To appear in 2019: The new EU Kids Online survey on children's and young people's online experiences in Europe

Context

EU Kids Online is established as the primary source of high quality, independent and comprehensive evidence underpinning a better and safer internet for children in Europe. Now working in more than 30 countries, the network integrates research expertise across multiple disciplines and methods. It has built constructive relationships with governments, media, industry, policy makers, educators and practitioners at national, European and international levels. Its findings and reports are widely referred to in policy statements, having guided numerous initiatives to improve children's online experiences. For further information see www.eukidsonline.net.

The impact of EU Kids Online has rested significantly on its accumulated expertise and on its ground-breaking 2010 survey: By then the network conducted a face-to-face, in home survey of 25,000 9- to 16-year-old internet users and their parents in 25 countries. In 2017 and 2018 the network has realised a new survey on children's and young people's online experiences. This time the network followed a decentralised approach: The national teams organised representative surveys on the national level with children and young people between 9 and 17 years. For the time being, 21 European countries have collected data or will finish data collection until the beginning of 2019 (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland). The national data are then merged into a European data set whoch allows for comparative analyses. Based on this, in 2019 the network will publish national reports and reports on comparative analyses.

Objectives and research questions for the new survey

Since the design of the 2010 survey several things have changed:

- The world – there are changes in relation to new technologies, particularly with regard to mobile media, and new social practices among children.
- The research context – new surveys have been designed and conducted, some using EU Kids Online questions, others not.
- Our knowledge – through analysis and publication of results, the network knows better what worked and what didn't.

Against this background the network has re-designed its theoretical model (see the figure below) and its methodological approach according to the following objectives:

- The new survey allows for some key **comparisons over time** in order to cover relevant changes in children's and young people's online practices.

- The new survey allows for **European comparisons** with regard to some key online experiences in order to analyse commonalities and differences between countries.
- The new survey includes relevant **innovations in media technologies and services** in order to provide empirical evidence about the existing media environment.
- The new survey covers **relevant societal developments** that are related to online communication, for instance the role of social media with regard to extremism.
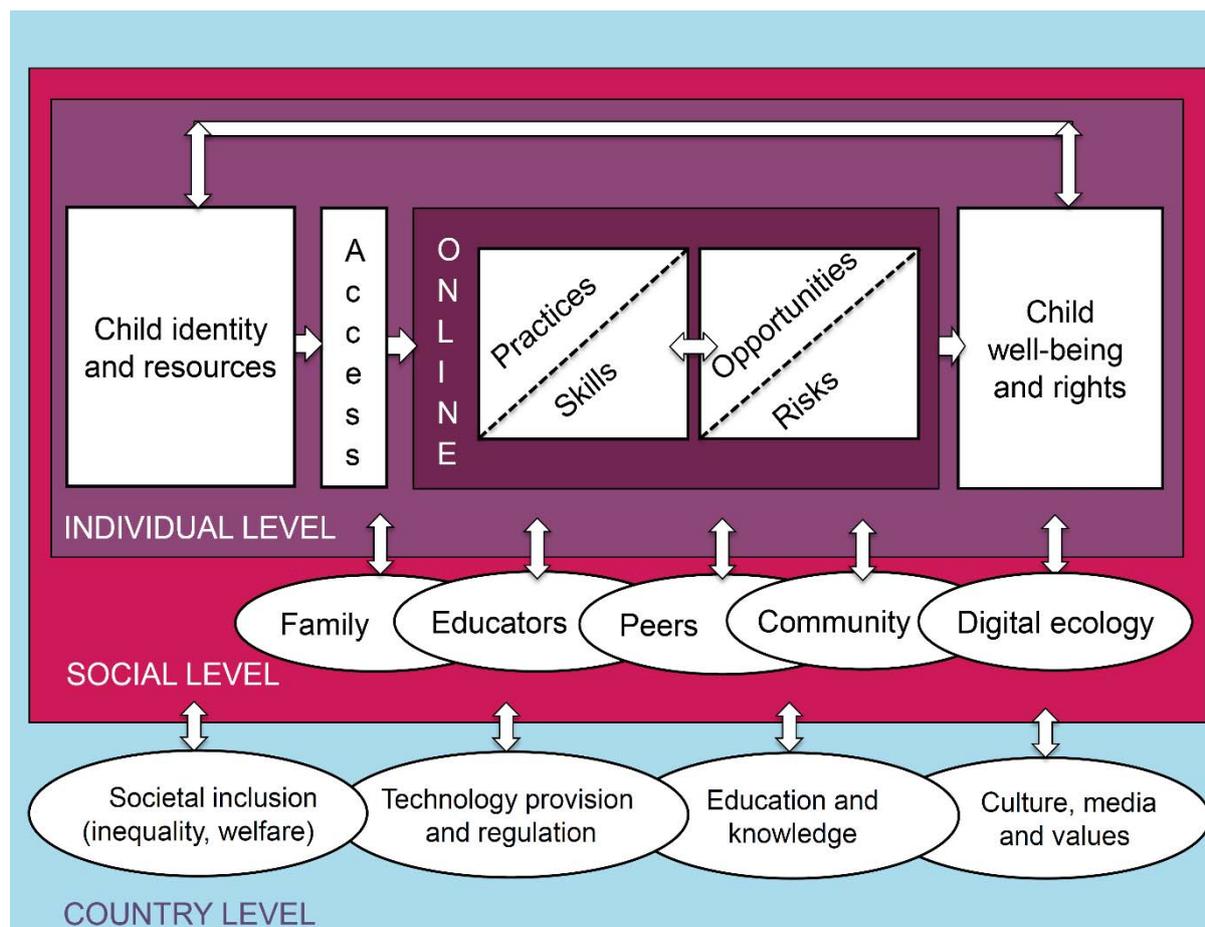

Figure: The revised model of the EU Kids Online survey (Livingstone/Mascheroni/Staksrud 2015)

It is obvious that not all these objectives can be optimised at the same time. Therefore the network has developed a flexible, decentralised approach for the new survey. The revised core questionnaire includes the following modules:

- **Individual characteristics.** Demographic, psychological, contextual – e.g. offline risks. For this having reliable and valid predictive scales has proved important and could be improved.
- **Use of internet.** Access, use, technologies, platforms, contexts of use. These are amongst the questions most widely used in surveys but at the same time there is an almost continuous revision needed given explosion of internet-enabled devices.
- **Activities online.** This was kept minimal in the risk-focused survey of 2010, but could be usefully expanded in future surveys that balance risks and opportunities.

- **Skills and literacies.** Approaches to measure this have been developed somewhat since the 2010 survey and the questions used there can be seen as having been too narrowly focused on safety and need to be expanded.
- **Risks.** Bullying, pornography, sexting, stranger contact, negative user-generated content. Not all areas of risk were included in the 2010 survey however (see classification of risks related to children's internet use).
- **Outcomes.** Coping questions, technical responses (reported, blocked etc) plus potential for an improved measure of harm.
- **Parental mediation.** Several scales have emerged from the analysis of the 2010 data but these require a rather large number of questions. It is important to seek agreement in what are the most relevant aspects of parental mediation and perhaps pare down the more contextual questions asked on parenting.

In order to reflect recent societal phenomena the network developed several optional modules:

- Cyberhate, discrimination and violent extremism
- eHealth
- Cyberbystanders
- Internet of Things
- Social Media and Uses of Sexual Content
- Digital Citizenship

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Publication about the new theoretical approach:

- Livingstone, S., Mascheroni, G. and Staksrud, E. (2015) Developing a framework for researching children's online risks and opportunities in Europe. EU Kids Online, London, UK. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/64470/

Key publications about the EU Kids Online 2010 survey:

- Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A. and Ólafsson, K. (2011) Risks and safety on the internet: The perspective of European children. Full findings. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33731/
- Hasebrink, U., Görzig, A., Haddon, L., Kalmus, V. and Livingstone, S. (2011) Patterns of risk and safety online. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/39356/