As the UK’s communications regulator, we make sure that communications work for everyone. We have a statutory duty, under the Communications Act 2003, to promote and carry out research in media literacy: enabling people to have the skills, knowledge and understanding to make full use of the opportunities presented by communications services.

As part of our work, we conduct research into how children aged 3-15 across the UK use and think about media, including the internet. We also talk to their parents and carers about the different ways they keep their children safe when they use media.

Our research findings are published in our annual report ‘Children and parents: media use and attitudes’. The most recent can be read at: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens.

In collaboration with Childnet¹, a charity working with others to help make the internet a great and safe place for children, we have created a worksheet for children aged 8-11 to download and use. The worksheet focuses on:

- **What children do when they are online**;
- **How it makes them feel**;
- **Their critical understanding when online**;
- **And where to get advice on online safety**.

This supports our work with Safer Internet Day 2020², and its theme of ‘Together for a better internet’.

### WHAT IS THIS WORKSHEET ABOUT?

The aim of this worksheet is to show children the results from our research, and encourage them to consider their own online use. These can be used in school or at home and can help to prompt important discussions about being safe online.

**Teachers** can use the worksheets as part of lesson plans, inspiring classes to compare their results to that of our survey. Children could then create their own survey, within the class or even the school, and create their own charts with the findings.

**Parents** can use these worksheets to start and develop conversations with children about online safety and where to get advice.

### WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

Our research includes a focus on the proportion of children who use social media, and what they use it for. While we are aware that the minimum age requirement for most social media sites/apps is 13 years old, our research shows that some children under this age do claim to use it. Therefore, we feel it is important for children to be aware of the consequences of using social media, and provide useful sources of information and advice if they have concerns.

### USEFUL RESOURCES

The following websites provide useful advice on helping children stay safe online:

- www.childnet.com
- www.saferinternet.org.uk
- www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
- http://mediasmart.uk.com
- www.net-aware.org.uk
- www.internetmatters.org
- www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- https://parentzone.org.uk
- https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/services/library-catalogue

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¹ https://www.childnet.com/
² https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2020

Safer Internet Day 2020 takes place on Tuesday 11th February, focusing on the theme of ‘Together for a better internet’. Coordinated in the UK by the UK Safer Internet Centre, the celebration sees hundreds of schools and organisations join together to raise awareness of online safety issues and run events and activities right across the UK. Find out more and get involved!
What does 'being online' mean to you?

At Ofcom we ask children across the UK about what kinds of things they do online, how these things make them feel, and if they know how to get online safety advice.

In this worksheet we've shown some of the answers children aged 8-11 in Northern Ireland and the UK gave us. How do you and your friends compare to other children?

Read through this worksheet, and discuss your answers with your classmates.

What kind of things do you do online?

1. What kind of things do you do online?

We can now watch TV programmes or films on devices other than a TV set, by streaming the content. In Northern Ireland, children aged 8-11 said they also use these devices to watch TV:

- Tablet: 58%
- Mobile phone: 17%
- Games console: 17%
- Computer/laptop: 7%

Use the circles to tick the devices that you use to watch TV.

2. WeTube is watched by three-quarters of children aged 8-11 in Northern Ireland.

Do you watch YouTube?

If so, which YouTubers or vloggers do you like?

What is your favourite video on YouTube?

3. In Northern Ireland, 7 in 10 children aged 8-11 play games online.

Do you play games online?

If so, what are your top 3 games?

1.
2.
3.

Who do you play games with?

4. In Northern Ireland, 2 in 10 children aged 8-11 who go online have a social media profile.

Do you have any social media profiles?

If so which ones do you use?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- YouTube
- WhatsApp

And if you have more than one, which is your favourite, and why?

Page 1
How do parents and carers feel about children being online?

Parents also have concerns and worries about keeping children safe online, but they recognise there are benefits too.

In Northern Ireland, parents of 8-11 year olds who go online believe it helps their child to:

- Do their homework: 69%
- Develop creative skills: 51%
- Learn a new skill: 47%
- Build/maintain friendships: 22%
- Understand what other people think and feel about things: 15%
- Find useful information about problems or issues: 7%

Across the UK...

Nearly seven in ten children aged 8-11 who have a social media profile feel that there is pressure to be popular on social media.

And more than eight in ten of these children think that people can be mean to each other on social media.

Nine in ten 8-11 year olds with a social media profile say using social media makes them feel happy.

And eight in ten say social media makes them feel closer to their friends.

If you ever see people being mean on social media, or have experienced this yourself, there are ways that you can deal with it.

Some sites have a report function or button to let them know about bullying. You can also tell someone like a parent, carer or a teacher.

Who would you tell if you saw something?

If you do feel sad or worried when you are on social media, there are a list of helpful sources at the back of this worksheet that you can use. And remember, you can also talk to your parents, carers, teachers and friends.
Across the UK, one in five children aged 8-11 who use search engines are aware that the top four results shown in a Google search are adverts, which means that companies pay for them to be there, so they catch your attention first.

A quarter of 8-11s who use search engines believe that if Google lists a website in its search then it can be trusted, but this isn’t always the case. Half of 8-11s are aware that sometimes sites can be trusted and sometimes they can’t.

It is important to think about which sites you visit, and to check if they can be trusted. What kind of things can you do to check if you should visit a site?

Do you know who can help you stay safe online?

Most children in Northern Ireland aged 8-11 who go online say they have been given information or advice on how to use the internet safely.

Even though we might have been told about online safety, sometimes we can still see things online that are worrying or nasty.

We were told by 17% of children aged 8-11 in Northern Ireland who go online that they had seen something online that was nasty or worried them.

Turn the page to find out who they would tell....
It is very important that you talk to someone if you see something online that you don’t like, or that worries you. Would you tell someone? Who would that be and why?

Nearly all of our 8-11 year olds in Northern Ireland said they would tell their parents if they saw something worrying, nasty, or offensive online.

Stay safe online

Use these links to find out more about how to be safe when online:

- Safer Internet: www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/young-people
- Childnet: www.childnet.com/young-people
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- ThinkuKnow: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

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Find out more and get involved! www.saferinternetday.org.uk

ABOUT THIS WORKSHEET

Research source: Ofcom Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2019

These worksheets can be downloaded from www.ofcom.org.uk/online-worksheets