

# **CHILDREN’S RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT:**

## **A CHALLENGING TERRAIN FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY**

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### **Summary**

Since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was formulated before the widespread adoption of the internet and related technologies, questions arise as to whether and how it applies in the digital age. This chapter critically evaluates the challenges for States, non-governmental organisations and other relevant stakeholders of interpreting and implementing a human rights framework that recognises children as independent actors and rights-holders in relation to the fast-evolving digital environment. Drawing on a global consultation with children and interviews with key experts, it argues for the development of a UN General Comment on the digital environment.

### **Applying the UNCRC in the digital age: A short history**

When children’s social environment is no longer only physical but also digital... a CRC for the Digital Age... [could tell States the] most important things that you need to do to ensure that your young people’s engagement is constructive, rather than destructive or worrying. (Christopher de Bono, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UN, 1989) affirms children as independent rights-holders and delineates the particular rights of children to ensure they develop to their full potential, together with the special mechanisms needed to deliver them. But why is interpreting and implementing the UNCRC for the digital age needed, what would it require, and what are the challenges?

De Bono's comment dates from 2013, when UNICEF's Office of Research-Innocenti asked Sonia Livingstone and Monica Bulger (2013) to interview experts on how its research agenda should embrace the risks and opportunities of the digital age. Noting the paucity of evidence in the global South, where already one in three children were online (Livingstone, Carr, & Byrne, 2015), their report called urgently for new research that is comparable across countries and yet flexibly implemented to recognise local contexts and concerns. This led to the Global Kids Online project which, by 2018, had surveyed over 15,000 children and 12,000 of their caregivers in countries on all continents, with follow-up work to ensure that policies and practices are evidence-based and impactful in advancing a child rights agenda on the digital environment.<sup>2</sup>

Building on the work of EU Kids Online (O'Neill, Staksrud, & McLaughlin, 2013), Global Kids Online evidence shows that children start using the internet younger and spend more time online the more available the internet becomes, and are likely to face more opportunities and risks. The trend towards personalised devices intensifies digital experiences, enabling children to be more independent users, but making parental supervision more difficult. However, while the internet can have a positive impact on children's learning, social relationships and participation, its use can also bring pornography, cyberbullying, sexual exploitation and abuse, online hate and other potential harms. Importantly, too, not all children have equal access to the opportunities: social, cultural and economic divides, especially in the global South, continue to prevent many children from benefiting from the digital environment.

UNICEF devoted its annual 2017 *State of the World's Children* report to "children in a digital world", revealing the benefits for the realisation of children's rights but also the new threats emerging as digitalisation, datafication and global networks become embedded in the infrastructure of children's lives. Among all those with views on the societal transformations brought about by digital technologies, children are the most vocal, as revealed by a consultation with children around the world conducted by Amanda Third and her colleagues for UNICEF (2017): children are calling for new rights of access and digital literacy because, they are clear, these increasingly mediate their participation, provision and protection rights in the digital age (see Third et al., 2017).<sup>3</sup>

While the sometimes-hyperbolic excitement regarding the benefits for children of digital engagement continues to drive the market as well as adoption by families, it is the threats that drive policy and regulation. Recent threats include the growth of web streaming of child sexual abuse and exploitation, whereby children typically in a global South country are abused 'to order' via live web streaming services, typically by men located in the global North, and sometimes with the knowing cooperation of their parents. Also gathering controversy recently, consider the sale of 'smart' toys (dolls, teddies) and other domestic products (e.g., baby monitors, rucksacks, among other instances of the 'internet of things') that collect children's personal data (including their conversations) in ways that parents do not understand, leaving them vulnerable to privacy abuses when data are profiled for commercial gain or hacked by criminals (Mascheroni & Holloway, 2019). As a third example, policy makers are increasingly worried about the explosion in 'fake news', and other forms of bias and misinformation, deliberate or otherwise, that favour manipulative persuasion over knowledge and decision-making for the public—and children's—good.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is the body responsible for promoting, interpreting and monitoring the implementation of the UNCRC. In 2014, in the year of the 25th anniversary of the UNCRC and, coincidentally, of the World Wide Web, it held a Day of General Discussion on the rights of the child and digital media (OHCHR, 2014). Following a lively discussion among experts, underpinned by a consultation with children (Third et al., 2014), a strong set of recommendations emerged for all States that have ratified the UNCRC (all bar the US). In a fast-moving, complex, global policy terrain, who is responsible for the needed actions?

The Committee produces General Comments to

... provide interpretation and analysis of specific articles of the CRC or deal with thematic issues related to the rights of the child. General Comments constitute an authoritative interpretation as to what is expected of States parties as they implement the obligations contained in the CRC.<sup>4</sup>

In 2017, the present authors were asked by the Children's Commissioner for England to prepare a case for a General Comment on the digital environment (Livingstone, Lansdown, & Third, 2017). Recognising that society's growing reliance on the digital environment has profound consequences for children's rights, and that States around the world are struggling to address children's provision, protection and participation in the face of rapid technological transformation, in 2018, the Committee accepted our case with a view to publishing the new General Comment in 2021.

## **Interpreting the UNCRC in relation to the digital environment**

What is it about the digital environment that poses new challenges for evidence-based policy and practice in realising children's rights? Digital technologies—including not only the internet and mobile technologies but also digital networks and databases, digital contents and services, as well as developments in artificial intelligence, robotics, algorithms and 'big data' and the 'internet of things'—are globally networked, enabling extensive and rapidly scalable connectivity that can operate beyond top-down control. Taken together, digital technologies are increasingly connected through a complicated, transnational value chain;<sup>5</sup> hence our reference to the 'digital environment'.

Consequently, we can conceive of children's rights in research, policy and practice in three ways (Third & Collin, 2016). First, children's uses of digital technologies raise questions of children's *right to* digital devices, content and services. Second, promoting children's *rights in* digital environments invites us to consider how children can realise their rights in online spaces and how society can counter ways in which their rights are infringed or violated. The third category is the most ambitious, namely, addressing children's *rights in the digital age* by recognising that digital technologies are reshaping society so that multiple dimensions of children's lives—from education to health, from family to future life chances—are being reconfigured (Livingstone & Third, 2017). All three of these categories intersect, building on each other to intensify connections and disconnections of many kinds.

Children's rights can be affected by a range of policies—for example, the outsourcing, at a national level, of educational technology or school information management systems or the privatisation of medical records and health information systems. In such domains, child rights considerations (e.g., in relation to privacy) easily and often go unrecognised unless specific measures are taken to 'mainstream' child rights within policy and practice.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, technological developments can reshape children's rights in a host of ways as yet little understood. For example, what are the implications for children's freedom of expression or safety of encrypted or anonymous digital services? Where such technological developments are examined in terms of their human rights implications or in relation to internet governance processes, there is often little or no recognition of child-specific issues. For example, practical approaches to protecting child rights in digital environments are often based on setting a minimum age for use of a service, but this tends to treat all children as reaching levels of maturity at the same ('average') age, which doesn't address their individual interests well, and can even be detrimental for some. Insofar as such age limits are operated by global companies (for example, the age of 13 for social media services), they also have the effect of applying internationally a standard set in the global North. Moreover, some child rights are particularly impacted by the digital age and should be newly interpreted: for example, Article 17, the right to information, takes on significant additional implications for children's education, given how frequently they now use the internet for informal learning (Third et al., 2017) - consider, for example, how access to the internet can facilitate children's right to sexuality and health information and their positive right to communicate online (see Albury, 2017).

The UNCRC includes four rights that are also recognised as general principles with cross-cutting applicability:

- Right to non-discrimination (Article 2)
- Best interests of the child (Article 3(1))
- Right to life, survival and fullest development of the child (Article 6)
- Right to be heard (Article 12)

What might these mean in relation to the digital environment? Non-discrimination has mainly been applied to children's access to digital technologies, but the implications for equality in digital environments and, more widely, in the digital age are far-reaching. This is especially the case because digital exclusion tends to mirror social, economic and cultural exclusion, with special efforts needed, for example, regarding girls' empowerment, children with disabilities, refugees and asylum-seekers, children in extreme poverty and children in institutions. Interestingly, public and third sector institutions are hopeful that digital inclusion can offer a workaround to traditional forms of exclusion. But the digital environment's commercial infrastructure and algorithmic logics may undermine such hopes, with existing and emerging business models increasingly relying on privatised processes that risk exclusionary, discriminatory or commodifying effects rather than outcomes in the public interest (Mansell, 2017).

The obligation to ensure that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all actions concerning the child poses a regulatory challenge in the digital age, calling for a nuanced and context-dependent balance between rights to protection and civil rights and freedoms. This

might best be achieved through a mix of regulation of the media industry, provision of appropriate protection, interpretation of confidentiality and privacy rules, and emergence of new social norms and institutional practices. Only thus can Article 6 become feasible, namely, that children should be able to benefit positively from the experiences of the digital environment without detriment to their wellbeing. How this can occur will vary for different individuals or groups of children in different national or cultural settings. For example, for children with disabilities, opportunities for online learning can be particularly important, as their offline opportunities may be restricted (Council of Europe, 2019).

As a guide in interpreting the UNCRC in all contexts including the digital, it is important to recognise the right of every child capable of forming a view to express their views and have them taken seriously, whilst also recognising the diversity of obstacles children in different settings experience to this right. In the digital context, this right implies not only harnessing the particular affordances of digital technologies as a means of consulting and collaborating with children in the development of legislation and policy with regard to digital participation and protection, but also across diverse policy domains. It also means promoting children's digital citizenship and opportunities for social and educational participation, enabling and empowering children to participate in wider political citizenship online and through social media, and educating children regarding their rights in digital and other environments.

Of the remaining articles in the UNCRC, several are highly relevant to the digital environment:

- Right to freedom of expression and information (Article 13)
- Right to freedom of association (Article 15)
- Right to privacy (Article 16)
- Right to information and protection from harmful content (Article 17)
- Right to protection from exploitation and violence (Articles 19, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37(a) and 39)
- Right to physical and mental health and access to healthcare services (Article 24)
- Right to education and literacy (Article 28 and 29)
- Right to engage in play and recreational activities (Article 31)

We lack space here to elaborate on the interpretation of these and related articles (see Lievens et al., 2018; Third, Livingstone, & Lansdown, 2019), but we will draw attention to some of the emerging concerns. As regards children's right to freedom of expression and information, this is too often neglected by policy-makers more concerned with the thorny relation between child protection and adult speech rights (O'Neill et al., 2013). Yet children share in these fundamental human rights, even though many online spaces of discussion are barred to them or hazardous for them. Access to digital information, for instance, is highly valued by children for many reasons including, as Global Kids Online has shown (Byrne et al., 2016), for health information that is otherwise hard to obtain.

As quoted in Third et al. (2017), children say:

If someone is sick in the family, we can use the internet to match symptoms to the sickness and determine its severity. (Bhutan, girl, 18)

If we do not use the computer, if we do not know the computer, then we do not know anything, including... the good things for our lives. (Timor-Leste, girl, 14)

Digital opportunities for expression and information also have consequences for children's civil rights and freedoms, including their right to freedom of association. There are also benefits for their rights to education and literacy. As children told Third et al. (2017):

Technology helps me to do research for my homework and also, if I miss a class, I can contact a friend on WhatsApp to get information or work together. (Burundi, girl, 18)

I learnt coding through YouTube. I watched so many videos about coding and thus I have learned coding. (Bangladesh, girl, 17)

In relation to education, however, children demand more of their school, in both wealthier and poorer countries:

School should help me know the bad and good effects of technology, the impacts. (Fiji, girl, 12)

Teachers should teach classes that help us use digital technology appropriately. (Japan, girl, 17)

Policy-makers have been far more active in relation to the risk of harm, seeking solutions to provide appropriate protection, including policies and training for schools, as well as positive measures to engage children in strategies to raise awareness and engage as partners in addressing cyberbullying, for example. Some of these have been targeted at specifically vulnerable groups such as LGBTQI children, children with disabilities or children from minority religious or ethnic groups, though more often interventions are generic. In relation to sexual abuse and exploitation, policy solutions have been more legislative, focused on the capacity and actions of law enforcement to enable identification of victims, remove images and prosecute perpetrators. Yet children remain concerned about online risks:

I'm worried about my safety on the internet because my information can be viral anywhere. (Bangladesh, girl, 17)

I don't upload certain pics with which bad people can make dirty videos of us. (Bhutan, girl, 16)

It is very distressing when you publish something [online] and suddenly others attack you with no reason, without knowing you. (Uruguay, girl, 14)

Sometimes, when we use Google or social media on the laptop then there was like a popup of a porn website. (Malaysia, girl, 16)

I think that adults worry for our own good because it is also through the internet that many young people join terrorist groups, because the internet helps but on the other hand it destroys. (Central African Republic, boy, 15)

Underpinning both opportunities and risks is the management of privacy in digital environments. This encompasses not only interpersonal privacy, of considerable importance to young people, but also privacy from the State and from business (Livingstone, Stoilova, & Nandagiri, 2018).

I am concerned about leakage of my personal information—because this means leakage of my money and personal information. (Republic of Korea, boy, 14)

In the digital environment, data protection regulation is making some inroads into preventing infringements of children's privacy rights, although it seems likely that further policy steps will be required.

## **Implementing the UNCRC in relation to the digital environment**

The UNCRC includes a series of articles specifying general measures of implementation by States. For instance, States should introduce a coordinating mechanism with a clear mandate and sufficient authority to coordinate all activities related to children's rights and digital media and ICTs. Also needed is training for all professionals working with and for children to raise awareness and improve technical skills, along with appropriate budgetary allocation to ensure digital protection and access. Trusted and effective systems will be needed to provide child-friendly forms of remedy and redress, and all of these measures should be independently monitored and evaluated, as well as evidence-based and informed by consultation with children. This raises a series of challenges discussed below.

Most generally, the use of digital technologies—by public and private bodies as well as by individuals—amplifies and intensifies both risks and opportunities for children. Consider, for example, the current imperative for refugee children to have access to mobile technology to sustain vital family connections and sources of information, even though this same technology can put them at risk of abuse from people traffickers. Those building digital opportunities need a framework to alert them to unintended risks; those addressing risks need a framework to ensure they do not inadvertently curtail children's opportunities. The 2014 Day of General Discussion on “Digital media and children's rights” held by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (OHCHR, 2014, p.19) concluded that:

States should adopt a national coordinating framework with a clear mandate and sufficient authority to coordinate all activities related to children's rights and digital media and ICTs at cross-sectoral, national, regional and local levels and facilitate international cooperation.

The UN more broadly recognises that the digital environment offers huge opportunities for the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in realising children's

rights (Wernham, 2016). For example, appropriate deployment of digital technology can enable children to gain much-needed information at low cost, to engage with affordable educational resources and knowledge, to overcome forms of discrimination or exclusion, to participate and be heard in meaningful decision-making processes, and much more. There is, in short, considerable enthusiasm among States and child rights organisations for initiatives that seek to capitalise on the attractive and scalable possibilities of using digital media to deliver health information, community resources, emergency response or other programme initiatives to children in hard-to-reach settings (Kleine, Hollow, & Poveda, 2014). Hence it is important not to be swayed by the new risks into taking an overly protectionist approach. Indeed, without clear guidance on managing conflicting rights and attending to children's civil rights and freedoms, policies can quickly revert to a predominant focus on protection which, important as it is, can tend to override efforts to support positive rights.

Challenges of both principle and practice regarding the implementation of the UNCRC in relation to the digital environment were explained to us by the expert interviews we conducted in preparing the case for the General Comment. Key experts from civil society, business, and international and national non-governmental organisations around the world were interviewed individually for between 30 and 60 minutes in person or by Skype during December 2016-February 2017 for the original report (Livingstone et al., 2017). The interview guide examined the practical challenges and concerns, regional or contextual considerations, and priorities for the scope of what a General Comment would cover, as well as practicalities concerning steps to implementation. Quotations from experts in this chapter come from this report.

One practical challenge much discussed by the experts is that often, a platform or online service is unable to determine whether a user is a child, so in effect, children are often treated online as adults rather than in an age-appropriate way. This is especially problematic insofar as children are often the first to engage with fast-developing digital environments, ahead of the adults around them. Consequently, their wellbeing can be inadvertently overlooked as States rush to embrace new economic opportunities.

This, in turn, raises a further difficulty discussed by experts – the relation between the State and parents in adjudicating

... with respect to the boundaries between parental responsibilities to protect children vis-à-vis the child's evolving capacity to make decisions about in what way they interact with the internet. (Amihan Abueva, Child Rights Coalition Asia)

In addition,

... while parents have valid concerns (about their children's safety online), they could also unwittingly be the people who put their own children or even their children's friends at risk. (Indra Kumari Nadchatram, UNICEF Malaysia)

Alongside guiding parents in their responsibilities, and respecting the rights of children when these conflict with their parents, States must also consider potential conflicts between adult freedoms and child rights more generally. On occasion, and somewhat perversely, the call to



attend to child rights becomes problematic if used as a justification for introducing unwarranted censorship or surveillance; here the experts suggested that a General Comment should guide States in order that child protection does not violate other rights (La Rue, 2014).

In addition to the challenge of addressing the attendant and ever-emerging risks of harm, States must promote digital literacy education and child-centred design alongside top-down policy initiatives. They must also attend to children's voices and concerns in planning new digital resources. Last, they must ensure that business-led innovation is subject to effective national and international regulation that recognises children's rights and is informed by risk impact assessments. This last point is currently proving almost-overwhelming for States: digital transformation is being driven by both major corporations and a multitude of small and medium-sized businesses, often fast-moving start-ups, often led by young developers, and often with little awareness of child rights and with commercial priorities that mitigate against efforts towards safety- or privacy-by-design. Indeed, we are witnessing the widespread relocation of communication, learning, health, civic participation, social relationships and other societal processes onto proprietary platforms primarily motivated by profit. While many constructive initiatives for children are instigated by business, others collect and monetise children's data in ways that seemingly evade State oversight and regulation. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 16 on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights:

... recognizes that duties and responsibilities to respect the rights of children extend in practice beyond the State and State-controlled services and institutions and apply to private actors and business enterprises. Therefore, all businesses must meet their responsibilities regarding children's rights and States must ensure they do so. In addition, business enterprises should not undermine the States' ability to meet their obligations towards children under the Convention and the Optional Protocols thereto. (paragraph 8)

But calling for something is not the same as achieving it:

The feeling is that, you know, these big companies are much bigger than the States, and I think the other dilemma as well is that the technologies are developing so fast that the legislation is oftentimes not able to keep pace with the development of technology. (Amihan Abueva, Child Rights Coalition Asia)

States must find new ways to incentivise and coordinate the actions of multiple relevant stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors. Yet problematically, digital technologies have cross-cutting and intersecting consequences across the full range of children's rights. Not only do these not fall neatly into the domain or expertise of one particular ministry or regulator, they are too easily neglected altogether by being passed from one ministry to another (e.g., the Ministry of Justice, Education, Family Welfare, Telecommunications or Business) or by ministries advancing mutually contradictory approaches. This adds weight to the call for an integrated approach:

Digital influences almost all spheres of children's everyday lives. It is broad and pretty much all-encompassing that it is impossible to focus only on a few specific issues. (Indra Kumari Nadchatram, UNICEF Malaysia)

Yet while it might be feared that the technology is developing too fast to be managed, the experts we interviewed urged the contrary. In short, they believed it is possible and now urgent to encourage and enable States to recognise and identify key trends, to take the steps they can, to marshal their resources to address early on the problems that can be foreseen, and to build the competent and trusted institutions required to anticipate future innovations and challenges as they unfold. Digital technologies

“will continue to be a kind of moving target. I don't think things are going to settle necessarily in the next 20 years. I think we're in an epoch of continued evolution and so one needs ongoing guidance.” (Guy Berger, UNESCO)

Several experts therefore recommended a ‘technologically neutral’, principled approach, insofar as possible, rather than tying recommendations or policies to particular technologies or social practices that will soon change. But, as our experts argued, it would be wrong to do nothing now:

The world evolves. Problems evolve. They take a different shape. I mean, maybe the name is the same but the shape is different. And the societies evolve, and so do the solutions, especially when you link that to the digital world. So there is need for a constant thinking, rethinking and questioning of what's going on, to look at this in a different way. I mean that's an obligation we have. (Marie-Laure Lemineur, ECPAT International)

Because the drafting of the UNCRC preceded the emergence of widespread uses of digital technology, it is throwing up new challenges that need to be interpreted in light of the significant impact these phenomena are having on the lives of children globally. As one expert observed:

The Convention was created in a time when digital technology was not yet that well known or not yet that advanced, so it would be the General Comment that can provide guidance on how to apply these rights in the age that we have right now. (Hazel Bitaña, Child Rights Coalition Asia)

A General Comment would, in short, provide a defence against those who say the UNCRC is out of date, reasserting it instead as a timely, legitimate and useful instrument for realising children's rights in the digital age.

Effective implementation of child rights depends substantially on national legislation, and States could lead the way in terms of ethical, rights-respecting treatment of children's data (e.g., birth registration, case management, government records), setting standards by which to raise expectations for other stakeholders. Experts were of the view that international coordination and cooperation is particularly challenging for States given the global businesses and networked processes which characterise the digital environment. For instance, increasingly child protection depends on the availability of and jurisdiction over forms of digital evidence, making international cooperation in law enforcement processes vital. A General Comment could serve to

prioritise the effort to manage and share evidence in and across digital platforms and national boundaries.

## Conclusion

New policy and practice is urgently needed so that the UNCRC can be effectively interpreted and implemented in relation to digital technologies, since “we can’t separate any longer our on- and offline lives, and children even less than we can” (Sheila Donovan, Child Helpline International). Further, since the internet transcends national boundaries, a global protocol is most needed:

The internet is a transnational technology. Individual nation states can make advances but children’s rights in the digital environment must be set out clearly and established on an international basis. A General Comment on the CRC is the necessary first step to protecting children’s rights in the 21st century.  
(Beeban Kidron, 5Rights)

Digital technologies are increasingly embedded in the infrastructure of society rather than something discrete and set apart. Thus it is not so much new digital rights but rather, children’s fundamental human rights that are at stake in new ways in the digital age. Echoing the argument of former UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Frank La Rue (2014), Jenny Thomas (Child Rights International Network) suggests of internet access, “I would not frame it as a right in itself but a way of implementing other rights.” One can make the same argument about digital literacy—as not a right in itself, but as an enabler for achieving rights in the digital age. At present, policy and practice designed to optimise children’s engagement with the digital environment is not always rights-focused and so may not recognise the full range of children’s rights in ways that are both holistic and authoritative. Experts interviewed also suggested that a General Comment would carry significant political weight, adding strength to child rights organisations’ demands, and fostering States’ accountability to children by requiring States to report on their compliance to the Committee:

A General Comment is a useful guide for those of us who are working at the regional and country levels because it helps us to push governments. When the reporting time comes, if we have General Comments, we can take them to task, or we can challenge them to make sure that policies are in place or make sure that programmes are implemented. (Amihan Abueva, Child Rights Coalition Asia)

It would mean that countries that don’t have legislation in place or if they do it’s not enforced, would be then somehow put on the spot to either implement existing legislation or enact legislation, and to enforce the legislation... [the Committee] has moral persuasion influence and it probably is the only one that does. (Sheila Donovan, Child Helpline International)

From an NGO perspective, they are very useful for our advocacy work. We draw on General Comments all the time in submissions to the UN and to governments. (Jenny Thomas, Child Rights International Network)

It's not just any old wish list, it is authoritative. (Guy Berger, UNESCO)

Without principled, coherent and authoritative guidance, States will continue to struggle to meet their obligations to children, including instituting the vital regulatory checks and balances to ensure that businesses meet their responsibilities to protect and enhance children's rights. Taking action now will enable States to face the challenges of the digital age in its early stages. The sooner child rights issues are recognised and addressed as part of the wider rush to embrace digital and business innovations—rather than tacked on belatedly or even too late—the more secure a foundation can be laid for a present and a future in which the digital environment is inseparable from any other environment. This is required to fulfil our ethical obligations to children. It is also a matter of practical necessity.

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## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.globalkidsonline.net](http://www.globalkidsonline.net)

<sup>3</sup> Quotations from children in this chapter are taken from Third et al. (2017); see also UNICEF (2017). Children and adolescents aged 10-19 were consulted on their rights in the digital environment in in-depth, child-centred, multi-method workshops held in 26 countries concentrated in the global South.

<sup>4</sup>See UNCRC General Comments, Child Rights International Network (CRIN) ([www.crin.org/en/library/publications/crc-general-comments](http://www.crin.org/en/library/publications/crc-general-comments)).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the resources available at the Global Commission on Internet Governance at [www.ourinternet.org/research](http://www.ourinternet.org/research) and the Internet Society at [www.internetsociety.org/publications](http://www.internetsociety.org/publications)

<sup>6</sup> See [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2017/03/st06846\\_en17\\_pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2017/03/st06846_en17_pdf)