

APPENDIX

EXPLORING HIGH MEDIA LITERACY AMONG CHILDREN AGED 8-12

METHODOLOGY

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METHODOLOGY

APPROACH

OVERVIEW

The research study comprised a literature review, diary tasks and in-depth individual interviews with 14 children identified as being highly media literate. In addition, we undertook eight sets of triad interviews to explore the real-world ways in which peers discuss and engage with online platforms, and four in-home observational visits, with a spotlight on gaming, to understand in-home set ups and familial interactions. Prior to the interviews, participants were asked to complete a range of tasks over the course of the week linked to internet searching, use of social media or online gaming.

Participants ranged in age from 8 to 12 years, were spread across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and included those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Fieldwork took place between 14th October 2023 and 3rd November 2023. Safeguarding protocols were followed to ensure that the project met sector standards and was compliant with relevant legislation. Research was based on specific and informed consent, and was conducted in a manner that minimised personal and social harm to participants or harm to interviewers. Children were recruited through their parents or guardians. After obtaining parents' or guardians' consent, children gave their own consent using an age-appropriate information sheet and had the opportunity to decline to participate in the research if they wished.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To ensure Magenta had a comprehensive understanding of the online media literacy landscape, we began by undertaking a literature review. This stage of the research allowed us to identify and define what high media literacy might look like across gaming, social media and search and for this age group. It informed the research design and enabled us to create a screener which accurately defined participants with high media literacy.

More specifically, aims of the literature review were to understand:

- how we can define high media literacy for those aged 8-12;
- what high media literacy looks like for searching, gaming and social media for 8-12 year olds; and
- what we know about the drivers of media literacy in this age group.

DIARY/ACTIVITY

Participants were asked to complete an activity pack, including a diary for one-week, prior to their interview. The guides were tailored to the age group and included tasks such as:

- Create a mood board all about yourself;
- Diary entries for time online;
- Things found easy and difficult online;
- Favourite things to do online.

Children spent between 10-15 minutes each day for between 5 and 7 days. The activity packs were used to ensure the interviews were highly tailored to each child, and the way they spend their time online.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Individual online interviews, lasting one hour were conducted with 14 children. Approximately 45 minutes was spent exploring children's primary area of focus and 15 minutes exploring their secondary area of focus, although this varied across interview. The discussion flow was modified for each child.

TRIAD INTERVIEWS

Eight sets of triad interviews lasting one hour were conducted to explore the real-world ways in which peers discuss and engage with online platforms. Each triad comprised a group of three children in a friendship group. Social media and search were the main topics of focus for these interviews.

IN-HOME OBSERVATIONS

Four in-home interviews lasting up to 3 hours were conducted with a focus on gaming. The purpose was to understand in-home gaming set ups and familial interactions. Parents were informally interviewed as part of the in-home visits, predominantly discussing their children's gaming habits, but also any other areas discussed with the children. In some interviews parents briefly discussed their children's online behaviour, or added context to some events discussed by the children.

SAMPLE

SCREENING PARTICIPANTS

To identify highly media literate children, we undertook a two-staged approach. Potential participants were first asked a series of attitudinal and behavioural questions, through their parent or carer, including their interpretation of social media posts, search engine results and scenarios in online gaming, depending on the area being recruited for. The second stage involved asking potential children to submit a short video response during screening.

Children were recruited based on demonstrating high media literacy in one of three areas of focus (search, social media¹ or gaming). Children could have any type of media literacy in the areas they were not recruited for.

SAMPLE BREAKDOWN

The 26 participant sample (14 depth interviews, 8 primary recruits for the triad interviews and 4 in-home observations) included:

- Those aged 8-12 years, evenly split between those 8-11 years and 11-12 years old.
- A spread of participant across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- Those from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- A mix of urban and rural areas.
- A mix of employment status and household income.

A detailed breakdown is provided in the table below.

In total, including the triad friendship groups, we spoke to 42 children, in addition to siblings and parents. The demographics outlined in the table reflect the children recruited.

¹ Many social media platforms have age requirements for accounts that our children did not meet but some still held. For the purposes of the research, social media use was still discussed with these children, including discussions on age requirements. Ofcom's Online Nation report estimates that a third (33%) of children aged 8-15 with a social media profile on at least one of the platforms included in their research, have a user/profile age of at least 16. Due to this prevalence, children in our sample were not excluded on the basis of holding a social media account under the age requirement. However, it should be recognised that these children were likely not having an age-appropriate experience and the findings should be considered in that context.

DETAILED BREAKDOWN

Table 1: Detailed sample breakdown

	Online Interviews	In-Home Triads (primary recruit)	In-Home Interviews (main interviewee)	Total
Gender				
Female	8	4	1	13
Male	6	4	3	13
Segments				
8-11yo Social Media	3	0	0	3
8-11yo Online Gaming	3	1	2	6
8-11yo Search	3	1	0	4
11-12yo Social Media	2	2	0	4
11-12yo Online Gaming	1	2	2	5
11-12yo Search	2	2	0	4
Locations				
England	8	2	1	11
Wales	2	2	1	5
Northern Ireland	2	2	1	5
Scotland	2	2	1	5
Ethnicity				
Black, Asian, and minority ethnic background	5	4	0	9
Household Income				
0-£10,999	0	1	0	1
£20,000- £20,999	2	1	2	5
£30,000- £49,999	3	1	0	4
£50,000- £79,999	6	5	1	12
£80,000- £99,999	2	0	1	3
£100,000 or more	1	0	0	1
Parent Employment				
Working - Full-time	8	4	0	12
Working - Part-time	5	3	3	11
Unemployed	0	0	1	1
Retired	0	0	0	0
Homemaker	1	2	0	2
Location				
Large city	4	4	2	10
Smaller city or large town	3	1	0	4
Medium town	4	3	2	9
Small town	1	0	0	1
Rural or isolated area	2	0	0	2

