

Guidelines for parents (and educators) on Child Online Protection



Key objectives

- To provide an overview of what children and young people are doing when they go online
- To discuss the risks and opportunities that they face and provide evidence of the challenges that they are most likely to have to deal with
- To offer strategies that parents, carers and guardians can use to support their children and keep them safe when they are online – both technical and practical solutions

Overview

1 in 3 internet users globally are children under the age of 18

“We grew up with the internet. I mean, the internet has always been here with us. The grown-ups are like ‘Wow the internet appeared’, while it is perfectly normal for us.”

Boy, 15 years, Serbia

Figure 1: Proportion (%) of individuals using the internet, by age, 2017*

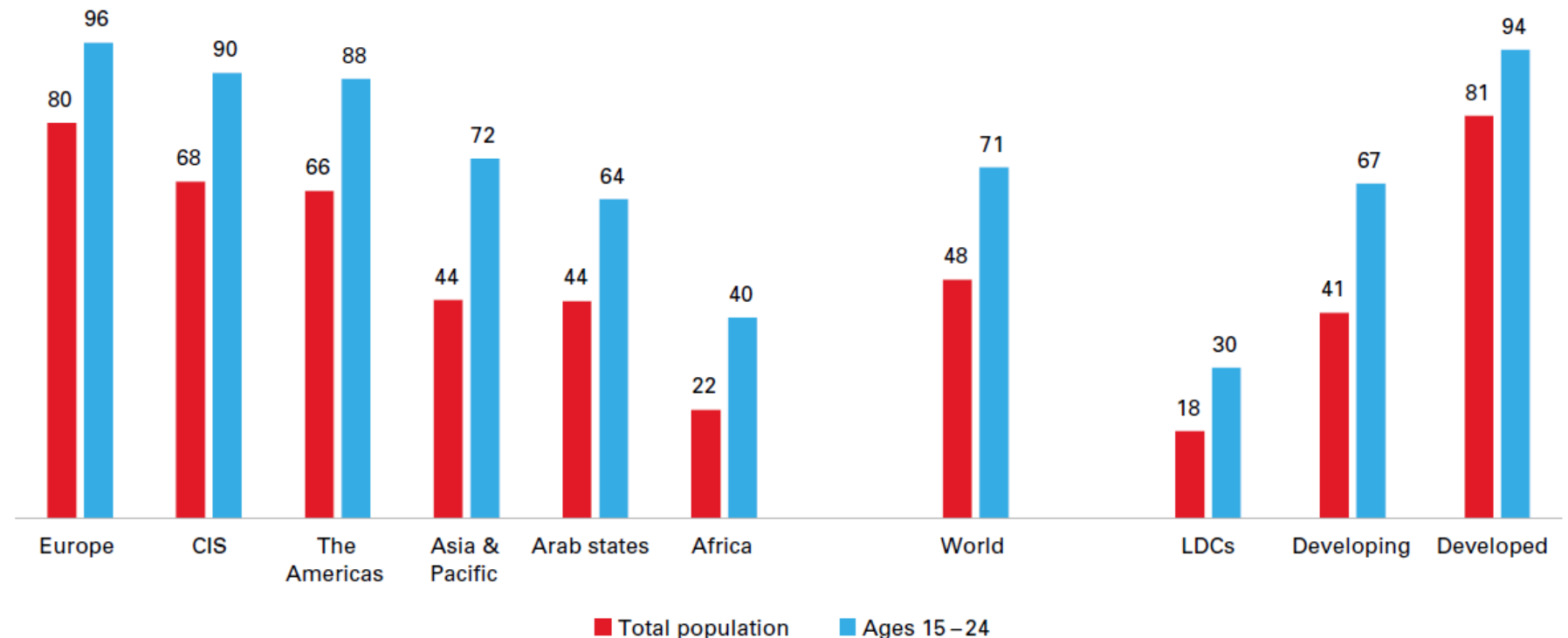
Source: International Telecommunication Union.

Notes: *denotes estimates.

CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States.

LDCs: least developed countries.

Proportions in this chart refer to the number of people using the Internet, as a percentage of the total population, and the number of people aged 15-24 using the Internet, as a percentage of the total population aged 15-24, respectively.



The types of risk children and young people face can be divided into content, contact and conduct risks...

Table 3: A classification of online risks to children

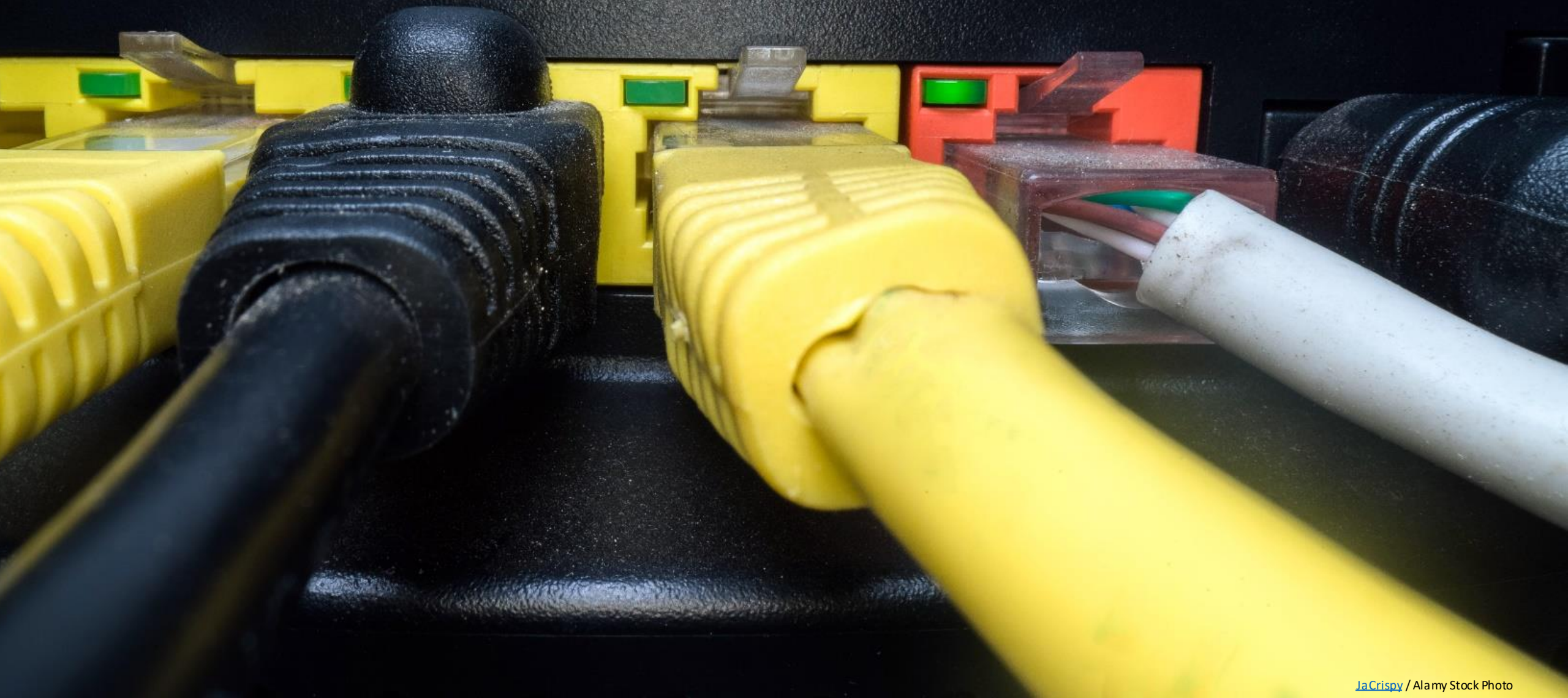
	Content Child as receiver (of mass productions)	Contact Child as participant (adult-initiated activity)	Conduct Child as actor (perpetrator/victim)
Aggressive	Violent/gory content	Harassment, stalking	Bullying, hostile peer activity
Sexual	Pornographic content	'Grooming', sexual abuse on meeting strangers	Sexual harassment, 'sexting'
Values	Racist/hateful content	Ideological persuasion	Potentially harmful user-generated content
Commercial	Advertising, embedded marketing	Personal data exploitation and misuse	Gambling, copyright infringement

Source: EU Kids Online (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2010)





| Network level





| Device level

A photograph of two women sitting on a grey sofa in a room with a large wooden bookshelf in the background. The woman on the left has brown hair in a bun and wears a blue long-sleeved shirt with red star patterns. The woman on the right has blonde hair and wears a red long-sleeved shirt. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The woman on the right has her hand near her face. A potted plant is visible on the left, and a vase with yellow flowers is in the foreground.

| Human level
*dialogue, discussion,
communication*



KA1: Have a conversation with your children

- Try to do some online activities with them.
- Develop a relationship of trust.
- Don't overreact if children tell you about something that has happened online.
- Make sure that your children know you trust them.



KA2: Identify the technology, devices and services being used by your family

- Which devices are being used?
 - Mobile phones
 - Laptops
 - Smart TV
 - Games console
 - Fitness trackers
 - Smart speakers
- Which services are being used?
 - Netflix
 - Youtube
 - Other social media platforms



KA3: Install firewall and antivirus software on all devices

- Consider whether filtering and blocking or monitoring programmes can help/support you and your family.
- Use the latest version of the operating system/app and ensure that any security patches are installed.
- Be transparent about why you are using these tools.



KA4: Agree expectations as a family about how the internet and technology is used

- **Rules**
 - When and where can children use the internet?
 - For how long? Discuss screentime as a family – adults should be good role models.
- **Consent**
 - When taking and uploading photos?
 - Sharing personal stories
- **Create a culture of support**
 - Encourage children to come and speak to you



KA5: Have a good understanding of what children are spending their time doing online

- Have a conversation with them
- Play an online game with them
- Use stories in the media to start a discussion with them – this will help to depersonalise the issue and make them more likely to talk about something
- Be prepared to talk about tricky topics – nothing should be taboo

KA6: Consider the digital age of consent



- There can often be a difference between an age rating in the app store and the age rating in terms and conditions.
- Have a look at a particular app and decide if it will be suitable for your child.



KA7: Control the use of credit card and other payment mechanisms

- Many devices, apps and games can be used to make purchases.
- Use settings on the device to require a password or PIN before any purchases can be made.
- Have a conversation with children about the use of virtual (in-game) currency.



KA8: Know how to report a problem online

- Encourage children to speak to you if they have a problem but make sure that they are also aware of online reporting routes.
- Look at the reporting options together as well as how to change/update privacy settings.
- Empower children to be in control.



KA9: Understand how advertising works

- Be aware that adverts can be inappropriate or misleading.
- Talk to children about how to block or report ads.
- The mantra *if it looks too good to be true then it probably is* can be a good one.



KA10: Create a culture of support

- Ensure that your children would feel confident to ask for support if something went wrong.
- React in the right way – stop and listen to what they are saying. What has happened may not be their fault but even if it is – they have come to you for support which is what they need. You want them to come back if something happens in the future – your reaction will determine whether they will or not.



KA11: Meeting people on and offline

- Many children will talk to or play games with strangers online – people that they have not met offline.
- Have a conversation with them about who they are really talking to.
- Remember that talking to strangers online is not always a bad thing but it can lead to risk.



KA12: Discuss the importance of personal information

- Explain that we should only be posting information that we are comfortable with others being able to see.
- Personally identifiable information should not be shared publicly.
- Once content has been shared it can be difficult to change or remove.



KA13: Discuss implications of posting images online

- None of us should be sharing personal information (including photos) of others without their permission. In reality this does not always happen.
- Talk about how to manage a positive online reputation.
- As parents we need to set a good example – do our children want us to share photos of them online?
- If they/we do share images – what other personal information might be included in them?

Thank you!

