

INSAFE GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Survey of resources for teenagers

Executive Summary

May 2012



About Insafe

Insafe is the European Safer Internet awareness-raising network co-funded by the European Commission. It comprises national awareness centres, helplines and youth panels across the European Union and in Iceland, Norway and Russia. Insafe aims at empowering users to benefit from the positive aspects of internet whilst avoiding the potential risks. Further information is available at www.saferinternet.org or contact info-insafe@eun.org.

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INTRODUCTION

The Safer Internet Centres (SICs)¹ have recently given an overview of the provision of information and resources for young people aged 13 to 18 and for their educators and carers. The report² describes the challenges of producing effective resources for this age group and also the impressive volume of high-quality resources across Europe addressing the needs of teenagers. It also highlights the need to continue to develop future resources which have real impact in a fast-changing world.

CHALLENGES

- **Age-appropriateness** - A particular challenge comes about meeting the needs of such a heterogeneous group. One SIC described them as a “very fragmented segment – difficult to reach”.
- **The Generational Gap** - Another SIC commented, “Teenagers ... do not particularly appreciate adults telling them what to do and not do, especially when it comes to a media they believe adults do not master better than they do.”
- **Form and Content** - The material must be age-appropriate concerning “language, content, design, length and type of material [print/online].”
- **Fast-changing requirements** - The online activity of young people is not static. “The trends of technology and 'fashionable' websites change quickly with this age bracket so it is important to avoid being service/tech specific as the content is at risk of dating quickly.”
- **Curriculum time** - There are many demands on the curriculum for this age group and several SICs have commented on how hard it is to get formal school time.

DEVELOPING AND TESTING RESOURCES

To overcome the challenges, the SICs are spending a great deal of time in testing resources for this age group as they are being developed:

- **Youth Panels** - The SICs use their Youth Panels and other forums to help them develop and refine resources. To achieve this, the SICs use consultations, questionnaires and structured dialogue as well as online channels.
- **Schools** - When materials are tested in schools, the testing varies from consultations on single visits to the full use of curriculum materials in schools over time.
- **Adult specialists** - Some SICs consult with educational professionals and other experts.

¹ There are now 30 SICs across the EU funded by the EU Safer Internet Programme. A SIC typically comprises these four components: an awareness centre to run campaigns; a helpline to provide information, advice and assistance to children; a hotline to allow the public to report illegal content and a youth panel to allow young people to express their views and exchange knowledge and experience.

² The production of this report was funded by the EU Safer Internet Programme.

DELIVERING RESOURCES

The SICs are continually looking for the most effective channels to reach this age group:

1. **Directly to young people** - SICs have material available on websites and there is a general move towards social media such as Facebook and YouTube.
2. **Through schools** - The SICs have made their resources available for schools to download. However, many schools still prefer pre-printed material. Materials are also distributed in schools as part of visits by SIC staff or partner organisations.
3. **Other channels**
 - **Partner organisations** - Inevitably, these vary from country to country. In some, libraries are a channel for e-safety resources. In Latvia, materials have been disseminated with the support of National Centre for Education.
 - **Events** - In Luxembourg, there is an opportunity to deliver material at events attended by BEE SECURE, the national SIC, in particular at the youth music events during the summer.
 - **Campaigns** - In some countries, there have been specific e-safety campaigns on a national scale and Safer Internet Day has played a significant part in this.

PROVISION FOR TEENAGERS

These are some of the types of activities and resources that have been made available by the SICs. Details and links to these resources, country by country, are provided in the full report.

1. Online resources

The SICs have developed e-safety websites either specifically aimed at teenagers or sites that have sections dedicated to the needs of teenagers. Most provide online advice about issues such as data protection, social networking, copyright and use of mobile phones, sometimes in the form of quizzes and games. Less common are online group discussions. One SIC has included the facility to make an online pledge against cyberbullying. Resources hosted include downloadable e-safety guides and other advisory documents and also e-postcards. The sites often host videos, or they direct users to videos hosted elsewhere. Some of the videos come in the form of cartoons.

2. Offline resources

Not all printed material can be made available online in an effective way and so printed material can be ordered from SICs such as flyers, posters, advisory brochures, pocket cards and comics and also a variety of give-aways.

3. Activities

As stated, all SICs interact with Youth Panels. Some, in addition, run occasional larger-scale conferences and youth forums. Many manage workshops for teenagers and also provide a programme of school-based sessions. As well as the Safer Internet Day in 2012, several countries run a variety of Internet safety campaigns, sometimes with direct support from government

agencies and usually in conjunction with partner organisations. A popular element of campaigns is a competition to make e-safety videos.

PROVISION FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Many of the items highlighted above also make useful resources for teachers and parents. However, a number of SICs have also produced tailored resources for these two groups. These include advisory handbooks and presentations, lesson plans and research reports. Some countries have websites, or sections of websites, specific to teachers' and parents' needs with videos, discussions and guidance on different types of devices. Several countries have online e-learning courses for teachers and some run conferences for teachers and also for parents.

MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

This is an area which has caused some difficulty in a number of countries, some of whom have indicated that they don't currently implement any measurement of the effectiveness of resources. Where measurement does take place, SICs are using questionnaires, online statistics and a web-based reporting tool.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

To mitigate the challenges of developing resources and activities to meet the needs of teenagers, the SICs have undertaken a number of successful strategies:

- **Youth consultation** - working very closely with youth panels, youth councils, advisory boards and working groups.
- **Development of Critical Thinking** - The SICs have been developing materials in engaging formats that promote critical thinking skills and informed decision-making, i.e. "Making good choices".
- **Specialist consultation** - working with partner professionals who are already involved with meeting the needs of this age group.
- **Social media** - There has been significant and growing use of social media sites to communicate with teenagers in many countries. It will be increasingly-important to share good practice in this area.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

A number of suggestions have emerged as to how teenagers could be better served by more of the following:

1. The process for resource creation

- Drawing on the experience of advertising agencies and other successful communication practices.
- Consulting with a wider range of professionals who work with this age group, such as teachers, psychologists, parents and social workers.
- Carrying out a survey among this age group to ask what they want to become more aware of.
- Giving them more of a voice and face in tools such as vodcasts.

2. Product

- Developmental games, rather than written information
- Give-aways
- Interactive workshops with thematic discussions
- More resources for teachers 16-18
- Focus on vulnerable children

3. Other forms of engagement

- Youth ownership - there are some outstanding examples of young people playing a large role in developing e-safety programmes.
- Youth leadership - When young people have the opportunity to interact with legislators there can be real and mutual benefits.
- Interacting with teenagers on their own platforms
- More entertainment events

4. The Insafe Network

- Training about how to approach teenagers
- Network initiatives that support young people's involvement in Internet governance debates and initiatives.
- Insafe materials that could be translated into many languages in the form of Common European resources with a 'design-once use many times' approach.
- Impact measurement - Develop agreed standards for measurement shared across all participating countries.