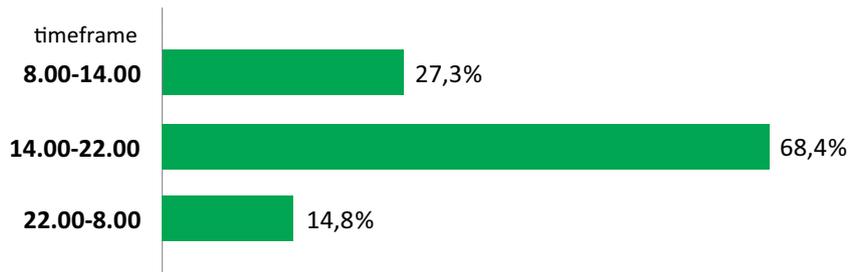
Hours of Internet access

The data of this study show that most access the Internet in the afternoon hours, between 14.00-22.00,

with a rate of over 68% (see Figure 1). Meanwhile, more than a quarter of young respondents access the Internet between 8.00-14.00, a period during which they should be engaged in schooling, except on weekends and holidays.

Compared with survey data from the International Center “La Strada” in 2011, the data of this study reveals a greater number of respondents who access the Internet at night, between the hours 22.00-08.00.

Fig. 1. “Usually in what interval of time do you access the Internet?”



Analysis of data segregated by socio-demographic variables lead to the identification of the following features:

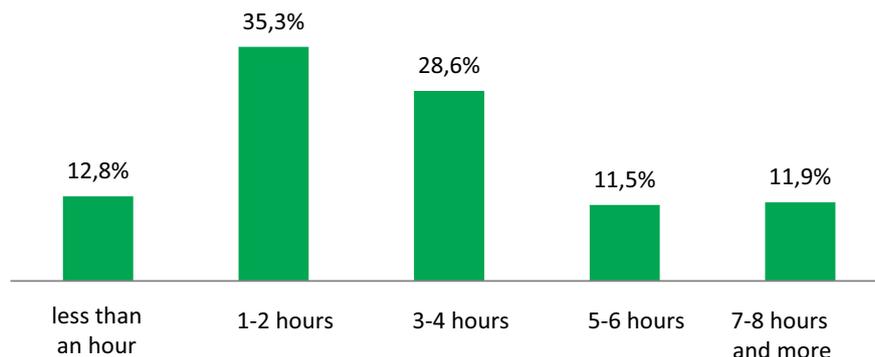
- 15 year olds access the Internet more frequently during night hours (24.6%) compared to 16 year olds, who access most frequently between the hours 14.00-22.00 (78.9%);
- The hours between 08.00-14.00 is a period for Internet access preferred especially by 12 year olds (40.6%) compared with other age groups;
- Both girls and boys access the Internet in the afternoon hours, girls to a greater extent (73%) than boys (62.3%);
- Boys have primacy accessing the Internet in the morning hours (32%), however girls access it to a greater extent in the night hours (15.6%);
- The living environment doesn't have a great influence in terms of Internet access- both respondents from rural and urban areas, access the Internet in the same proportion, often between 14.00-22.00;
- During night hours, urban children access the Internet to a greater extent (16.7%) than those living rural areas (13.3%);
- Approximately three quarters of teenagers in Chisinau go online after lunchtime.

- Every 6th teenager from Chisinau and the South of Moldova, accesses the Internet in the hours of the night;
- Approximately one in three teenagers in the North and Centre of the country goes online more often in the morning hours.

Time spent online

The study reveals that more than a third of teens spend between 1-2 hours online and about a third spend between 3 and 4 hours online (see Figure 2). About 13% of adolescents surveyed, claim to spend less than an hour online.

Fig. 2. "When you access, usually, how much time do you spend in the Internet continuously?"



What is worrying is the fact that 1 in 10 teenagers spends between 5-6 hours online, and approximately 12 % spend more than 7 hours which can be hazardous for the health of the children.

The analysis of the dependence between the period and duration of navigation reveals the following situation: those who spend less than an hour online, either do so between 14.00-22.00 hours (50.7%) or between the hours of 8.00-14.00 (40, 6%). The timeframe between 14.00-22.00 is preferred by those who spend between 1-2 hours (64.1%) and between 3-4 hours (67.3%) in cyberspace. One in 10 children spending between 3-4

hours online, prefers the hours between 22.00-08.00, and every 1 in 5 children, accesses the web between 08.00 and 14.00. A disturbing fact is that a third of those who surf the web more than 7 hours, do so in the night hours between 22.00-08.00, in the time when they should be resting. One of the possible reasons explaining unlimited Internet access by children during the night time may be the lack of parental control or the opportunity to escape their monitoring.

The study also reveals the relationship between children's age and length of time spent on the Internet, which is depicted in the data in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Time spent online per children's age

Age	Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	3-4 hours	5-6 hours	7-8 hours and more	Total
12 y.o.	18,8%	46,8%	20,9%	6,8%	6,7%	100%
13 y.o.	11,5%	40,4%	30,8%	9,6%	7,7%	100%
14 y.o.	11,8%	33,2%	32,6%	11,2%	11,2%	100%
15 y.o.	9,3%	22,4%	29,5%	18,6%	20,2%	100%
16 y.o.	8,2%	23,7%	34,8%	14,8%	18,5%	100%

The analysis of the Table above allows us to conclude that most of those who spend less than an hour online are 12 year olds (18.8%). Those who spend 1-2 hours online are, again, mostly 12 year olds (46.8%) and 13 year olds (40.4%) than the others, 3-4 hours (30.8%). The percentage of those who browse 3-4 hours is higher for children aged 15 to 16 years old (29.5% and respectively 34.8 %). This is also the age group that spends 5-6 hours (18.6% and respectively 14.8%) and more than 7 hours (20.2% and respectively 18.5%).

Analysis of data from questionnaires allows us to draw some conclusions regarding the duration of accessing the Internet:

- Girls access the Internet more often over a period of up to one hour (13.1%) compared to boys (12.3%). Boys however, more often access the Internet for periods of more than 5 hours than girls.
- Children from rural areas access the Internet more often for a period of up to 2 hours (51.6% versus 43.5%, urban children), and those in cities - for pe-

riods of more than 3 hours (56.5% versus 48.4%, rural children).

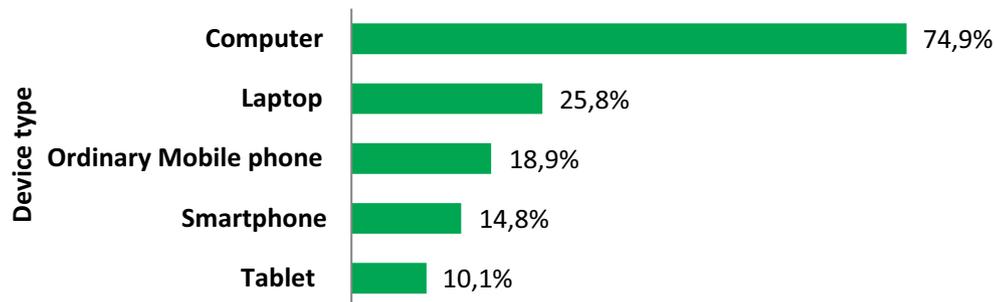
Devices for Internet access

E-Government Data Centre attests that in Moldova, in 2013, 64% percent of households had at least one computer, the number of households equipped rising by 6% compared to 2012. At the same time, some households had two or even three computers, computer average per household being 1.1 units.

Survey data conducted by the International Center "La Strada" reveals children's use of several devices to access the Internet: 55.4% of respondents use only one device, 30.4% - two devices, 11.3% - three devices and 2.9% - up to four devices.

Most of the times, children access the Internet from a computer: 3/4 of those in the questionnaires used a computer as an Internet connection device (see Figure 3). Meanwhile, 1 in 4 children use a laptop and approximately 1 in 5 use a mobile phone.

Figura 3. Distribuția răspunsurilor la întrebarea: „De la ce dispozitiv accesezi de obicei Internetul?”



The children that completed the questionnaires aren't strangers to the latest technological innovations. Approximately 15 % used smart phones and more than 10 % used tablets for Internet connection.

Data analysis reveals the fact that those who use a computer in order to go online, access the Internet more. (62,6 %) between the 12.00-22.00 hours, while the 8.00-14.00 hours are spent more on a tablet (30,4%), mobile phone (26,1%) and smartphone (22,8%). This

data also shows what devices children use during school time, that teachers may not be aware of.

During night time (22.00-08.00), besides using a computer (43.3%), children also may use a laptop (19%) for Internet access. The preference of using a laptop as a main connection device grows with age: approximately 15% 12 year olds and more than 21 % of 16 year olds prefer laptop (as seen in Table 3)

The study shows that:

Table 3. Devises' use per children's age

Age	Ordinary Mobile phone	Smartphone	Computer	Tablet	Laptop	Total
12 y.o.	11,9%	7,1%	55,8%	10,5%	14,7%	100%
13 y.o.	11,9%	8,9%	54,4%	5,6%	19,3%	100%
14 y.o.	13,2%	10,4%	52,0%	6,4%	18,0%	100%
15 y.o.	15,9%	12,8%	46,4%	7,3%	17,6%	100%
16 y.o.	12,4%	13,9%	49,0%	3,1%	21,6%	100%

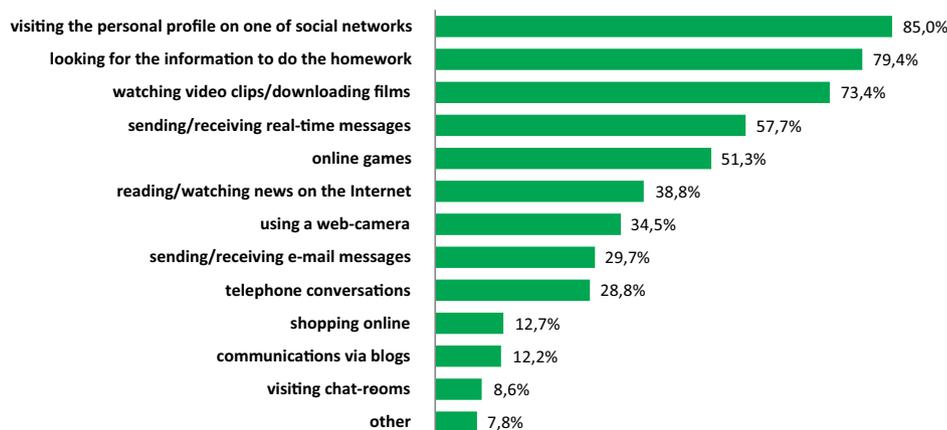


- Boys use the computer to a greater extent (78.8%) than girls (72%) for Internet connection. The smartphone is used (17.7% and respectively 12.6%) and the tablet (11.3% and 9.3%);
- Instead girls prefer internet connection on a laptop (28.4% versus 22.4%) and a cell phone (19.5% versus 18%);
- Teenagers from rural and urban areas use a computer to access the Internet in approximately the same proportion.
- Teenagers from rural areas prefer to connect to the Internet via mobile phones (22% versus 14.8% in urban areas), however teenagers from urban areas prefer devices such as as laptops (27.7% vs. 24.3% in rural areas), smartphones (20.7% versus 10.2% in rural areas) and tablets (14.4% versus 6.8% in rural areas);
- Compared to other investigated adolescents, inhabitants of Chisinau prefer the following devices: laptop (32.1%), smartphone (19.4%) and tablets (14.9%) and they use the PC in a lower proportion than in other areas (under 69% while in other areas the rate is over 74%);
- The PC is an overall preferred device for Internet access regardless of the time spent online;
- The mobile phone is used by children to access the Internet for less than an hour (25.7%), and the laptop is used for a period over 3-4 hours (21.3%);
- The tablet (10.7%) and smartphone (14.3%) are mainly used for a period of 5-6 hours.

The purpose of accessing the Internet

The survey data reveals a multi-dimensional purpose of accessing the Internet. It is noted that teens prioritize visiting profiles on social networks by 85% (see Figure 4), without any significant differences in age or region of the country. This activity is attributed to girls (88%) more than to boys (81%).

Fig. 4. “For what purposes did you use the Internet during the last 12 months?”



Approximately 80% out of the children surveyed, said they use the Internet to prepare for school. Girls (83.1%) do this in a proportion of 8.5 % more than boys. In terms of territory- (74.6%) of children from Chisinau use the internet in order to do their homework, and (78.9%) from other urban areas.

Watching videos and downloading movies online is practiced by more than 73% of respondents, who are especially boys (74.6%). In this case age determines frequency. According to the study, 12 year old children, do so at a rate of 68.6%, while 16 year olds- a rate of 83.7%. Meanwhile, those living in urban areas, practice watching videos and downloading movies online at a rate of 7.7% higher than in rural areas (70%).

About 57.7% of the children surveyed use the Internet in order to dispatch/receive messages in real time; Especially 16 year olds (69.9%), boys (58.1%), children living in urban areas (63.1%), children living in Centre of the Republic (58.8%) and those living in Chisinau (58.2%).

Online games are accessed by every second child interviewed, predominantly boys (69%) and children in urban areas (55.8%), which is explained by them having more leisure time than those living in rural areas. And in this case, frequency of access is determined by age. The rate of younger people who play games online is greater: 12 year olds showed a rate of 66.1%, while 16 year olds teenagers- only 39.8 %.

Over 38 percent of respondents read or watch the news online. Especially boys (39.4%), 16 year olds, (50.4%) and children from urban areas (41.7%).

The webcam is used by 34.5% of respondents. Data analysis proves this practice popular among boys (37.4%), children in rural areas (35.1%) and those who live in the South of the country (42.2%). At the same time, it is relevant to mention that the webcam is most often used among 12 year olds, characteristic for every fourth 12 year old. (see Table 4).

Table 4. The age of children that indicated using the Internet particularly for the purpose of accessing web-camera

Age	12 y.o.	13 y.o.	14 y.o.	15 y.o.	16 y.o.	Total
Share	26,9%	19,5%	16,7%	20,4%	16,4%	100%

Among other ways of Internet use, **sending/receiving e-mail** was mentioned by (29.7%) of participants, particularly boys (30.8%) children in urban areas (34%) and 16 year olds (43.1%). Another claimed use of the Internet was for **telephone calls** (28.8%); practiced more often by 12 year olds (34.7%) and those in rural areas (29%) without a significant difference between

boys and girls. **Online shopping** was another mentioned use of the Internet (12.7%) characteristic for adolescents in urban areas (15.8%), also for 16 year olds (17.1%) and, surprisingly, boys (13.5%). **Communication on a blog or a forum** is practiced by 12.2% of adolescents, and **visiting chat room sites** is preferred by 8.6% of children.



2. Children's behaviour online

Exchange of personal data, photos and videos with people met online

Alongside the many uses of the Internet, it is also a means of searching for new friends, a fact also revealed in the previous study. And the present study shows us that about 70% of children searched for new acquaintances online in the past 12 months (see Table 5). This

is especially the case for girls (55.6%), rural adolescents (55.8%), 12 year olds (25.3%) and those who use the Internet during night time (60.9%) between 14.00 and 22.00 hours.

A fifth of respondents claimed to have exchanged personal photos with people they met online, over the past 12 months. This activity is often practiced by 15 year olds (29.3%), boys (51.8%) and those living in rural areas (57.3%).

Table 5. "Which of the following actions did you undertake over the last 12 months"?

	yes	no
1. I looked for new acquaintances through the Internet	69,3%	30,7%
2. I added in my friend's list on my personal profile on social networking sites persons that I did not meet in reality	59,2%	40,8%
3. I exchanged data (address, phone number, etc) with someone I only from the Internet	25,0%	75,0%
4. I sent a photo of mine to a person I knew only from the Internet	19,7%	80,3%
5. I sent videos about me to a person I know only from the Internet	11,9%	88,1%
6. I talked online using WEB camera with a person met online and never met offline	21,0%	79,0%
7. I placed online the offensive messages	13,2%	86,8%
8. I sheared with someone my password for email box or social networking sites (not parents)	23,0%	77,0%

Data exchange with people met only online is a practice that is performed by 4 out of 10 teenagers, especially girls (51.9%), adolescents from rural areas (53.2%) and 15 year olds (28.1%) . Sending video sequences to a person known only through the Internet and never met offline, has been practiced in the last year by approximately 12% of the adolescents questioned, particularly girls (52.7%), children

in rural areas (54, 5%) and 12 year olds (35.7%), as shown in Table 6.

Online discussions via webcam with people known only through the Internet without meeting offline, were practiced by 21% of children, including boys in a proportion of 51.3%, children from rural areas - 51.3%, 15 year olds- 25.9%, and adolescents who access the In-

Table 6. Socio-demographic characteristics of children who sent videos to a person met only online

Sex	Shear	Residence	Shear
Masculine	47,3%	Urban	45,5%
Feminine	52,7%	Rural	54,5%

Age	12 y.o.	13 y.o.	14 y.o.	15 y.o.	16 y.o.	Total
Shear	35,7%	13,4%	17,9%	16%	17%	100%

Table 7. The shear of children using Internet in night time and who use WEB camera while communicating with persons met only online (not in real life)

Timeframe	8.00-14.00	14.00-22.00	22.00-8.00	Total
Shear	26%	54,5%	19,5%	100%

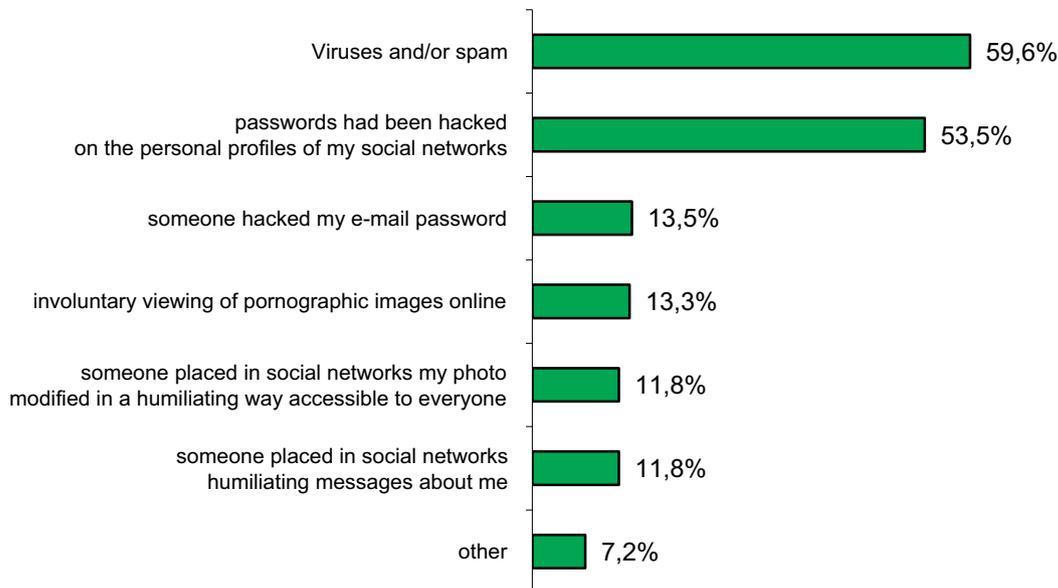
ternet most often between 14.00-22.00 hours - 54.5% (see Table 7). About 1 in 5 children, who spends time on the Internet during the night, communicates via webcam with strangers.

The study shows that only 18.3% of respondents have not faced any problems online in the last 12 months. Out of the 679 persons (81.7%) who have experienced

at least one problem, approximately 60% have had to deal with viruses and/or spam (see Figure 5). More than half (53.5%) of respondents reported that their passwords had been hacked on the personal profiles of their social networks, especially 12 year olds (58.4%), those who spend more than 7 hours online (57.3%), boys (56.1%), respondents from rural areas (57.7%) and those living in the North of the country (65.8%).



Fig.5. “What problems online you faced (if such) in the last 12 months?”



Cyberbullying

Posting comments containing offensive content has been practiced by 13% of the adolescents surveyed, having the following socio-demographic characteristics: male adolescents (52.4%), from rural areas (53.2%), 12 years old (29%) and 15 years old (26.6%). Most of them access the Internet at night (48.6%) between 14.00-22.00. Children reported through informational seminars as well, that they have encountered situations of verbal and psychological harassment which caused emotional suffering.

Approximately one fourth of adolescents entrusted a person other than their parents with their mailbox password

or the password of their social network profiles, in the last 12 months. This is more often the case for girls (58.3%) children from rural areas (53.7%) and 12 year olds (25.5%).

Over 13% of respondents indicated the problem of email password hacking, often with 12 year olds (40.7%) and children from rural areas (50.5%). Hacking the passwords to the profiles of their social networks and creating new profiles with uncensored information containing defamatory or indecent images also caused suffering among children.

Other problems reported by adolescents that were encountered online were strangers posting images of te-

enagers on their social networking sites and modifying them in an offensive manner (11.8%). Girls faced this problem to a higher degree than boys (51.5%), also children in rural areas (59.5%) and 12 year olds (43%). The issue of posting messages containing offensive material about teenagers (11.8%) was especially preponderant for girls (53.8%), for children in rural areas (55%) and for 12 year olds (31,3 %)

Adding strangers to friend lists on social networks

The data in Table 5 (p. 34) reflects risky actions that children undertake online, behaviour that may endanger their safety. 59% of respondents admitted to adding strangers to the friend lists of their social networks. This analysis was segregated by socio-demographic variables, revealing that this practice is characteristic for girls (56.1%), adolescents from rural areas (56.3%) and 12 year olds (23.4%).

The rate of children who indicated that they added to the friend lists of their personal profiles on social networks, people they have not met offline and exchanged data with someone they knew only communicating online was 19.7% of the total number of respondents (or 185 people). The sociodemographic data analysis of this category of children shows that girl were especially subjected to an increased risk (52.4%), so were children from rural areas (51.4%) and 15 year olds (30.3%).

Accessing pornographic material

A problematic aspect revealed in the study refers to cases of involuntary viewing of pornographic images online, as shown by 13.3% of respondents. The risk of being exposed to such content is higher in respect to 16 year olds (33.3%), 12 year olds (25.6%) and girls (62.2%), with no obvious difference in terms of area of residence (see Table 8).

Table 8. Age of children who indicated that involuntary viewed pornographic images in Internet

Age	12 y.o.	13 y.o.	14 y.o.	15 y.o.	16 y.o.	Total
Shear	25,6%	21,1%	7,8%	12,2%	33,3%	100%

The study shows a low level of knowledge with respect to the behaviour of children when they are frustrated and frightened by what they see on the Internet. Moreover, 1 in 10 respondents did not know how to react in such situations (see Figure 6), especially 12 year olds (28.7%), 13 year olds (24, 3%), girls (58.3%) and children living in rural areas (54.8%).

Indecent proposals online and online communication of a sexual nature

Approximately 12% of children received indecent proposals from Internet acquaintances. The majority (68.8%) were those who accessed the Internet between 14.00-22.00 hours. Their profile is projected as follows: 12 year olds- 29.9%, out of them boys- 55.8%,



Fig.6. “In case you are frighten or frustrated by something you faced in Internet space, what shall you do?”

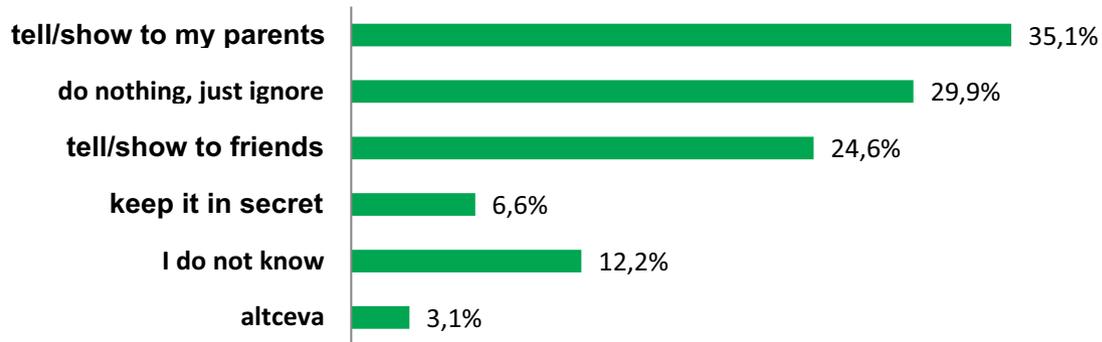
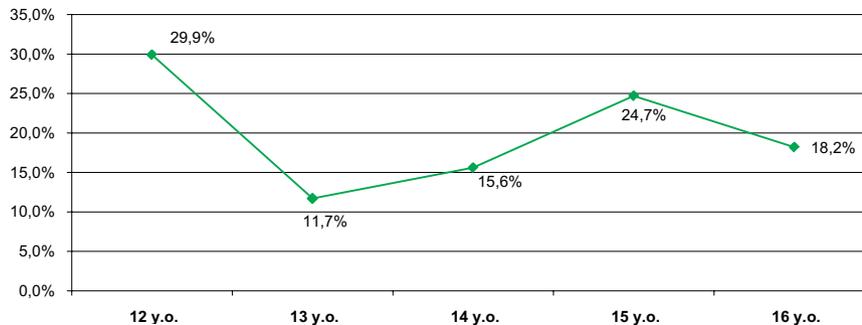


Fig.7. Age distribution of children who got indecent proposals made by newly acquainted persons met exclusively online



rural residents - 50.6%, from the Centre of the Republic- 37 7%. Out of the total number of those who received indecent proposals online, 24.7% were 13 year olds, 18.2% were 16 year olds, and 15.6% were 14 year olds. The smallest percentage in this case, are 13 year olds. (see Figure 7).

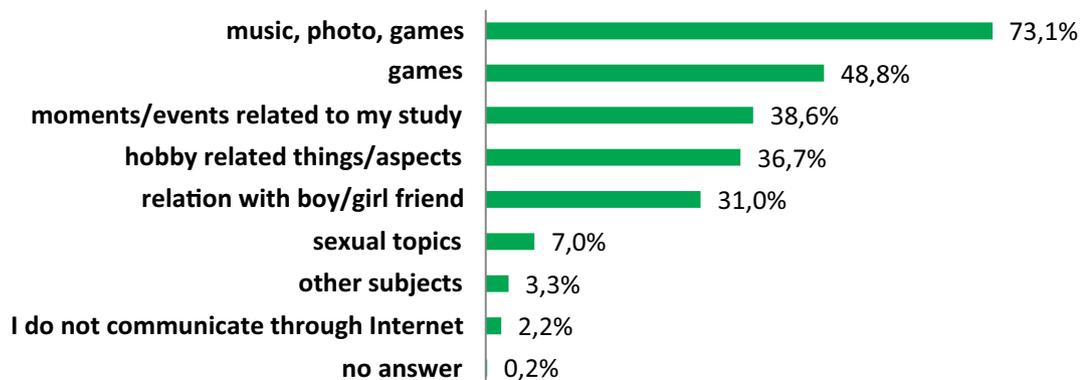
Only 21.6% out of the children surveyed had not received any indecent proposals from people they met online.

Exchanging links, sites or files has been suggested to 22.1% of respondents. This is especially the case for 15 year olds (29.7%), boys (51%), those who reside

in urban areas (57.9%). The topics most frequently addressed by children online are music, movies and photos (73.1%), games (48.8%), education (38.6%),

hobbies (36.7%) and relationships with boyfriends/girlfriends (31%), as seen in Figure 8.

Fig.8. "What are the topics that you usually discuss through the Internet?"



Sexual topics are discussed by 7% of all people surveyed, among which 15 year olds (31.8%) and 16 year olds (25.8%), as seen in Table 9; these topics also raise the interest of boys (66.7%), children from urban areas

(53%), those who access the Internet most often between the hours of 14.00-22.00 (62.1%). A third of the respondents who discuss sexual topics, access the Internet between 22.00-08.00 hours.

Table 9. Age of children who discussed sexual-related subjects in Internet

Age	12 y.o.	13 y.o.	14 y.o.	15 y.o.	16 y.o.	Total
Shear	19,7%	9,1%	13,6%	31,8%	23,6%	100%

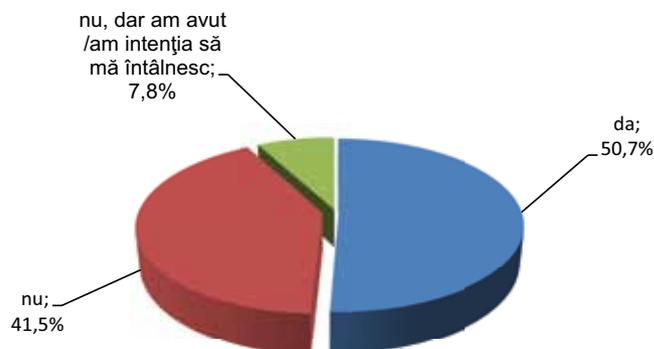
Offline meetings with people met online

Over half of the children surveyed met up at least once with people met online, excluding relatives. (see Figure 9). The analysis of socio-demographic characteristics of the 651 children who met new people on the Internet

(excluding relatives) reveal that age is an important factor when accepting these meetings. There is an increased risk among 12 year olds (23.9%) girls (53%), those in rural areas (57%) and those from villages in southern Moldova (37%).



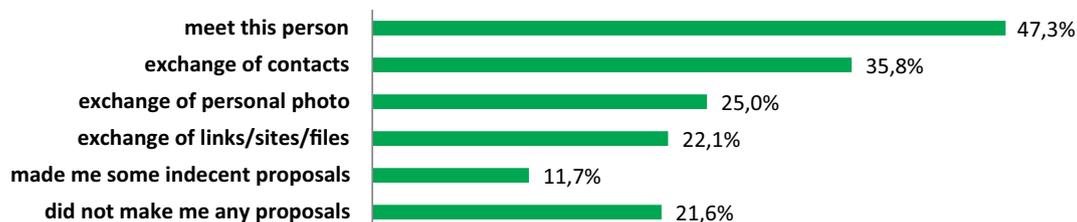
Fig. 9. “Did you ever meet in reality with someone whom you came to know from the Internet?” (except for relatives, if you came to know them by this way)



The study also attests that 47.3% of cases where children meet people online and communicate solely through this virtual space, are asked to meet offline with these people, in 35.8% of the cases they are asked to exchange contacts and in 25.0% of the cases children are requested to exchange personal photos (see

Figure 10). The analysis of segregated data in terms of socio-demographic factors, certifies that this proposal is especially popular among 15 year olds (26.5%), girls (55.5%), residents from rural areas, (58.1%) residents from the Centre of the Republic (34.5%) or from the Southern part of the Republic (32.6%).

Fig 10. „If you got acquainted from the Internet with new persons (except for relatives) and communicate with them only through the Internet, what proposals did they make you?” (data referred to 782 respondents that got acquainted with new persons and communicate via Internet with them)



Failure to notify parents about problems online

When asked about their actions in cases when they are frightened or frustrated by something they saw on the Internet, about a third of respondents would ignore the case and would not take any measures, which raises concern. Among those who would ignore such situations are predominantly girls (53%), children from rural areas (51.2%), 14 year olds (22.4%), 15 year olds (22.1%) and 27.1% of those who use webcams. Approximately 7% of the respondents would conceal such si-

tuations, especially boys (59.7%), 12 year olds (33.9%) and children from rural areas (59.7%).

Only 35.1% of respondents would inform their parents, primarily girls (59.1%), given the close relationship between girls and mothers, particularly teenagers in rural areas (58.5%) and 12 year olds (35.8%). Studies show that age determines whether the child will notify his parents or not, when problematic situations arise (see Table 10).

Table 10. Age of children who indicated that would inform/show parents things that frustrated them online

Age	12 y.o.	13 y.o.	14 y.o.	15 y.o.	16 y.o.	Total
Shear	35,8%	23%	16,7%	15,5%	9,1%	100%

Announcing friends is a practice undertaken by a fourth of the children and adolescents, especially girls (63.6%), those in rural areas (58%) and 12 year olds

(29%). And in this case age is a factor in the decision to confess as well. (see Table 11).

Table 11. Vârsta copiilor care au indicat că ar spune/arăta prietenilor dacă ar viziona ceva pe Internet ce i-ar frustra

Age	12 y.o.	13 y.o.	14 y.o.	15 y.o.	16 y.o.	Total
Shear	29%	20,8%	15,6%	19,0%	15,6%	100%



Three years after the first study, we can confirm that although new informational technologies and new developments have been registered (meaning opportunities for more progressive communication more efficient devices, etc.), the gaps in the online behaviour of children and adolescents have not registered any improvement and the risks they may face have not been diminished. Among these behavioural gaps, special attention must be paid by parents and teachers since children and teenagers spend more time online at night and during study hours. Thus, the risks they keep facing include password hacking and theft of personal data, cases involving involuntary viewing of pornographic content, communicating with strangers, which under certain conditions can lead to them becoming the protagonists of abuse bearing severe consequences.

At the present time, there is an urgent need for interventions by qualified specialists in the field of informational and communication technologies, as well as by parents, teachers, and last but not least, the Internet-service providers should ensure adequate protection of children against abuse of any kind in cyberspace. In this context it would be beneficial if online safety topics were introduced in computer science classes or during tutorials in school. It is also beneficial to promote informational activities for children and adolescents about the importance of civilized behaviour online and what actions need to be taken in cases of exposure to dangerous situations online in order to reduce their risk of abuse and sexual exploitation online.

Recommendations





Recommendations

In addition to the advantages that the Internet offers children- opening new horizons containing knowledge about the world, the possibility of unlimited communication etc. – we should not underestimate the risks that children may face online. Data from the study in question should guide schools, parents, governments, the civil society, the industry of informational technologies, and the children themselves to work together to mitigate risks, thus creating conditions for children, the active users of the Internet, to benefit fully from the opportunities of new technologies. In this regard, we hope that the research in question could indicate evidence-based priorities for joint efforts to promote the safety of children online. Further on, we propose a series of specific recommendations for potential actors in the field.

Teachers

- Tutors and computer science teachers in schools, should be directly involved in informing students about online risks and contribute to the development of safe online behaviour. It is recommended that a special lesson devoted to online safety is included in the curriculum of computer science classes, and in the meantime, extracurricular thematic seminars should be organised for students. In order for teachers to effectively conduct specialised classes, it is recommended to organise a training course for teachers of computer science,

in matters of online safety. These courses should cover the significance of the Internet in the lives of children and adults, its benefits, situations of risk caused by Internet addiction, using the Internet as an educational resource and the psychology of communication between children and parents/teachers on these issues.

- Thematic sessions on child online safety can also be organised by pre-school teachers, with the aim to familiarise pre-school teachers, with the elementary notions concerning the online safety of children, presenting the educational resources available for preschool children as well as providing specialist advice aimed at ensuring beneficial and responsible online behaviour. Educators and teachers of children's centres should prepare preschool children as well, for future digital life through fun and interactive games.
- We recommend that you include the computer and the Internet among your other teaching tools in conducting your classes (both in computer science classes and other school subjects), making sure the links provided for students do not contain harmful information. Encourage children to access specialised sites that address child safety online, for example, www.siguronline.md through which children can play logic based games for example, without being exposed to the risk of viruses or spam . To mitigate risks for children, the online active users of the Internet, it is recommended that all school computers with Internet access have applications installed, or filtering software that prohibits access

to certain sites, so that the professionals in charge of computer rooms, can monitor children's online behaviour. Children should be encouraged to access a list of safe sites where they can find the information needed to prepare their homework and for their intellectual development.

- Teach children not to respond to e-mail spam, to harassing messages including obscene, aggressive and insulting content and not to download files or photos from unknown sources. Remind students that not everything they read or see on the Internet is reliable - you can suggest other sources (books, publications) and encourage them to create their own opinion on what is true or false.
- Discuss the risks that children may face, when accepting meetings with strangers with whom they communicate via email, chat or phone. Encourage them to turn to their parents or to you, whenever they are invited to meet offline with strangers or whenever they feel threatened.
- Initiate parents into the importance of appropriate use of online resources, explaining the ineffectiveness of repressive measures applied to children, the Internet users. You can organise activities in which parents are able to assist their children in completing their homework, using the computer. Parents are always interested in the safety of their children, so discuss the importance of setting rules in respect to Internet and mobile phone usage.
- Inform both students and parents where they can report an emergency or a situation of abuse. Both children and adults can report through the informational portal **www.siguronline.md** -illegal and harmful content found on the Internet (for example, suspicions that children send or post nude pictures with them or their classmates online, Internet sites containing nude images with children, sites containing pornographic images of adults that are easily accessible for children, chat conversations between an adult and a child, in which the adult asks the child to send or post nude pictures, to meet offline or to engage in sexual acts, etc.). Tips and advice about the safe usage of the Internet can also be provided by the specialists at the International Center "La Strada":
 - E-mail: helpline@siguronline.md
 - Skype: [sigur.online](https://www.skype.com/name/siguronline)
 - Hotline 0 800 77777 (toll free, anonymous and confidential).
- In order to help parents, encourage them to access specialised information support (e.g. **The guide of the responsible parent** (in Romanian only, link) or other existing online sources).
- In order to prevent illegal activities (child pornography, drug trafficking, theft of computer data, etc.) in which children appear as witnesses or victims, encourage parents/children to reach out to the Centre for Combating Cybercrimes at the General Inspectorate of Police (tel: 022 577 177, e-mail: ccci@mai.gov.md).



- It is necessary to take further steps in educating children about the prevention of online harassment and bullying, including that among children. School teachers must be trained in the prevention of such situations, and school psychologists must know how to intervene in such cases.

Parents

- Parents of Internet users and potential users can intervene and help organisations that are specialised in prevention, protection and combat of activities which are harmful to their children, by having the greatest influence on their behaviour.
- Parents should be informed within thematic seminars, of the risks and potential harm of online browsing. In the organisation of such seminars, it would be advisable to inform parents of the cooperation between parental associations/committees, school computer science teachers and NGO activists promoting online child safety topics. These actions would allow parents to have a more active role in monitoring the activities of their children online. During the process of informing parents about online child safety issues, they are encouraged to access specifically designed informational support, such as 'The guide of the responsible parent' (link) or other existing online sources.
- Try to help children understand the risks that they may encounter online, which could be of a sexual nature, what kind of activities can place them at risk and how certain activities can be damaging or become possibly criminal. Help children to apply social norms that encourage responsible online behaviour and show them the support to promote this behaviour among their peers.
- Parents are responsible for monitoring the child's length of stay online, so it does not exceed 2 hours per day, and they should not browse the Internet during night hours. The computer with Internet access should be placed in a room where parents can have free access to it, and the monitor should always be in their sight. If parents are working abroad, online browsing should be nevertheless monitored by an adult. It is imperative that parents monitor the online activities of their children. They should be informed about the possibilities of obtaining filter programs/parental control programs, in order to monitor their children's access to the computer or the Internet. Thus, these programs should be installed on your home computer.
- Try to find out more about the "online friends" of the children, as you do the offline ones. Encourage your children to tell you about these friends, where they met, what they are discussing etc. A real opportunity for parents to monitor children's online activity on social networks is to be added to their child's friend list. Suddenly minimising windows or shutting off the computer monitor may be a sign that they are trying to hide something from their parents.

- Report any situation of abuse and harassment online through the **www.siguronline.md** informational portal, helpline@siguronline.md, through Skype (sigur.online) or the hotline: 0800 77777 (toll free, anonymous and confidential). In order to prevent illegal activities (child pornography, drug trafficking, theft of computer data, etc.) where children were mentioned as witnesses or victims, parents are encouraged to contact the Centre for Combating Cybercrimes at the General Inspectorate of Police (tel: 022 577 177, e-mail: ccci@mai.gov.md).
- Parents should be alert in situations where the child prefers the online communication over the offline one, and to identify the causes of this preference. In such cases, in order to avoid possible future problems of adjustment in society, parents could intervene, encouraging direct communication initiatives with children. Parents should talk to their children about their new online acquaintances, in particular, about any proposals to meet offline.
- It is very important for parents to be informed and to understand that the use of repressive measures against their child are not effective. The prohibition of Internet usage is inappropriate and even counterproductive, exciting the curiosity of the child and generating even more imprudent behaviour on his behalf.

Civil society

- Civil society organisations should provide support for state organisations (pre-university and pre-scho-

ol educational institutions) in training the teachers in online child safety issues. It is necessary to encourage good practices among teachers and parents, related to facilitating children's access to some recommended educational sites for school, including specialised information through informational portals.

- It is necessary to organise informational campaigns on the online risks and precautions, such as the "Peer to Peer" program. The measures necessary for safe usage of the Internet must be brought to the public attention and that of the relevant authorities, including those responsible for amending legislation and the modification of educational perspective. We recommend organising multimedia contests and fun games for teens with messages about online safety programs, producing videos for children and informational materials promoted through national broadcasting channels.
- In order to prevent risky behaviour online and provide prompt solutions for children who need the support in difficult situations, it is beneficial to promote the national information and advice service hotline, accompanied by the possibility of a chat. This service can provide children, parents and teachers telephone counseling on the online risks, which sites are suitable for certain age groups, and which are to be avoided, psychological counseling, referral to specialists or authorities for solving complex problems, etc. .
- It is necessary to organise more research on bullying among peers at school, including cyber bul-



lying, which would result in recommendations to prevent this phenomenon, taking into account the experience of other countries in this field.

- Non-governmental organisations involved in preventing online risks that children may face, should actively cooperate with media agencies in distributing statistics of risks and their prevention methods, on the Internet.

The private sector

- Telecommunication companies and Internet providers in Moldova could have a more active role and a significant contribution to reducing online risks faced by children, in an effort of corporate responsibility. Eventually, they could offer parents and children (the future users of the Internet) the possibility of safety browsing, in addition to Internet service packages. They could install special programs/filters and possibly offer parents a brief training in this regard

and could also distribute messages or post information to encourage them to report cases of abuses and intimidation against children online.

- Internet-cafe owners could also be involved in the installation of special programs/filters to their computers, and to cooperate in the distribution of information materials for children's online safety. Of course, installing these programs/filters will not solve all problems, but the possibility of bumping into violent or pornographic content online would considerably diminish.
- The popularity of certain social networking sites can be used to prevent risks that children may encounter online by placing the information on the actual pages of the sites, which would advertise the phone number of the Hotline and the address of the informational portal specialized in the field or in online counseling.

Annex





Annex 1. Questionnaire for children

	<p>International Centre for the Protection and Promotion of Women's Rights "La Strada"</p> <p>tel.: (022) 234906, e-mail: vrusu@lastrada.md</p>	<p>Nr. de chestionar</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> </table>				

QUESTIONNAIRE

Topic: Safe online navigation

Dear Friend,

In front of you is a questionnaire that is meant to identify some aspects of using the Internet by adolescents, both from villages and from cities and towns. We assure you that your answers are confidential and anonymous. The results of this study are important also to you, too – they will help to study safe methods of navigation online. It will not take you long to fill out the form. Please read carefully the question and the possible answers and tick the box of an answer (or several answers, if specified), that you think is correct.

THANK YOU!

Q 1. USUALLY, IN WHAT INTERVAL OF TIME DO YOU ACCESS THE INTERNET?			Q 2. WHICH DEVICES YOU USUALLY USE WHILE ACCESSING INTERNET?				
8:00-14:00 <input type="checkbox"/>	14:00-22:00 <input type="checkbox"/>	22:00-08:00 <input type="checkbox"/>	Ordinary Mobile phone <input type="checkbox"/>	Smartphone <input type="checkbox"/>	Computer <input type="checkbox"/>	Tablet <input type="checkbox"/>	Laptop <input type="checkbox"/>

Q 3. WHEN YOU ACCESS, USUALLY, HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND IN THE INTERNET CONTINUOUSLY?

Less than one hour <input type="checkbox"/>	1-2 hours <input type="checkbox"/>	3-4 hours <input type="checkbox"/>	5-6 hours <input type="checkbox"/>	7-8 hours and more <input type="checkbox"/>
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Q 4. FOR WHAT PURPOSE DID YOU USE THE INTERNET DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS? (several answers are possible)

4.1. Looking for information needed to prepare homework	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2. Online games	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3. Watching video clips, downloading films	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4. Visiting the personal profile on one of the social networks (for example, Odnoklassniki, Facebook etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.5. Sending/receiving messages in real-time (for example, Skype, ICQ, Yahoo messenger etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.6. Sending/receiving e-mail messages	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.7. Reading/browsing news on the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.8. Using web-camera	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.9. Visiting chat-rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.10. Communication via blogs/forums	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.11. Telephone conversations	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.12. Shopping online	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.13. Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 5. WHAT PROBLEMS ONLINE YOU FACED (IF SUCH) IN LAST 12 MONTHS?"

5.1. Someone hacked the passwords in my personal profiles of one social networks (Odnoklassniki, Facebook, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2. Someone hacked the passwords in my email box	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3. Someone placed in social networks humiliating messages about me accessible to everyone	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4. Someone placed in social networks my photo modified in a humiliating way accessible to everyone	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5. I had viewed involuntary pornographic images online	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.6. Viruses and/or spam	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.7. Others (indicate) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.8. I had no problem online	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6. IN CASE YOU ARE FRIGHTEN OR FRUSTRATED BY SOMETHING YOU FACED IN INTERNET, WHAT SHALL YOU DO"

6.1. Do nothing, just ignore	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2. Tell/show to my parents	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3. Tell/show to my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4. Keep it in secret	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.5. Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.6. I do not know	<input type="checkbox"/>



Q 7: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS DID YOU UNDERTAKE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

(tick one answer for each line)

	DA	NU
7.1. I looked for new acquaintances through the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2. I added in my friends' list on my personal profile on social networking sites (Odnoklassniki, Facebook etc.) persons that I did not meet in reality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3. I exchanged data (address, telephone number, names of educational institutions where I study etc.) with someone I know only from the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4. I sent a photo of mine to a person whom I knew only from the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.5. I sent video clips about me to persons whom I know only from the Internet (we did not meet in person)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.6. I communicated online using Web Camera with a person I know only from the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.7. I placed comments online that include offensive messages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.8. I shared my password from email box or social networking site (not parents)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 8: IF YOU CAME TO KNOW SOME NEW ACQUAINTANCES THROUGH THE INTERNET (except relatives) AND COMMUNICATE WITH THEM ONLY THROUGH THE INTERNET, WHAT PROPOSALS DID THEY MAKE YOU? (several answers are possible)

Exchange contacts (telephone, address, e-mail)	Exchange of personal photos	Meet with this person	Exchange links/sites/files	Made me some indecent proposals	Did not make me any proposal	Other (please specify):	I did not know such persons
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 9: WHAT ARE THE TOPICS THAT YOU USUALLY DISCUSS THROUGH INTERNET? (several answers are possible)

Things/events related to studies at your gymnasium/lyceum or university	Games	Music, photography, games	Things (preferences) related to hobby	Topics of sexual character	Relations with your girl/boy friend	Other topic(s):	I do not communicate via Internet
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Q 10: DID YOU EVER MEET IN REALITY WITH SOMEONE WHOM YOU CAME TO KNOW FROM THE INTERNET?
(except for relatives, if you came to know them by this way)

YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	NO, I ONLY HAD/HAVE AN INTENTION TO MEE <input type="checkbox"/>
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YOUR AGE: (completed years): <table border="1"><tr><td>12 <input type="checkbox"/></td><td>13 <input type="checkbox"/></td><td>14 <input type="checkbox"/></td><td>15 <input type="checkbox"/></td><td>16 <input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Other (please specify) _____</td></tr></table>	12 <input type="checkbox"/>	13 <input type="checkbox"/>	14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15 <input type="checkbox"/>	16 <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____	YOUR SEX: male <input type="checkbox"/> female <input type="checkbox"/>
12 <input type="checkbox"/>	13 <input type="checkbox"/>	14 <input type="checkbox"/>	15 <input type="checkbox"/>	16 <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____		
RESIDENCE AREA: urban <input type="checkbox"/> rural <input type="checkbox"/> DATE OF FILLING OUT: _____	City/village: _____ Rayon: _____						