



Young Canadians in a Wired World Phase III: Life Online **Fact Sheet**

Initiated in 2000 by MediaSmarts, *Young Canadians in a Wired World* (YCWW) is the most comprehensive and wide-ranging study of children's and teens' Internet use in Canada. Through this research, MediaSmarts has harvested a wealth of information on the impact of networked technologies on young Canadians.

Our latest YCWW findings from a survey conducted in 2013 provide new insights on the Internet behaviours and attitudes of students across the country. *Life Online* focuses on what youth are doing online, what sites they're going to, and their attitudes towards online safety, household rules, and unplugging from digital technology. This report is the first in a series that will examine several themes which are emerging from the survey findings, including: privacy, cyberbullying, digital literacy, online relationships and offensive content.

Methodology

In total, 5,436 students in grades 4 through 11, representing every province and territory, were surveyed. The research was conducted from February to June 2013 and was administered by teachers in 140 schools to both English- and French-speaking students.

Key Findings

Online access

- Students are highly connected, with over 99% having access to the Internet outside of school.
- Portable devices are used more than desktop computers to access the Internet.
- **Cell phones and smartphones** are primary devices for going online and 39% of students with a cell phone report sleeping with it in case they get calls or messages at night.

Online activities

- Digital media are important sources for **finding information** but students primarily go online **for entertainment and communicating with friends and family**, with Facebook being the second most popular site for students in grades 7 to 11.
- A large number of students in grades 4 to 6 are on Facebook and Twitter despite user agreements that restrict people under the age of 13 from using these sites.

Favourite Sites

- 7 of the 10 top favourite sites for all students focus on posting and sharing information and content, **illustrating the need to teach young people digital skills** so they understand privacy, digital permanence, ethical decision-making and how to protect their personal information.
- **YouTube (75%) topped the list of ten favourite sites for all students**, while Facebook, Google and Twitter also appeared in the overall top 10 list.

Boys and girls have different experiences online

- A surprising number of girls (82%) agree with the sentence "I could be hurt if I talk to someone I don't know online", compared to 63% of boys. Girls are also less likely to see the Internet as a safe place (51% compared to 61% of boys).
- **Girls were more likely than boys to have household rules** in place regarding online activities. This suggests that girls are more regulated than boys and may carry additional burdens with respect to their own online safety and the tone of their online interactions, **despite the fact that boys are more likely to engage in risky online behaviours**.

Parental Involvement

- Parents have fewer rules in place compared to 2005, even though having household rules reduces risky online behaviours.

Importance of life balance with digital media

- One third of students **worry that they spend too much time online**, but the majority choose to go offline to do other things, like spending time with friends and family, going outside, or enjoying quiet time alone. Almost half wouldn't care if they couldn't use the Internet for anything other than school for a week.

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