

INSAFE GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE
Online safety resources for young internet users:
Survey and recommendations



Compiled: November 2011
Published: March 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 the 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

Insafe Safer Internet Centres (SICs*) have recently given an overview of the provision of information and resources for children aged nine and under and provision also for those with a care responsibility for the children. The SICs clearly show that this is an age group whose use of the internet is growing in importance and need. As the respondent from Slovakia writes, "We think it is necessary to focus on the target group of small children since this is the group that have the first contact with the internet and it is very important to make them aware about opportunities and also threats of the online tools." Consequently, it is hoped that this report, based on their responses, will inform the whole community and will contribute to the sharing of good practice in supporting these children, their carers and their teachers. The report also shows the considerable challenges faced by providers when developing meaningful information and resources and the innovative approaches they are taking to meeting those challenges.

There are some excellent resources which have been developed centrally and used in many countries with this age group. There are also some very valuable partnerships contributing to internet safety and some outstanding national and international resources. Despite this, there still remain many challenges in meeting the needs of this very vulnerable age group.

(* Note - 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. The production of this report was funded by the EU Safer Internet Programme.)

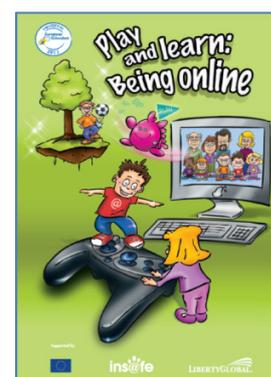
CURRENT PROVISION

The SICs have outlined the information and resources they have available for this age group and the supporting information and resources for their teachers and parents.

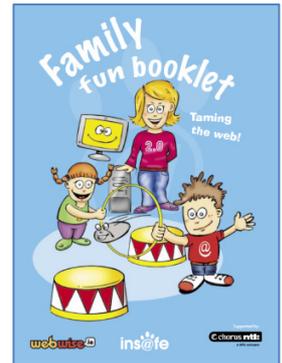
1. Multi-country provision

The resources used by most of the SICs are based around material that has been produced once and then adapted for other countries. This adaptation takes the form of translation, re-dubbing audio text or subtitled video. Key examples of this are:

- The 'Play and Learn: Being online' booklet published by European Schoolnet is available online and in printed form in French, Czech, Dutch, English, German, Hungarian and Polish. It is also available online in Greek, Hebrew, Romanian, Slovenian and Spanish. Estonian and Portuguese versions are in production.



- The 'eSafety Kit' is now available online in a number of countries: Austria, Belgium (Dutch and French), the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Spain. It is also available offline in Armenia, Egypt, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom, Ukraine. Versions for Greece (online) and Turkey are also in production.
- 'Sheeplive' is used in Austria, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and in Slovakia where it was originally developed: <http://sk.sheeplive.eu/>



2. Single country provision

Where SICs have very significant resources developed within their own country, it is usually where they have support from major national partners. Examples are:

- **Belgium** – In addition to their own website at <http://www.clicksafe.be/kinderen>, they have collaborated with Disney to make an e-safety version of 'Phineas & Ferb'.
- **Denmark** – they use the resources developed by collaboration between the Media Council and the Danish Broadcasting Company, who have created an online interactive universe for the youngest children with a secure portal and a supportive website: <http://www.dr.dk/b/Oline/sikker-net/sikker-net-med-oline.htm>
- **France** – There is a wide range of resources with the 'Vinz et Lou sur Internet' awareness programme, games for children and a helpline for parents and teachers of this age group:



<http://www.internetsanscrainte.fr/le-coin-des-juniors/dessin-anime-du-mois> and also: <http://tinyurl.com/82dapzk>



- **Germany** – The requirements for this age group are delivered by 'klicksafe' which is run by the Media Authority of Rhineland-Palatinate (LMK) and the Media Authority for North Rhine-Westphalia (LfM): <https://www.klicksafe.de/>
- **Greece** – They have resources on the 'saferinternet' portal and a dedicated, secure website for educational professionals: <http://www.saferinternet.gr/index.php?parentobid=Page4>
- **Ireland** – Every primary school has received a resource pack with CD and they now have 'Webwise on Facebook' for parents: <http://www.facebook.com/Webwise>
- **Latvia** – They work with the Centre against Violence, 'Dardedze'. They have created a special character/mascot 'Džimba', who is educating children in personal safety, including safety on the internet: <http://www.dzimba.lv/>



- **Lithuania** – They have an online game and a virtual encyclopedia: <http://www.draugiskasinternetas.lt/zaidimas/> and <http://enciklopedija.bibliotekospazangai.lt/>
- **Portugal** – They have created games about safe use: http://www.seguranet.pt/repositorymodule/collection_view/id/262/



- **UK** – The 'kidSMART' website holds material for this age group and will shortly be adding a story and supporting resources for 3-7 year olds: <http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/>

3. Offline material

- **Portugal** and **Slovenia** have good examples of offline resources including 'cootie catcher' paper games, notebooks, colour pencils, flyers, posters and stickers.



- **Romania** – A well-known children’s author has written an eSafety colouring book for kindergarten children: <http://www.sigur.info/docs/jester-si-printesa-misterioasa-varianta-print.pdf>

CHALLENGES

The SICs say that, despite progress, there are major challenges in developing resources:

- Visual and verbal content – There is a much higher demand for the visual from this age group and content must be developed with the help of professional designers and illustrators. It is a non-trivial task to develop age-appropriate text and audio feedback.
- Game design – Their development often carries higher costs than other media.
- Technology background – The availability of school-based and home-based technologies for this age group varies greatly. As a result, it becomes necessary to develop an especially wide range of materials, including paper-based resources.

TESTING RESOURCES

The SICs described how they test information and resources for this age group, although it is sometimes difficult to engage teachers of the youngest children in the development process. It is also difficult to get feedback from children of this age:

- Teachers – Most SICs work with teachers to test their materials during or after development.
- Children’s panels – A few countries specifically mention using panels or groups of children in this age group for direct testing.
- Parents – Some SICs are using parents in the testing process.
- Specialist support – Some SICs are making use of specialists such as social workers, psychologists, police and others who work in prevention. They are working with national and regional broadcasting organisations, education bodies and specific curriculum support organisations including curriculum-specialist teachers within their Ministry of Education.

DELIVERING RESOURCES

The main channels SICs use to deliver resources are:

- School sessions – SICs’ teams take the materials to school-based sessions and work face to face with staff and children.
- Website – Their websites are important channels for delivering information and resources. Many are aimed at educators and some at children.
- Parents – Most SICs are creating resources to help parents support their children.

- Other channels – These are mostly used to provide information about online safety: teacher information channels and newspapers, newsletters to schools, social networking sites (SNSs), media (PR, television, radio, newspapers), curriculum support organisations, libraries, children’s clubs, and fairs and other education events.

MEASURING IMPACT

The SICs are getting feedback from children, teachers and parents and are also measuring website activity. However, this remains a challenging area which will require more focus.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

All the SICs have given views about how we can better serve this age group in the future.

1. Concept development

- Research – More research is needed to look into the potential dangers that children of this age group are facing and issues such as motoric skills development and the implications for internet use. There is also a need to develop recommendations on how educational websites for this age group should be constructed, including what to avoid and what kind of layout is suitable.
- Collaboration – The SICs recommend increased working with NGOs who focus on safety issues for young children, and also with university education departments and experts in psychology.

2. Product formats and design

The SICs raised a number of questions and ideas in this area:

- Risk management – Balancing the need to achieve prevention without causing unnecessary fear and without drawing children into harmful activities.
- Age appropriate – Making the whole concept like a game to improve engagement, without being childish. Keep the basic concept to just one simple idea rather than many.
- Parents – There must be information and activities to support parental engagement.
- Audio – Several SICs said that the audio component of videos, interactive activities and games should be kept separate to facilitate localisation.
- Video development – Videos still have a big role to play in teaching online safety.
- Product migration – Migrating the games to other mobile and personal formats such as console-devices, smart-phones and tablets.
- Role play – There has been a benefit in kindergartens using hand puppets, for example.

- Paper-based products – Develop more fun literacy age-appropriate offline resources in the language of the different network members and distribute them to schools.

3. Channels for communication and distribution

Several channels were suggested:

- Parents and teachers – The SICs agree that the best way to reach young children is via parents and teachers and they cite ‘Play and Learn: Being online’ as a good example of a useful resource.
- Round tables – These are valuable for talking through key questions with experts and with parents.
- Age-appropriate SNSs – These can be used to communicate internet safety information and guidance.
- ‘Teen-to-child’ – These initiatives can work well in informal recreational settings, such as scout groups and sports activities.

4. Other network actions

The SICs have proposed four network actions:

- Sharing good practice at an annual event
- Promotion of good online places for children such as the “Best Children’s Online Content - European Award”:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/events/competition/winners/index_en.htm
- National or international teacher and school competitions
- Developing specially-targeted campaigns.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES

After reviewing the information provided by the SICs, we have put together five recommendations and guidelines for future activity.

1. Sharing good practice

Issue – There are many examples of good practice but they are not implemented in all countries.

Recommendation – Set up a Europe-wide forum, face to face and online, to share good practice and address the specific and very wide needs of this age group more effectively. The forum should come with targets and impact measures to ensure practical outcomes.

2. Teacher training

Issue – The SICs have sometimes found a lack of engagement with, or understanding of, online and mobile safety issues from some teaching professionals who work with this age group.

Recommendation – Develop materials specifically for teacher-training institutions and for in-service training to extend the teaching professionals' understanding of safety issues for this age group.

3. Family support

Issue – Some of the products in wide use have family resources attached to them to promote parents' and carers' understanding and involvement, but not all.

Recommendation – Unless there is an overriding reason for not doing so, all materials designed for school use or individual out-of-school use for this age group should come with family support material.

4. Product development

Issues:

- There are varying levels of partnership with other safety organisations.
- A number of countries are struggling with the cost and skill requirements of developing high-quality multimedia resources.
- The age range of the first nine years for any child includes the widest range of understanding and communication skills of any age group.

Recommendations:

- Resources and information for this age group and their carers should be developed in collaboration with other leading safety agencies wherever possible.
- Prioritise the centralised development of just a few high-quality resources which are designed for this age group with localisation in mind, as long as cultural variations can be catered for.

5. Impact measurement and user feedback

Issue – The measurement of the impact of resources currently appears quite varied across the regions.

Recommendation – Conduct further research into the measurement of the impact of resources at different stages of the 'nine and under' age group to identify those that develop the greatest understanding and good practice. Establish formal systematic feedback mechanisms including measures of activity on websites, online surveys for children, teachers and families to seek their feedback, and user panels which include children in this age range.