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Sweet Child in Time Online sexual abuse of children – a research exploration

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Abstract

- The ‘Budapest study’ conducted in 2009 focuses on the online activities and behaviour of teenagers
- The range of risky behaviours includes chatting with strangers online, talking sex with strangers online, and having offline meeting with strangers encountered online
- “double moral standards”
- Pupils do not usually turn to their parents when confronted by embarrassing online material or requests
- ‘dangerous or risky online behaviour or content’

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Background to the problem

- Very little valid data about the numerous assumptions and fears in relation to the habits of Internet use among Hungarian youngsters and the risks and actual dangers
- Where the messages of the tabloid world instilling fear may end, and where the actual dangers of the virtual space begin? – No evidence-based knowledge
- Internetharrative
 - The **social ramifications** of the new technology
 - The **duplication of the world** as one of the dominant effects of the new medium
 - The new **opportunities and risks** arising from the Internet

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Background to the problem 2.

1. The Internet use of youngsters is more intensive, extensive and skilled
2. Online threats are difficult to assess, and uncertainties abound
3. For adults, the world of the net generation is at once full of hope and fear (The Internet is the world of opportunities)
4. Virtual reality and the web do carry real dangers, precisely because of their freedom, lack of restrictions and their anonymity
5. Currently, the only known representative international study into online child abuse is *EU Kids Online*

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Introduction to the 'Budapest study'

- The research aimed to assess the habits of Internet use of 16-year-old secondary school students in November and December 2009, on a sample of 1200 students from Budapest
- Comprehensive picture of the threats that Hungarian youngsters face in an online environment while they use the Internet

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Results and discussion

- About 85% of the respondents use the Internet on three or more days of the week, and two-thirds of them on a daily basis
- In 2008, 60.7% of the EU's population had a broadband Internet connection
- The under-18s, however, have an above-average rate of Internet access in all countries
- We can also see that in the member states that joined the EU in and after 2004, children use the Internet more often than their parents (Livingstone & Haddon, 2009)

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Risks of Internet use

- The transformation of the playground of human relations (CMC)
- Encounter with adult content (What do you usually use the Internet for?)
- ‘Exposure’. Sharing personal data and contacting people (Meeting people online)
- Outcome of meeting persons encountered online (...when you met in person)
- Sexting: approach or conversation of a sexual nature

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Characteristics of Internet use of children in recently joined EU member states

- Less legal awareness, less punishment (Actual and thought-to-be illegal actions online)
- Self-teaching as a way of learning Internet use (Proportion of parents who set no restrictions when their child uses the Internet, by Country. How would you rate your parents' Internet skills?, What rules do your parents set for Internet use? Etc.)
- Stronger manifestation of double standards

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Summary and conclusion

- Our comparison shows clearly that children living in countries joined the EU recently are exposed to greater risks during Internet use
- At the same time, children in recently joined countries of the EU are driven to greater independence in solving any problems related to Internet use
- The Internet is certainly significantly different from earlier media, and these differences also explain the special nature of its threats
- This is at once a source of disadvantages and advantages

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Summary and conclusion 2.

- Direct communication and exchange of information between users was less popular than today
- It is also interesting to witness how, due to technical development, users are becoming increasingly tolerant towards extreme contents they used to find disturbing
- „Riding a bicycle is not without its dangers, yet it never stirs moral panic, or forces us to ban our children from their bicycles” (Internet use is not free of all dangers)

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Thank you for your attention!

