Like, post, share: Young Australians’ experience of social media

Qualitative research report

RESEARCH CONDUCTED FOR THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA AUTHORITY BY
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive summary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research objectives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methodology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Role of the internet in the lives of children and young people</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Use of social networking services</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Risks associated with internet use and social networking services</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Cyberbullying</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Privacy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Contact risk</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Content risk</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Geo-spatial networking and new technologies</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Role of parents and siblings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Awareness and further need of cybersafety education</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key findings: Conclusions and a potential future strategy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Need for Research</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research objectives</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methodology</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview and rationale for the methodology</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining the target audiences</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment of respondents</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing of fieldwork</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLE OF THE INTERNET IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S EVERYDAY LIVES</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and young people’s lives beyond the internet</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet use among younger children and young people</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet use among older children and young people</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERNET USAGE</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in internet usage according to broad age groups</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – 9 year olds</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 12 year olds</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 14 year olds</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 17 year olds</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents (Continued)

‘Needs’ driving internet usage among children and young people 19
Gaming 20
YouTube 20
Google searching 21
Online shopping 22

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING 23
The dominance of Facebook 23
Age groups engaging with Facebook and social networking 24
User engagement with Facebook 24
Types of people engaged with using Facebook 25
The role of Facebook in negotiating social identities 26
Perceived benefits and risks of Facebook 27
Other social networking sites 27
Tumblr 27
Formspring 28

Online risk and risk-based segmentation 29
Engagement and awareness of risk 29
Engagement with risk 29
Risk taking behaviours 29
The 5 segments 30
‘Claimed Conformists’ 31
‘Relaxed Maintainers’ 32
‘Vulnerably Influenced’ 33
‘Responsible Risk Takers’ 34
‘Knowing Naughties’ 34

Specific risk behaviours identified and explored 36
Cyberbullying 36
Children and young people awareness of cyberbullying 36
Implicit and explicit cyberbullying 37
Gender differences in cyberbullying 37
Knowledge and education around cyberbullying 38
Privacy Risks 39
Immediate privacy 39
Contact Risk 41
Managing contact risks 42
Content Risk 43
Exposure to content risk 43
Managing content risk 43
Geo-spatial networking 44
Risks associated with ‘checking-in’ 45

The role of siblings, parents and peers 46
# Contents (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older Siblings</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness of existing cybersafety campaigns</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusions and a potential future strategy</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration of the 5 segments</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inclusion of Facebook</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyberbullying</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geo-spatial networking</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging 'real world' visits</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and older siblings</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendices</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive summary

Research background
The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) regulates broadcasting, telecommunications, radio communications and the Internet in Australia. As part of its responsibilities the ACMA manages a national cybersafety education program entitled ‘Cybersmart’. The program targets children, parents, carers, teachers and library staff, and aims to assist these target audiences to manage online risks in order that their experiences are both safe and positive. Cybersmart aims to present positive messages about the internet while at the same time embedding protective behaviours among children, young people, parents and teachers.

The growth of online social networking over the past few years has been significant. This is reflected in the increasing number of children and young people who take part in online social networks. Equally, and evidenced through stories in the mainstream media, the effect of social networks on the lives of children and young people are seemingly being felt more and more often in the offline environment.

The risks associated with online activities are prevalent yet not always perceived by children, young people or adults. While considerable work has been done in the past in developing Cybersmart strategies and resources, constant technological development and emerging and changing trends among target audiences require this work to be regularly re-visited and updated.

Research objectives
The overall objective of the research was to explore the knowledge, attitudes, opinions, behaviours and perceptions of young people in regards to their use of the internet, social networking services, the risks involved and their risk management strategies. The four core objectives of the research were as follows:

> Understand children and young people’s attitudes toward and perceptions of social networking services;
> Identify attitudes and behaviours which profile children and young people’s online risk level;
> Understand children and young people’s self-management of online risk, including through protective behaviours and resilience; and
> Explore the role of families and peers in children and young people’s experience and use of social networking services.

Research methodology
The research approach included three main elements:
> six group discussions with 13 to 17 year olds;
> six in-home depth interviews in friendships pairs with 8 to 12 year olds; and
> 4 in-home ethnographic immersions, also in friendship pairs, with 12 to 15 year olds.
All research cells were split by gender and conducted by moderators with extensive experience of working with children and young people. A homework task was also employed and given to all participants prior to their attending any group, depth or immersion. The research took place across metropolitan and regional areas of New South Wales and South Australia.

**Key Findings**

**Role of the internet in the lives of children and young people**

The internet plays a progressively significant and time consuming role in the lives of children and young people as they grow older. Overall children and young people lead very busy lives, with school and structured activities taking up much of their time. These are often organised by parents as means of entertaining and enriching their children. As they get older their engagement with such structured activities tends to diminish.

In contrast, their internet use increases with age. For younger children the internet acts somewhat as a ‘filler’ activity between a myriad of other pursuits. Their use of the online environment is more limited in scope than older children. As children and young people get older their understanding of the internet and their ability to use and explore its potential increases. Parental controls are relaxed and their exposure to broader content and contacts increases. Older children and young people come to view the internet as a primary activity in and of itself and a source of entertainment, information and education.

**Use of social networking services**

Children and young people are avid users of social networking services. A clear threshold exists through which children and young people pass from being consumers of non-user generated social networks, to becoming active members of user generated social networks. These user-generated social networks are dominated by Facebook and from secondary school onwards it is expected by children and young people that their peers engage with the service. Critically, the language of social networking is dominated by Facebook-centric terms to the point where children and young people talk exclusively in terms of their Facebook use when referring to social networking.

Children and young people engage with three main types of people via social networking services. These are their immediate friends, who they have genuine offline relationships with; their Facebook community, which is comprised of acquaintances, and friends of friends whom they may not personally know; and ‘random adds’, who are people they do not know personally or through their broader community, but have chosen to add anyway. This is the smallest group that children and young people interact with.

Both children and young people view their use of social networks primarily as a tool for communication. It provides the ability to communicate with their immediate friends as well as a broader community of contacts. However, it is clear that the influence of social networks goes beyond merely increasing their ability to communicate with one another. Children and young people’s use of social networking services has become so ubiquitous, and the tools of those services so diverse in nature, that it has become a primary means of building, negotiating and presenting their social identities. Their actions are no longer confined to the environment in which they take place. Discussion, both positive and negative, of events in the ‘real world’ are readily played out in the online environment. Equally, events that take place online can have immediate or long term effects in the ‘real world’. These can be both positive and negative.
Key findings: Risks associated with internet use and social networking services

Children and young people are able to articulate a number of risks inherently associated with using the internet and social networking. These tend to centre on loss of personal information, cyberbullying, inappropriate content, unsolicited or unwanted contact, and in the extreme, kidnapping or paedophilia. Compared to their theoretical knowledge, perception and awareness of risks, their actual behaviour demonstrates that this knowledge is often not put into practice. Based on this 5 key segments have emerged from the research.

‘Claimed conformists’ perceive online risks as personally relevant but manage these by abiding by rules and ensuring their behaviour avoids risk where possible. ‘Relaxed maintainers’ appear to be the largest segment, and while they accept that some degree of risk exists, they do not believe that their behaviour itself entails significant risk. As a result this group take a ‘set and forget’ approach to their risk management and can take risks in a rapidly evolving environment. The ‘Vulnerably Influenced’ are generally motivated by improving their social standing via their online behaviour. So focussed are this group on building their identity using online channels that they do not engage with the idea that their behaviour can be risky, and as a result are more likely to take content risks (boys) and contact risks (girls). ‘Responsible Risk Takers’ are those who are sensitised to the idea that their behaviour can be risky, but who choose to engage in this behaviour anyway as a means of testing boundaries and becoming adults. ‘Knowing Naughties’ are also aware of the risks involved in their behaviour, however they choose to take these risks as they have an inherent desire to break boundaries and many appear to take great enjoyment from defying risks across a range of different behaviours.

Key findings: Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is seen by children and young people as an inevitable consequence of using social networks. All children and young people who took part in the research had some experience of cyberbullying, having either taken part in it, seen it or had it happen to themselves. To some degree cyberbullying and bullying in general was an accepted part of children and young people’s lives. There was an acknowledgement that as opposed to in the ‘real world’, online cyberbullying had potential to involve a far greater number of people and to escalate easily and quickly. The distance afforded by the online environment, lack of immediate consequences, and inherent ‘feedback’ systems imbedded in social networking services mean that there is significant opportunity for cyberbullying to take place.

Cyberbullying can take place in a number of different ways. These can broadly be categorised into ‘explicit’ and ‘implicit’ bullying. Explicitly children and young people use ‘direct’ approaches of being ‘nasty’, rude or purposefully cruel. This can include using offensive language or openly mocking, and inviting others to mock individuals or groups. ‘Implicit’ bullying is a phenomenon described by children and young people as much harder to pinpoint or to directly label as bullying. This often manifests through the specific use of social networking tools. The clearest example found was individuals or groups ‘liking’ status updates or photos which they actually thought were stupid or ‘not cool’. The irony employed in ‘liking’ something that one actually thinks is a negative is where the element of bullying lies.

Gender differences appear in terms of cyberbullying, with boys being more focused on threats of physical harm and undermining masculinity, while girls appear to be more personal in their attacks, by focusing on looks, personalities and sexual behaviours.

Children and young people, especially older age groups, report that they have learnt about cyberbullying for a long time, and all are able to relate how they should and should not behave, and what they should do if they experience or witness
cyberbullying. Few among the older respondents believed there was a need for ongoing education in this area.

**Key findings: Privacy**
Privacy can relate to both immediate privacy considerations such as disseminating personal information, as well as a digital footprint which refers to the legacy of information available online over time. Children and young people appear to be aware of immediate privacy concerns, and less engaged with the idea of their digital footprint.

Many examples were provided which demonstrated an awareness of immediate privacy concerns. These included ‘checking in’ at home (and thus broadcasting home addresses), and uploading phone numbers. Most engaged with social networking had at some point had images of them uploaded which they did not wish to be seen by others. There were also examples of passwords being shared in exchange for money, favours or as ‘bribes’.

While most were aware of the risks inherent within these behaviours, as well as the most appropriate means to mitigate these risks, many did not put this knowledge into practice. ‘Knowing Naughties’ often choose not to as they do not perceive the need to be significant. Others feel that having looked at their privacy settings in the past, and with no record of any serious incidents, there is no need to re-examine them (‘Relaxed Maintainers’ with a ‘set and forget’ mentality). Others have only given cursory thought to the need to consider their immediate privacy. Only a small minority of respondents had not actively managed their privacy at any stage and these were mostly in the ‘Vulnerably Influenced’ segment.

The idea of the digital footprint is something that most have not considered, although some older groups had begun to engage with the idea that potential employers may have an interest in their online lives. Ultimately, the lack of interest appears to be driven by a perception that the ‘future’ is a long way away and not currently relevant. However, it was clear that when older children and young people engage with the idea of their long term digital footprint there is some interest in finding out more about it. From the research it seems that there is an age threshold of around 14 onwards where the relevance of a footprint can be grasped. However, that is not to say that there was no interest among younger respondents, only that they did not feel an immediate sense of relevance for themselves.

**Key findings: Contact risk**
A number of children and young people in the research reported having received unsolicited or unwanted contact through their social networks. This was felt to be a more prominent issue for girls than boys and was primarily seen as coming from older men attempting to prey on young girls. The risk was perceived as the potential for undesirables to attain personal information and the threat of inappropriate sexually explicit contact or advances.

However, the majority of children and young people did not feel that this posed a significant risk in the ‘real world’ but was rather confined to the online environment. Very few perceived the risk of physical harm coming to them as being likely, and it was this aspect of physical risk which they focused on. Ultimately, most use a ‘safety in numbers’ approach to manage their contact risks. This can be either doing things that others do and feeling safe about it as a result, or it could be ensuring that when risks are taken in the offline world, steps are taken to mitigate these risks. An example is taking a friend along to a meeting with an online friend to help ensure that nothing goes wrong.
Key findings: Content risk
All children and young people were aware that the internet contains material they deem inappropriate for themselves or for others. Younger children are more heavily regulated and supervised in their use of the internet. They are also more aware of rules about their internet use and what kind of material they are and are not allowed to view (both online and offline). They tend to adhere to these rules and close any inappropriate material instantly as they come across it. Older teenagers’ internet use is hardly regulated or supervised and as such they have strong potential to come across inappropriate material. However, they have developed strategies for dealing with inappropriate material, and also often seek it out. The most at risk group are those who are coming into and in their early teens. These children and young people are beginning to engage with the internet without strict supervision and have the capacity to easily navigate the internet. However, they have not developed risk management strategies and are therefore most vulnerable to coming across inappropriate content which they are ill-equipped to deal with.

Key findings: Geo-spatial networking and new technologies
Across the research sample, a number of participants were themselves engaging in geo-spatial networking and using mobile technologies to access and engage with their social networks. All those who were engaging with social networking, if not doing so themselves, had seen the use of geo-spatial applications by others within their online communities. The use of mobile technology for social networking was limited to the older teens who were the only audience with an ownership of smartphones. There was a desire from the majority to engage with mobile social networking and to gain ownership of a smartphone. However, geospatial applications were not attractive for all. This included those who were highly risk averse, but majority were those who based their opinions of the technology on the use they had seen others make of it, which was deemed ‘uncool’. As such they saw little potential for the technology for themselves. These groups were a minority and overall there was still a strong desire to engage with the technology.

In particular for geo-spatial applications there was a strong sense among children and young people of how the applications should and should not be used. There was a keen awareness of not giving away personal information such as home addresses through their use.

Key findings: Role of parents and siblings
Parents and siblings are a key influence in the way children and young people use the internet and their exposure to risk. Parental control relaxes as young people grow older and gain experience of going online. However, the research findings indicate that when they are young, children are heavily monitored and supervised in their use of the internet. Over time and as children become technologically proficient and comfortable going online, and given a lack of any serious incidents, parents begin to loosen their control. This continues to the point in the mid teens when most children and young people are accessing the internet completely independently of any direct parental supervision.

The presence of older siblings makes a more significant contribution to the internet use of children and young people than if they are the oldest sibling themselves. Older siblings are a conduit for exposure to broader content and at an earlier age. This often sets expectations for children and young people as to what their internet use will entail in the future. Older siblings can be a source of risk by exposure to inappropriate content, but also part of risk management as they can supervise and guide their young sibling’s internet activities.
**Key findings: Awareness and further need of cybersafety education**

All children and young people who took part in the research had received some kind of cybersafety education. All were aware of the need for education about being safe online. However, as children and young people grow older their exposure to new education materials diminishes as does their interest in the subject matter. This continues to the point that they feel they ‘know it all’. As a result, the older teens in particular felt that there was a need to present cybersafety education in interesting, new, and personally relevant way.

The emergence of new technologies, in particular geo-spatial and mobile social networking, is a potentially fruitful new area of communication and cybersafety education for children and young people. These services and technologies are reported as becoming more popular and ubiquitous among young people and as such may require thought for inclusion in future cybersafety education initiatives.

**Key findings: Conclusions and a potential future strategy**

Children and young people have a high awareness of risk, but there does exist scope for refinement and consolidation of the existing strategy to address some key developments. In particular, programs and materials will need to address an audience which thinks they have heard it all before and feel somewhat disinclined to engage with further cybersafety education. Critical in countering this lack of interest will be to present information using new perspectives and personally relevant examples.

Strategies should be developed and consolidated with Facebook at the forefront. The current study found that Facebook is the destination for social networking. Whilst there will be difficulties in directly referring to Facebook in any future education materials or programs, the language of social networking is so intrinsically linked by children and young people to Facebook that using the right terminology will provide a potential way to indirectly talk about Facebook.

Cyberbullying strategies are likely to require ongoing reinforcement even though children and young people are acutely aware of the issue. It is important to keep the issue ‘on the radar’ of children and young people, and to avoid it being seen as an acceptable consequence of social networking.

Privacy issues may be an area in which new and ‘fresh’ information can be used to engage children and young people. Children and young people require constant reminders to ensure that the potential consequences of risky behaviour are in fact very real and therefore there is a need to ‘stop and think’ to give them active consideration. Strategies could be developed to migrate children and young people’s theoretical knowledge into action.

Parents and siblings can be important message conduits for any future strategy, as well as other knowledgeable, credible, and authoritative adult speakers. When messages are delivered by individuals who children and young people perceive as being authorities in the area as well as having active knowledge of the activities their pursue, then such messages can really get through. Those that children and young people feel they are most likely to listen to are able to clearly articulate, in the language of young people and with up to date knowledge of what they get up to, new information which the children and young people feel they do not yet know.
Recommendations

Emerging from the research a number of key conclusions and recommendations have emerged.

> Continue with the existing strategy of children and young people, teachers and parents about cybersafety issues and consider some slight refinements to ensure that the strategy maintains relevance.

> In creating materials, there will be value in working to engage young people who think they have heard it all by presenting new information, using new perspectives and where possible, making them truly personally relevant.

> In taking the strategy forward, be mindful that different segments will each take something slightly different from it.

> In developing any new materials, it will be critical to acknowledge the impact and influence of Facebook on older children and young people’s online lives, although using the current language around social networking is likely to achieve this. This should focus on children aged 12 and older but acknowledge that there is high awareness, and expected use, of Facebook by those under 12.

> Within the strategy, consider reinforcing current messages around cyberbullying to ensure that this issue is kept on the radar of children and young people.

> In developing materials around privacy, consider reinforcing immediate privacy risks while also focusing on the digital footprint in a way which feels relevant for children and young people. This has greater salience for older young people (14 and over), but interest does exist in those under 14 when the issue is raised.

> Continue with the existing approaches around contact risk, ensuring that social networking remains at the forefront of any messaging in this area.

> Consider targeting those most vulnerable to content risks – namely those aged 10 – 14 who are curious yet are ill-equipped to deal with inappropriate content.

> Consider developing new resources and activities focusing on geo-spatial social networking as this area has enormous growth potential and can be an interesting new angle from which to talk about cybersafety.

> Ensure that educators are encouraged to organise school visits from credible speakers who can demonstrate the risks associated with online behaviour.

> Continue to target parents as they are especially important for younger children and young people but continue to have influence over teenagers, especially when children and young people believe that their parents know what they are talking about.

> There may be value in targeting older siblings as message conduits, as they are likely to influence younger siblings, and this could be a fresh way to engage children and young people in the idea of cybersafety.
Background

Overview
The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) regulates broadcasting, telecommunications, radio communications and the Internet in Australia. As part of its responsibilities the ACMA manages a national cybersafety education program entitled ‘Cybersmart’. The program targets children, parents, carers, teachers and library staff, and aims to assist these target audiences to manage online risks in order that their experiences are both safe and positive. The ACMA recognises the internet as a potentially valuable resource for these target audiences, and in particular for children and young people. The ACMA also acknowledges that it facilitates identity building, creative activities, and plays a significant role in managing interpersonal relationships among children and young people. Equally, it is an important source for formal and informal learning.

Reflecting this acknowledgment, Cybersmart aims to present positive messages about the internet while at the same time embedding protective behaviours designed to enable young people to successfully manage cybersafety issues. The aims of the Cybersmart program are to inform, educate and empower young people to be safe online.

However, the ACMA also acknowledges that there are significant potential risks surrounding the use of online social networks for children and young people. As such the ACMA is aiming to enhance its understanding of the role of online interaction in the lives of Australian children, particularly in regard to their use of online social networking services. The research findings will be used to inform the future delivery of cybersafety initiatives, communications and activities.

The growth of social networking over the last few years has been significant in not only the number of children and young people involved, but also the effect it has on their lives beyond the online environment. The risks associated with online activities are prevalent yet not always immediate to children, young people or adults. These might include the unintended downloading of malicious software, identity fraud and information abuse, exposure to inappropriate content, harassment and bullying, meeting with strangers offline, engaging in illegal activity, commercial exploitation, and a confusion between reality and fantasy.

Additionally, in recent years there has been rapid change in technology, where 3G or Wi-Fi networks allow people to engage with their social networks anywhere, at any time, via their mobile device. Mobile devices have introduced a range of new social networking opportunities. These are being lead by geospatial services and applications. Through these, users can identify themselves in specific locations in ‘real time’, therefore alerting their network to their current whereabouts and movements.

While considerable work has been done in the past in developing Cybersmart strategies and resources, constant technological development and emerging usage trends among target audiences require this work to be regularly re-visited and updated. Specifically, the ACMA wishes to explore key changes in the behaviour of Australian children and young people who use online social media, including new developments such as the impact of mobile technologies on use of social networking services.
The Need for Research

Research was required to assist in enhancing the ACMA’s understanding of the role of online interaction in the lives of Australian children and young people. Specifically the research sought to explore how young people view and use social networking services with a particular focus on understanding any change in their use since the original study. This will be used to inform future Cybersmart program initiatives, communications and activities. Specifically research was required to:

> determine how children and young people perceive the risks of social networking, as well as the emerging risks associated with new technologies / capabilities in their use of social networking.
> explore the impact of mobile technologies such as smartphones and tablets on access to, and use of, social networking services; and
> establish attitudes towards, and use of, geo-spatial applications while also identifying other new applications which increase the potential for risk.
Research objectives

Objectives

A number of objectives were established as part of the key research requirements. These came under four key areas for investigation and are detailed as follow:

> Understanding children and young people’s attitudes and perceptions toward social networking services. Under this objective the research was required to:
  > Profile children and young people’s attitudes and perceptions toward their use of social networking
  > Understand how children and young people perceive their social networking activities in the context of their everyday lives
  > Explore how children and young people perceive the issue of cybersafety within the context of their social networking
  > Determine whether children and young people perceive that being involved in social networking increases the likelihood that they will be cyberbullied
  > Identify the level of access, use, and perceived benefits and risks of using new social media platforms such as Twitter

> Identify attitudes and behaviours which profile children and young people’s online risk level. Under this objective the research was required to:
  > Understand why some children and young people engage in high risk behaviours online
  > Understand the relationship between levels of online skill/experience and engagement in high risk behaviour such as meeting ‘strangers’ offline
  > Identify whether risk taking behaviours differ between online and offline contexts
  > Determine the extent to which children and young people consider their responsibilities as ‘cybercitizens’ when assessing online risks
  > Identify the factors that promote a risk prevention culture for online behaviour among children and young people
  > Identify how behaviour changes when children and young people are online ‘alone’ versus when they are online with peers and friends
  > Determine whether young people’s perceptions of social networking services as a safe forum for risk taking increases the potential for contact risk
  > Identify the extent of underage use of social networking services
  > Examine children and young people’s perceptions of risk or of encountering unpleasant experiences/behaviour when using social networking

> Understand children and young people’s self-management of online risk, including through protective behaviours and resilience. Under this objective the research was required to:
  > Explore children’s resilience in the face of online risk, including strategies already in place to mitigate risk
  > Identify how children and young people assess risk in the context of the opportunities for social relationships provided by social networking
  > Identify what personal and educational resources children and young people use when managing online risk
> Determine the level of importance children and young people place on privacy controls when using social networking
> Explore whether the perceived importance of privacy issues is mediated by levels of digital media literacy
> Explore children’s knowledge about privacy settings on social networking services versus the current status of their own profile
> Determine how children and young people manage the misuse of their personal data on social networking services
> Understand how children and young people manage their exposure to inappropriate user-generated content within their online social network
> Identify the extent to which children and young people consider their ‘digital reputation’ when assessing online risks

> Explore the role of families and peers in children and young people’s experience and use of social networking services. Under this objective the research was required to:
> Explore how children and young people work with their parents in the management of online risk
> Determine how siblings and peer groups affect children’s experiences and use of social networking services
> Understand the role of peer mediation versus digital media literacy in response to social networking risks
Research methodology

Overview and rationale for the methodology

A number of considerations were taken into account in the design and implementation of the research methodology. These included a number of ethical considerations regarding working with children and young people. The methodology was established with consideration of how best to approach discussions with young people of different age ranges with potentially significant differences in experience, attitudes and behaviours.

A mixed methodology was developed in consultation with the ACMA. This included traditional focus groups, depth interviews in friendship pairs, and ethnographic immersions in friendship pairs. All interviews were conducted by moderators with extensive experience of working with children and young people across a range of issues including sensitive topics.

Six gender specific focus groups were conducted with respondents aged 13 to 17. These were held at dedicated research venues and lasted for 1½ hours. In-home friendship-pair depth interviews of one hour in length were conducted with 8 to 12 year olds. Four 2 – 2½ hour ethnographic immersions in friendship pairs were conducted in respondent’s homes with 12 -15 year olds. The samples are presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Immersion</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>State</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 - 15</td>
<td>8 – 9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Coffs Harbour</td>
<td>NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14 - 15</td>
<td>8 - 9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12 - 13</td>
<td>7 - 8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>12 - 13</td>
<td>7 - 8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Coffs Harbour</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group Discussions</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>State</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>7 – 8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>NSW</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>7 – 8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>St Leonards</td>
<td>NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>9 – 10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Murray Bridge</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>9 – 10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>11 – 12</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>11 – 12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>NSW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A ‘homework’ task was given to all respondents for completion prior to attending or taking part in any research activities. This task was used to ensure that some consideration of the issues has been made by the children and young people, as well as some reflection of their own behaviour. This was to ensure that the children and young people had an awareness of the research topic, and as such could commit to the research process in an informed manner. Homework tasks were incentivised to ensure completion and generate a positive outlook on the research process.

Defining the target audiences
The target audiences were defined in consultation with the ACMA. The research targeted an equal representation of male and female respondents from metropolitan and regional areas across two states. The age range as decided upon with the ACMA was 8 to 17 years. New South Wales was chosen as the most populous state and South Australia was chosen to ensure the findings were not all gathered from the Eastern Seaboard states.

Recruitment of respondents
For the purposes of the research, recruitment screeners approved and developed in consultation with the ACMA were used to ensure that a representative sample of children and young people was generated. In particular it was ensured that the children and young people taking part in the research were not only internet users but also active users of social networks. The recruitment screener was also used to ensure representation of children and young people with older or younger siblings. In addition respondents were screened by gender, school year, attitude toward risk, and use of smartphones or tablets.

The recruitment screener can be found in the appendices of this report.

All recruitment was undertaken by specialist recruitment companies that adhere to strict ICOA standards and follow the AMSRS code of professional conduct. Parental permission was sought and ensured for all respondents taking part in the research.

Timing of fieldwork
Fieldwork was conducted between 2-16 June.
ROLE OF THE INTERNET IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S EVERYDAY LIVES

Children and young people’s lives beyond the internet

Overall, children and young people lead very busy lives. School takes up much of their time, and family time also plays an important role, although this tends to diminish with age. On the whole the most valued aspects of children and young people’s lives are their interactions with friends and family. They spend much of their time thinking about, talking to, interacting with and negotiating their friendship groups. Children and young people do not have a lot of ‘free time’, in part because a range of structured activities take up much of their time, which is particularly the case for younger children. These can occur throughout the week and on weekends. They are most often organised by parents as a means of keeping their children occupied, entertained, or to increase their knowledge and exposure to a range of experiences and other children and young people.

A greater number of activities seem to be undertaken by those in higher socio economic groups. The majority reported only having one to two days ‘off’ or without a structured activity each week.

Some activities mentioned in the research included:
> netball, cricket, soccer, rugby;
> swimming lessons;
> scouts;
> dancing lessons;
> music; and
> study groups or tutoring.

It was clear that as children and young people get older their engagement with structured activities begins to decline. The research indicates that for 8-9 year olds, parents tend to use activities as a means to keep their children occupied and entertained. The breadth of activities they undertake demonstrated the desire of parents to expose their children to a range of experiences. By the age of 10-12 years, these activities begin to filter down to those children and young people that are most interested in these activities. By 13-14 years old only those activities that they are passionate about are being continued on a regular basis. By 15-17 years old many teens are hardly engaging with structured activities, or only those they have developed a deep passion for.

Internet use among younger children and young people

The younger respondents’ behaviour indicates that the use of the internet begins as ‘filler’ or ‘stop-gap’ between other activities. These respondents tended to still be at primary school. However, some older primary school children were beginning to move toward similar behaviours and activities as secondary school children when going online.
Younger children will engage with the internet when they are not busy with other things and it is often not seen as a destination in and of itself at an early age. The internet can provide an ideal tool for relaxation and entertainment when at home, but as mentioned above, young children are very busy and often have other commitments which are prioritised above internet use. This means that the internet is often not used on a daily basis, and when used it tends to be for short periods of time. Young children can also become easily distracted by, or interested in, other things due to their relatively short attention spans.

Despite the overall focus on short and medium session entertainment, there are occasions when the internet is used with a clear purpose. This generally tends to centre on school assignments which require children and young people to conduct some research online.

“I use the internet when I’m bored or if I want to play a game for a bit.”

“Sometimes I go on there for my school work, but most of the time it’s to play games for a bit. But usually it’s not very long, I like doing others things too.”

Internet use among older children and young people
As children become older and move toward secondary school, internet use transforms into a primary activity which is often central to their lives. As their engagement with structured activities diminishes, so their internet use increases and the internet is used much more heavily by teenagers than by younger children.

Rather than acting as a filler of time, or to stave off boredom, it begins to make a significant contribution to their education, knowledge and exposure to new experiences. Arguably most important of all, through social networking, it becomes a universal means of interaction that almost all teens are taking part in. Respondents actively reported that access to the internet is a priority. Those few respondents who reported having limited or restricted access to the internet (usually due to parental control), or having slow connections, often felt ‘left out’ or unable to ‘keep up’ with the crowd.

“Everyone is online now, if you don’t have the internet that’s a bit of a bummer really.”

“I don’t know anyone who isn’t online, or who doesn’t spend a lot of time online either playing games, reading up on stuff or basically mostly on Facebook.”

“I’m online all the time. I get home and my computer is always on. If I’m doing my homework I’m checking Facebook or other stuff for half of that time.”

As a result, frequency of internet use clearly increases with age. The 8-9 year olds reported spending less than an hour a day on the internet, and often no daily use at all. The 10-12 year olds tended to report increasing use from 1 to 3 hours per day. By 13 social networking has become the norm and by 15 the internet and use of it has become an organic integrated part of their everyday lives.
INTERNET USAGE

Differences in internet usage according to broad age groups

The research found that internet usage changes significantly according to age, both in terms of access to it, as well as specific uses. Qualitatively, these differences have been reported according to age bands, although given the nature of the research these should be considered as indicative, rather than definitive statements about behaviour at these ages.

8 – 9 year olds

The repertoires of 8 – 9 year olds tend to be very limited and as a rule their internet use is closely monitored. All those interviewed were using ‘family’ computers and games consoles usually located in the living room or hallway. There was occasional use of a parent’s smartphone or tablet, but none had smartphones of their own.

Some examples of the sites they were visiting on a regular basis were:
> Club Penguin;
> Disney;
> Moshi Monsters;
> Hannah Montana; and
> Miniclip Games.

Their internet use is closely supervised by their parents. This was manifest both in the lengths of time they were allowed to spend online and sites they were allowed to visit. Time constraints were generally enforced, although there was some indication that children and young people could ‘get away’ with slightly more than their parents allowed. Some parents were using internet filters or parental control software and many would not allow their children to independently navigate around the internet, but rather would do it for them. The majority of this age group do not yet fully understand how the internet works, its capacity and the full extent of what they can do with or on it.

“My mum says I can’t go on some websites, so I don’t go there or else I’ll get in trouble.”

“Sometimes I’ll ask my Mum or Dad if I can go online and they’ll do it for me and then I play for a bit.”

“They do try and tell me that I’ve only got 5 minutes left or something, but usually I just keep playing anyway.”

In general this age group understands that there are rules which govern their internet use. Generally, these rules tended to be adhered to, as children and young people seem to understand that they are in place to protect their safety. The rules in place tended to centre around how long they are allowed on line, avoiding any contact with strangers online, and avoiding inappropriate content (usually violence and explicit language). It is worth noting, however, that in terms of contact avoidance this is very much part of a broader ‘stranger danger’ lesson they are taught by their parents. In actuality there is very little contact with anyone over the internet for this age range as they do not engage in user generated social networking.

“They told us at school, and Mum always says that I’ve got to be careful and not talk to anyone on the computer.”
10 - 12 year olds

By this age the internet starts to be viewed as a resource for information and indulging interests as well as a source of entertainment. A very small number are starting to have their own laptops but the majority have access to a family laptop that they are able to move around, and thus access the internet in private. The incidence of using parents phones for light entertainment such as gaming or watching videos increases. A number also had web-enabled technologies through which they could access the internet in private. The most common of these was an iPod Touch. Others had web-enabled phones which can be used to browse websites but are distinct from Smartphone's as they cannot run applications. As such these web-enabled phones were not often used to access social media sites as they do not support the dedicated social media applications such as the Facebook app. Accessing social media sites through the web browser on these phones was reported as being unwieldy and slow.

Some examples of the sites they were visiting on a regular basis were:
> YouTube;
> MSN;
> Google;
> Poptropica; and
> Habbo Hotel.

By this age, parents of children and young people show signs of becoming more accustomed to their children being online. For the majority it is more of a norm and given that nothing untoward has happened so far, most parents relax and allow their children greater freedoms. The rules become more focused on enforcing time limits than being centred around direct supervision. Content does continue to be monitored but not as closely, in particular for those children and young people who have their own laptops.

“They used to try and tell me where I could go and that, but now I just go anywhere. Sometimes Mum comes up and tells me to get off the computer cos I’ve been on it for a while. Sometimes I listen, but sometimes I don’t.”

“I think they used to be stricter. But not anymore really. I can do what I want, although the other day my Mum heard me listening to this song and it had bad words in it and she made me stop.”

These increased freedoms and ability to access the internet with a greater degree of privacy means children and young people begin to inadvertently experience content they know to be ‘naughty’ or inappropriate for them. Critically, however, they are not yet fully equipped to deal with these instances. The primary strategy is to immediately ‘shut down’ or close the window. Those children and young people who are more likely to engage in risky behaviours generally are more likely to have a ‘quick look’ at the inappropriate content but also report that they would close it down relatively quickly. Risks centre mostly around content as contact risks are minimal given there is very little engagement with any user generated social networking.

“I have seen stuff that I think my mum would be angry at if she knew, but I just have a quick look and make sure I close it down so they don’t know.”
13 - 14 year olds

By the age of 13, socialising on the internet is a major factor driving internet use. However, this is largely dictated by enrolment in secondary school. As such, many of the 12 year olds who are in secondary school, are also using the internet to socialise. They primarily use their own laptops or for some, family laptops, and mostly in their bedrooms. Their internet use has become largely a private affair without any family involvement. Many are using internet enabled technologies such as iPod touch or web enabled phones. Some have their own smartphones.

Some examples of the sites they were visiting on a regular basis were:
> Facebook;
> Skype;
> Tumblr;
> YouTube; and
> Google.

By this age, parents of children and young people have generally started to step back quite considerably. There were examples of parents who continued to actively monitor their children’s online behaviour and internet use. However, this was very much the exception and those children felt subject to parental control to which the majority of their peers were not, and as such felt somewhat slighted and unequal. Parents reported engaging new means of monitoring their children’s online behaviour. One of the most prevalent examples cited by more than half the parents of the children in depths and immersions, was ‘friending’ their children on Facebook. The monitoring of their children’s behaviour itself moves into the online space.

“They don’t really pay much attention. Sometimes they’ll ask me what I’m looking at or what I’m doing. I just say something like ‘talking with my friends’.”

“My mum added me as a friend which is annoying. If I swear she’ll comment on it. It’s really embarrassing but she says I can only have it if we’re friends so she can check.”

For most, the internet has become a fully integrated element of children and young people’s lives by this stage and in general they have developed a full sense of the capabilities the internet offers them. It fulfils numerous needs beyond entertainment. Social networking has become the norm and the risks children and young people are exposed to move beyond a focus on content to include significant risk from unsolicited, unwanted or negative contact.

Many children and young people are becoming or have become more technologically savvy than their parents. This has a significant impact on how they view the rules, advice and guidance of their parents in relation to how they use the internet. The research findings indicate that the less technologically savvy, or ‘up to date’ the parents are, the less likely children and young people are to heed advice from them.

“My parents don’t have a clue how to use the computer really. They’re asking me for how it works most of the time.”

15 - 17 year olds

By this age young people are completely and independently engaged with the internet. They have their own laptops, iPod touches, and internet enabled phones or smartphones. They access the internet without any need for permission or with parental supervision.
Parents demonstrate little ability to control their child’s internet usage by this stage and while there is some desire to enforce time limits these are rarely adhered to. Instead, the role of most parents appears to centre on providing advice and guidance about content, mostly revolving around pornography, violence, and spending money online.

“Sometimes my Dad warns me about spending money online or about looking at stuff he thinks I shouldn’t, but hasn’t really got a clue what I look at anyway. Most of the stuff he says not to do I’m sort of doing anyway.”

“They used to tell me what to do but not anymore. I’ve got my own computer so they’re not interested.”

By the time they have reached 17, young people are fully fledged internet users and are extremely confident online. It has become part of their everyday lives and they generally know more than their parents about the internet, the online environment and what opportunities the internet holds. As well as the sites listed above for the 13-14 year olds they have started engaging independently in other online behaviours such as online banking, or online shopping.

‘Needs’ driving internet usage among children and young people

The research identified that a number of core needs tend to be the drivers behind most children and young people’s use of the internet. These include wanting to:

> Be ‘actively’ entertained: this largely involves gaming, be it on a PC, laptop or games console. Children ‘take part’ in events in games and provide input into the experience. Many, if not most, modern games are designed so as the gamers’ decisions affect the outcomes rather than simply reacting to them. Therefore children and young people have to actively engage and think about their behaviour in the games. Children and young people reported playing numerous types of games across a number of platforms and all reported having played some kind of game in the online environment;

> Be ‘passively’ entertained: this is largely constituted by browsing the internet and consuming content. Primary examples were watching videos on sites such as YouTube but also visiting dedicated sites which provide specific types of content (fashion, gossip, news, sports);

> Find out a piece of information: all respondents reported using the internet as a source of information, be it out of personal interest or as part of a homework assignment. With age this increases in volume and breadth of information sought. To an extent this can also be seen as entertainment when undertaken for personal interest. Respondents often reported going on ‘journeys’ prompted by information found. As such this can act as a catalyst for engaging with a significant amount of content;

> Engage with other people: this almost exclusively refers to social networking. Some other services such as Skype were variously described as a form of social networking or not, but are also used to engage with other people. Social networking has become the norm for most children and young people and is a primary tool of contact with immediate friends and broader communities;

> Shopping / banking: some specific needs can be, and are, fulfilled online. In particular this is true for older children and young people. A number reported that they had started banking online and even more that they had used online shopping sites. This can be for a specific purpose but also for browsing.
“Sometimes I go online to play games, usually to use Facebook though. But I’ll also shop online, or just search around if I’m really bored...watch videos, that sort of thing.”

A number of sites are consistently identified as meeting these core needs. In relation to the needs these were:

- Actively entertained: Miniclip (online games site)
- Passively entertained: YouTube
- Know a piece of information: Google
- Want to engage with people: Facebook
- Specific needs: various banking services, Ebay, iTunes and other shopping sites (these tend to depend mostly on what they are seeking)

**Gaming**

Playing games on computers, games consoles, or on the internet, ranges from being a ‘filler’ activity used to stave off boredom, to being a primary activity which is taken seriously. For the majority it is very much a ‘filler’ activity, in particular for girls who tend to engage only in short sessions of gaming. Boys are more likely to engage in more medium to long gaming sessions on dedicated gaming consoles.

There are numerous free games websites on the internet which are used to play these ‘filler’ games. Those with internet enabled phones or smartphones also play some games on these devices, but generally for short periods of time. ‘Miniclip’ was the most popular games site for these free games. Otherwise respondents were using Xbox, PlayStation 3, Nintendo Wii and Nintendo DS for more serious gaming activities.

“Like, if I’m bored on the bus or something I might play a game on my phone.”

“Sometimes at home I’ll play a game for a bit, if I’ve got nothing to do. Just one of those flash games.”

In relation to online gaming with or against other ‘live’ players there were only a handful of respondents, mostly older, who engaged in this. They tended to be the more serious gamers. The reason for online gaming was the extra challenge and thrill knowing that they were playing against other people. It was not to engage with them directly and on the whole there was relatively little actual interest in the other people they played with.

**YouTube**

Universally, YouTube is seen and used as a source of passive entertainment. All respondents interviewed were either light or regular users. The younger respondents used YouTube less often but spontaneously mentioned it throughout the discussions. The older respondents cited it as a primary destination on the internet which they frequented often for a number of reasons.

“I’m always on YouTube. There is always someone sending you a video or you want to watch something, sports or movie trailers, could be anything really.”

The three primary content types that were accessed by children and young people on YouTube were:

- Music / Music videos;
> Following hobbies, sports of interests (for example videos of skateboarding, AFL highlights, soccer goals, horses, netball, dancing); and

> ‘funny videos’ – these included a range of different content from current internet memes such as ‘planking’ or Rebecca Black, to ‘funny’ animals, amusing accidents or cartoons.

Content is discovered in three primary ways:

> Direct searches. In these instances users actively seek out specific videos or types of videos;

> Referrals from friends. This can happen through word of mouth but also in person when a friend might show you a video; and

> By following the ‘links’ in the right hand menu. YouTube offers suggestions which theoretically relate to the current video being watched but can also differ wildly.

A number of older children and young people, and a few younger, also reported uploading videos of their own. These videos featured their own interests, comedy videos, or performances (for example sports, music, dancing or singing). There is a clear expectation that this material will be seen by others and the claimed motivation by many was to generate as many ‘hits’ as possible.

“I've got a video on there. Me and my friend made it, we just wanted to see how many people would watch it, we've got like 700 hits so far!”

Children and young people understand the potential for immediate consequences by uploading content to YouTube and the internet, and that this can either be positive or negative. There is an overriding desire to be the ‘next big thing’, be it for positive reasons or negative. A number of respondents cited Rebecca Black as someone who has achieved a degree of success by becoming famous, even though it was ostensibly for the ‘wrong’ reasons.

“You get those people who just get paid out so bad for the crap they put on there. But I guess, they do get on TV and that.”

Google searching

The internet is widely acknowledged by children and young people as the richest source of information available for either research related to school work or for personal interests. The primary source for information online for all children and young people is Google. It has superseded all other search engines and there was no mention of any others such as Microsoft’s Bing or Yahoo. Google is very much felt to be the ‘first port of call’.

“Doesn’t everyone use Google?”

Google search results return tens of thousands of pages for most search terms. As such there is a huge range of potential sources of information available. Children and young people, in essence, tend to simply go where Google tells them to as it is seen as a trusted source.

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1 Rebecca Black is an American teenager whose music video went ‘viral’ in early 2011 gaining over 160 million views. The media attention given to her was largely negative and included death threats by phone and email. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebecca_Black
“You get a million results pretty much no matter what you type in so you just go to the first ones that it tells you. I've hardly ever gone onto the second page.”

As well as being seen as a source of information which is actively sought, Google is also used as a source of passive entertainment. Given the rich nature of search returns, the opportunities for ‘random browsing’ are regularly used by children and young people. Non-specific search terms are often used, such as ‘cool stuff’ or ‘I am bored’, and the results are perused accordingly. This can include the ‘image search’ function and the ‘video’ function.

As such there is huge potential for children and young people to come across content which could make them uncomfortable or is inappropriate for them. This is particularly true for the younger respondents who may not have learnt how to discern on the results page which website may or may not contain content they do or do not want to view. The older teens have learnt a number of ways of discerning on the results page what content they might expect to find from the sites listed.

“Something might get your attention and you start Googling about it, and you can end up reading all sorts of stuff.”

“You can tell from the search results a lot of time if the site is dodgy or not. Even what its called or how it describes itself.”

**Online shopping**

Online shopping tends to be limited to the older teens. Those younger respondents who had engaged with online shopping had done so in a supervised manner. On the whole the younger age groups lack the funds to shop online and are unable to do so without parental permission.

Some universal interests exist, such as buying music, but there are some distinct gender differences. Girls tend to view shopping more as an ‘activity’ and their interests often centre of clothes. Whereas boys generally only visit online shops ‘as needed’ and their interests centre on gadgets, technology and sports equipment. However, clothes shopping is also prominent amongst boys. Some core sites such as iTunes and eBay were mentioned but there are a huge range of online retailers that were used depending on needs.

“I look at clothes shops and accessories when I get bored.”

“I'll pretty much only look at stuff I want. Sometimes I search for clothes but mostly its things like footie boots or the latest reviews for something I'm thinking about.”
THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

The dominance of Facebook

All children and young people who engaged in social networking did so primarily, if not exclusively through Facebook. The research findings clearly indicate that Facebook has eclipsed all of its social networking competitors, including Bebo and MySpace. The vast majority of children and young people over 12 have a Facebook account - only a small minority did not have one and this was primarily due to strict parental control. Those who did not have access felt they were somewhat socially isolated and to some degree excluded. In fact, not having an account was cited by some as a source of offline bullying.

“Everyone has a Facebook account. It’s a bit weird if you don’t. I’d ask them why not?”

“I don’t know anyone who uses anything else.”

“My friend isn’t allowed one but she’s the only person I know who doesn’t have an account.”

For the majority of respondents it was only through prompting that they recalled other services such as MySpace and Bebo. There was spontaneous mention of the sites ‘Tumblr’ and ‘Formspring’, but these were seen by respondents as offshoots of social networking and not in the same category as Facebook. This is in direct contrast to previous research which indicated that Facebook was part of a ‘suite’ of social networking services which were actively used by children and young people.

“Oh yeah! I’d actually forgotten about MySpace! I used to have one, I think I still might but I’ve not looked at it for years.”

“I used Bebo when I was little kid, but that feels like years ago.”

Not only has Facebook overtaken its competitors but it has come to almost completely ‘own’ the social networking environment. Perhaps the greatest indicator of this is the language used by children and young people when talking about social networking. This language makes clear that Facebook has become the default when children and young people think or talk about their social interactions with other people online. Critically, this language is used by children and young people even when not directly referring to Facebook but talking more generally about the topic of social networking.

Examples of Facebook-centric language that was consistently used throughout the research included:
> Checking-in;
> Writing on a wall;
> Tagging;
> Facestalking;
> Status updates; and

2 ‘Facestalking’ was a term used by respondents themselves to described the activity of perusing other people’s profiles (either people they knew but also unknowns).
> Adding someone / random adds.

“If someone talks about ‘adding’ you then you know exactly what they’re on about. Same with ‘tagging’ or checking your ‘status’.”

**Age groups engaging with Facebook and social networking**

While some children and young people engage in social networking earlier, it appears that it becomes an organic and established part of life around 13 years old for the majority of children and young people. All children and young people interviewed around this age indicated that they expected their peers and indeed anyone in their teens to be engaged in social networking and have a Facebook account.

The research encountered a number of individuals under 13 who were using Facebook. There was also a high level of knowledge of Facebook among those under 13. A number of respondents reported knowing children under 13 who had Facebook accounts (some of whom were as young as 8). All had lied about their age in order to access Facebook, and the age limit of 13 years had little to no meaning to the children and young people, ultimately because very little evidence exists of this being enforced or investigated. Making up a birthday has, for some, become a source of entertainment in itself with reports of children and young people claiming to be hundreds of years old.

Under-age accounts were particularly prevalent among those with older siblings. These children tended to have higher knowledge and exposure to Facebook as well as an early desire to have an account of their own.

“The age thing was stupid. It doesn’t ask for any proof so you can put whatever you want. My friend is like a hundred years old on it.”

**User engagement with Facebook**

Facebook has a broad range of ‘tools’ through which users can interact on the site or with other users. The breadth of these tools and the actions they allow users to perform are an integral part of Facebook’s appeal with respondents, who reported a number of key functions as being more or less valued.

The more valued tools included private messaging and real-time chat which allow direct and private communication with others. The tools for public communication were also highly valued and included status updates and the ability to write on people’s ‘walls’. Least valued was the ‘poke’ function and for those who did not engage with them, ‘pages’ or ‘groups’.3

3 Through Facebook users are able to engage in a number of functions. These include:
- ‘real time chat’ where users exchange private messages instantly
- ‘Walls’ which are public forums where users can post comments or links to their own or other users profiles for others to see
- ‘Private messaging’ which is similar to ‘email’ and is used for private communication
- ‘status updates’ which are used to comment in the public arena and are published to user’s wall and on the ‘news feed’
- The ‘news feed’ is a the public arena which Facebook presents the user with upon logging in. Here gets published the activities of their Facebook friends including status updates, posted links, who has accepted friend requests from whom etc.
- User can also ‘poke’ each other. This function alerts the user when they log in if they have been poked by someone and gives them the option to ‘poke’ them back. No direct communication can take place through this function.
“I definitely think private messages and chat are the best. That’s like the instant way to talk with your friends in private. The other stuff is about looking at what everyone is doing, but the private stuff is where you do all the proper talking really.”

This represents a significant change in the way children and young people view the role of social networks in their lives. In the previous ‘Click and Connect’ research study, children and young people claimed not to use the real-time chat / instant messaging functions on Facebook, Myspace or Bebo (the three main social networks cited at the time)⁴. Rather they claimed to predominantly use MSN and Yahoo Instant Messenger services. Whereas social networking sites were previously cited as of primary interest for entertainment purposes, children and young people’s use of them has evolved to take advantage of their communication based services. Facebook in particular has superseded the need to use other programs such as MSN or Yahoo Instant Messenger.

Children and young people’s interaction with Facebook can be segmented into three types of engagement. Each type of engagement was felt to be a critical component of the Facebook experience and the vast majority of children and young people indicated that they were regularly involved in all three. The types of engagement are:
> creating content;
> direct communication; and
> engaging with content.

Creating content refers to actions such as updating a status, posting links or photographs, tagging people in photographs, organising events or checking in. Direct communication refers to the real-time chat tool, posting on friend’s walls, ‘poking’ friends, or ‘in-boxing’ them. Engaging with content relates to reacting to other people’s content, including commenting on photos, status updates or links, as well as Facestalking and joining groups or following pages.

Types of people engaged with using Facebook
As reported by respondents there are three main types of people on Facebook. These are:
> Immediate friends;
> Facebook community; and
> ‘Random adds’.

Immediate friends refers to people that children and young people know personally and would actively choose to spend time with. Critically, this immediate group makes up the majority of interactions that children and young people have on Facebook.

Facebook community refers to the broader network of acquaintances or people children and young people ‘know of’. These are people they have met at a party, sports event or go to a school nearby. They are almost exclusively made up of ‘friends of friends’.

‘Random add’s are individuals outside of children and young peoples’ immediate network with few or no shared connections between them. The main criteria found in the research for these random adds was that they were members of the opposite sex and good looking (without obviously having fake profiles). This is consistent with the findings of the earlier ‘Click and Connect’ study.

The role of Facebook in negotiating social identities

During the research, respondents described Facebook in terms of what it enabled them to do. This primarily centred around communicating with others, as most see its core use as being a vehicle to ‘talk’ to their immediate friends through private messages and instant chat. A number of respondents talked about, and viewed, Facebook as a means of communication superseding ‘traditional’ modes such as the telephone. It has become a normal avenue and means of engaging others in conversation, sharing ideas, opinions and experiences, and generally conversing with friends.

Secondary to this was the ability to interact with their broader community through creating and sharing content, as well as commenting on other people’s content.

Respondents highly valued the ability to send private communications to other individuals or groups. These communications are most likely to be reflective of how they would communicate in the offline world and allow them to discuss sensitive issues or current events affecting their broader communities. Typically this is done through ‘in-boxing’ or instant ‘chat’.

The ‘wall’ and other features such as ‘status updates’ are explicitly public arenas where it is known that communications will be viewed by others. As such the attitude toward these differs from their private communications and this sphere has a greater influence on building and negotiating identities.

However, the research findings indicate that Facebook plays a role in the lives of young people beyond being a communication vehicle. What those communications entail, how they are formulated, and who they are shared with have a significant and vital impact on how young people build, negotiate and realise their social identities. As Facebook has become such an integrated part of their lives, the interactions they have through the site are carried over into the offline world and vice versa. Therefore the impact of their online communications are no longer confined to the online space but are also carried over and through to the offline world.

“What you do online totally matters in the real world! People are always bagging someone out for some shit picture they put up or some stupid status.”

“I’ve seen fights start on Facebook and then at school they actually go for it...or the other way round. Someone had a fight at school and lost and everyone picks on them online as well.”

While for the majority, Facebook is felt to be a ‘natural’ extension of their personality, children and young people did recognise that for others it was clearly an opportunity to try and ‘build’ an identity. Often described as ‘keyboard warriors’\(^5\), the clearest examples were of less socially confident individuals using the online environment to express themselves to a broad group of people. The breadth of audience is a key aspect to how powerful the online environment has become as a tool for children and young people to express who they are, or want to be.

A number of key indicators and activities were consistently signalled by children and young people as indicative of someone’s identity. These include:
> who you are friends with;

\(^5\) This was a term used by respondents across the sample to indicate individuals who gained increased confidence in the online environment and would say or do things online that they were not perceived as having the confidence to do in the ‘real world’.
what you write in status updates;
the pictures you put up of yourself;
the content you share (links);
the things you ‘like’; and
the comments you make on other people’s content.

However, crucial to the building of identity in the online environment is the feedback from others which can heavily influence how individuals are perceived. Children and young people made clear that feedback is a key attraction of Facebook. It is arguably the crucial element to its success, as without any feedback mechanisms the level of, and potential for, online interaction would be greatly diminished.

“All the comments, that’s how it sort of really works. Otherwise its just like email really. You put stuff up there so you know people will see it and comment on it or like it.”

Perceived benefits and risks of Facebook
Children and young people are quick to identify and can easily articulate a number of perceived benefits for using Facebook. Primarily, and valued most highly, it is a means through which they can easily keep in touch with their friends for free. It allows for easy communication with immediate friends, and they perceive it very much as an extension of their normal social lives. However, it is also valued for being a way to keep in touch when their normal social lives are disrupted. For example they can ‘talk’ with their friends while on holiday, out of the country or they move towns / areas. They feel that it does away with the need to have a telephone as instant communication is possible. This is a distinct positive, as those who have phones more often than not have limited amounts of credit and are reliant on their parents for top ups. Facebook eliminates, to a degree, the amount of parental control on the volume of communication they have with friends (however, parents can still control their access to the internet). They find it entertaining and an easy way to share things with others. That it can be personalised adds an extra dimension to the attraction.

However, they are also able to articulate some key risks associated with using Facebook. These were spontaneously identified as centring on bullying and issues of privacy. These are discussed in the section entitled ‘Specific risk behaviours identified and explored’.

Other social networking sites

Tumblr
Tumblr was mentioned consistently by the over 14’s and most often by girls. It is described by them as a non-traditional blogging site. Users share content aggregated from other areas of the web and content is directly used to express interest and identity. The emphasis is on trying to be ‘cool’ by demonstrating interest in material others find attractive or of note. For girls the content tended to centre around high fashion and attractive men, whereas for boys it focused on cars or sports.

“Basically you go on there and people have made a page and they have photos or videos, stuff like that, you just scroll through all these different things people have put up there.”

However, as opposed to Facebook there is very little capacity for user feedback, nor is the site used as a means of interaction. Users browse through other people’s pages
dismissing them and moving on to others quickly, most often without providing any commentary. As such there is low risk of any fallout from using the site and it was not seen as being in a similar category of social network as Facebook.

“It’s not like Facebook at all really. You just look at stuff or post stuff, you don’t talk to anyone.”

**Formspring**

Throughout the research a number talked about Formspring. Those who knew about Formspring described it as a dedicated cyberbullying website. The intention of the site is to be an idea sharing and generation platform. Users pose questions or invite comments to links which are often photos. In reality the site is often used as an opportunity to ridicule and comment sarcastically on other people’s content. The key element which differentiates Formspring is that users can comment anonymously.

“I have no idea why we go on there really. It’s a dedicated cyberbullying website. That’s all it’s for really.”

It was perceived by all that the risk of these ‘funny’ comments becoming spiteful and vitriolic was extremely high and they acknowledge that many users log onto the site with the direct intention of abusing others. The anonymity afforded by the site allows them to comment on whatever they wish using any kind of language without fear of recrimination or consequence.

“People get really mean. Sometimes it’s funny but a lot of the time it’s actually horrible.”

“Because you can post anonymously you can write whatever you want. So people just say the most horrible stuff they can to try and bag each other out.”

Few reported accessing the site on their own but rather would do so as a group activity, in friendship pairs or larger groups. Posts often tended to be made about other people within their broader communities, and often reflected bullying that was happening offline or on Facebook.

“I think most people go there with friends to have some fun. I’ve never been on it on my own I don’t think.”
Online risk and risk-based segmentation

Engagement and awareness of risk

A degree of management is required for all children and young people to ensure that they remain as risk free as possible, and that they are able to deal as effectively as possible with any risks should they encounter them. This requires an active awareness of risk and management strategies being in place.

There were no children and young people who perceived themselves or others to be completely free from risks. The majority were aware that at a fundamental level, there is a requirement for some risk management. However, there were clearly distinct levels of engagement with this need.

“I guess everyone is at risk really. Someone could just hack you and there is nothing you can do about it.”

Engagement with risk

Engagement with risk as something which is personally relevant varies significantly among children and young people. Those who are more aware tended to have had some personal experience or encounters with risk. This could include unwanted contact or exposure to inappropriate content. At some point they have taken notice or actively listened to the advice or need for caution from parents, teachers, school or peers. Among these individuals there is some conscious awareness of strategies to manage risk.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who only loosely feel risks are relevant to them. In general they feel that risks are pertinent for others but do not see their own behaviours as entailing any significant risk. They are unlikely to consciously consider the issue or risk or that any need to manage it exists.

Risk taking behaviours

The extent of risk taking behaviours also varies widely across children and young people. A number of key but not exclusive indicators point to those who act with higher or lower degrees of risk.

A clear example for those who engage in low risk behaviours are those who would only add or accept a ‘friendship’ in their social network from people they personally know. These individuals are also more likely to regularly check with their parents or heed their advice, and will quickly close down any inappropriate material they come across.

“I’d never accept someone I don’t know personally. If I’ve not met them and don’t know them why would I add them on Facebook”

In contrast, those who engage with high risk behaviours tend to take part in cyberbullying, have public profiles and would readily accept or make friends with ‘random’ people. They often seek explicit or inappropriate content and ignore the advice of others such as parents or teachers. This group are more likely to use geospatial social networking such as Facebook Places, and they are also more likely to use particular tools inappropriately such as Formspring.
“The risks are pretty small I reckon. So long as you use your common sense you can pretty much do what you like.”

The 5 segments

Five segments emerged from the research were based on behaviour and engagement with risk. These were largely consistent with those identified in previous ACMA research although there have been some significant updates to reflect the increased focus on social networking and changes in technology.

The five segments were identified as the following and will be explored in detail below:
> ‘Claimed Conformists’;
> ‘Relaxed Maintainers’;
> ‘Vulnerably Influenced’;
> ‘Responsible Risk Takers’; and
> ‘Knowing Naughties’.

Given the ubiquity of social networking and the extent to which it has become integrated into real life, a new segment has emerged in the research. These are the “Relaxed Maintainers”. In addition the ‘Specialist Seeker’ segment from the previous research was not found this time. Children and young people are no longer using social networking solely as a means to follow their interests. This is not to say they are not following special interests anymore, but rather, that social networking has come to play a much broader role. This segment has been subsumed into the “Claimed Conformists” and the “Relaxed Maintainers” groups.
Figure 1 The spread of the five segments relating to their relevance and behaviour

Five segments emerged based on behaviour and engagement with risk

‘Claimed Conformists’
This segment are engaged with the notion of risk and tend to, as much as possible, avoid them. They tend to be younger, or girls if older. They could be generalised as being somewhat more conformist and abide by the rules set out for them.

“There are lots of bad things on the internet. So I only go where I’m allowed to.”

“You just make sure you do what you’re supposed to and don’t go anywhere that’s got naughty things on it.”

They are motivated to be online by a desire to interact with their friends (for those old enough) and generally to be entertained, either passively by consuming content or actively through gaming.

They have an active awareness that their behaviour involves risks and have taken on board lessons from parents, teachers and schools. They most easily identify risks in the behaviour of other children and young people tend to distance themselves from the actions of these others. Overall they feel knowledgeable and confident to manage risk and this largely stems from the feeling that they adhere to the rules. Clear examples of this are that they claim they would never share private information on the internet (address, phone number), and would not make friends with strangers or ‘randoms’. They actively manage their privacy settings and a number reported
consulting their parents for advice such as when they witness instances of cyberbullying.

“Sometimes I do see naughty things but I just click the red cross straight away.”

“I know lots of people who do stuff I just wouldn’t do, like checking-in or some of the stuff they write on their wall. I just think ‘why would I ever do that’?”

“There is no way I’d ever give out my personal information over the internet. I don’t have my phone number on there, or my address, that’s just stupid.”

“If you just use your common sense and don’t do things like make friends with complete randoms, then you’ll be fine. Make everything private and you don’t have much to worry about.”

‘Relaxed Maintainers’
This segment is perhaps the largest and was made up of an equal mix of genders with a broad age range of 13-17. ‘Relaxed Maintainers’ tend to be those who are engaging in social networking and enjoy interacting with their friends online. There is an attraction in extending their social network beyond those they know personally and most are keen to be part of ‘the herd’.

“It’s fun basically. I get to talk to my friends but you can see what is going on with a whole heap of other people as well.”

‘Relaxed Maintainers’ accept that some degree of risk exists and are able to articulate what the risks are. However, when talking about those risks which they felt were of any actual significance, these were all ‘extreme’. For example, the concern over inappropriate contact online was seen as minimal and essentially inconsequential. In opposition, meeting someone in person and becoming the victim of kidnapping or paedophilia was seen as extremely serious.

The result of this was that they do not consider themselves to be at risk on a day-to-day basis and believe that personally they will be OK.

“Yeah sure, you could end up being bashed, but it’s not likely, you’ve got to really piss someone off for that...or not have any mates who will back you up.”

“Everyone knows there are dirty old men out there, but it’s not like you’re going to make friends with one and then meet up with them. You can always tell when someone tries to add you and they’ve got a fake profile. You just block them.”

In relation to their risk management and risk taking behaviour, ‘Relaxed Maintainers’ tended to take a ‘set and forget’ approach. They have usually engaged with their privacy settings at the beginning of their social networking experience and infrequently revisit them, if at all. They appear happy to maintain the status quo and justify their behaviour to themselves by assuming that nothing has gone wrong so far and hence there is no need to make any changes. They will most likely wait until an issue arises before perceiving any need to take action. As such they are also unlikely to keep up to date with any changes made by their social network provider. Facebook, and other networks, make periodic changes that do require users to manage or update their settings. Respondents in this segment repeatedly reported ignoring alerts from Facebook.
“I set everything when I first started, it’s all private. I haven’t really looked at it since but it’s all still private so I reckon it’s ok.”

“Unless something goes wrong why would you need to check the settings. Nothings happened so far, I’ve been fine, so I’ve got no need to go and mess about with it.”

‘Vulnerably Influenced’
This segment take risks as a consequence of seeking acceptance from other groups of children and young people within their community. They are motivated in their online behaviour by often being socially excluded offline and they see the online space as an opportunity to build an identity. As such the online environment is a critical social outlet.

“You get the ‘keyboard warriors’. People who are more confident online. At school you never notice them but on Facebook they’re posting stuff all the time or commenting on other people’s things.”

“I’ve just put up some pictures of me and my friends in our bikinis when we were having a pool party. It’s a kind of way to show people at school that we’re not just those boring girls who never have any fun.”

Attitudinally, this segment was found across age groups, although it was clear that the most risky behaviours were taking place at the point where young people have greater autonomy online after their parents relax the rules slightly, but before the young people are fully equipped to manage the consequences of their risk taking. Both males and females were found equally in this segment; however the findings clearly indicate that boys tend to focus on ‘content’ risks and girls on ‘contact’ risks in their behaviour. In regards to content, this refers to material that is inappropriate for their age or potentially disturbing regardless of age. This can include inappropriate language or adult themes, but also ‘gory’ images or high risk information (for example on how to make home-made drugs). For girls the contact risks generally appear to entail being approached by older males mostly with fake profiles in an attempt to lure them into accepting friendship.

“I made friends with someone I thought was my age and quite fun, but it actually turned out to be a dirty old man. I just never really thought that he wouldn’t be who he said he was.”

“I’ve found heaps of funny stuff that I wouldn’t tell my mum about but it’s funny to send to people from school to try and gross them out.”

In relation to their perceptions of risk, this segment is broadly aware that there are risks involved in being online generally. However, this group tend to be highly focussed on gaining some degree of social recognition or acceptance into the mainstream, and many hope to stand out and be recognised as ‘cool’ or ‘interesting’. As a result of being so highly focused on these objectives, this group tend to either underestimate risk or simply do not think about the risks that are inherent in their own personal behaviour.

“There’s a guy at my school who tries so hard to be cool by looking at really gross things on the internet, and sharing them with other people. Nobody likes him for doing it and everyone picks on him about it, but he just doesn’t seem to get that doing this stuff is part of the reason nobody likes him.”
Their risk-taking behaviour is mostly manifest through increased confidence online leading to some outlandish behaviour. For boys an example would be seeking highly inappropriate content and sharing it with others, whereas for girls it might be them posting sexually explicit or provocative pictures of themselves. They often act on impulse without much foresight as to the consequences of their actions, which, combined with their increased confidence online, can mean they are at risk of engaging in cyberbullying. They are also at risk of accepting contact from strangers and engaging in online, and potentially offline, relationships with people they have not met.

“You get people who do ridiculous things. For some reason as soon as they get online they’ll start doing all this stuff they would never do at school.”

‘Responsible Risk Takers’
The ‘Responsible Risk Takers’ are those who seek to push boundaries while remaining in control. Engaging online with their friends and broad community is important to this segment. Their behaviour reflects a desire to prove to themselves that they are becoming adult and able to ‘handle’ whatever comes their way. They can be both males and females but tend to be older, usually over 14 years of age.

“I think I’m at the point now where I know I can handle pretty much anything that’s thrown at me. I’ve seen most of it before so it’s no big deal.”

‘Responsible Risk Takers’ have an acute awareness of risk and know that some of their own behaviour is risky. However, this segment feel comfortable with taking risk as they perceive themselves to be actively in control of their risk management and able to deal with any consequences that might occur. They only tend to think of the offline risks as being those which might actually be harmful. Online, they feel they ‘know the line’ and that they do not cross it. However, this ‘line’ can move depending on circumstances and needs at any given point in time. ‘Responsible Risk Takers’ tend to base their decisions and judgement of risk ‘in the moment’. They often lack a degree of foresight as to the potential consequences of their actions going into the future. Immediate ‘satisfaction’ drives their actions rather than a conscious awareness of how the consequences of their actions may accumulate over time.

“Most of the risk is what happens when you’re not online. So as long as you make sure you don’t go meeting strangers, that sort of thing, then it’s doesn’t matter what you do online really.”

“If something bothers you, just close it. Simple as that really….it’s no big deal, why stress about it.”

“You sort of learn what you’re comfortable with, just stick with that, if it makes you uncomfortable shut it down.”

‘Knowing Naughties’
Members of this segment take a much higher proportion of risks than those in other segments, but also risks with potentially more serious consequences. This can include meeting people offline without friends accompanying them, and keeping public profiles on social networks.

What distinguishes this segment from the others who engage with risk is that they like to break boundaries rather than bend them. They enjoy taking risks and defying them is ‘part of the fun’. They are determined to push as far as possible as a source of entertainment. This behaviour is most likely not confined to the online environment but
is reflected in other aspects of their lives where they enjoy breaking boundaries. They tend to be older and be either boys or girls.

“It's just a bit of fun really. Like why not? There is all this crazy stuff out there, it's fun to look at most of it.”

They believe they have knowledge and awareness of the risks involved to a degree which allows them to defy them. There is significant ‘odds management’ going on with this group and they do not believe ‘it will ever happen to them’. Ultimately they believe they are capable of mitigating the risks and they have a sense that they are untouchable.

“It's just so unlikely that anything is ever going to happen to you so just don't bother about it. All those kids you hear about who go and meet someone and they get murdered, they're all idiots. It's just not going to happen if you don't want it to.”

“The odds of anything ever happening are tiny. How often do you ever hear about someone getting killed because of what they do online? Never basically.”
Specific risk behaviours identified and explored

The research identified five key areas of risky behaviour which are explored in detail in the following section. These were:

> Cyberbullying;
> Privacy;
> Contact;
> Content; and
> Geo-spatial social networking.

**Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is inherently tied to user-generated social networking. Outside of social networking tools and applications, there is little online contact between children and young people - where once email and MSN were used by children and young people as tools to communicate online, these have essentially been subsumed by Facebook in recent times. It is important to note that Facebook is used by children and young people in both traditional online environments, as well as on Smartphones. While more traditional means of communication using mobile phones such as texts and phone calls are still prevalent, online text-based communication through social networks has overtaken these as a primary means of conversing with friends. In comparison to traditional use of mobile phones, social networks are free to use and conversations can include multiple participants. As a result, social networking sites are the primary conduit for cyberbullying.

Facebook and Formspring were identified by children and young people as the online areas where cyberbullying is most prevalent. Formspring offers the ability to post content into public arenas for others to comment on. It differs from other social networking sites in that it offers users the ability to identify themselves in their comments or to comment anonymously. Respondents reported that it was this potential to provide or receive anonymous feedback that means the potential for cyberbullying is almost limitless.

The ‘distance’ afforded by the online space is an essential aspect to the ease and breadth of bullying online. It allows for individuals or groups to be bolder and more aggressive without the fear of immediate consequences or recrimination. Additionally, online interactions provide less immediate feedback for those engaging in teasing or bullying behaviour which may influence them to stop. Conversely, in the offline world someone bullying might stop or feel immediate regret on seeing a victim breakdown, cry or otherwise be negatively affected.

“It's sort of part and parcel of it all. You use social networks and you're going to see cyberbullying.”

“I reckon some people get this extra confidence to be someone different online. They'll say all this stuff there is no way they'd say to your face.”

**Children and young people awareness of cyberbullying**

Children and young people recognise that bullying happens and have either experienced it themselves (having done it, or had it done to them), through friends or having witnessed it online. Children and young people were acutely aware that
bullying can happen easily, quickly and can rapidly involve a significant number of people. Most within the sample believed that they had experienced bullying in some way and felt that it was extremely common, although it is likely that what children and young people described as ‘bullying’ may in fact be less extreme than other definitions of cyberbullying currently used by the ACMA. How they would define cyberbullying was variable. Whereas the older teens tended to confine cyberbullying to explicit negative behaviour or commentary online, the younger children tended to include any form of negative behaviour or commentary made online as cyberbullying. However, while more research would be necessary to fully understand the specific ways in which children and young people define cyberbullying, the research findings indicate that children and young people use the term to encompass a broad spectrum of behaviour.

Children and young people generally see bullying or teasing as an inevitable consequence of social interaction with one another, be it offline or online. The overriding feeling is that in any situation where children and young people are together in any number there will be some element of bullying involved. Now that the online world has become so closely intertwined with the offline, issues can and do easily transfer from one space to the other and vice versa. Arguments or bullying that occur offline are brought online, and online disputes can be taken into the real world.

Respondents were aware, and spontaneously articulated that the online space in particular was conducive to the escalation of bullying. Whereas in the real world bullying might be mediated by teachers or other individuals including peers, there is little capacity for this in the online world. In fact the opposite is true and the online environment holds greater capacity for more people to get involved. As disputes or bullying can be broadcast to a large group of people if not kept private, these individuals can become involved quickly and easily.

“When its online everyone can see it, and then someone’s mates will start defending someone, and others will jump in and before you know there are like a hundred comments and everyone’s going for it.”

**Implicit and explicit cyberbullying**

Children and young people also talked about how bullying manifested itself in two main ways. These were explicitly and implicitly. Explicit bullying was seen to be very similar to offline bullying and involved being directly rude and nasty to one another online. This could take the form of comments on photos, status updates or writing on someone’s wall. In addition to this more overt form of bullying, a more implicit type of bullying in the online environment was also described by respondents. The tools of social networks and Facebook have given rise to a kind of bullying which respondents said was much harder to pinpoint and report on. The clearest examples of these were inviting individuals to ‘fake’ events, creating pages about others which they may not know about, or specific behaviours such as ‘liking’ status updates or photos that were actually seen as stupid, ugly or otherwise held to be negative. Having fifty, eighty or a hundred people ‘like’ such a photo was actually a group way of ridiculing that individual.

“You get the obvious stuff like saying mean stuff, but then you’ll also see like someone who isn’t popular put up a photo and then everyone will start liking it. But no one actually likes it, it’s like a way of paying them out if everyone starts liking it.”

**Gender differences in cyberbullying**

Girls and boys do seem to bully differently and to respond to bullying in different ways. Boys tended to focus on undermining each other’s masculinity. The threat of physical violence was also a prevalent feature. Overall those interviewed claimed that
cyberbullying had little to no effect on them, however, this was likely to mask the real impact. What was clear was that in group situations boys did not feel comfortable admitting that cyberbullying may cause them issues, or that it is something they are concerned about. This, in fact, would likely be in and of itself a cause of further bullying. This was particularly felt to be the case in peer groups which were not only comprised of close friends. There was an expectation that among immediate friends some discussion of the effects of cyberbullying would be wholly acceptable. However, in broader peer groups the expectation was felt to be that boys should be able to ‘brush off’ any bullying and not to voice concerns or show signs that it has an effect. Threats of physical violence are perhaps the exception to this ‘rule’ as this type of bullying was felt to be more intimidating than comments made in the online world.

"With boys it's pretty simple really. You slag someone off and then threaten to beat them up. That's what usually happens."

In contrast, girls felt that cyberbullying aimed at them tended to focus on looks, relationships and sexual exploits or behaviour. Although there were some reports of physical violence being threatened these were less frequent than among boys. Girls felt that they take cyberbullying more to heart than boys and that there is greater acceptance for girls to show the effects of being bullied. However, like boys, this can lead to further bullying. Overall, girls appeared to be more susceptible to emotional or verbal bullying.

"I think for girls it's a bit different. We're sort of meaner to each other and we might not bash someone but we'll call them names or tell them they're ugly, stuff like that."

Knowledge and education around cyberbullying

Across the research audiences, children and young people were highly educated and aware of cyberbullying. They believe they know a lot about it and that the education they have received has been reinforced by their experiences.

"A lot of it is true. Like the cyberbullying stuff. You see that going on all the time."

They have received education and advice around cyberbullying at school and by their parents and through a range of different approaches. These include:

- Videos;
- Websites;
- Group presentations by teachers;
- Group presentations by experts from outside the school; and
- Individual discussions.

They feel they know clearly what they should and should not be doing – that is, what constitutes cyberbullying, and what they should do when cyberbullying does happen either to them or in front of them. However, there remains a significant gap between their theoretical knowledge and their practical application of it. There were only a handful of reports of individuals speaking out about cyberbullying to parents or teachers, and these centred around extreme or sustained instances of bullying. The reasons for this are likely multifarious. Respondents reported feeling that children and young people, in particular when they reach their teens, have a desire to ‘deal with things’ on their own. None wanted to be seen as a ‘snitch’ or ‘dobber’, and there was a
sense that some degree of cyberbullying was inevitable and therefore should just be ‘put up with’.

As a result of this education there is very little desire for further information about cyberbullying. Many of the older children and young people reported feeling that the information they have received over the last few years has not given them any significant updates on what they feel they already know. As they feel they ‘know it all’ there is little interest in receiving further cybersafety education unless this were to provide new information in a relevant way.

“We pretty much know it all. I’ve seen the same video three times so nothing is new.”

“We’ve heard it all before, you get basically the same information about what to do and what not to do. So it’s kind of waste of time really. I always just sit there and play on my phone or whatever, I don’t really pay any attention anymore.”

Privacy Risks
Privacy can be a concern in relation to both the immediate privacy of children and young people as well as their long-term digital footprints. Immediate privacy can relate to the dissemination of personal information which is not intended for public consumption. This can include phone numbers, addresses and also photographs and private communications. Checking-in and ‘telling’ people where you are is also an immediate privacy concern as this can lead to immediate consequences. Long term digital footprints refer to the ‘legacy’ or ‘reputation’ that children and young people create and leave online. As information uploaded and entered online is stored by the services that are used there is significant potential for their actions to be recalled at later dates. This could manifest positively or negatively.

In spite of these two distinct privacy concerns, children and young people usually saw privacy risks as concerning their immediate privacy and had generally given very little thought to their long term digital footprint. This was most true for the youngest respondents who had had almost no exposure to the concept of a long term footprint, whereas some of the oldest respondents had given this idea a degree of consideration. In particular, for both older and younger respondents, there was little understanding that what they do online is recorded, kept and can potentially be accessed in the future. That this can lead to a ‘digital reputation’ that could follow them is not actively considered. The ‘front of mind’ considerations related to personal safety and information such as not giving out full names, addresses or phone numbers.

“There is some stuff you think about like your phone number, but most of the time I don’t think you need to worry that much about other stuff.”

Immediate privacy
Immediate privacy risks were articulated by many from across the sample, including younger respondents who were able to ‘repeat’ lessons learnt on cybersafety. Those in segments more personally engaged with risk were more easily able to discuss particular immediate privacy concerns. The research findings indicate that primarily the consequences of breaches to their privacy were understood in the context of unsolicited contact.

There were a number of examples given by children and young people which demonstrate an awareness of privacy being compromised. For all those using social networks there was some knowledge of others ‘checking-in’ inappropriately, mostly at home (thus broadcasting their home address). All had also seen others, or had themselves, uploaded personal information such as phone numbers. The majority of
respondents had had photos uploaded of them which they did not want to be in the public domain, and all had seen this happen to others. There were some specific instances of respondents reporting that passwords were often shared in exchange for money, favours or as a ‘bribe’ to divulge secrets. Another example was of organising public events.

“When people check-in at home it just makes me laugh. They’re so stupid, now everyone knows where they live.”

“I made a fake event and asked everyone to send me their number and it was hilarious, everyone was sending me their numbers, it’s just dumb.”

“We sort of share our passwords, or you might ask me mine for five bucks or something. My friend gave his password to someone but had to tell them who it was they liked at school...it’s alright though because you just go and change it again.”

Although there was a strong theoretical understanding that to some degree there is a need to manage their immediate privacy, not all actively do so. What were seen as ‘basic principles’ were easily articulated by most. These included not sharing private details or information and keeping passwords secret (there were some exceptions to this particularly among the ‘Vulnerably Influenced’ and ‘Knowing Naughties’). There was understanding of a need to manage their social network settings to ensure privacy. The majority knew in detail how to change and control their privacy settings but some, mostly younger children and young people and those in the ‘Vulnerably Influenced’ segment, were unaware of how to do this.

However, many do not put this knowledge into practice. There are a number of reasons why this might be. ‘Knowing Naughties’ often choose not to as they do not perceive the need to be significant. This is driven by their desire to have open and public profiles and their perception that any ‘real’ risks are easily avoided. Others feel that having looked at their privacy settings in the past, and with no record of any serious incidents, there is no need to re-examine them (‘Relaxed Maintainers’ with a ‘set and forget’ mentality). Others have only given the need to consider their immediate privacy cursory thought. There were only a small minority of respondents who had not actively managed their privacy at any stage and these were most in the ‘Vulnerably Influenced’ segment.

Overall, the majority feel that they are in control of their immediate privacy. This is reinforced by their experience as almost none have ever had any issues with their privacy that they deem serious. The actual risk is perceived to be confined to the real world and the overriding feeling is that online risks are not significant unless they move into the offline space.

“The actually risky stuff isn’t happening online is it really? You can’t get kidnapped online? It’s only if you do stupid stuff in the real world.”

Digital Footprints

Very few respondents have considered their digital footprint. Little serious thought is devoted to the idea that their online life may impact on their future. Younger respondents, especially teenagers, see their ‘future’ as an adult as extremely distant and somewhat irrelevant to them at this point in time. As a result, their immediate concerns on a day to day level are prioritised above any consideration of their futures.
“You don’t really think about that. It’s sort of far away and I’m sure when we’re older and have to get jobs and that we might need to think about it, but right now it doesn’t really matter.”

Equally few have been told much about what might or might not contribute to their digital footprint or what the consequences of their footprint might be. In relation to consequences, concern lies with immediate privacy and the majority of cybersafety education has focused on this. Active decision making regarding online behaviour takes place with short term consequences in mind and this is true for all children and young people segments.

At most there has been some indication from teachers that a digital footprint is something children and young people should consider, or for some, their parents have warned them about their future employment prospects being affected by what information is available about them online. The majority expressed the opinion that they felt this issue would only become relevant in a few years at which point they would ‘tighten’ their profiles or access to their social networks but without consideration that what they do now will still be potentially available for people to see. There is interest in this idea once children and young people are prompted to consider the potential consequences, especially among older children and young people who are starting to think about life as adults. There is potential to strengthen children and young people’s awareness of their digital footprints and the active need to consider them.

“My mum has told me about bosses checking people’s Facebook when you go for a job, but I’m not even at uni yet so I don’t really care.”

Contact Risk
Risks associated with unsolicited or malicious contact relate almost exclusively to social networking as there are no other major online conduits regularly used by children and young people which allow them to be contacted. Concerns about contact outside of cyberbullying relate primarily to unwanted contact by adult strangers. Children and young people are very much aware of this issue in the real world and are able to easily identify unwanted contact as a risk of using social networks. As well as through Facebook, children and young people identified the risk as having potential when using MSN or chatrooms, although both were only rarely mentioned. Overall children and young people are highly sensitised to the issue of contact risks, both in the real world and online. ‘Stranger danger’ is commonly referenced and is seen to be credible. It has been part of their education since an early age and is seen as a frequent news topic.

“Everyone knows about strangers and not talking to them and all that. Boooooring.”

“You do hear about it on the news. But I reckon those kids are idiots. It’s not something that affects most people.”

The majority of the older children and young people and some younger have had experience of people trying to establish contact with them online. This tended to be either friends of friends who they may not personally know, or complete strangers. Contact by strangers is a more apparent concern for girls than for boys, with most at least knowing about instances of older men contacting girls their age, and in some cases young girls reported having been sent inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures themselves. Overall, the threat of such contact is seen to be very real but is to some degree also felt to be an accepted risk of social networking (in particular for girls).
“Almost every girl I know has had someone try and add them. Some sleazy old man or something.”

Most children and young people are able to identify the process by which people make contact online and the progression of risk involved. It is articulated by children and young people as the following:

> making initial contact;
> a ‘getting to know you’ phase of chatting, investigating profiles etc;
> becoming ‘friends’ in the online space; and then
> meeting in person.

In this contact process, the majority of risk is perceived to exist in the real world. While it is accepted that there may be some elements of risk involved in making contact, getting to know someone and becoming ‘friends’ online, the actual risk is felt to be the real world danger which is perceived to be a genuine, physical harm. As such children and young people tend to feel confident and secure online as there is very little perception that non-physical risks can be significant.

**Managing contact risks**

A number of self imposed rules exist to manage contact risks. Primarily a ‘safety in numbers’ approach is a favoured strategy for managing their risk. This is particularly the case when contacting or being contacted by ‘friends of friends’. How many mutual friends one might have in common with someone is the most common means by which children and young people determined whether or not to ‘friend’ or accept someone into their social network. For the majority, having around 20 – 30 friends in common was felt to be sufficient. However, this rule is very flexible and it is dependent on who those mutual friends are. In many cases, the number of mutual friends needed to negate the sense of risk can be very low.

“If you’ve got loads of friends in common with them, like 30, then it’s pretty safe to add them. They must alright if your mates are friends with them.”

“Yeah, basically check how many friends you’ve got in common, maybe look at their photos and see if anyone you know is in them and if they are you can add them.”

Equally, children and young people may engage in risky behaviours if their friends are also engaging in similar behaviours. This adds some legitimacy to their actions as ‘everyone else is doing it’ and children and young people tend to have greater confidence in the safety of their behaviour if others also do it without any obvious consequences.

In particular, girls they may accept a friendship from a ‘hot’ boy so long as their pictures aren’t obviously ‘fake’ (i.e. unlikely to actually be them). Another strategy is to tell a friend who they have added so they can ‘monitor’ the situation and help them feel safer about it. Contact with strangers may be made in friendship pairs and in the event of actually meeting someone face-to-face almost all children and young people indicated they would bring a friend and meet in a public place.

“If they’re hot I would probably add them to be honest. But you can usually tell if they’ve got a fake profile.”

“I’ll add them, check them out and then delete them if they’re actually boring or seem dodgy.”
Content Risk

Content risks apply to all but are seen as a bigger issue for younger children and young people. Among children and young people themselves and among parents, there is a universal acceptance that the internet contains content which is inappropriate for children and young people. However, both parents and children and young people themselves worry more about younger children, in particular, younger siblings. This is because the younger children and young people are felt to be less resilient to inappropriate content and the innocence of younger children is seen as something that should be preserved. It is assumed that older children and young people have the skills to avoid inappropriate content, or the knowledge of how to deal with it should it arise, and as such are perceived to be less at risk.

A range of content risks are top of mind for parents and are identified by children and young people. These include:
- sexually explicit material;
- violence;
- ‘gore’;
- inappropriate language;
- adult themed humour; and
- potentially dangerous information (e.g. how to make a petrol bomb, or homemade drugs).

Exposure to content risk

Children and young people are exposed to content risks in three main ways. Firstly, it can be that they go looking for it. They use Google or have knowledge of specific sites through which they access content. Often this is seen as a form of entertainment (‘Responsible Risk Takers’, ‘Knowing Naughties’ and ‘Relaxed Maintainers’) or as a means of ‘proving’ themselves (‘Vulnerably Influenced’). The research indicates that it is more often boys who seek out inappropriate content than it is girls. Secondly, inappropriate content can be shared. This can occur through social networks or in person and usually happens when one person finds content they believe warrants sharing. Often there is potential for material to go ‘viral’, and be shared by a large number of people in a relatively short period of time. Thirdly, children and young people often reported ‘stumbling’ upon content deemed inappropriate. Generally, this involves accidently discovering the material (most often pornography) while searching for something else. Equally, using sites which ‘recommend’ content, such as YouTube, is another way in which children and young people stumble across, or are lead, to inappropriate content.

“You just end up coming across random stuff that maybe you weren't expecting...it can be good, or sometimes really wrong.”

Managing content risk

Content risks are dealt with differently across age groups. The 8–11 year old respondents knew that there were certain types of content they should not look at. While the higher risk segments of this age group might have a ‘quick look’, the vast majority would immediately close the window or browser. By 12-14, some curiosity has arisen and children and young people are more likely to engage with inappropriate content although they still have a strong awareness that they should not be doing so. Overall they are ill equipped to deal with any inappropriate content. By 14 upwards children and young people feel confident to look at a range of content and are beginning to seek it out. They are knowledgeable about how not to get caught, such as by deleting history files or using ‘in-private’ browsing. By this age, children and young people are moving to managing content more as adults and will shut down
material if it really does make them feel uncomfortable, although there are exceptions to this.

As such, it is the 12-14 year old age range that is perhaps the most vulnerable. Their internet usage is becoming more expansive and parental control less stringent. While their experiences are growing, few have had enough experience to easily avoid inappropriate content or deal with it when it comes along. Therefore, this group is at risk of experiencing content which could make them uncomfortable as well as being ill equipped to deal with it. However, many older respondents felt that it was only through a process of being exposed to such content over time that they gained the tools or developed strategies to deal with it effectively. A number of respondents articulated this as being a ‘rite of passage’. The older teens compared this to their experiences with alcohol and other risk taking behaviours.

“You sort of have to go through it otherwise you don’t really learn how to spot something that might be gross or not really something you want to watch.”

“The more you do it the less hectic it is. Like now I can pretty much watch anything really. Some of it is disgusting yeah, but you just forget about it.”

Geo-spatial networking

The number of children and young people found in the research who were engaging with geo-spatial networking was low, but there was high awareness of others using it and the technology is accepted as part of the social networking ‘tool kit’. Almost all the children and young people who engaged with social networking knew others who did engage with geo-spatial networking and some had done so themselves on occasion. The constraints of the technology mean that it was confined to those who have smartphones, and as such, mainly to the older children and young people. However, there is an interest in participating and it is an accepted part of what people do with their profiles.

“I don’t do it and none of my mates do really. But you see people checking-in online all the time.”

“I probably would do it but I don’t have a phone that lets me.”

Facebook ‘places’ is the only service that children and young people talked about. It dominated all discussion of geo-spatial social networking and as with social networking more broadly, the language is very Facebook centric. Children and young people talked about ‘checking in’ and across the sample there was no mention of Forsquare, Gowalla or Britekite.

It was felt by children and young people that those who do check-in do so in order to build their identity. It is seen as a direct means of broadcasting what, where and with whom one is and as such provides one more tool to generate content in order to support identity building. In theory it is used to project that ‘I’m somewhere cool’ or ‘I’m with people who are cool’. However, its use is only acceptable to a point. A threshold exists beyond which many children and young people lose interest. This is both in terms of volume and in relation to what is actually being posted. Children and young people run the risk of being ridiculed for checking in at ‘boring’ locations or with ‘boring’ or ‘not cool’ people. In particular, checking-in at home was seen to be stupid as the majority were aware that providing a home address was an unnecessary risk. There were some other specific behaviours which were also deemed ‘stupid’ or ‘not cool’, such as claiming to be with people when you are not.
"If someone checked-in at New York or something then great, but if it’s at the cinema, like who cares! Do they really think anyone cares that they’re at the cinema?!"

Risks associated with ‘checking-in’
Children and young people were able to readily identify a number of risks with checking-in. As mentioned, giving out a home address was one of the primary risks. Not only was this contravening the rule that you don’t hand out personal information, it was also seen to have the potential for serious consequences. A number of children and young people reported stories of people checking-in at home, then checking-in on holiday and their house then being robbed. Ultimately, the main risk is perceived to be broadcasting your whereabouts such that people are then able to come and find you.

“Yeah, I’ve heard stories of people checking-in at home, then they go away on holiday, check-in there and then get robbed.”

The act of checking-in appears to be quite impulsive and there is little management of the risks involved in those instances. The impetus to check-in is often spur of the moment and the technology makes it extremely easy and it can be done almost instantly. Therefore there is little time between contemplation and action for consideration, and little or no thought is given to the potential consequences before the act.
The role of siblings, parents and peers

Older Siblings

The presence of older siblings has a significant impact on attitudes and behaviours of both children and young people and parents. Older siblings can have a direct impact on the behaviour and exposure to content of their younger siblings. Whereas for parents, older siblings can be a conduit of communication to younger siblings and also ‘partners’ in the education of their younger siblings. However, older siblings can certainly act equally as ‘protectors’ or to increase the risk exposure of their younger siblings.

For children and young people themselves, having an older sibling increases the likelihood that they will be exposed to a greater variety of content, including inappropriate content. There is a quicker progression to engagement with risk for those with older siblings. The findings also indicate that older siblings tend to increase awareness of the internet’s capacities among their younger siblings. As a result, younger siblings often want to do the things their older brothers or sisters are doing too – even if they are not presently allowed to do so by their parents. As such, expectations are clearly set about their future use of the internet. One of the clearest examples was of children looking forward to when they would be allowed a Facebook account like their older siblings.

“My older brother and my sister have Facebook. I asked my mum but she wouldn’t let me but I told her the day I turn 13 I’m getting it.”

Older siblings often carry a sense of responsibility for their younger siblings. They see themselves as having a role to play as far as their younger siblings are concerned, and this is sometimes formalised and reinforced by parents. This responsibility can work to self-regulate and provide a check for their own behaviour. This manifests by them asking ‘would this be ok for my little sister?’, ‘how would I feel if someone did this, or showed this, to my little brother?’. This can lead them to sometimes question whether the content they come across or the behaviours they engage in are really suitable for them personally.

“I have thought before about whether or not I’d like my little brother to see this or that and it does make you think about what you’re looking at sometimes.”

This sense of responsibility can also lead to children and young people directly protecting their younger brothers or sisters. This can come about through moderating their use of the internet. Often older siblings are more technologically savvy and may check history folders to see what their younger siblings have been doing. This can lead to them dispensing advice or warnings. Responses can either be about telling the younger sibling that some content is not appropriate for them, or in more serious cases reporting situations or behaviour to parents.

Parents

For parents having an older child can have an impact on their behaviour and attitudes toward what they allow their younger children to do. They are often much more relaxed in their observation of a younger child’s internet use. Often older siblings are more technologically savvy and may check history folders to see what their younger siblings have been doing. This can lead to them dispensing advice or warnings. Responses can either be about telling the younger sibling that some content is not appropriate for them, or in more serious cases reporting situations or behaviour to parents.

The role of parents also changes over time. At the youngest end of the spectrum, their motivation and role is perceived to centre around active supervision and moderation of
their children’s internet usage. Around 10–12, this supervision becomes less active but an interest in their children’s activity remains. Also beginning from this age, children and young people start to move past their parents in expertise and begin building their ability to hide their activity from their parents. By 14+, parents’ role moves from a supervision to an advisory capacity. Children and young people no longer feel as obliged to follow their parents’ rules and are independently navigating the internet in private where the reach of parents does not extend.

Parental IT literacy is a critical determinant of their ability to engage, understand and mediate their children’s use of the internet. Their ability to ‘keep up’ with their children’s use of technology and services can have a significant effect on the likelihood of children to heed any advice given to them by their parents. As children get older and interact with the internet in more sophisticated ways, this issue becomes exacerbated.

“Like, my parents don’t have a clue about computers so I think why should I listen to them, they don’t even know what it is I’m doing really, so their advice is useless.”

Peers

The role of peers in influencing children and young people’s attitudes toward social networking, as well as their behaviour, can be highly significant. In fact, the influence of peers is often more significant than that of parents or siblings. The influence of peers can be either quite direct, or more indirect.

Direct influence relates to content sharing, advice and suggestions around behaviour, or specific discussion around a particular issue or event. This occurs on a daily basis throughout the course of children and young people’s everyday lives, and can be a highly powerful way in which peers can influence one another’s attitudes and behaviour.

“Lots of the things I do on the internet is stuff my friends all do to. Sometimes we even do things online together.”

Indirect influence refers more to broader social expectations, norms and perceptions around what is desirable and acceptable behaviour online. Peers can exert influence over one another simply by subscribing to what is acceptable. Many young people demonstrate attitudes and behaviours as part of a desire to fit in and appear ‘cool’. Equally, peers can exert influence by more proactively advocating for social norms, for example by bullying other children and young people who are not perceived to fit the accepted norms.

“It’s cool to have lots of friends, so you want to try and get as many as you can, even if you don’t know them that well.”

“Most people know what’s cool and what isn’t, but when people do something that doesn’t fit with the usual, they can get picked on for it.”
The particular areas of where peers can have a particular influence can be broken down into four key areas, which are broadly aligned with the key risk taking behaviours identified in this report. These include an influence on:

> the type of content consumed;
> the manner of interacting with others, such as on Facebook and other sites;
> the level of online ‘sharing’ undertaken, including posts and geo-spatial social networking; and
> the likelihood of making contact with others, including strangers.
Awareness of existing cybersafety campaigns

All children and young people in this research had a strong awareness of cybersafety education. Their education starts at a very early age and for the older children, is felt to have remained a constant across many years of education. They receive this education both formally in health classes, and informally through general discussions, by teachers. Parents and guest speakers at school are also reported to have a role to play in providing cybersafety education. There is some peer to peer education around cybersafety but this tends to be around the extremes and pointing out if someone is doing something ‘really stupid’.

Children and young people had used a range of resources but had difficulty recalling their specific names. They talked about having had guest speakers, videos in class, and having been directed by teachers to websites. There was some knowledge of the ACMA materials but although ‘Cybersmart’ sounded familiar to many, none were able to spontaneously recall details of any materials they have used. However, this was similar for all materials. There was some indication that Cybersmart materials such as ‘Let’s Fight It Together’ had been seen. Overall, the Cybersmart brand is not standing out to children and young people although this appears to have little impact on their recall of messages and resources.

In relation to guest speakers, almost all children and young people reported having had someone come to their schools to either talk to the whole school, year group or class. Children and young people perceptions of these talks differed largely depending on perceptions of the speaker themselves and the content that was delivered. In relation to the speaker, children and young people related most to younger speakers who they felt had some awareness or experience of the kinds of activities they engage in and the services they use. Speakers considered to be ‘authorities’ also garnered the most respect. In some instances these were police officers, but being an ‘authority’ related as much to their perceived knowledge and expertise as it did on their position or organisation. Speakers who were able to provide children and young people with ‘new’ information, or present it in a way they had not seen before, were held as the most interesting and influential.

“I think everyone has probably had a talk or watched a video. There is at least one every year.”

“Someone came into the school and they were able to show how easily they could find stuff out about people. That was really interesting! It showed how easy it was and definitely made me think about it.”

“This lady came in and turned on the Bluetooth on her phone and was able to see all these kids who had their Bluetooth on as well. It sort of nicely demonstrated how easily someone could send you a message or some dirty picture.”

Older children and teenagers in particular appear to believe that there is little more that cybersafety education can offer them. The majority feel they have ‘heard it all before’ and have little appreciation for the fast moving pace of change in technology or the online environment. However, this is compounded by the fact that they feel they usually hear the same things repeated to them. As such, they do not feel the cybersafety education given to them is actually furthering their knowledge. Programs which have an impact in this context are therefore likely to be those which have a
'fresh' feel to them and provide information on new technologies and behaviours as the services children and young people interact with evolve. Innovative ways of demonstrating or talking about cybersafety is central to holding the interest of children and young people. Many respondents reported that active and live demonstrations of cybersafety risks have been a highly impactful way of bringing home the risks and making them feel personally relevant in the past.

"I think what we really need is something that’s new. Like new information or a new way of telling us stuff. I’m bored of watching videos or someone boring coming in to talk to us. If they’re going to do a talk they should like be young and make it relevant for us, talk about the stuff that we’re actually doing and show us things like how easily they could hack our profile or something, make it real. Otherwise it just seems boring."
Conclusions and a potential future strategy

All indications are that the current Cybersmart strategy is working well overall. Children and young people have a high level of awareness of risks, which indicates that the current strategies are effective in helping children and young people stay on the right track. This apparent success indicates that a continuation of the current strategy is warranted. However, there exists scope for refining and consolidating the existing strategy, which is detailed in the section below.

Consideration of the 5 segments

Programs or materials will have a difficult job in engaging children and young people who think they have heard it all before, and as a result, many are disinclined to engage with further cybersafety education. Critical in countering this lack of interest will be to present new information using new perspectives and personally relevant examples. The majority of children and young people do not feel that they themselves are at risk and therefore demonstrating the potential for them to be affected by risk will have some significant impact.

While a single strategy for engaging with all segments will be appropriate, it is likely that children and young people from different segments will take something slightly different from cybersafety messages and resources.

‘Claimed Conformists’ need to be encouraged to continue their current behaviour and will therefore require reinforcement from any strategy in the future. It is likely that any further communication in this area will work to reinforce the existing attitudes and behaviours of this group.

‘Relaxed Maintainers’ require any programs, materials or communications to be as personal as possible in order to engage with the idea of risk being relevant to them. In particular there is a need to reinforce with them that their risk management requires constant monitoring in order to counter the ‘set and forget’ mentality. As a result, this segment is most likely to engage with relevant examples of behaviours which are clearly linked to consequences they believe are real and concerning.

The ‘Vulnerably Influenced’ need to have their behaviour interrupted with a ‘stop and think’ approach. It will be important to engage them with the idea of risk and highlight that their behaviours entail actual and real risks. Similar to the ‘Relaxed Maintainers’, this group is likely to most engage with relevant examples which highlight potential consequences.

‘Responsible Risk Takers’ need to be equipped with the tools to help them make the right judgements and assistance in where to ‘draw the line’. As a result, this group will likely engage most with strategies to help them make their own judgements about risks and strategies to manage them.

‘Knowing Naughties’ are perhaps the most difficult segment to reach and some may never respond. However, this group requires reinforcement that there is a need for ‘a line’ for everyone, and that there is a real need to manage their risk. Similar to the responsible risk takers, this group will benefit most (if at all) from strategies to help them make their own judgements.
The inclusion of Facebook
Any strategy targeting the cybersafety of children and young people must be developed and consolidated with Facebook at the forefront. It is clearly the current destination for social networking and although other sites are used to complement it, they do not offer the same breadth and depth of possibilities. Given the breadth and depth of means of communication / social networking on Facebook, strategies on how to identify risks will be critical, as well as strategies on how to manage it.

Critically, while there will be difficulties for the ACMA in directly talking about Facebook, the language of social networking is intrinsically linked by children and young people to Facebook and can provide a potential way to indirectly talk about Facebook. Children and young people will clearly understand that any communications around social networking are aimed at their use of Facebook and as such, there is no need to explicitly mention it.

Cyberbullying
Cyberbullying strategies are likely to require ongoing reinforcement. This is despite children and young people being acutely aware of the issue. However, it is important that it is reinforced as an issue to keep the issue ‘on the radar’ and avoid cyberbullying being seen as an acceptable consequence of social networking. In particular, drawing attention to the ease with which ‘a bit of fun’ can quickly turn into ‘cyberbullying’ will be beneficial to make children and young people consider their actions before taking them.

Privacy
Communicating on privacy may be an opportunity to provide some ‘fresh’ information and engaging materials to children and young people. In regards to immediate privacy, communications and materials can focus on providing reminders, while scope exists for communication regarding their digital footprint as a ‘new’ concept or area for children and young people’s consideration.

Children and young people require constant reminders to ensure that the potential consequences of risky behaviour are in fact very real and therefore there is a need to ‘stop and think’ to give them active consideration. Strategies could be developed to migrate children and young people’s theoretical knowledge into action.

Regarding their digital footprint, this is a relatively new area for the vast majority of children and young people and only a few have considered it before. Therefore, significant scope exists to highlight the issue. Children and young people are curious about this area and potential exists to make it engaging. However, care must be taken to avoid talking about a ‘very distant’ future as some degree of ‘immediate relevance’ must be maintained.

Contact
As with cyberbullying, contact risk awareness and management requires reinforcement for children and young people. Both girls and boys currently feel that the risks are greater for girls and there is potential to highlight to boys how they may be affected by the risks as well. Given that the focus of risk lies in social networking, it is likely this sphere should remain the core focus for education activities.

A potentially fruitful area for education and communication lies in addressing contact risks beyond the extremes which children and young people currently focus on. Whereas children and young people tend to perceive the only real contact risk arising from meeting someone in person, there is little acknowledgement that unknown contacts can pose risk before this point (for example by sending them inappropriate content).
Content

Some reinforcement of issues around content should be provided to all children and young people but any strategy is likely to have the greatest impact by focusing on those who are most vulnerable. Specifically, those most at risk at between 10 and 14 years old who are curious but have not had enough experience or resilience to be able to deal with the material they come across or seek out. Additionally, there is scope for future strategies which highlight how to mitigate content risks for children and for parents.

Geo-spatial networking

This represents a fertile area for development given that the technology is relatively new and many young people have awareness but not yet full engagement with it. There are clear benefits in focusing on mobile social networking. The affordability and ubiquity of smartphones is growing by the day and although not all children and young people are using mobiles to access social networks or geo-spatial tools, the numbers are only likely to increase. As such this has the potential to be a new angle with new information which can help engage children and young people who otherwise believe they have heard it all before.

A ‘stop and think’ approach will likely be most effective. The risks are fairly self evident to young people who are easily able to speak about them. However, the consequences of those risks can be made clearer and more relevant to children and young people. Critically, any strategy will most likely have the greatest impact by encouraging children and young people to think about the potential consequences of their actions before taking them.

Engaging ‘real world’ visits

The research strongly indicates that real world visits to schools by guest speakers are a practical and beneficial way of engaging children and young people in the issue. This is mediated by the extent to which the children and young people relate to and respect the speaker. When well done, these visits live long in the memory and can be a talking or reference point for children and young people for some time.

Projecting knowledge and authority in the area while also clearly demonstrating an active understanding of what kinds of activities and services young people engage in and with, is key to establishing the credibility of the speaker. An example from a number of respondents was the impact of demonstrations showing how easy it was for people to collect their personal information which worked to make the risks personally relevant. There is continued potential to use these in-school visits to present cybersafety information in a new and engaging way which has greater impact on children and young people.

Parents and older siblings

Parents and older siblings can be important message conduits. Targeting parents will be especially important for the younger age groups where there is more parental control and influence. At the younger age, parents remain a credible voice for children and young people and especially if they can talk with authority and demonstrate knowledge of the internet, risks, and strategies for management.

Older siblings are willing to take on responsibilities in relation to their younger siblings. There is potential to leverage the idea that their relationship to their younger siblings should be as trusted ‘protectors’. They have the potential to filter down messages to younger children with a high degree of credibility, but in addition this may also be a
more subtle way to engage these older siblings into thinking about their own
behaviour.
Appendices

Discussion guides

Self-completes / scenarios

Recruitment questionnaire

Discussion Guide - Groups

Please note the following will not be used verbatim but the appropriate tone and language will be gauged for each group.

Moderator to ensure that at all times conversation is kept at a level whereby respondents will not feel judged on their behaviour, or that they begin to fear or are left uncomfortable with their own behaviours, in particular when talking about risks and consequences.

1. Introduction (5 mins)
   - Introduce research topic:
     We are here to talk about the internet and what they like to do online – where they go, what they do, look at, read, watch etc, but also the way they access it.
     Reassure on confidentiality, ability to terminate, that we are not going to judge them or their behavior, and that there are no right or wrong answers. Remind on audio/visual recording and viewing as appropriate.

Participant introduction:
   - Name
   - Home set up (brothers and sisters? Ages?)
   - Favorite and least favorite school activities
   - Ask them if they did their 'homework' task and to get it onto the table
   - How did you find doing the homework task?
   - Was it easy? Or difficult? What made it easier or more difficult?

General and Online behavior/habits (10mins)

Moderator to ask that before we talk about their use of the internet and what they do online we’d like to know a bit more about them and what other things they like doing
   - What sort of things do you do for fun? In your spare time?
What would be an ideal activity for you? Why is that?

Are there different things you like to do with friends than you would on your own? (if needed
prompt with an example such as playing sport with your friends in a team, or going for a bike
ride on your own - moderator to listen out for any mention of using the internet as either a
social or individual activity)

Do you have any interest in gadgets or technology? Such as? What is it you like about/are
interested in about them? (moderator to gauge any interest or understanding of technologies,
in particular anything related to accessing the internet)

What about things like smart-phones or iPads? Anything good about those? What? Why?

Moving on to talk about what you do online:

How do you primarily access the internet? Any other ways? (prompt as necessary with
through a computer/laptop, phone, iPad or other tablet, games console)

If a PC/laptop, iPad/other or games console – Is that yours? Does anyone else use it to access
the internet? Where is it in the house?

Do you share a login or does everyone have their own username and password? (moderator
to ascertain whether their internet access can be done 'in private' and/or 'anonymously').

Does what you do online change depending on what technology you use? PC/laptop vs. phone
or games console etc.

What do you do on one that you might not do on the other? Can you give me some
examples? (or for those with only one means of access 'what would you think you would
do/like to do if you had different ways of accessing the internet?'; 'what would you do on a
smart phone that is different from what you can do with your computer?')

(Moderator to listen out for any use of mobile technology to access the internet out of the
home, use of geo-spatial technology, for risky behavior involving mobile technology, and key
differences between technologies)

How much time do you think you spend on the internet a day?

How do you think that compares with most other people your age?

What about older or younger? Do they spend different amounts of time online? Why is that?

Moderator to hand out SELF COMPLETE EXERCISE 1:
Have a look at the sheet in front of you and cut up the pie into what activities you do online. You can
name them however you’d like. Please give a bit of an idea of what it is, so if one segment is playing
games write down the name of your favourite game, or if one section is watching videos write down
what kind of videos you like to watch.

What kinds of things have you cut up your pie into?

What is it you like to do online most? Why is that?

What is it you think you spend most time doing online? Why is that? Anything else that you
spend a lot of time doing online?

Can we list out your favourite sites (moderator to note down)? Why are these your favorites?
• How do you think what you do online has changed over time? Why is that?
• Can you give me an example of something you do now that you didn't used to do? What about something you used to do that you don't do anymore? Why is that?
• How do you think your behavior online, or what you do online, is going to change in the future? *prompt as needed with online banking, shopping online, signing up to newsletters, deals, responding to adverts, making money online*

• How confident do you feel going online? Is it easy? Is there every anything difficult about it?
• Can you think of an example of when you've come across something, or something has come your way, that you weren't sure about? *as necessary prompt with 'for example getting a pop up ad for something you really want but not sure to click on it'...trying to download some software but not sure about where its coming from'*
• What might make people more confident when they go online? Why?
• What about less confident? Can you think of anything that would make someone less confident going online? *moderator to listen out for anything about risks, encountering uncomfortable material*

**Social networking sites / tools (15mins)**

• What social networking sites do you use? *prompt as necessary with Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Bebo etc*
• Why these sites? Why not any others?
• Why do you have a social networking profile/are you signed up to a social network? Any other reasons?
• How did you first come to join one? What influenced you?
• How old were you when you first used a social networking site?
• Are you aware of the age limits with some social networking sites?
• What do you think of this?
• What do you primarily use your site/profile for? *for any with accounts on multiple sites ask if they do different things on the different sites*
• What other things do you use it for? *moderator to listen out for any risky behaviors and prompt with the following as needed and ask for examples:*
  • Talk with friends
  • Share photos
  • Share links
  • Watch videos
  • Meet people
  • Join groups
- Share information
- Play games
- Organize meetings/parties – either with people you know or don’t know

- Is there anything else you can think of you do on social networking sites?
- Does it depend on how you access them? E.g. through your pc versus your phone? Can you give me any examples?
- What about where you are? At school or at home or somewhere else? Can you give me any examples?
- Of all the things that you do on these sites which ones are the most important to you? Which ones would be worst to ‘lose’? Why? Any others?
- Which ones would you happily ‘live without’? Why?
- Do you ever ‘check in’ to places? Or use any apps to let people know where you are? Why? Why not?
- What’s the fun part/best bit of checking-in? Why?
- What’s the worst part/could be bad about it? Why?
- Overall, what do you think is the best thing about social network sites? Why is that? What do they allow you to do that is really useful/you really enjoy?
- What about the worst parts? What is bad about social networking sites? Why is that? Is there any potential for things to go really wrong through using social networks? Can you think of an example?

(moderator to listen out throughout the above for any knowledge/understanding/awareness of risk taking behavior or potentially negative consequences. However, ensure that the conversation is kept at a level where respondents do not begin to fear/or could potentially be left feeling uncomfortable their own behaviors)

Online relationships (15mins)

Moderator to explain we’d like to move on to talk about the kinds of relationships they have with family, friends and other people online

- What kinds of relationships do you have online?
- Who do you ‘talk to’ online? Family? Friends? Friends of friends? People you’ve met through groups or pages? What about with people you may not have met in person (e.g. through a game)?
- How does what you do/say differ with the different relationships/type of relationship you have? What can you do with one type of relationship but not another?
- In what ways are online relationships similar to real life relationships?
- What might be a positive of an online relationship compared with a real life relationship (e.g. you can always exchange messages rather than having to wait face to face, or messages can be delivered instantly)
- In what ways do you think they are different? Can you give any examples?
• Are there any downsides to online relationships? What might these be? Can you think of any examples? *(e.g. cyberbullying)*

**Sharing information and online material (10mins)**

*Moderator to explain we would like to talk with them briefly on the kinds of information they share online*

• What kinds of things do you share with your network online? Can you give an example? *(as necessary prompt with videos, websites, programs)*
• What about sharing things about you or personal information? Would you put your phone number or address, or upload a photo to a website? Why? Why not?
• Anything else that you do online which reflects on you? *(e.g. status updates)*
• How does it depend on what kind of site it is? What kind of site would you trust? Or not trust?
• Do you have any concerns about sharing different types of personal information?
• Do you ever think about the type of information you upload on your social networking profile?
• Do you ever think about it as a record for other people to access or have in the future?
• Do you ever think about what people might say in the future about what you upload?
• Do you ever think about these issues before you post personal information online?
• Have you ever, or do you ever have to, think about your ‘digital reputation’?
• What positives are there about sharing things online with family, friends, other people?
• Any negatives? What’s not so good to share with people online, that you might have seen others share?
• How do you think what you do online affects how/what people think of you? Why is that?
• What about privacy? What are your views on the concept of privacy in society?
• How important is this concept to you? Do your views on privacy differ in the offline/online environment?
• What about your privacy online?
• What about things like privacy settings? Do you think about these setting when you are using an online service?
• Have you ever looked at the privacy settings on your social networking profile/site?
• Have you ever changed your privacy settings? How did you learn to do this?
• Why did you do this? *(Probe for whether this change was due to a specific cybersafety incident?)*

*Moderator to explain we briefly want to talk about the sorts of things they see/read/come across online*
• Thinking about the things we’ve talked about that you do/access online, do you ever come across, get sent, or find things that make you feel comfortable or that you find inappropriate for you?
• How does that happen?
• What do you do when that does happen?
• What do you think could be done to avoid that happening?

**Online Safety (20mins)**

• What do you think are the risks for young people like yourselves when you go online? Any others? *(moderator to briefly gather spontaneous reactions)*

*Moderators to note down responses then hand out SELF COMPLETE 2:*

*For each of the following please give a score for how ‘risky’ you see this behavior. 1 = not risky at all, 10 = extremely risky. Moderator to read out each behavior and question with the following:*

• What are the consequences of these risks? Do they vary? How? Why?
• How do these compare with risks in the real world? *(only for appropriate scenarios)*
• How could young people like you manage/minimise those risks?
• Is there anything you currently do to manage/minimise those risks?

• Do you think what young people do on the internet, and therefore the potential risks they encounter, depends on:
  o What technology they use to access it? How? Why? Examples?
  o If they are with friends, or with family, or by themselves? How? Why? Examples?
• How do young people like yourselves learn / know about what might be risky and might not be? Have you ever had any information on this? What? Where from? Was it any good?
• What would be the most useful information to help keep young people safe when they go online? Why that? What else?
• Where would you need to get this from to pay any attention to it? What about sources which you wouldn’t pay any attention to?

**Parents and Siblings (5mins)**

• Do your parents have any rules for your use of the internet? What are these? Do you follow them?
• What about your siblings? Do they have any effect on what you do online? What about you on them? Do you keep an eye on what they do? Have your parents, or anyone else (such as a teacher or another ‘trusted adult’), ever given you advice on keeping safe online? What was it? Was it of any use? Why/why not?

**Friends and Others (5mins)**
• What about your friends? How do they effect what you do online? Have you had an impact on their behavior online
• Is there anyone else who has an impact on what you do online?

**Awareness of Government Online Safety Campaigns (2mins)**

• Are you aware of any online safety programs or campaigns?
• Are you aware of any websites that provide online safety information?
• Have you ever attended a presentation or seminar about online safety?
  [Probe for awareness of CYBERSMART programs and website]

**Summary (3mins)**

• Overall, what is the biggest factor in determining if someone’s behavior online is potentially risky or not?
• What do you think could be done most effectively to ensure that young people remain safe online whilst still being able to enjoy the internet?
Scenarios 15-17

1. Sharon loves using Facebook and has loads of friends on her profile. She keeps it public so anyone can join and she hasn’t met everyone she is friends with. She uses her phone to go online wherever she is and always likes to ‘check-in’ so people know where she is.

2. David has an interest in photography and uses his friends and family as subjects to practice on. He shares his photos on a photo sharing site, along with his email and phone number, hoping that he gets noticed.

3. John is having a party while his parents have gone away for the weekend. He wants it to be the best party of the year so has put an open invitation on his social network and told all his friends to invite whomever they can.

4. Claire is really into music and films but can’t afford to buy them all the time. So she goes onto file sharing website and downloads whatever she wants.

5. Adam is surfing the web and pop-up appears. It is advertising tickets to a concert with his favourite band who are coming to Australia. He decides he really wants to see them and clicks on the link.
**Scenarios 13-15**

1. Allie is joining a new social network site. As part of the registration the site is asking her for her home and mobile phone number. She types it in so that she can start using the site.

2. Alex has a really popular Facebook page and gets lots of comments and has loads of friends. She hasn’t met them all face to face but is planning on meeting up with someone she’s been chatting with through instant messenger. They don’t live in the same city but have offered to come and meet her on the weekend.

3. Brett loves to play games online. His favourite are role playing games and he will often play on them till the early hours of the morning. He used to play a lot of sport but now spends almost all his time online.

4. Mark wants to be a singer and so takes videos of himself and posts them on YouTube.

5. Sally is doing some internet research for a school project but can’t find what she is looking for. She thinks the ‘very safe’ setting on her parents internet filter is what is getting in the way. She decides she will turn the filter off all together.
Scenarios

Please listen to the following scenarios and after each one rate it for how risky you think that situation/their behaviour is. The scale is 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘not risky at all and fine to do’, and 10 being ‘extremely risky and shouldn’t be done’. Think about what risks might be involved in doing these sorts of things. Then write down a few words on what you think of this behaviour.

1. 

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. 

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. 

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Divide up the pie chart to show what you spend your time online doing?
Discussion Guide – Immersions

Please note the following will not be used verbatim but the appropriate tone and language will be gauged for each visit.

Moderator to ensure that at all times conversation is kept at a level whereby respondents will not feel judged on their behaviour, or that they begin to fear or are left uncomfortable with their own behaviours, in particular when talking about risks and consequences.

Also ensure both respondents have equal opportunity to respond and to show you what they do on the internet at the appropriate times

2. **Introduction**

Purpose of section is to introduce the visit and set expectations of how it will work.

Introduce self and explain to participants that:

- Confidentiality and ability to terminate at any time.
- That we would like to observe what they do on a normal day and ‘tag’ along with them while they do it. We’re not hoping they do anything different or special than what they would normally.
- We would like them to show us a bit of what they do when they use their computers and especially when they go online.
- We’re not here to judge them, we’re just interested in getting to know them and their lives as best we can. There are no right or wrong answers.

Participant introduction:

- Name
- Home set up (brothers and sisters? Ages?)
- School year and favorite / least favorite school activities
- Ask them if they did their ‘homework’ task and to have a look at it

3. **Homework task**

- How did you find doing the homework?
- Was it fun? Or boring? Which bit was most interesting?
- Which bit was easiest? Which bit was hardest? Why?
- What did you write for how you would describe yourself? Why did you write that? Are there any other ways you would describe yourself?
- What about the things that you are really good at? What do you like most about them? What do you think makes you so good at them?
- What about the two things you really like doing? Why do you like doing them? Can you tell me another reason why you really like doing those things?
• What about the two things you really don’t like doing? What is it about those things you don’t like?
• Can you talk me through a normal school day?
• What is your routine? (prompt as necessary on what time they wake up, how they get to school and what time, what they do during the day, best class, worst class, sport, what time they finish, how they get home etc)
• Do you like school? What is the best thing about it? And the worst? Why is that?
• What about today? Anything interesting happen at school today?

4. General Lifestyle

Moderator to explain that we would like to know a little more about them, their likes and dislikes

• If you have free time what do you like to do the most? Why is that?
• Anything else you love doing?
• What about with your friends? What do you like to do then? What about when you are on your own?
• What about the things you really don’t like doing? Why is that? Anything else?
• What about your favourite TV show? Why is that?
• And your favourite sport/game? Why is that? What other sports/games do you like playing?
• Do you own any games consoles? Which one/s?
• What games do you like to play the most?
• Do you play on your own or with friends/siblings/parents?
• What about playing games online? Do you ever do that? What games do you play?
• What do you like about it?
• Do you play against other people? What kind of people are they? Are there ever any problems or bad things about playing online games with other people?

(moderator to listen out for any awareness of risks with online gaming)

5. Going online

• Do you use the internet?

Ask respondents to take you to their computer

• How often do you think you use it on a normal day? More on weekdays or weekends? Why is that?
• Is it your computer? Who else uses it? How does that affect what you can do on the computer?
• What do you like to do online?
• What websites do you like to go to? – ask them to show you
• Why these? Any others?
• what else do you like to do on the internet?

  **Prompt if necessary with:**
  
  • Talk with friends online (through Skype? msn? Facebook chat? Or otherwise)
  • Use social networks (Facebook, bebo, myspace, habbo, club penguin, etc)
  • Use chatrooms? Which ones? What about?
  • Watch videos online? What kind of videos? Where do you to watch them?
  • Play games?

• What about your friends? Do they do the same as you? Or do any of them do anything different?

• Are there any other ways that you can use the internet? **(prompt as necessary with phone, laptop, iPad/other tablet, games console)**

• Do you different things on the internet with those things? Visit different sights? Use different applications?

• How has what you do on the internet changed over time? Can you give me examples of what you used to do that now don’t do, or vice versa? Why do you think that was?

  **Moderator to gauge when appropriate to ask the following:**

• **Do your parents ever check on what you are doing on the computer/internet?**

  • Do your parents ever limit the amount of time you can spend online? How long is that? Do you ever spend longer? Do you ever go online without them knowing?
  • What about your brothers or sisters? Do they know what it is you do online?
  • Do you ever go online with them? What sorts of things do you do together?
  • Do they ever tell you what you can/can't do, or should/shouldn't do when you go online? What types of things? How do you feel when they say that?

• **Have you ever uploaded anything to the internet?**

  • What were these? **(Prompt with as necessary: photos to social networking site, photos to Flickr or equivalent, videos to YouTube or equivalent)**
  • Why did you do that? Did you send it anyone in particular? Who? Why them? Can anyone see it? How do you make sure only the people you want to see it do?
  • What was fun/good about doing this?
  • Do you think there are any risks involved in you, or someone else, doing this? What are they? What do you think can be done to prevent them?
  • What do you do once any of those risks have happened?

• **Do you ever download things from the internet?**

  • What types of things? Anything else?
  • Where do you go to get these from? How do you decide what to download?
• Have you ever had any problems in downloading things? Or once they’ve been downloaded?
• Are there any risks in downloading material from the internet? What are these? What can you
do about them?

• **Have you ever clicked on an advert on a website?**
  • What was it for? What made you click on it?
  • What happened then?
  • Was it what you were expecting or something you weren’t expecting?
  • If not, then why not? What is that makes you not want to click on them? Why is that? How do
  you know that?

• **Have you ever come across something on the internet that made you uncomfortable, or you thought was inappropriate for someone like you?**
  • Or that you think your parents wouldn’t want you looking at?
  • How is it that you ended up seeing/reading that? Where did you find it?
  • What did you do? Did you tell anyone? Why? Why not?
  • In your opinion, did you ever come across anything that you considered was inappropriate for
  someone else in your immediate circle of family and friends (e.g., such as a younger sibling)?

• **Do you think people ever get bullied online?**
  • How does that happen? Why does that happen?
  • What do you think people can do about it? Anything else?
  • What do you think would help stop this from happening?
  • Has it happened to anyone you know?

• **Do you have a profile or use any social networks?** *(prompt if necessary with: Facebook,
  MySpace, Bebo, Habbo, Club Penguin etc)*
  • What do you think of sites like that? Do you know about them?
  • What you think about having to be a certain age to go on those sites? Why do you think they
do that? Is it a good idea or a bad idea?

If they have a profile:

• **What do you do on your social network?**
  *Prompt as necessary:*
  
  o  *Status updates* – what kind of things do you write? What about your friends?
- Post links to your/other people’s wall – what sort of things? Where from? What about if people post things on your wall? Has anyone ever posted anything they shouldn’t have?
- Post photos – have you posted photos of yourself? Of other people? Do you tag the people in them? Who do you let see your photos? How do you know who is looking at them? Is that something you have ever thought about?
- ‘check-in’ – have you ever ‘checked-in’ anywhere? Where was that? Do your friends ever do that? Why do you think people like to ‘check-in’ places?
- Make new friends – have you ever met someone for the first time online? How did that happen? Have you ever met them in real life?
- Cyberbullying – have you, or have any of your friends ever experienced cyberbullying? Can you give me an example? What happened then? What can you do to stop that from happening?

- What is the best thing about it?
- What is the worst thing about it?
- What is it really good for?
- What is fun about it?
- Are there any down sides?
- Do you think there are any risks? How do you address/minimize those risks?
- What about things like your privacy settings? Have you ever looked at those? Or changed those? How? (ask them to show you how) Why?

Online Risks
- Do you ever think there are any risks in people going online? What might these be? Any others?
- How serious do you think these risks are? Which ones are more serious than others? Why?
- Has anyone ever talked to you about risk when you are on the internet – either at school or your parents or friends? What did they say?
- What sorts of things would you say that people should never do on the internet? Why is that?
- How do you think people can make sure they avoid those risks? Can you give me an example? Can you show me anything that you could do to avoid them? (moderator to understand what knowledge they have of privacy settings, pop-up blocking, anti-virus software etc)

At the end of the session moderator to ask each respondent:
- What, out of all the things we’ve talked about and that you’ve showed me, is your favourite thing online? Or favourite thing to do online? Why is that?
- If you had a chance to tell someone who had never used the internet before what the best thing about it was, what would you say? Why is that?
• What do you look forward to doing on your computer and the internet in the future?

**Awareness of Government Online Safety Campaigns**

• Are you aware of any online safety programs or campaigns?
• Are you aware of any websites that provide online safety information?
• Have you ever attended a presentation or seminar about online safety?
  [Probe for awareness of CYBERSMART programs and website]

**NOTE about Time spent Gaming**
ACMA SCREENER – 8-12yr olds

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is _______________ and I am calling on behalf of an independent market research company called GfK Blue Moon. We are currently conducting some research for the Australian Communications and Media Authority about online behaviour and are looking for young people between 8 and 12 years of age to take part in a face to face discussion with one of their friends held at your home. Would this be something that you would be interested in?

We are looking for people that fit a certain criteria, so I would need to ask you and the young person some questions initially to see if you are who we need for this research. Would you have a few spare minutes to answer some questions for me?

REASSURE THEM THAT OUR RESEARCHERS WILL NOT EXPOSE THEIR CHILDREN TO ANY UNSUITABLE MATERIAL OR PUT THEM AT ANY RISK. AS RESEARCHERS WE ARE BOUND BY A STRICT CODE OF CONDUCT SET BY THE MARKET RESEARCH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA.

IF RESPONDENTS WISH TO VERIFY THE RESEARCH OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS THEY CAN CONTACT EITHER CRAIG SMITH or PATRICK ELL AT GFK BLUE MOON: (02) 9460 6555 OR MATTHEW DOBSON AT AUSTRALIAN COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA AUTHORITY: (02) 9334 7883.

PLEASE MAKE SURE EVERY PARENT AND YOUNG PERSON IS Screened AND FITS THE CRITERIA
PARENTS ONLY

1. Do you or any of your close relations, work in any of the following industries?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market research</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising, marketing, public relations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media, communications, journalism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TERMINATE

CHECK WHICH GOV’T AGENCY WORK FOR – EXCLUDE IF FOR PRIVACY COMMISSION, LAW REFORM COMMISSION, DPT OF BROADBAND OR ACMA

2. What is the occupation of all household members? record:

___________________________________________________________________________

3. When was the last time your child took part in a group discussion or depth interview? (Record)

TERMINATE IF LESS THAN 6 MONTHS AGO

4. How many times has your child participated in any market research discussion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 time or less</td>
<td>Continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 times</td>
<td>CLOSE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Which of the following best describes your level of awareness of what your child is looking at / doing on the internet?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness Level</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I constantly oversee and sensor what my child does on the internet</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I check the search history on our computer to see what websites my child has been looking at</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I occasionally have a look at the websites my child is looking at</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim for a mix
I talk to my child about websites or what they do online but have not seen them myself | 4

I don’t really have much idea what my child does or looks at online | 5

Ask to speak with the young person who will be involved in the interview

Children/Young People Only

6. Do you have access to the internet outside of computers at school?

| Yes | At home (computer or laptop) | 1 | CHECK QUOTA |
|     | On my phone                  | 2 |             |
|     | Games console                | 3 |             |
|     | iPad or other tablet         | 4 |             |
|     | Other Specify:              | 5 |             |

| No |  |  | CLOSE |

7. How often do you use the internet for anything other than school related activities?

| Daily | 1 | CHECK QUOTA |
| 4-6 times a week | 2 |
| 2-3 times a week | 3 |
| Once a week | 4 |
| Less than once a week | 5 | CLOSE |

8. A) Which of the following websites have you visited in the last month?

B) Which 3 do you visit most often?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visited in the last month</th>
<th>3 most frequent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bebo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Penguin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flixtor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends reunited</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habbo</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imvu</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MySpace</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows Live Spaces (Formerly MSN space)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xanga</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahoo! 360</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other websites that involve chat, profiles, social activities, online gaming (e.g. through Xbox or playstation) / virtual worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft). Specify:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Do you / have you done any of the following?

| Played a game online with other people you know | 1 |
| Played a game online with other people you don’t know | 2 |
| Talked with a friend online (e.g. using MSN) | 3 |
| Talked with people online in a chatroom | 4 |
| Shared photos online with more than one person (not through email but through Flickr or other sharing websites) | 5 |
| Written / posted on a forum or blog | 6 |
| Shared information about yourself on a website or with other people online Specify: | 7 |
10. How long have you had your main social network account for (i.e. the one you use the most)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3 months</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months – 1 year</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over a year</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim for a mix

11. **ASK ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE INTERENT ACCESS ON THEIR PHONE** - Do you use / do any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook places ('checking in')</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Square</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gowalla</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrightKite</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geo-tag photographs (GPS your photos showing people where you took them)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use other GPS system to post online where they are</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specify and check with GfK Blue Moon:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the above: 7 Continue

12. What year are you in at school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7 (primary school only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Older</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

acma | 77
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many:</th>
<th>Aim for a mix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Do you have any disabilities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>CHECK QUOTA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please specify:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECORD GENDER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>CHECK QUOTA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quotas:

Qu6. Ensure all respondents have access to the internet outside of school computers. Aim to have a minimum of 30% who have access to the internet on a device other than a computer or laptop (smart-phone, iPad, games console, or otherwise) – please monitor this and let us know if there are any problems finding smart phones owners in this age group.

Qu7. Aim for a mix of internet use for activities outside those related to school.

Qu9. Respondents must have done one of these activities – i.e. interacted with others online (in a ‘public’ domain – i.e. played games with strangers online, shared information with others online which could be seen by groups of people they know or people they don’t know, put pictures of themselves or shared personal information about themselves online etc).

Qu11. Respondents with internet enabled phones must use at least one of the services listed, or another service through which they post online where they are. If the service used is not one of the ones listed please contact GfK Blue Moon to tell us which service they use.

Qu12. Ensure all respondents are between 8 and 12 years of age.

Qu14. Ensure a representation of disability in the population across the sample.
Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is ________________ and I am calling on behalf of an independent market research company called GfK Blue Moon. We are currently conducting some research for the Australian Communications and Media Authority about online behaviour and are looking for young people between 13 and 17 years of age to take part in a face to face discussion held at your home, or a group discussion held at a dedicated research facility with other young people of similar age. Would this be something that you would be interested in?

We are looking for people that fit a certain criteria, so I would need to ask you and the young person some questions initially to see if you are who we need for this research. Would you have a few spare minutes to answer some questions for me?

REASSURE THEM THAT OUR RESEARCHERS WILL NOT EXPOSE THEIR CHILDREN TO ANY UNSUITABLE MATERIAL OR PUT THEM AT ANY RISK. AS RESEARCHERS WE ARE BOUND BY A STRICT CODE OF CONDUCT SET BY THE MARKET RESEARCH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA.

IF RESPONDENTS WISH TO VERIFY THE RESEARCH OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS THEY CAN CONTACT EITHER CRAIG SMITH or PATRICK ELL AT GFK BLUE MOON: (02) 9460 6555 OR MATTHEW DOBSON AT AUSTRALIAN COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA AUTHORITY: (02) 9334 7883.

PLEASE MAKE SURE EVERY PARENT AND YOUNG PERSON IS SCREENED AND FITS THE CRITERIA
PARENTS ONLY

1. Do you or any of your close relations, work in any of the following industries?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market research</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising, marketing, public relations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media, communications, journalism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- TERMINATE IF WORK FOR PRIVACY COMMISSION, LAW REFORM COMMISSION, DPT OF BROADBAND OR ACMA

2. What is the occupation of all household members? record:

- ____________________________________________________________

3. When was the last time your child took part in a group discussion or depth interview? (Record)

- TERMINATE IF LESS THAN 6 MONTHS AGO

4. How many times has your child participated in any market research discussion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 time or less</td>
<td>Continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 times</td>
<td>CLOSE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Which of the following best describes your level of awareness of what your child is looking at / doing on the internet?
I constantly oversee and sensor what my child does on the internet  
I check the search history on our computer to see what websites my child has been looking at  
I occasionally have a look at the websites my child is looking at  
I talk to my child about websites or what they do online but have not seen them myself  
I don’t really have much idea what my child does or looks at online  

Now ask to speak with the young person who will be involved in the interview

Young People Only
6. Do you have access to the internet outside of computers at school?

| Yes | At home (computer or laptop) | 1 |
|     | On my phone                  | 2 |
|     | Games console                | 3 |
|     | iPad or other tablet         | 4 |
|     | Other                        | 5 |
|     | Specify:                     |   |
| No  |                             |   |

7. How often do you use the internet for anything other than school related activities?

| Daily         | 1 |
| 4-6 times a week | 2 |
| 2-3 times a week  | 3 |
| Once a week     | 4 |
| Less than once a week | 5 |

8. A) Which of the following websites have you visited in the last month?
B) Which 3 do you visit most often?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Visited in the last month</th>
<th>3 most frequent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bebo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Penguin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flixter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends reunited</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habbo</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imvu</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MySpace</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>Windows Live Spaces (Formerly MSN space)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Xanga</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahoo! 360</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other websites that involve chat, profiles, social activities Specify:</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online gaming portals / websites: (e.g. through xbox or playstation. e.g Call of Duty Modern Warfare) / virtual worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft). Specify:</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Do you have a social networking account? (e.g. with Facebook, Bebo, Myspace, Twitter or otherwise)

| Yes.                      | 1                         | Continue |
| Specify:                  |                           |         |
10. How long have you had your main social network account for (i.e. the one you use the most)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3 months</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months – 1 year</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 2 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 2 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AIM FOR A MIX

11. **ASK ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE INTERENT ACCESS ON THEIR PHONE** - Do you use / do any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook places ('checking in')</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Square</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gowalla</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrightKite</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geo-tag photographs (GPS your photos showing people where you took them)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use other GPS system to post online where they are</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specify and check with GfK Blue Moon:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHECK QUOTA

12. Would you / have you ever done any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post / tag a photo of yourself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check yourself or others into a location on your mobile</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide your real name, if someone asked you to</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide your phone number to someone if they asked you to</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AIM FOR A MIX
13. What year are you in at school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 7 (high school only)</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12 (no older than 17)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Older</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How many:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Do you have any disabilities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please specify:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECORD GENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quotas:
Qu6. Ensure all respondents have access to the internet outside of school computers. Aim to have a minimum of 30% who have access to the internet on a device other than a computer or laptop (smart-phone, iPad, games console, or otherwise)

Qu7. Aim for a mix of internet use for activities outside those related to school

Qu11. Respondents with internet enabled phones must use at least one of the services listed, or another service through which they post online where they are. If the service used is not one of the ones listed please contact GfK Blue Moon to tell us which service they use.

Qu13. Ensure all respondents are between 13 and 17 years of age.

Qu15. Ensure a representation of disability in the population across the sample
APPENDIX – USING THIS RESEARCH

It is important that clients should be aware of the limitations of survey research.

Qualitative Research
Qualitative research deals with relatively small numbers of respondents and attempts to explore in-depth motivations, attitudes and feelings. This places a considerable interpretative burden on the researcher. For example, often what respondents do not say is as important as what they do. Similarly, body language and tone of voice can be important contributors to understanding respondents’ deeper feelings.

Client should therefore recognise:
> that despite the efforts made in recruitment, respondents may not always be totally representative of the target audience concerned
> that findings are interpretative in nature, based on the experience and expertise of the researchers concerned

The Role of Researcher and Client
GfK Blue Moon believes that the researchers’ task is not only to present the findings of the research but also to utilise our experience and expertise to interpret these findings for clients and to make our recommendations (based on that interpretation and our knowledge of the market) as to what we believe to be the optimum actions to be taken in the circumstances: indeed this is what we believe clients seek when they hire our services. Such interpretations and recommendations are presented in good faith, but we make no claim to be infallible.

Clients should, therefore, review the findings and recommendations in the light of their own experience and knowledge of the market and base their actions accordingly.