

Children and Young People's Voices

Digital Futures Commission
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The Digital Futures Commission

The Digital Futures Commission is an exciting research collaboration of unique organisations that invites innovators, policy makers, regulators, academics and civil society to unlock digital innovation in the interests of children and young people.

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Foreword

Having spent much of the last decade listening to young people talking about their digital lives, I am struck that whatever their age or year group, after a data literacy workshop or a session on their digital lives, the most frequent response is “Miss, I wish you’d come and said that two years ago”. What is always uplifting, is that once they understand, not only their own experience, but the forces and purposes of the technology they are using, I am reminded of just how many creative solutions young people offer for a better digital world.

Consulting with young people is at the heart of the Digital Futures Commission. This short paper looks at previous consultations and considers what young people have already asked for. We must ensure that we speak not only on their behalf but with their views embodied in the conclusions and outputs of the Commission. In seeking to contribute to building the digital world young people deserve, we continue to enjoy and be inspired by their involvement.

- *Baroness Beeban Kidron OBE*

Traditionally, academics did research “on” children, and they examined the “impact of technology on children.” Recent decades have seen an important shift to doing research “with” children, and, especially, to including and consulting children as actors in their own right. From the beginning of its work, the Digital Futures Commission seeks to learn from children and young people’s experiences of engaging with digital technologies, and to listen to what they want and expect from the key players who can really make a difference to their digital lives. Finding ways to act on their experiences and address their expectations will drive our work forward.

- *Professor Sonia Livingstone OBE*

Listening to children and young people

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognises children's right to be heard on matters that affect them. This means that the institutions and organisations whose decisions shape children and young people's lives should make the effort to consult them and to take their views into account. To respect this right, and to inform our work throughout, the Digital Futures Commission (DFC) will conduct regular consultations with children and young people during its three years.

Before undertaking a new consultation, we decided first to listen carefully to the views that children and young people have already expressed in reports recently published by children's organisations. Hence this report asks: **what do children and young people value about the digital world and what changes do they call for?**

Working with Sudeshna Mukherjee, LSE, we searched online and contacted children's organisations and other experts. We identified recent UK-based consultations with children and young people relevant to the DFC's work streams, also including some valuable older material and some qualitative research. This review highlights the voices of those aged up to 18 years old, selected from 18 consultations and related research. Quotations are attributed to the reports in which they appear (numbered in the appendix) with speaker descriptions based on the information available.

Our purpose is to learn how children's views can guide our thinking for the DFC's three work streams: *Play in a digital world*; *Beneficial uses of education data*; and *Guidance for innovators*. While most consultations focus on how children regard online opportunities and risks, we can gain insights into what it is about digital provision and design that children value or are concerned about:

"I used YouTube for maths when I was revising for my GCSEs." Girl, 16 years old¹

"I love to see what children from other places do." Girl, 9 years old²

"If you're in a bad mood at home you go on social media and you laugh and then you feel better." Boy, 10 years old³

"You have access to health resources - e.g. fitness apps." Young person, UK⁴

"My friend ...said maybe we could try out a new programme. So we tried it, and we had lots of fun together and we posted different coding games." Young person, UK⁵

Children and young people clearly relish the way that the digital environment offers easy access to diverse resources, some targeted at children but many of them not. When they discuss online risks, it is again the ease of access and diversity of content that shapes their experience:

"The fact [is] that pornography is so easily accessible, harmful content in the media that causes low self-esteem or hatred towards particular groups and websites that actively encourage harmful behaviour such as self-harming, anorexia or suicide. Also, cyber bullying." Young person, UK⁶

"I feel that it is easy for young people to be contacted by strangers on the internet and some young people in care are vulnerable. I have experienced this and have things in place to make me safe and it hasn't happened again." Young person, UK⁷

"Online there are a lot of adverts and fake news, and this worries people unnecessarily." Girl, 12 years old, UK⁸

Discussion of ease of access, the ways in which content and contacts are spread through digital networks, and the huge diversity of content already draws attention to questions of digital design and innovation, the main focus of this review. In what follows, we listen especially for children and young people's views as they relate to the DFC's three work streams.

Play in a digital world

The DFC will develop an assessment of the value of play for children and young people, before evaluating current opportunities for digital play and proposing ways to enhance play in the digital world. A consultation with Scottish children revealed how much they value play for its opportunities for imagination, sociability and inclusion, among other qualities of play:

"You don't always need toys to play; you can play with your imagination." Girl, 8 years old, Midlothian⁹

"Playing is important because it builds friendship." Girl, 7 years old, Glasgow¹⁰

"I like to play hide and seek because it involves everyone." Girl, 11 years old, Wester Ross¹¹

Children and young people enjoy outdoor play in open and public spaces such as parks, gardens and streets, appreciating the extra space and freedom it brings. They understand the benefits of play for their health, mood and overall well-being, and are conscious of their safety needs:

"I'd prefer my local area to have more facilities for young people nearby that can make them feel safer and they can easily get home." Young person, 11-16 years old¹²

"I've been going out to the park, there are more people as lockdown lifts and I'm realising from the experience of lockdown that we need to go outside." Girl, 11 years old, UK¹³

"You need to be protected but not that much that you can't learn anything." Girl, 11 years old, Dunbar¹⁴

Particularly interesting is the way that children and young people relish making their own games, with their own rules:

"I like playing with my brother pushing him around in the laundry basket, that's my favourite game. I don't know what it's called; just the 'pushing my brother around in the laundry basket game'." Boy, 6 years old, Aberdeen¹⁵

"The rule in the den is – NO GIRLS ALLOWED, no stealing and don't hit people with sticks – we obey it – well, ish." Boy, 5 years old, Kelso¹⁶

Children and young people look forward to their free play time in school and home and dislike being constrained by childcare arrangements, travel time, schoolwork or even the weather. They appreciate adults joining in as long as they do not dominate the moment or inhibit fun:

"It's not good to have adults around when you're playing because they stop you doing secret stuff... It spoils the game." Boy, 5 years old, Kelso¹⁷

"Adults are boring – they don't do much. When I'm out on my bike, he just walks with me – they should come out and play – be like a little kid." Boy, 10 years old, Edinburgh¹⁸

Children and young people, especially but not only boys, are also enthusiastic about digital play, valuing it for itself and because it enables both solitary enjoyment and peer interaction:

"You can play computer games on your own – I prefer to play on my own." Boy, 11 years old, Bo'ness¹⁹

"It's safe [from adults] because no adult will play Roblox." Boy, 8 years old, UK²⁰

Children and young people value having a diversity of play opportunities, both digital and non-digital. Their priorities centre on play opportunities that afford agency and choice, imagination, sociability, safety, and a lack of adult restrictions and interference. The Children's Commissioner for England's consultation²¹ revealed a strong desire for more and better opportunities for free play, at home, outside and online:

"[I want] maybe more things outside of school to get you and your friends together. So, like groups to do different activities for more grown-up people, like teenagers, because there's not many things." Girl, 12-13 years old, UK²²

We found few discussions of play or playfulness in relation to the digital world, though there is a considerable body of research on gaming that could be explored by the DFC in future. There are more plentiful consultations with children and young people about social media activities, and these could be construed as offering opportunities for playfulness in one way or another, although most consultations focus on safety issues and/or, as we consider below, data and design.

Beneficial uses of education data

The DFC will explore current uses of student data in education settings and set out a beneficial, privacy-enhancing and rights-respecting framework for data in education. Recent consultations with children and young people regarding their data and privacy online reveal their growing concerns, and their calls for better treatment regarding their privacy, agency and protection. For the most part, however, recent consultations have asked children and young people about data and privacy in general, rather than specifically in relation to education data.

Note, first, that children and young people recognise the value of data processing when they grasp how it serves their interests:

"Your teacher might need to know where to send your homework." 6-9 years old, Swindon²³

"My doctor should know where I live so they could come and make me better if I was ill." 3-5 years old, Swindon²⁴

In relation to education and also health, children and young people tend to trust public institutions with their data and privacy online:

"They're my school, they're going to keep my data safe." Boy, 11-12 years old, Midlands²⁵

But especially as they get older, they draw a line where they see data processing serving interests other than their own:

"I don't trust media, advertisers, tech companies and influencers at all as they just expose our data, share it with other companies and unfortunately monetise it." Young person, UK²⁶

"I'm telling the companies to stay away from my data! If they want it, they should ask." Young person, UK²⁷

"I'm worried because apps are not meant to sell on data to third parties but they do and that makes me scared." Young person, UK²⁸

While they may recognise the ingenuity involved in monetising personal data, and the business model behind it, they are uneasy:

"If the social media platforms don't sell data, then they wouldn't be able to function." Young person, UK²⁹

"Whichever device you are using, some can still make use of your data in many ways that nobody can think of." Young person, UK³⁰

"Mark Zuckerberg, he's always watching". Boy, 15-16 years old, Essex³¹

Since digital services are widely used by key organisations – at school, and in the community – children and young people say they have little choice about using such services:

"I only got Facebook a week ago. [A youth group] needed me to join, so I had to get an account. I really didn't want to do it but there was no choice. That's just how it's done." Young person, UK³²

Their lack of agency becomes normalised as young people get used to not understanding how the data ecology works or expecting to have real choices:

"I don't know exactly what cookies are, but I see them all the time." 10-12 years old, London³³

"You just scroll straight to the bottom of it and then click 'agree' as if you've read it." Girl, 13-14 years old, Wales³⁴

"You can't get any further without giving your information. Like you don't really get a choice." Boy, 13-14 years old, Scotland³⁵

Children and young people's common concern is that the data collection embedded in the design of digital services they use places them at interpersonal risk:

"Using Snap Maps without Ghost Mode is the best way to get stalked." 13-15 years old, Edinburgh³⁶

"Share your data if you're looking for a wee stalker." 13-15 years old, Edinburgh³⁷

"In Snapchat, I didn't know that there was this map where anyone can see where you are. Like I really don't want people to know where I am. It's kind of creepy." Young person with a visual impairment, UK³⁸

This leads them to want improved safety-by-design, especially for "better protections to stop people contacting you" (Young person, UK³⁹):

"Sometimes I regret what I post online and wish there was some easy way to make it disappear." Child, Scotland⁴⁰

"Recently there have been hackers and predators on the rise and big tech like Insta and Snap should be doing more." Girl, 11 years old, UK⁴¹

In the absence of what they see as sufficient user choice, children and young people try to take on the responsibility to protect themselves, possibly to regain a sense of confidence and competence:

"I check all the backgrounds first and see if anything is there, and then if I'm in my school uniform I wouldn't post it." Girl, 8 years old, UK⁴²

"I check on Snapchat, if I'm on ghost mode or not... And on maps, I sometimes check that people can't see if I'm at home." Girl, 11-12 years old, Essex⁴³

"Your address is the worst thing you could possibly say to someone online." 10-12 years old, Cardiff⁴⁴

"Well, I have two accounts. One's my personal account, where it's on private. I have another account where it's, like, open. But I don't reveal anything about myself. I just ... do drawings and post them." Girl, 11-12 years old, Essex⁴⁵

Such tactics and workarounds are popularly celebrated as revealing how media and technology-savvy children and young people are. But these tactics can also be read as revealing an anxiety about engaging with the digital environment, with the burden of responsibility for their own safety weighing heavily for some:

"The only thing that I really care about keeping private is my conversations with other people. That's the only thing. Otherwise I've posted it. I've agreed to Terms and Conditions, it's my fault if they take my data." Girl, 13-14 years old, London⁴⁶

"We choose. Terms and conditions tell us about this, we choose not to read it and we press okay. It's not their fault." Young person, UK⁴⁷

Although they often expect little to change, children and young people's views reveal an agenda of wants – for less data collection, more choice, better ways to delete their data, more information on who has their data:

"They [security settings] do not always protect you from people/companies using your data." Young person, UK⁴⁸

"It's annoying because it's something I don't really want to be out there. It's annoying because I don't really have a say." Young person, UK⁴⁹

"In some ways, our human rights have been invalidated – one of our rights is confidentiality. Who else is viewing my stuff?" Young person, UK⁵⁰

Some call explicitly for more meaningful choices, better privacy and security, and less exploitation:

"More legislation especially for under 18s; you should get the choice of what is stored; I hate how my data can be monetised." Young person, UK⁵¹

"I trust the NHS with my data but don't trust their ability to protect themselves from cyber attacks." Young person, UK⁵²

"I feel as though my pictures should only be kept by me and not for profitable gain for others." Young person, UK⁵³

"[I don't like] facial recognition from companies. Biometric data – you need to protect that. You have a right to your own information." Young person, UK⁵⁴

Guidance for innovators

Children and young people's concern regarding their data already takes us into the territory of digital design and innovation, with suggestions aplenty for the DFC to consider when developing guidance for innovators. In its work stream on guidance for innovators, the DFC will identify and assert ways to design and innovate with children's rights in mind so as to embed positive change among digital service providers. Although we found few children's consultations directly concerned with the nature of the digital environment – its affordances, innovations, design or regulation – there is sufficient available material to draw out an account of children and young people's views.

As with data and privacy, children and young people's starting point is often concern for their safety. This affects them deeply, stimulating a range of responses. The most common calls are to reduce the availability of potentially harmful content, apps that distort reality, and to prevent contact from strangers and potential predators.

Some calls for change recognise the risky-by-design features of the digital environment:

"On Instagram, if you click on the location of the image and you can see exactly where they were when they took this photo. It's really, really creepy." Girl, 13-14 years old, London⁵⁵

"I would like no bullying online as there is enough in real life. I also do not like the fake people online who use the Photoshop apps to look like someone that they actually are not. I do not like the body confidence apps that change people as people believe that is what they look like and try and be like them, when actually it's all fake." Young person, UK⁵⁶

Others address digital design more implicitly, recognising as problematic that strangers can contact them directly, and that social media norms (and tools such as filters) create problems:

"People have contacted me and I don't know who they are. Grooming, cyber bullying... via social media." Young person, UK⁵⁷

"Social media sets expectations that are unrealistic." Young person, 11-16 years old, UK⁵⁸

"Images are really personal and I hate the facial recognition which is more prone on snapchat because of the filters." Young person, UK⁵⁹

Children and young people are particularly frustrated that the privacy settings supposedly designed to protect them let them down in practice, and they want to see improvements to these services:

"There are so many ways your data can be collected so it is impossible for privacy settings to cover everything." Young person, UK⁶⁰

"There [are] many things we simply agree to that are even on the highest privacy settings." Young person, UK⁶¹

Lack of agency can make children and young people seemingly unconcerned about the digital environment:

"Whenever it [enabling location services] pops up, I just accept straight away. I don't think twice about it." 10-12 years old, London⁶²

"I just like, tick them. I don't even scan them; I just don't read them. I tick it." Young person, UK⁶³

"I wish you didn't have to accept them [cookies]. But realistically you just do." 13-15 years old, Derby⁶⁴

Nonetheless, in addition to the above noted frustrations, they have heard of or experienced a range of possible harms that concern them:

"Your image could be used to represent a belief that you don't share." Young person, UK⁶⁵

"A boy told me he really liked me and that if I sent him it we could be such [an] amazing couple... I fell for it and the next day my pictures were all around school even though he sent me a picture first." Girl, 14 years old, UK⁶⁶

Some of these point to children and young people's recognition that, behind the screen interface lies a complex network of pathways that is hard to grasp or control:

"I do not want someone seeing me looking really bad online and then it going viral." Young person, UK⁶⁷

"Recently I was on Pinterest on animal memes and I clicked through a fake link and ended up on a gambling website." Girl, 13 years old, UK⁶⁸

However, although they reveal an at-times sophisticated understanding of the digital environment, they are less clear about the digital service providers – the organisations responsible for the innovations that both delight and worry them. Hence, they tend to talk about "how things are" rather than being specific about the changes they wish to see from particular organisations:

"The electronic panopticon is scary as a citizen because the growing awareness that we are being watched cannot truly encourage curiosity." Young person, UK⁶⁹

"Sometimes it makes me upset that you have to be careful, because I just think you should be able to make a video and not be worried". Girl, 8 years old, UK⁷⁰

"Even if it is a big company, you can't always trust them." Girl, 11-12 years old, London⁷¹

As already noted in relation to data, this can lead children and young people themselves to take on the responsibility for dealing with what goes wrong online:

"You have to slowly figure out the basic guidelines, what you should do, what you shouldn't do because you don't want people to judge you for it. [...] It's quite hard and you have to figure out..." Girl, 13-14 years old, Wales⁷²

"When someone sent a racist video about me to a group Snapchat the sad feeling lasted for months, and I had to keep it in but I was angry. One day I lashed out and then it felt a lot better when I told them [my parents]". Boy, 11 years old, UK⁷³

"When it's talked about at school it makes me feel scared, like during Safety Week. Because why else would they be talking about it with us? It's intense to find out what they're going to say, because if it's bad then parents might ask us questions, so I kind of get the scared feeling when someone talks about it at school". Boy, 10 years old⁷⁴

This makes them glad when they have learned how to protect their own interests online:

"I think to make sure there's no one I know in the background. My mum told me it's a safety thing because people could look at it and get information. So, you just take a photo on a plain wall. I don't want people seeing my house number... If you're at a friend's house you definitely wouldn't take a photo of their house, not showing the number of the house." Girl, 8 years old⁷⁵

So, although children and young people appear to be confident users of digital technology, their comments belie a relative lack of agency in the face of online risks. This leads them to call for better digital literacy education, so as to be able to deal even better by themselves with difficulties they may encounter:

"Unless we understand the technologies we use daily we can't control how they make us behave." Child, Scotland⁷⁶

"We need to be taught the skills to use digital technologies effectively." Child, Scotland⁷⁷

"[We need more] clarity around how to use it. So that most people know how to use it to its full positive potential and protect the vulnerable because of that knowledge." Young person, UK⁷⁸

However, children and young people do have specific ideas of the digital innovations and (re)design they want to see:

"Safer search engines." Young person, UK⁷⁹

"Make it more open and accessible to know what you are sharing and who you are sharing it with." Young person, UK⁸⁰

"Easier access without giving away information – choice." Young person, UK⁸¹

"I feel like things are aged wrong." Girl, 11-12 years old, Scotland⁸²

I would improve the security of the internet and allow the police to access everyone's internet usage, because in the modern day, paedophiles can get in contact with children quite easily." Young person, UK⁸³

"Every website should make it mandatory to start your account as private and you can decide to make what public whenever you want." Young person, UK⁸⁴

"The world is getting better, but we should push for example [for] subtitles as automatically provided on all audio." Boy, 14 years old, Aberdeenshire⁸⁵

"If it's like a video... it's something that can never really be deleted, because it's happened. But I think they should still have the right to take it down." Young person, UK⁸⁶

Their calls for change tend to focus on safety, doubtless because teachers, parents and researchers most often talk to young people on this topic, and because they recognise the threat to their person that some online activities present. However, there is much more to be discovered about children and young people's views and expectations regarding how innovating in the interests of children and young people could better enable their opportunities in a digital world.

Implications for the DFC's future consultations with children and young people

The main message from this review of prior consultations with children and young people is that they have much to say about the nature of the digital environment and how it could better meet their needs and serve their interests. Their views are both important and insightful. In discussing their digital experiences and how these could be improved, children tend to focus on the design of devices, apps and digital interfaces – the elements of the digital world that they see for themselves and engage with directly. Although in many respects they gain enormous pleasure and value from the digital world and their right to access it, and regard it as “their domain”, they also express frustration and a sense of lack of agency regarding digital design, provision, regulation and redress. Taken together, their comments reflect a desire for greater agency, and emphasise the importance they place in safety, privacy, respect and reputation.

Consultation methodologies also matter. We have found that children and young people are more often consulted about their personal experiences of the digital world, and we have had to interpret children and young people's comments with care not to miss the fact that they indeed have concerns and demands regarding digital design, data protection, digital policy and processes of innovation. Given the complexities of the digital environment, careful deliberative methodologies will be required to enable children and young people's informed contribution to future debates regarding the potential for innovating in their best interests. This is particularly the case if they are to be able to contribute to decisions regarding innovation in the wider digital environment “beyond” what they can see for themselves on their screens, for this will require a deeper grasp of the design decisions, networked nature and complex ecology of the digital world.

With regards to who is consulted, most consultations are conducted with “children in general”, though we also sought out consultations with children and young people with

disabilities or living in diverse or limiting situations, including those in care or living in poverty. Ensuring inclusion in consultation processes is a priority. It will be important for the DFC's future work to build on the strengths and improve on the limitations of prior consultations, especially regarding the inclusion of younger children, children and young people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups such as those in alternative accommodation such as foster care. We have had little scope in this work to delve into differences in understanding or opinion according to age, gender or socio-economic status, among other key factors. It remains for future research and consultation to understand where children and young people's views diverge and why. Here we have focused on areas of apparent consensus, and these already provide a challenging agenda to pursue.

Appendix: Children's consultations included

- 1. 5Rights, Young Scot & Scottish Government (2017) Our Digital Rights.** Retrieved from:
<https://youngscot.net/observatory/5rights-our-digital-rights>
1675 young people (under 18) from all 32 council areas in Scotland were asked about their digital experiences through a national peer survey. Focus group activities with young people across 10 regions in Scotland, as part of the Discovering Digital World Roadshow.
- 2. Childnet UK, Kék Vonal (Hungary), Save the Children (Denmark), & UCLan (UK) (2017) Project deSHAME.** Childnet International. Retrieved from:
<http://www.childnet.com/our-projects/project-deshame/research>
Quantitative and qualitative research including web-based questionnaires, focus groups (both single sex and mixed sex groups), and interviews conducted with 13-17 year olds in Denmark, Hungary and the UK to reveal their experiences of online sexual harassment. The research project is supplemented by online questionnaires, interviews and focus groups with key professionals, including teachers, police officers and helpline staff.
- 3. Children's Commissioner for England (2020) Childhood in 2020: Business plan consultation with children 2020-21.** Retrieved from:
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/childhood-in-2020/>
137 children were consulted through 21 focused groups held across England between December 2019 and March 2020, including disabled children, children with care experience, children who have been in the criminal justice system, rural children and children from a migrant background. While each group had an assigned topic, children largely led these conversations and covered a variety of topics of their choosing. In addition, research firm YouGov surveyed 1924 children aged 6-17 years using two questions, with answers from a set of options.
- 4. The Children's Society (2019) The Good Childhood Report 2019.** Retrieved from:
<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/the-good-childhood-report-2019>
Mixed methods that include longitudinal studies of 30,000 children over 10 years.
- 5. Council of Europe (2019) "Two clicks forward, and one click back": Children with disabilities reveal their experiences in the digital environment.** Retrieved from:
https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/news-2019/-/asset_publisher/gaVFYRTI7hqZ/content/-two-clicks-forward-and-one-click-back-children-with-disabilities-reveal-their-experiences-in-the-digital-environment
The consultation involved recruiting four groups of children with disabilities as advisors on the project and collected qualitative data from children from 6 countries. In total, 97 children with diverse disabilities took part in the study either as advisors or as research participants. This included children from the UK.
- 6. Girlguiding (2019) Girls' Attitudes Survey 2019.** Retrieved from:
<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/globalassets/docs-and-resources/research-and-campaigns/girls-attitudes-survey-2019.pdf>
A total of 2,118 girls and young women aged between 7 and 21 took part in the 2019 survey from all parts of the UK. Interviews were mostly completed online, with 7 to 16 year-olds doing this in school, while the older age group were interviewed through an online panel. In addition, face-to-face interviews were carried out with young women who were not in education, employment, or training (NEET). The questionnaire was adapted for different age groups, 7 to 10, 11 to 16 and 17 to 21

years. Some questions were asked across the full age range, to track changes in attitudes as girls get older.

- 7. Guardian Saints (2020) Online Safeguarding for Young People In Care—A Retrospective Report 2016-2019.** Retrieved from: <https://www.guardiansaints.com/online-safeguarding-for-young-people-in-care-report-2019>
For Safer Internet Day in 2018, Guardian Saints held a prize draw to ask young people in care to tell us why they used the internet, what was the best thing for them about using it and any issues they had experienced. In 2016 and 2019 Guardian Saints also gathered information from Local Authority and Independent Fostering Agency Carers about how these providers, and the young people they cared for, used the internet and any challenges they faced regarding online safety.
- 8. Information Commissioner's Office (2019) Towards a better digital future: Informing the Age Appropriate Design Code.** Retrieved from: <https://www.revealingreality.co.uk/work/towards-better-digital-future-informing-age-appropriate-design-code/>
For the qualitative research, 20+ focus groups were organised to speak to children about how they felt their data should be used. The research involved 150+ children with 1:1 ratio of boys to girls, aged 3–17 years in 9 schools across the UK. For the facilitated research, the Information Commissioner's Office helped partner organisations use its research materials to talk to children and share the findings. This research involved 130+ children with 1:3 ratio of boys to girls, aged 7–16 years in 7 schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 9. International Play Association (Scotland) & The Children's Parliament (2011) "I'd play all day and night if I could" A report on children's views on their right to play.** Retrieved from: <http://www.ipascotland.org/projects/right-to-play-report-2011/>
This children-facilitated research explores the "who", "what", "where", "when" and "why" of children's play by organising 36 workshops in 28 locations across Scotland; visiting 14 of Scotland's 32 local authorities and engaging with 379 children, who came from a range of back grounds and were of different abilities. They live in urban, semi-rural and rural/island communities.
- 10. Revealing Reality & Children's Commissioner for England (2018) Life in 'Likes'. Children's Commissioner report into social media use among 8-12 year olds.** Retrieved from: <https://www.revealingreality.co.uk/work/life-in-likes/>
This research interviewed 32 children aged 8-12 across the country. Children were recruited in 'friendship pairs' to instil a sense of familiarity and confidence during the research, and to allow for insights around peer dynamics and other social factors. Children and their parents were asked to complete 'digital pre-tasks' that reported on their lifestyles, behaviours, and attitudes towards social media, and also submitted examples of their social media activities through screenshots and photos. Researchers then interviewed children through eight discussion groups, each including two friendship pairs, grouped by age and gender.
- 11. Revealing Reality (2019) Life on the small screen: What children are watching and why. A report for Ofcom.** Retrieved from: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/what-children-are-watching-and-why>
A sample of 40 respondents were selected to be representative of a cross-section of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) from October to December 2018. The sample spanned 4-16 year olds living in suburban, urban and rural areas, and from a range of social backgrounds. Combining self-reported data, objective evidence of what children watched and subsequent in-depth interviews

(lasting 3 hours per household), researchers were able to build a detailed profile of their media behaviours.

12. **Revealing Reality & BBFC (2020) Young people, Pornography & Age-verification.** Retrieved from: <https://www.revealingreality.co.uk/work/young-people-pornography-age-verification/>
This qualitative research used a mixed methods approach that involved a combination of in-depth individual interviews with 36 young people between 16-18 years (20 boys and 16 girls), at home or in libraries/community centres according to the respondent's preference. For this age group, parental consent was not required, and the young people could engage in candid conversations and give their opinion on age verification. A nationally representative survey was completed online by 1,142 parents, and 1,142 children aged 11 to 17.
13. **Stoilova, M., Livingstone, S., & Nandagiri, R. (2019) Children's data and privacy online: Growing up in a digital age.** London: London School of Economics and Political Science. Retrieved from: <https://www.lse.ac.uk/my-privacy-uk/Assets/Documents/Childrens-data-and-privacy-online-report-for-web.pdf>
This study employed a qualitative research methodology that "allowed children's voices and experiences to be expressed in a way that is meaningful to them." A series of workshop methods were developed, piloted, revised and conducted in schools in London, Essex, the Midlands, Wales and Scotland. The research consisted of 28 mixed-gender focus groups, lasting 173 minutes on average; two focus groups and seven interviews with teachers, one focus group with parents and 15 child-parent paired interviews; three child jury panels with a mix of 18 children in Years 8 and 10.
14. **UK Safer Internet Centre (2019) Our Internet, Our Choice** Retrieved from: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2019/our-internet-our-choice-report>
A survey was conducted online by Censuswide between 12-17 December 2018 with a representative sample of 2004 young people aged 8-17 years old in England and Wales. 10 Childnet Digital Leaders from a primary school also answered questions, providing the qualitative responses.
15. **Unicef (2019) Health, Privacy, and Trust in a Digital World: What do Children & Young People Think?** Retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/policy/health-privacy-trust-digital-world/>
Participatory workshops with 19 children in the UK (aged 11-19) as part of the consultation process for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment on the Digital Environment.
16. **Coleman, S., Pothong, K., Vallejos, E.P., & Koene, A. (2017) The Internet on Our Own Terms: How children and young people deliberated about their digital rights.** 5Rights Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://5rightsfoundation.com/uploads/internet-on-our-own-terms-a4.pdf>
This report is the culmination of an initiative in which young people aged between 12-17 gathered together to participate in a series of jury-style focus groups designed to 'put the internet on trial'. In total, nine juries took place which included 108 young people.
17. **5Rights (2019) Interviews with young people at our data literacy workshops.** Retrieved from: <https://5rightsfoundation.com/in-action/interviews-with-your-people-at-our-data-literacy-workshops.html>

In 2019, 5Rights ran Data Literacy workshops in partnership with design agency, Snook, for young people aged 11-15 in London. The workshops encouraged young people to debate and discuss issues around online privacy, bullying, and oversharing: and to use their new-found knowledge and understanding to consider, create and re-design their digital environments.

18. 5Rights (2020) UNCRC General Comment on children's rights in relation to the digital environment. Internal publication.

5Rights invited young people aged between 11 and 19 to participate in a digital roundtable on the UNCRC General Comment on children's rights in relation to the digital environment. Participants provided feedback on the draft consultation and were encouraged to reflect on a variety of questions including accessibility in the digital, changes they would like to see, responsibility of government and the tech sector, and commercial uses of data.

Endnotes

- ¹ [Report #10]: Revealing Reality & Children's Commissioner for England (2018) Life in 'Likes'
- ² [Report #10]: Revealing Reality & Children's Commissioner for England (2018) Life in 'Likes'
- ³ [Report #10]: Revealing Reality & Children's Commissioner for England (2018) Life in 'Likes'
- ⁴ [Report #15]: Unicef (2019) Health, Privacy, and Trust in a Digital World
- ⁵ [Report #14]: UK Safer Internet Centre (2019) Our Internet, Our Choice
- ⁶ [Report #10]: Revealing Reality & Children's Commissioner for England (2018) Life in 'Likes'
- ⁷ [Report #10]: Revealing Reality & Children's Commissioner for England (2018) Life in 'Likes'
- ⁸ [Report #18]: 5Rights (2020) UNCRC General Comment on children's rights in relation to the digital environment
- ⁹ [Report #9]: International Play Association (Scotland) & The Children's Parliament (2011) "I'd play all day and night if I could." A report on children's views on their right to play.
- ¹⁰ [Report #9]: International Play Association (Scotland) & The Children's Parliament (2011) "I'd play all day and night if I could." A report on children's views on their right to play.
- ¹¹ [Report #9]: International Play Association (Scotland) & The Children's Parliament (2011) "I'd play all day and night if I could." A report on children's views on their right to play.
- ¹² [Report #6]: Girlguiding (2019) Girls' Attitudes Survey 2019
- ¹³ [Report #18]: 5Rights (2020) UNCRC General Comment on children's rights in relation to the digital environment
- ¹⁴ [Report #9]: International Play Association (Scotland) & The Children's Parliament (2011) "I'd play all day and night if I could." A report on children's views on their right to play.
- ¹⁵ [Report #9]: International Play Association (Scotland) & The Children's Parliament (2011) "I'd play all day and night if I could." A report on children's views on their right to play.
- ¹⁶ [Report #9]: International Play Association (Scotland) & The Children's Parliament (2011) "I'd play all day and night if I could." A report on children's views on their right to play.
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- ¹⁹ [Report #9]: International Play Association (Scotland) & The Children's Parliament (2011) "I'd play all day and night if I could." A report on children's views on their right to play.
- ²⁰ [Report #10]: Revealing Reality & Children's Commissioner for England (2018) Life in 'Likes'
- ²¹ [Report #3]: Children's Commissioner for England (2020) Childhood in 2020
- ²² [Report #3]: Children's Commissioner for England (2020) Childhood in 2020
- ²³ [Report #8]: Information Commissioner's Office (2019) Towards a better digital future
- ²⁴ [Report #8]: Information Commissioner's Office (2019) Towards a better digital future
- ²⁵ [Report #13]: Stoilova, M., Livingstone, S., & Nandagiri, R. (2019) Children's data and privacy online
- ²⁶ [Report #15]: Unicef (2019) Health, Privacy, and Trust in a Digital World
- ²⁷ [Report #17]: 5Rights (2019) Interviews with young people at our data literacy workshops
- ²⁸ [Report #17]: 5Rights (2019) Interviews with young people at our data literacy workshops
- ²⁹ [Report #15]: Unicef (2019) Health, Privacy, and Trust in a Digital World
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- ³¹ [Report #13]: Stoilova, M., Livingstone, S., & Nandagiri, R. (2019) Children's data and privacy online
- ³² [Report #15]: Unicef (2019) Health, Privacy, and Trust in a Digital World
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- ³⁸ [Report #5]: Council of Europe (2019) "Two clicks forward, and one click back"
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- ⁴⁰ [Report #1]: 5Rights, Young Scot & Scottish Government (2017) Our Digital Rights. The Scottish Government
- ⁴¹ [Report #18]: 5Rights (2020) UNCRC General Comment on children's rights in relation to the digital environment
- ⁴² [Report #10]: Revealing Reality & Children's Commissioner for England (2018) Life in 'Likes'
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- ⁵⁷ [Report #7]: Guardian Saints (2020) Online Safeguarding for Young People In Care—A Retrospective Report 2016-2019.
- ⁵⁸ [Report #6]: Girlguiding (2019) Girls' Attitudes Survey 2019
- ⁵⁹ [Report #15]: Unicef (2019) Health, Privacy, and Trust in a Digital World
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- ⁶² [Report #8]: Information Commissioner's Office (2019) Towards a better digital future
- ⁶³ [Report #16]: Coleman, S., Pothong, K., Vallejos, E.P., & Koene, A. (2017) The Internet on Our Own Terms
- ⁶⁴ [Report #8]: Information Commissioner's Office (2019) Towards a better digital future
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- ⁶⁷ [Report #14]: UK Safer Internet Centre (2019) Our Internet, Our Choice
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