WEB SAFETY SURVEY

YOUNG PEOPLE AND INTERNET USE

“Companies spend millions of dollars on firewalls, encryption and secure access devices, and it’s money wasted, because none of these measures address the weakest link in the security chain.”

Kevin Mitnick

Foreword

The technological world that we now find ourselves living in appears to require us to grapple more and more with various online tools, apps and widgets. That said the opportunities and potential available from appropriate use of the Internet are wide reaching.

It is often young people who are the pace-setters with regard to embracing each new innovation, in most cases at a very young age. This research has unearthed some very interesting findings that should be considered by any stakeholders involved in working with young people and parents in relation to safer internet use and cyberbullying etc. Therefore, it is imperative that, professionals, decision makers, policy makers and ultimately parents are keeping up to speed and being aware of how our young people are engaging with the Internet.

As a member of the Children's and Young People's Service Committee Web Safety Working Group, I endorse without hesitation the work of this report and commend the organisations involved and also the young people from the Donegal Youth Council and Donegal Youth Service for the sterling work in conducting and presenting the research.

This type of work is never fait accompli. Nevertheless it is the vison of the group that this report will act as catalyst to the development of ongoing strategic planning within Donegal, striving to enhance the awareness of Internet issues and encourage positive online behaviour.

Gareth Gibson
Donegal Youth Service

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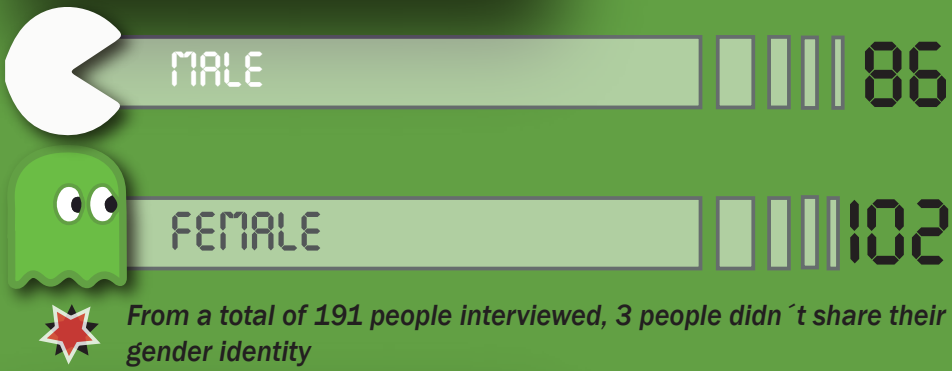
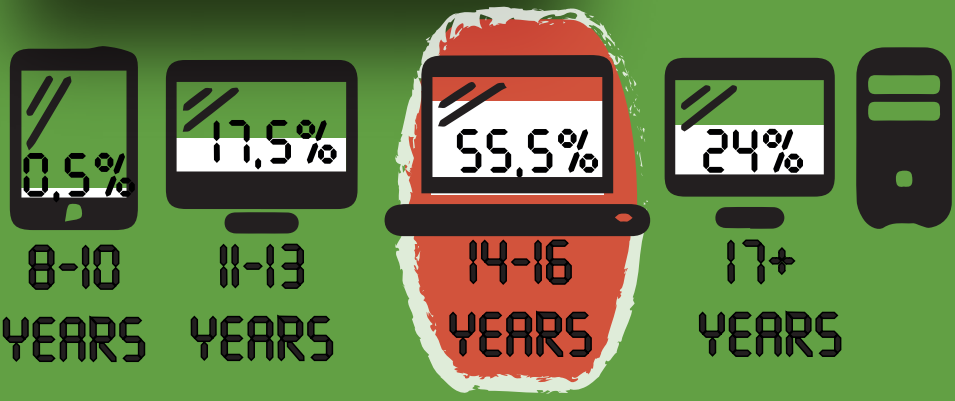
1. GENDER DISTRIBUTION



From a total of 191 people interviewed, 3 people didn´t share their gender identity

2. AGE SECTIONS



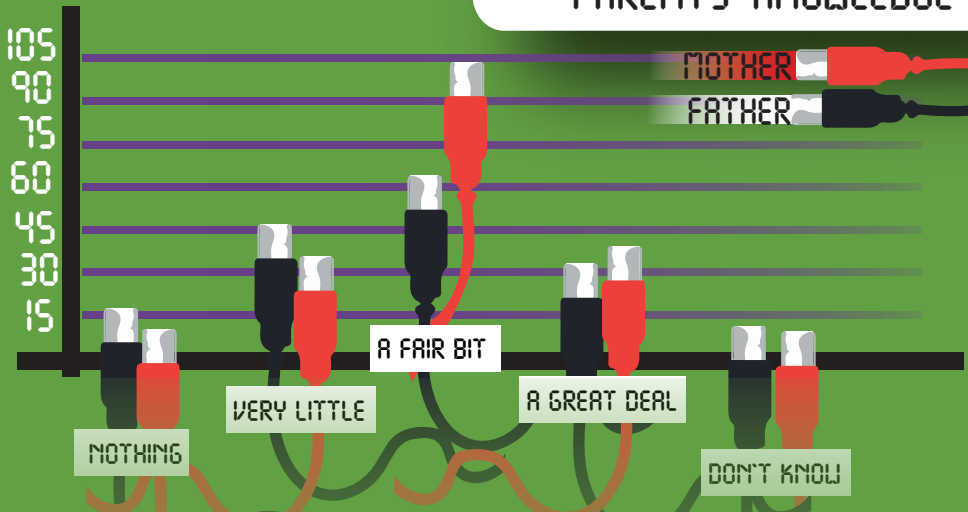
COMMENTS

This survey on "Young People and Internet Use" targeted young people from Donegal between the age of 8 and 17 years old.
It was distributed in secondary schools - and a small amount of questionnaires in primary schools - all over the county. The gender distribution of the sample presents a small majority of women, but generally there is a quite even gender divide.The most prevelant age section is composed of 14-16 years old students - more than half of the sample (55,5%) - followed by 17 year old people (24%) and 11-13 year old (17,5%).

3. THE INTERNET: FIRST USE

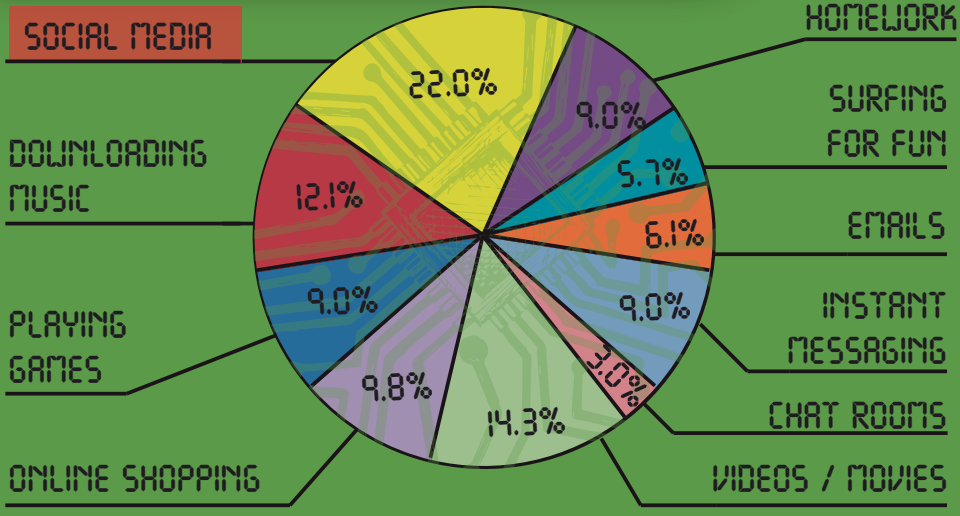
The majority of children start using the Internet between 7 and 11 years old. In Donegal 25% of children begin using it between 7 and 8.

4. THE INTERNET: PARENTS' KNOWLEDGE

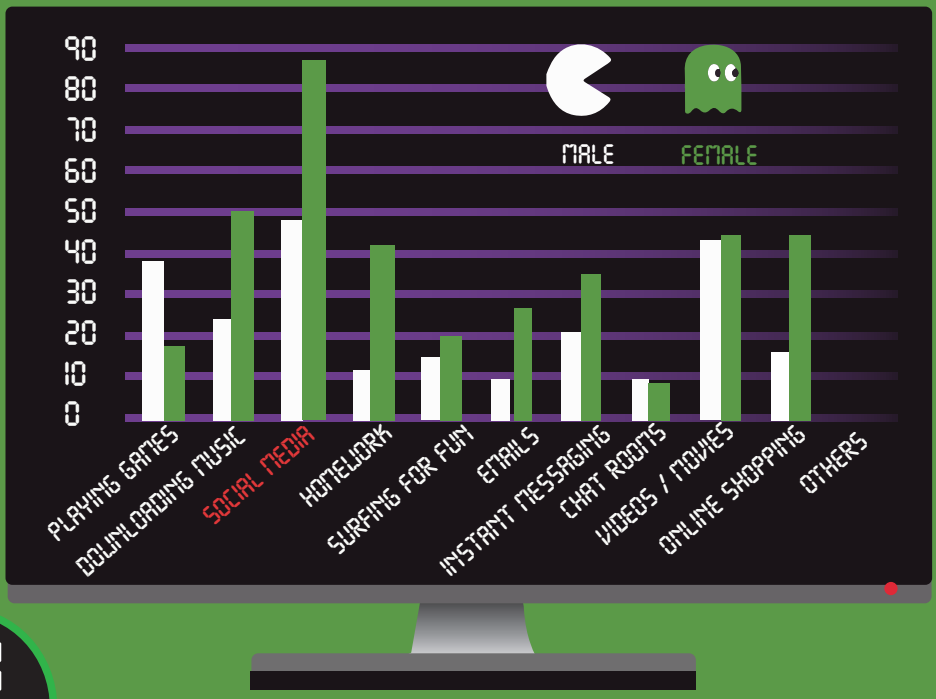


There is the general perception that parents know a "fair bit" or "very little" about the Internet. An high parcentage of teenagers (54%) think that their mother has a better knowledge than their father.

5. YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WEB: WHAT THEY DO MOST ON THE INTERNET



A significant number of young people in Donegal use the internet mostly for social media, watching videos/movies and music downloading, with only 9.8% utilising the internet for online shopping.



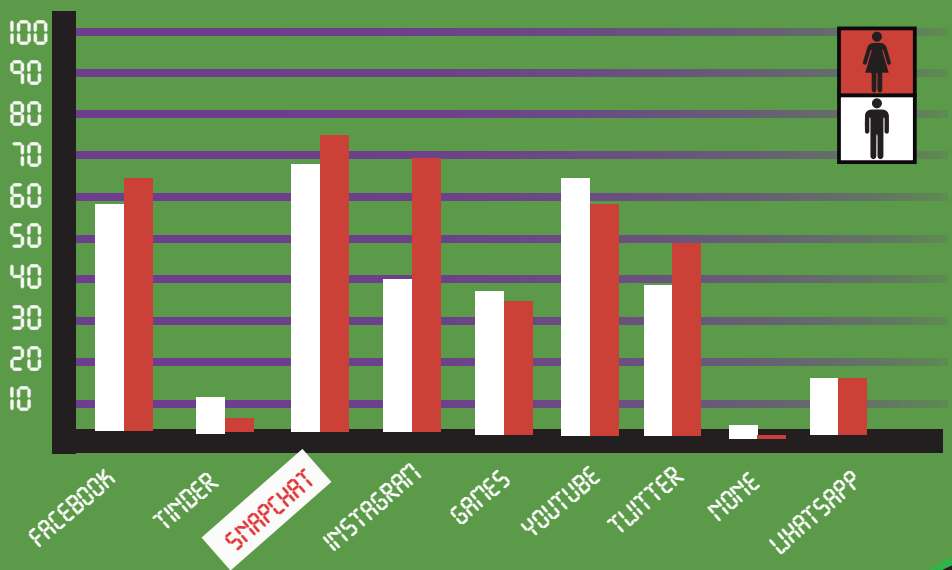
6. YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WEB: MOBILE PHONE APPS

FOLLOWING FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

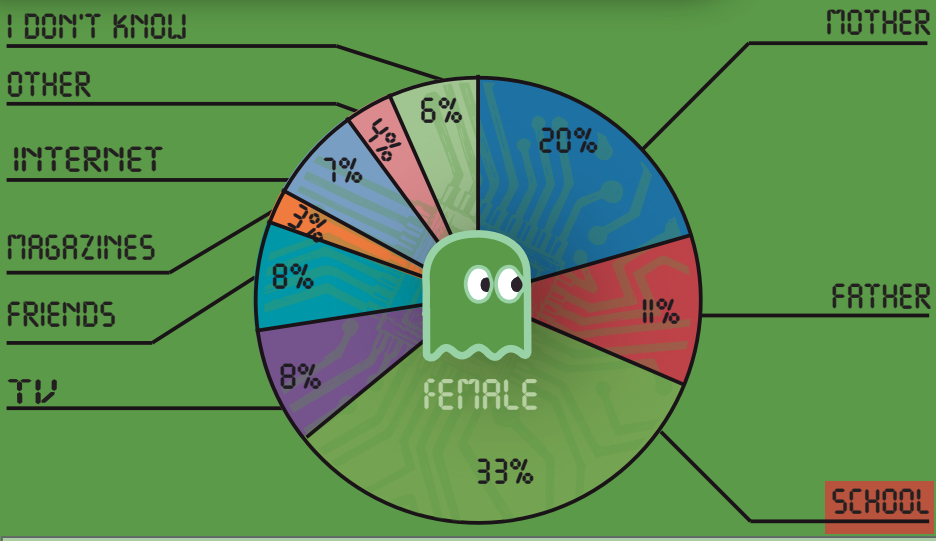
An equal percentage of youth use the Internet for homework and playing games. One difference to be highlighted between girls and boys is in their use of social media, with females reporting twice as much social media use as males.

Due to the constant increase of Internet use via mobile phone, we can highlight how young people are accustomed to using these Apps.

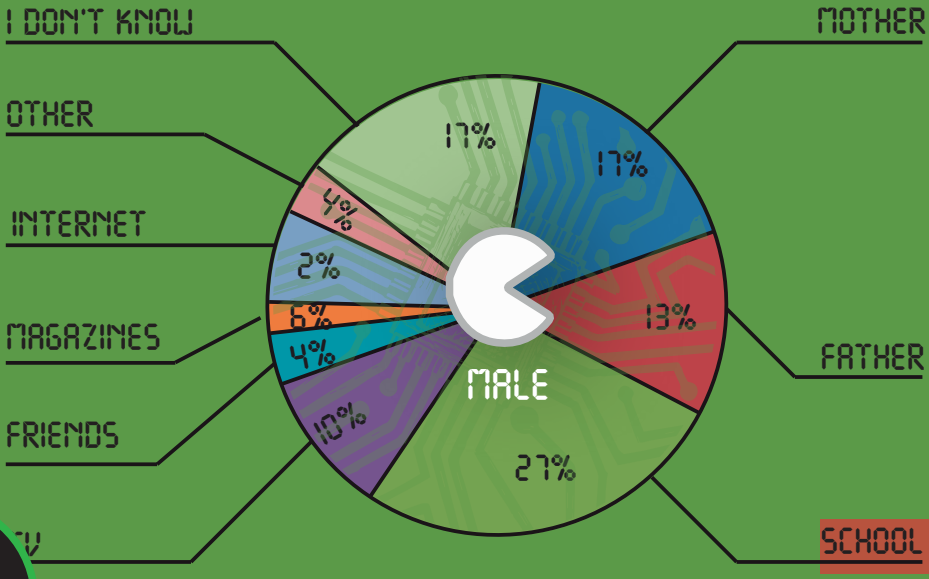
In the following bar chart we can see a large majority of Donegal students use Snapchat, Facebook, Yotube and Instagram via mobile Apps. Females once again are in the majority in terms of overall use.



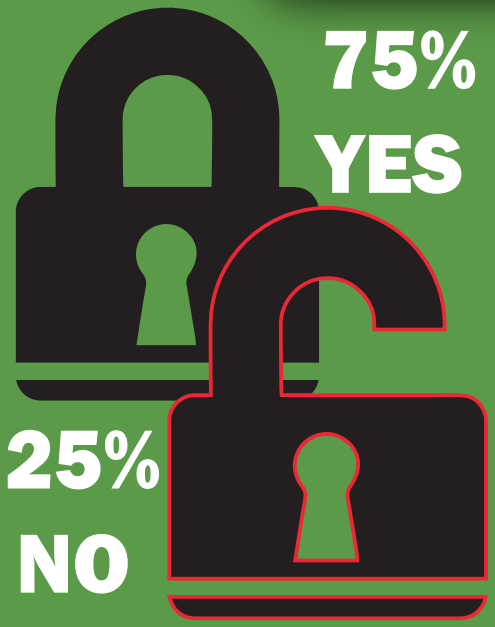
7. INTERNET SAFETY: INFORMATION SOURCES



We can notice a difference between girls and boys in relation to their awareness of Internet Safety Information, with females again reporting greater knowledge, while among males there is a higher percentage of people who didn't answer, or chose "I don't know". Finally we can determine how girls are more likely to get Internet Safety Information from parents and school. Generally girls seem to be more infromed and aware.



8. INTERNET SAFETY: USE OF PRIVACY SETTINGS



COMMENTS

The majority of young people surveyed (75%) do use privacy settings on social media networking sites. 25% of 185 people interviewed do not use privacy settings. Only 6 people didn't answer the question.

9. INTERNET SAFETY: ADULTS CONTENT AND USE OF FILTERS

COMMENTS

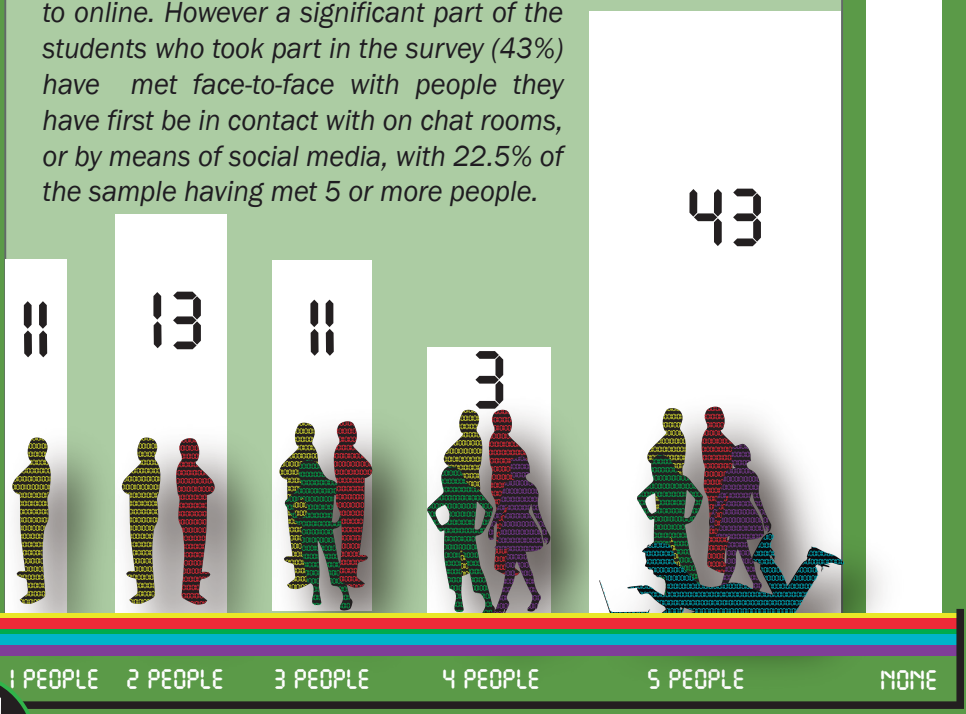
Question 12 was about the use of family filters while using the Internet. In particular the teenagers were asked whether they accidentally go onto adults web sites while they are on the web. Up to 76% answered "NO", with 21.5% "YES" and 2.5% didn't answer.

COMMENTS

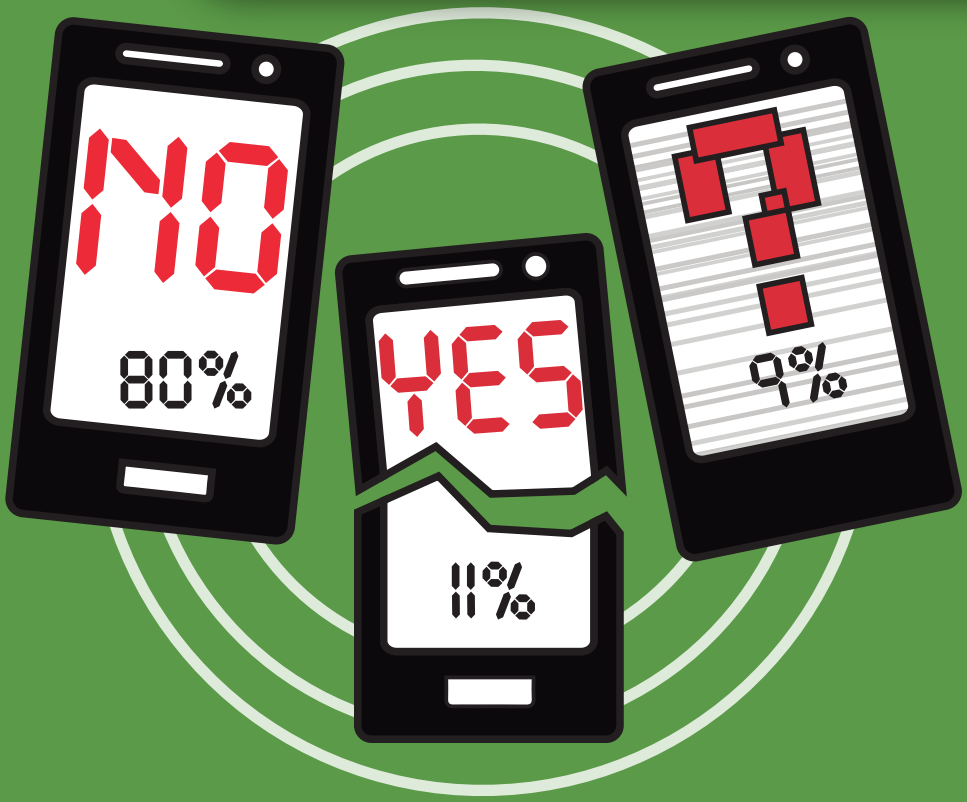
In Question 8, young people were asked: "How many different people have you met face-to-face that you first met in chat rooms, through e-mail, Facebook or other on-line service?". In a sample of 191 people:

- *105 answered "None";*
- *43 answered "5 or more people";*
- *13 answered "2 people";*
- *11 answered "3 people";*
- *11 answered "1 person";*
- *3 answered "4 people";*
- *5 didn't answer.*

This means that more than half of those interviewed (55%) do have never met face-to-face with people they first talked to online. However a significant part of the students who took part in the survey (43%) have met face-to-face with people they have first be in contact with on chat rooms, or by means of social media, with 22.5% of the sample having met 5 or more people.



II. THREATS AND DANGERS OF THE NET

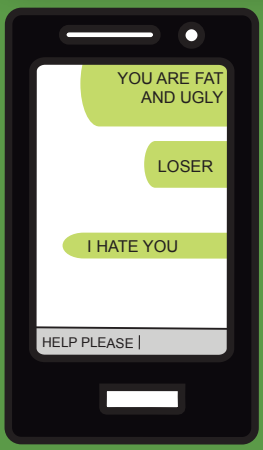


COMMENTS

Up to 11% of those surveyed acknowledged to have been "harassed, upset, bothered, threatened or embarrassed by someone on a social networking site, or chatting online" in the previous 6 months. It means that 21 out of 191 has identified dangers on the Internet and have suffered negative situations while online.

While the majority of young people (80%) seems to not have been threatened or harassed online, there is also 9% of students involved in this survey who cannot answer the question and have difficulties in identifying threats and dangers coming from the internet.

12. CYBERBULLYING

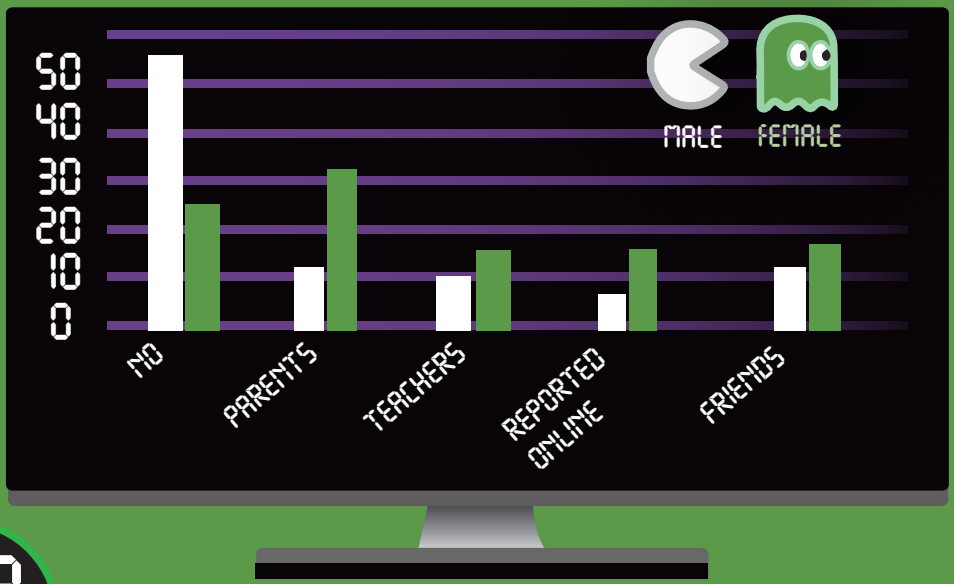


32%

ACKNOWLEDGED TO HAVE PERSONALLY BEEN OR KNOW A FRIEND WHO HAS BEEN

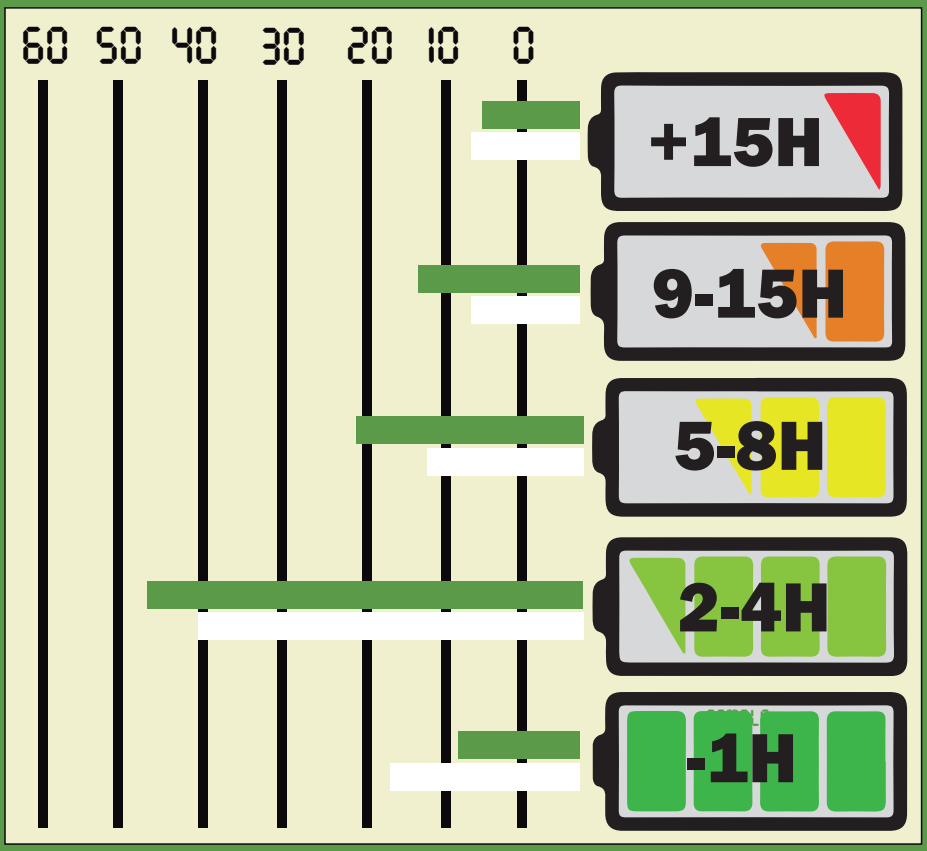
CYBERBULLIED

A really important finding we can highlight is in relation to young people's awareness of cyberbullying issues. Up to 32% of young people acknowledged to have been personally cyberbullied or to have a friend who has had this problem.
The bar chart here below shows that the majority of boys didn't report the cyberbullying to anyone, while girls are generally more likely to tell parents, teachers or friends.



MALE FEMALE

13. TIME SPENT ON THE INTERNET



COMMENTS

The vast majority of those surveyed spend up to 4 hours online each day (58%), with 18% reporting daily online use of 5-8 hours. Up to 10% stated they spend 9 to 15 hours online per day a final 8% even more than 15 hours. Girls tend to spend more time than boys on the Internet.

DONEGAL YOUTH COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

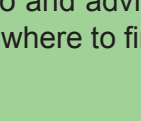
From a first analysis of the results of the Web Safety Survey "Young People and Internet Use", the Donegal Youth Council identified the following as their key findings:

- There is a general perception that parents' knowledge of the Internet is low and in many cases probably not enough to protect children from threats and dangers of the web;
- Teenagers and young people spend a significant amount of time on the Internet - the majority of them at least 2-3 hours daily – and for this reason they need to be informed about privacy protection policies and tools, as well as about copyright on images and pictures they share on the Internet;
- Young people use the Internet to socialise and meet new people and in 43% of cases they finally meet face-to-face people they have met first online;
- Interviewed students are aware of cyberbulling and 32% of them acknowledged to have been cyberbullied, or have friends who had this problem.

DONEGAL YOUTH COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Donegal Youth Council would make the following recommendations:

- To promote a better knowledge of the Internet and most of all to increase awareness of threats and dangers of the web among parents by means of consultations, leaflets and information materials, video or documentary;
- To better inform students of the dangers in SPHE classes;
- To have posters in schools containing info and advice on what to do in case of cyberbulling and where to find help and support;
- To post Web Safety Tips on Social Media;
- To have a Web Safety Week in schools.



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Shaping Our Future Ag Múnlú ár dTodhchaí

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