Media literacy data
Consultation on the National Curriculum for Computing

Selected findings from
Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report

4th April 2013
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Background and context</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Internet use</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Risk and inappropriate content</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Parental concerns and mediation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Preferences for learning</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 1

Background and context

1.1 Media literacy at Ofcom

The promotion of media literacy is a responsibility placed on Ofcom by Section 11 of the Communications Act 2003. Under Section 14(6)(a) of the Act we have a duty to make arrangements for the carrying out of research into the matters mentioned in Section 11(1).

Our media literacy research informs three of Ofcom’s strategic priorities: to maintain audience confidence in broadcast content; to promote opportunities to participate; and to contribute and implement public policy as defined by Parliament.

Media literacy enables people to have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make full use of the opportunities presented both by traditional and by new communications services. Media literacy also helps people to manage content and communications, and protect themselves and their families from the potential risks associated with using these services.

Ofcom’s definition of media literacy is:

“the ability to use, understand and create media and communications in a variety of contexts”.

1.2 Contribution to the consultation

Ofcom is not providing a formal response to the consultation. However, Ofcom has a wealth of information about: children’s use of and attitudes towards media and technology; their experiences of using that technology, including negative experiences; and their current experiences of learning about the internet at school. We are providing a selection of that data in the hope that it will provide useful context for those assessing and analysing the responses to the consultation. For further information please contact us or see www.ofcom.org.uk/medialiteracyresearch for the full report and supporting documents.

1.3 About the data

The data in this document is based primarily on our Media Literacy Tracker, a large-scale quantitative survey based on in-home interviews with children aged 5-15 and their parents/carers, carried out in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. In March to April 2012 1,717 interviews with parents and children aged 5-15 were conducted. Questions are tailored to the age of the child and so not all questions are asked of each age-group. The report was published in October 2012. Where possible, data is compared against previous years.

Significance testing at the 95% confidence level was carried out. This means that where findings are commented on in the report, there is only a 5% or less probability that the difference between the samples is by chance.
Section 2

Internet use

2.1 Older children are spending more time online, and are more likely to go online alone

While children aged 5-15 continue to spend most time watching TV, children aged 12-15 are spending more time online (rising from 14.9 hours a week in 2011 to 17.1 in 2012) and now spend as much time in a week using the internet as they do watching television.

Children aged 5-15 are also more likely than they were in 2011 to mostly use the internet in their bedrooms (43% in 2012 vs. 34% in 2011). Children who use the internet mostly alone comprise 35% of 5-15s, breaking down into 14% of internet users aged 5-7, 24% aged 8-11 and 55% aged 12-15.

Figure 1: Estimated weekly hours of media consumption at home among users, by age: 2012

2.2 Children are going online via a wider range of devices

Internet access via a PC, laptop or netbook is increasingly being supplemented by access via other devices. All age groups are more likely in 2012 to go online using a tablet computer (6% of 5-7s in 2012, 9% of 8-11s and 11% of 12-15s), and children aged 5-7 and 12-15 are more likely to go online using a mobile phone (5% of 5-7s, 12% of 8-11s and 44% of 12-15s used a mobile phone to go online in 2012). Children aged 5-7 are less likely than in 2011 to go online using a PC, laptop or netbook (58% vs. 65% in 2011).
2.3 Smartphones are becoming more widespread

Since 2011 smartphone ownership has increased among all children aged 5-15 (28% vs. 20% in 2011), primarily driven by a 21 percentage point increase among children aged 12-15 (62% in 2012 vs. 41% in 2011). From age 12 onwards smartphone ownership outstrips ownership of other mobile phones. Children are using their smartphones more than they did last year, and 15% of girls aged 12-15 say their phone is the device they most often use to go online at home.
2.4 Children carry out a wide range of activities online

Children were asked what activities they did on the internet and how often. The most popular weekly activity for all age groups is school work. For 12-15 year olds this is followed by social networking and then general browsing. For 8-11 year olds school work is followed by playing games online and general browsing, while for 5-7 year olds it is followed by playing games online and then using avatar websites.

Since 2011, internet users aged 5-7 are almost twice as likely to use the internet at least weekly for avatar websites (33% vs. 18%). Among 8-11s, users are now more likely to use the internet at least weekly to watch/ download videos ‘like on YouTube’ (25% vs. 19%).

Five of the top ten individual activities are more likely in 2012 than in 2011 for users aged 12-15: schoolwork/ homework (82% vs. 75%), general surfing/ browsing (71% vs. 61%), watching/ downloading videos ‘like on YouTube’ (56% vs. 46%), downloading or playing music (53% vs. 45%), and going to a TV channel’s website or TV programme website (28% vs. 20%).

While not shown in Figure 4 (as they fall outside of the top ten online activities), there are a further three online activities that children aged 12-15 are more likely to undertake on a weekly basis than in 2011: watch or download music videos (40% vs. 28%), go to sites about news and what is going on in the world (21% vs. 13%) and make or receive telephone calls using a webcam over the internet using services like Skype (13% vs.7%). In 2012 there are, therefore, eight online activities that are more likely to be undertaken on a weekly basis by 12-15s, with some of these activities experiencing growth of 10 percentage points or more.
Figure 3: Top 10 internet activities carried out at least once a week, by age: 2012

When you’re at home, do you use the internet to do any of these things? Please think about using the internet on any type of computer, mobile phone, games player or media player (prompted responses, single coded) – PERCENTAGES SHOWN REFLECT THOSE THAT UNDERTAKE ACTIVITY AT LEAST WEEKLY *Not asked of 5-7s in 2011. **Wording amended in 2012 so cannot compare to 2011.

Base: Children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home (376 aged 5-7, 495 aged 8-11, 553 aged 12-15). Significance testing shows any change between 2011 and 2012.

Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter Base in March 2012.
Section 3

Social networking

3.1 Older children are prolific social networkers

Twenty two per cent of 8-11s say they have a social networking profile, as do 80% of 12-15s. Twenty six per cent of 12-15s say they have set up a Twitter profile. Data from Nielsen show that Facebook is among the top five most-visited websites for 5-7s, 8-11s and 12-15s.

In 2012 we asked children for the first time how many friends they had on their social networking profile. Children aged 8-11 have an average of 92 friends and children aged 12-15 say they have, on average, 286 friends. Children aged 8-11 estimate that they have not met around one in eight (12%) of these friends in person (an average of 11 people per child) while 12-15s say they have not met around one in four (25%) - an average of 72 people per child.

Figure 4: Estimated number of friends across social networking sites used: 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean number of friends</th>
<th>Proportion of these friends that the child has not met in person/face to face</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aged 8-11</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 12-15</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys aged 12-15</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls aged 12-15</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC1</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2DE</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QC26/ QC27 – How many people do you have listed as 'friends' across any social networking sites that you use? (spontaneous responses, single coded) / How many of these people listed as 'friends' have you met face to face?


Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter Base in March 2012
Critical understanding

4.1 Levels of critical understanding are not increasing

Children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home were asked a number of questions to identify levels of critical understanding: the extent to which children are able to identify the likely veracity and reliability of different types of information and content.

Children aged 8-15 who had ever visited four particular types of websites (those used for schoolwork/homework, social networking sites, those used for news purposes and the Wikipedia website) were asked whether they believed that all of the information, most of the information or some of the information on these types of site was true.

Children aged 12-15 who ever use search engines (92% of all home internet users) were asked about the truthfulness of information that was returned by the search engine. Children were asked to say which of the following statements was closer to their opinion:

- “I think that if they have been listed by the search engine the information on the website must be truthful.”
- “I think that some of the websites in the list will show truthful information and some will show untruthful information.”
- “I don’t really think about whether or not they have truthful information, I just use the sites I like the look of.”

For all four of the different types of websites we asked about the majority of children understand that different types of information and content are more likely to be truthful or reliable than others, and more than two in five children aged 12-15 (45%) make some type of critical judgement about search engine results, thinking that some of the sites returned will be truthful while others may not be. However, three in ten 12-15s (31%) believe that if a search engine lists information then it must be truthful, and close to one in five (17%) don’t consider the veracity of results but just visit the sites they like the look of.

It is also important to note that these measures have remained fairly flat over time. There remains therefore a minority of children who do not have good levels of critical understanding.
Figure 5: Children's belief in websites, by age, 2012

QC15B/A–When you use the internet to visit [TYPE OF WEBSITE] Do you believe that all of the information you see is true, most of it is true or just some of it is true? (prompted responses, single coded).

Base: Children aged 8-15 who use the internet to visit relevant websites (VARIABLE BASE). Significance testing shows any difference between 2011 and 2012.

Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in March 2012.

Figure 6: 12-15s understanding of results listed by search engines, 2012

QC29 – Which one of these is the closest in your opinion about the truthfulness of the information in the websites that appear in the results pages? (prompted responses, single coded).

Base: Children 12-15 who ever use search engines to find out about other websites or search for information (496).

Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in March 2012.
Section 5

Risk and inappropriate content

5.1 Confidence online is not always accompanied by due caution

Children express high levels of confidence online: 83% of 8-11 year olds and 93% of 12-15s say that they are confident that they know how to stay safe online, and this has remained stable over time. However, confidence and due caution do not necessarily go hand in hand - for example, using social networking sites to communicate with people not directly known to the child is more likely now than in 2011, both for 8-11s (25% vs. 12% in 2011) and 12-15s (34% vs. 24% in 2011).

5.2 Children’s dislikes about inappropriate content have not changed

8-11s continue to be more likely than 12-15s to have dislikes about inappropriate content across the range of media that children use. Dislikes tend to be higher for television and online content than for mobile and have not changed since 2011; 23% of 8-11s say they dislike inappropriate content online, as do 15% of 12-15s. One in ten children aged 8-11 who use the internet at home (11%) say they have seen something online in the past year that is worrying, nasty or offensive, with 12-15s being more likely to say this (18%).

5.3 Most children would report inappropriate content

As in 2011, 8-11s are more likely than 12-15s to say they would tell someone if they saw something online that they found worrying, nasty or offensive in some way, accounting for nearly all 8-11s who use the internet at home (94%) and close to nine in ten 12-15s (87%). The majority of both age groups would tell a family member (parent/ sibling or other), with younger children more likely to do this than older children (88% vs. 73%). Older children would be more likely than younger children to tell a friend (19% vs. 7%).

Children aged 12-15 are more likely than 8-11s to be unsure about whether they would tell someone (4% vs. 2%). A significant minority of children aged 12-15 (13%) would therefore not necessarily tell someone if they saw something online that they found to be worrying, nasty or offensive.
Figure 7: Reporting online content that is considered by the child to be worrying, nasty or offensive, by age: 2010, 2011 and 2012

5.4 Girls are more likely than boys to say they are bullied online

Around one in twenty 8-11s (4%) and 9% of 12-15s who use the internet say they have had experience of being bullied online in the past year. As with bullying through a mobile phone, this incidence has not changed for 8-11s or 12-15s since 2011. Girls aged 12-15 are more likely than boys to say they have been bullied online in the past year (13% vs. 5%).
Section 6

Parental concerns and mediation

6.1 Parents’ concerns about TV and the internet have fallen

Levels of parental concern vary across the different media their children use. The highest levels of concern are about TV, with 23% of parents of 5-15s saying they are very, or fairly, concerned about content on TV. Concerns about internet and mobile content are lower than for TV, with 17% of parents very, or fairly, concerned. Concerns about TV and the internet have fallen since 2011: from 31% to 23% for TV and from 23% to 17% for the internet. Concerns about mobile, radio and gaming content have remained steady since 2011, although concerns about gaming have fallen since 2009.

Figure 8: Parental concerns about media content, among users of each media by age: 2012

6.2 Most parents mediate their child’s media use to some extent

The majority of parents have rules in place for their child’s use of television, internet, mobile phones and gaming. A smaller number of parents have installed technical controls: 50% of parents of 5-15s have parental controls installed on their multichannel television service; 46% of parents whose child goes online at home have any of the four specific types of online controls asked about installed on their PC, laptop or netbook at home; 31% of parents of 12-15s with a phone that can be used to go online have mobile phone ‘filters’ in place; 14% of parents of 5-15s have parental controls in place on handheld/portable games consoles and 16% on fixed consoles.
6.3 For internet mediation, parents use a combination of approaches

These include some or all of the following techniques: regularly talking to their children about staying safe online, technical controls, and rules relating to parental supervision. Eighty-five per cent of parents use at least one of these approaches, with 20% using all three. In addition, parents are more likely than in 2011 to use the ‘history’ function to see the websites that their child has visited (42% vs. 32%).

Of the 15% of parents who do not use any of these elements, 8% have talked to their children about staying safe online but don’t do this regularly, and 7% do none of the things asked about.

6.4 Supervising ‘digital natives’ can be difficult

Forty-six per cent of parents agree with the statement: “My child knows more about the internet than I do”. Agreement increases with each age group, with 22% of parents of a 5-7 year-old agreeing, 35% of parents of an 8-11 year-old and 67% of parents of 12-15s. In addition, 54% of 12-15s say that they know how to delete their online history and 26% say they have done this in the last year. Twenty-two per cent say they know how to disable any online filters or controls, while 8% say they have done this in the last year.
Preferences for learning

7.1 The majority of parents agree strongly that they know enough to help their child to stay safe online

In 2012, parents of children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home were asked the extent to which they agreed that: “I feel I know enough to help my child to stay safe when they are online”. A majority (52%) agree strongly with this statement, with parents of 5-7s (62%) and 8-11s (57%) being more likely to agree strongly than parents of 12-15s (42%).

Around one in seven (14%) parents of 5-15s disagree (either strongly or slightly) that they know enough to keep their child safe online, rising to one in five (20%) parents of 12-15s.

7.2 The most popular source of information on keeping children safe online is the child’s school

A majority of parents of children aged 5-15 (54%) have looked for or received information or advice about how to help their child stay safe online. This is more likely for parents of 8-11s (59%) and 12-15s (54%) than for parents of 5-7s (45%).

The most popular source of information is the child’s school (31% for 5-7s, 42% for 8-11s and 37% for 12-15s). Information from family/friends is the next most common source of information, chosen by a sizeable minority of parents (16% of all parents of 5-15s, rising to 19% among parents of 12-15s). One in ten parents of 5-15s (11%) looked for or received information from ISPs. No other sources were used by more than one in ten parents. Around one in twenty parents of 5-15s (4%) say they have received information from their child.
Figure 9: Parents stating they have looked for or received any information or advice about how to help their child to stay safe online, by age: 2012

QP60 – Have you looked for or received information or advice about how to help your child to stay safe when they are online, from any of these sources or in any other way? (prompted responses, multi-coded) – only responses shown where >1% of all parents have given that answer
Base: Children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home (1424 aged 5-15, 376 aged 5-7, 495 aged 8-11, 553 aged 12-15)
Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in March 2012
7.3 Nine in ten children aged 8-15 say they have been given information about staying safe online

Around nine in ten children aged 8-11 (88%) or 12-15 (91%) recall receiving advice about staying safe online. For both age groups this information is most likely to be recalled as being from a teacher, (67% for 8-11s and 72% for 12-15s). Around two-thirds in each age group recall receiving this information from a parent (64% for 8-11s, 63% for 12-15s). Twelve to fifteens are more likely than 8-11s to recall receiving information or advice from friends (9% vs. 4%).

Around one in ten children say they have not been given any information or advice (10% for 8-11s, 8% for 12-15s).

Compared to 2011, children aged 8-11 and 12-15 are less likely to recall receiving information from any source (88% vs. 92% for 8-11s and 91% for 96% for 12-15s). While no individual information source has changed for 8-11s, 12-15s are less likely to say they have been given information or advice from a teacher (72% vs. 78%).

Figure 10: Children stating they have been given any information or advice about staying safe online, by age: 2010-2012

7.4 Children prefer to learn about digital media through a variety of sources

Children aged 8-15 were shown a list of possible ways to learn about digital technology such as the internet, mobile phones and digital television, and were asked to say which, if any, they preferred.

Children in both of the age groups prefer to learn through a variety of sources. For 12-15s in particular, only one source is preferred by the majority (school; 57%). In 2012, as in 2011, children aged 8-11 are more likely than 12-15s to say they prefer to learn from their parents (59% of 8-11s vs. 47% of 12-15s), while 12-15s are more likely than 8-11s to prefer to learn...
from friends (45% of 12-15s vs. 23% of 8-11s), to be self-taught (26% vs. 10%), to learn from manuals (12% vs. 4%) or from suppliers/shops (9% vs. 2%).

There are some differences by gender; girls aged 8-11 are more likely than boys to prefer to learn from parents (64% vs. 54%) while boys aged 12-15 are more likely than girls of this age to say they are not interested in learning about digital technology (5% vs. 1%).

Children aged 8-15 in AB households are more likely than all children aged 8-15 to prefer to learn from friends (42% vs. 34%) or from suppliers/shops (12% vs. 6%) while those in DE households are less likely to prefer to learn from parents (46% vs. 53%).

Compared to 2011, children aged 8-11 are less likely to prefer to learn from school (51% vs. 58%) and 12-15s are now more likely to prefer to learn from school (57% vs. 49%), from friends (45% vs. 38%) and from the manual (12% vs. 8%).

Figure 11: Children’s preferences for learning about using digital technology: 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012

7.5 The majority of 8-15s have experience of learning about the internet at school

Children aged 8-15 were asked whether ‘any of your lessons at school teach you about the internet. For example, how the internet works, how to make websites, how to do research on the internet, or how to avoid websites you don’t want to see.’

The majority of 8-11s (67%) and 12-15s (90%) say they have experience of learning about the internet at school. This is more likely among 12-15s than 8-11s. Since 2011, 12-15s are more likely to say they have lessons about the internet (90% vs. 82%).

**QQ65/66** – Do any of your lessons at school teach you about the Internet? (prompted responses, single coded)


Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter/Base in March 2012