

Committee: Economic & Social

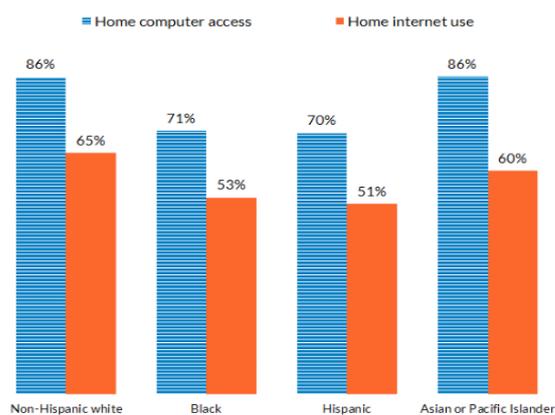


Topic: Protection of Children Online

Introduction

Protecting children online is a global challenge, which requires a global approach. While many efforts to improve child online protection are already under way, their reach has been more national than global. International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has established the Child Online Protection initiative to create an international collaborative network and promote online safety of children around the world. Children all across the globe are starting to gain access to the internet. This can be both with or without parental consent. This can lead to children being exposed to adult material such as pornography or extreme violence and other topics that children should be protected from. This could have a negative impact on children such as trauma. The growing global issues surrounding online safety and cybersecurity require a global response, especially when it comes to the protection of our youngest and most vulnerable digital citizens: our children.

Percentage of Children Ages 3 to 17 Who Have Access to Computers and Use the Internet at Home, by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2015



Note: Hispanic youth may be of any race.
Source: Child Trends' original analysis of data from the Current Population Survey, Computer and Internet Use Supplement, 2015.
childtrends.org

Key definitions

The actions of the child online: A child acting in the online environment is not different from a child offline, even if her/his right to access certain online services without parental consent may well be allowed before the child turns 18. While children under the set age limit (e.g. 13 years for many social media services) may be more vulnerable than older children, all young persons under the age of 18 years are entitled to special protection.

The representation of the child online: A child is a child at one specific moment in time, but childhood is, by definition, a temporary and passing status, which the child will leave behind as she/ he grows older and moves on to adulthood. Yet the sexual

abuse images of a child can remain online long after she/he has reached adulthood, and continue to be consumed (e.g. distributed, exchanged, sold, and bought). Victimization of children can take place in one country at a given time, but, through the dissemination of child sexual abuse material, could continue in various countries with different legislation, or at a much later moment in time.

The term “*online child sexual abuse*” has become a widely used term to refer both to the sexual abuse of children that is facilitated by ICTs (e.g. online grooming) and to sexual abuse of children that is committed elsewhere and then repeated by sharing it online through, for instance, images and videos (which is where it becomes exploitation). The preferred term in the case of the former is “online-facilitated child sexual abuse”.

“*Online child sexual exploitation*” can be used as an umbrella-term to indicate such forms of sexual exploitation that have an online component or a relation to the Internet, it should be recalled that the Internet is a means, albeit very potent, to exploit children sexually; it is not, in and by itself, a distinct type of sexual exploitation.

Key UN treaties/protocol

- Optional Protocol to The Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
- Convention on the Rights of the Child

Useful references

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N19/234/09/PDF/N1923409.pdf?OpenElement>

<https://www.itu.int/en/cop/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/crc-sale.pdf>

<https://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/crc.pdf>

<http://luxembourgguidelines.org/english-version/>

<https://cdn.broadbandsearch.net/blog/internet-statistics/01-01.jpg>