MediaSmarts

YOUNG CANADIANS IN A WIRED WORLD

Online Privacy, Online Publicity

Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III

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Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III:
ONLINE PRIVACY, ONLINE PUBLICITY

Introduction

Ever since the Internet first allowed commercial activity in 1992, companies have been interested in what kids are doing online. Schools, public libraries and even parents were quick to join them, and young peoples' online activities are now monitored, collected, scrutinized and used by a variety of institutions and individuals for a variety of purposes.

Educational responses have typically told children not to post personal information online if they want to protect their privacy. But, as our *Life Online* report shows, kids have increasingly taken up social networking technologies that are *based* on them sharing their information with others.

Adults typically argue that young people don't care about their privacy since they seem so willing to post their personal information on the Internet. However, the qualitative research conducted by MediaSmarts in 2012 indicates that young people seek both publicity *and* privacy online, and have developed a number of strategies to protect their privacy at the same time that they seek the benefits of online visibility[1].

In 2013, MediaSmarts conducted a national survey – *Young Canadians in a Wired World* – of 5,436 Canadian students, grades 4 through 11, in every province and territory, in order to gain a better understanding of young people's experiences and perceptions of networked media. *Online Privacy, Online Publicity* is the second of a series of reports drawing on that rich data. In this report, we explore the Janus-faced nature of online privacy by examining the strategies that young people use to control how they are represented online and the ways in which they seek to assert some sort of control over their personal information.

[1] Steeves, V. (2012). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Talking to Youth and Parents about Life Online*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts. Available at: http://mediasmarts.ca/ycww/talking-youth-parents-about-life-online

Executive Summary – Key Findings

Young Canadians' immersion in social networking activities, as highlighted in *Life Online*, provides the context for understanding young people's attitudes and behaviours relating to privacy. While students are willing to post information about themselves and their personal lives online, they have very clear ideas of who should – and should not – be able to see what they post. They've also developed a number of strategies to help them manage their online reputations, but their limited understanding of data privacy issues and tools shows the need for more effective privacy education.

It's a Social World

Older teens are particularly active users of social media and frequently post information about themselves online.

- Ninety-five percent of Grade 11 students have Facebook accounts and nearly half of girls in grades 7-11 have Instagram and Twitter accounts.
- Grade 11 students (at least once a day or once a week):
    - Post comments or pictures on their own social networking sites (50%)
    - Read or post on other people's sites (73%)
    - Tweet (44%)
    - Follow friends and family on Twitter (39%)

However, sharing personal information starts early. A significant percentage of younger students have social media accounts; and many of the virtual playgrounds that are popular with younger students also include social media, blurring the lines between online play and sharing information.

- Thirty-two percent of students in grades 4-6 have a Facebook account and 16 percent have a Twitter account.
- Eighteen percent of students in Grade 4, 28 percent of students in Grade 5, and 37 percent of students in Grade 6 report posting information on their own social media sites at least once a week.

Even with the high interest in social media, the majority of students don't post contact information online such as their home address or email address.

- This ranges from 90 percent in Grade 4, to 67 percent in Grade 8, to 50 percent in Grade 11.

- Household rules may play a role: more than half of students report having a rule at home about posting contact information online, and students with house rules are less likely to do whatever the rule suggests they avoid[2].

Identity Play as a Privacy Strategy

Previous *Young Canadians in a Wired World* research has highlighted how online identity play is used by youth for a number of different reasons. This latest phase is no exception, with significant numbers of students pretending to be someone else to play jokes on friends (35%) and flirt (13%). A large percentage of students also pretend to be someone else to protect their privacy, surf anonymously and bypass age restrictions on websites.

- Almost half (47%) of students have said that they were someone else online to protect their privacy.
- Close to one third (31%) of students pretend to be someone else to post comments on news or social media sites.
- Forty-eight percent have pretended to be older to register for a site they are too young to join.
    - The percentage of students who misrepresent their age rises from one fifth of students in Grade 4 to 65 percent of students in Grade 11.

Control over Personal Content, Especially Photographs

We know that young people's online experiences are *social*. But socializing is not necessarily the same thing as sharing. Students are very proactive about curating their online persona and controlling content that they don't want certain audiences to see – and a number of social norms have emerged around expectations regarding what friends share, and don't share about their friends online. When it comes to photos, students apply a number of social and technical strategies to keep images that they want kept private out of the public eye, including using privacy settings to block certain people, deleting content themselves or asking others to take material down.

- While it's not surprising that 89 percent of students say it's wrong for a friend to post a bad/embarrassing picture of them, it is surprising that more than half (54%) agree that it's wrong for a friend to post a good picture without asking first. For French speaking students in Quebec, nearly three quarters of students think this is wrong (72%).
- For content that they have posted themselves:
    - Older students are more likely to delete content about themselves (77% have done so in Grade 11, compared to 77% who have never done this in Grade 4).
    - Their main concern is that parents (44%), family (42%) or friends (37%) will see it.

[2] Steeves, V. (2014). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Life Online*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts. Available at: http://mediasmarts.ca/ycww/life-online

    - Girls are more likely to delete things, suggesting they are more concerned than boys about their online image.
- For photos that have been posted by others:
    - Ninety-seven percent of students would take steps to remove a photo they don't want others to see.
        - The two most common strategies for doing this are to ask the person who posted it to take it down (80%) and to untag the photo (49%).
        - French language students in Quebec are more likely than English language students in the rest of Canada to go to parents (53% compared to 35%) or teachers or principals (27% compared to 14%) for help.
        - Overall, younger students are more likely to turn to adults if they need help. Turning to parents is the primary response for students in grades 4–8.
- As students get older, they are generally more accepting of friends posting photos of them without asking permission (by Grade 11 just over one quarter of students expect their friends to ask them first).

Audiences Matter

The attention paid by students to who can see photos and comments about them online underlines the importance of audiences to young people. Generally, audiences fall into three groups, with varying levels of exposure granted to each one. These include: people in each student's social circle; institutional actors; and strangers and marketers.

People in Students' Social Circles

- When asked who should be able to see their photos and content online, the majority of students included people in their social circle: friends (86%), family (68%), and boyfriends/girlfriends (59%).
- However, even though they are comfortable being seen by their social circle, many students – especially older students – actively monitor what information friends and family have access to online. For example, students are more likely to use privacy settings to block friends (31%) and family members (21%) than any group other than strangers (50%).
- A majority of students (59%) say they would share the password to their social networking account, email account or cell phone, primarily within their social circle.
    - Not surprisingly, younger students are more likely than older students to say they would share their password with their parents, from a high of 66 percent in Grade 5 to a low of 14 percent in Grade 11.
    - While boys and girls were equally likely to share their passwords with a girlfriend or boyfriend, girls were much more likely to share passwords with a best friend.
    - Boys were more likely than girls to report never sharing their password with anyone at all.
- Even though many students are comfortable giving parents access to their online lives, a large number, especially of older students, think that parents should not constantly keep

track of them online, force them to “friend” them, ask for their passwords or listen in on their conversations.

- Generally, French language students in Quebec are much more comfortable with parental monitoring (72% agree that parents should keep track of their kids online all the time, compared to 44% of English language students in the rest of Canada).

Institutional Actors

- Fewer students say that institutional actors, including police, government, social media companies and teachers/principals, should be able to see what they post on social media.
- Overall, students were more open to monitoring by police than teachers/principals and government:
    - Close to a third of students (28%) think police should be able to see their social networking posts and 35 percent of students agree that police should be able to track their location using devices and apps.
    - One fifth of students agree that government should be able to see what they post and 17 percent agree that the company that owns the social media site should be able to do this.
    - The vast majority of students (92%) believe that teachers and principals should not be allowed to use a device or application to check on a student’s location (Table 12).
    - Only a small number of students (4%) think that a company that owns a device or an app that provides locational information should be allowed to check and see where they are.

Strangers and Marketers

- Over 90 percent of students think that strangers should not have access to their social networking page.
    - Although openness to strangers increases across grades, students are more leery of adults they have not met before than they are of people their own age.
    - Students are more likely to use privacy settings to block strangers than any other group.
        - Older students are more likely to use privacy settings to block strangers than younger students (60% of students in grades 9-11 versus 25% of students in Grade 4).
- Only five percent of students think that marketing companies that want to advertise to them should be able to read their social network posts.
- One percent of students think that marketers should be able to track where they are.

Learning about Online Privacy Protections

Although students are generally well informed about protecting content about them that is posted online, there is a need for more education when it comes to corporate uses of their personal information. What students know – compared to what they think they know – about protecting their data, is fraught with contradictions.

- Sixty-five percent of students have never had a privacy policy or terms of use agreement explained to them. There is a need for education here, as:
    - Sixty-eight percent of students mistakenly believe that "if a website has a privacy policy that means it will not share my personal information with anyone".
- French language students in Quebec are less likely than English language students in the rest of Canada to report that policies or agreements have been explained to them.
- While a majority of students (66%) say they have been taught about how companies collect and use their personal information, 39 percent agree with the statement "Companies are not interested in what I say and do online".
    - Almost one third (28%) of students agree with this statement: "I like it when companies use information I post to decide what products to advertise to me". This runs counter to students' feelings about marketing companies and companies that own social media websites being able to read their posts.
    - The encouraging news is that 82 percent of students have learned about privacy settings.
        - While parents are the main source of information (41%), one quarter of students have learned from friends and only 15 percent have learned about this from teachers.

It's a Social World

Older teens are particularly active users of social media and frequently post information about themselves.

Students in 2013 are indeed enthusiastic users of sites where they are encouraged to post information about their daily lives, preferences and opinions (Table 1). Ninety-five percent of Grade 11 students have Facebook accounts (Figure 1) and over half of girls in grades 7-11 also have Instagram (55%) and Twitter (53%) accounts (Figure 2). Fifty percent of Grade 11 students post comments or pictures on their own social networking sites and 73 percent read or post on other people's sites at least once a week (Table 2). Forty-four percent are also tweeting and 39 percent are following friends or family on Twitter at least once a week. Although social media are relatively new, they form a significant part of the online landscape for young people.

Table 1: Top 10 favourite websites grades 7-11: Gender

What are your five favourite websites: grades 7-11					
Boys (grades 7-11)			Girls (grades 7-11)		
Site	**Content**	**Percent of respondents**	**Site**	**Content**	**Percent of respondents**
Youtube.com	Video sharing	83%	Facebook.com	Social networking	77%
Facebook.com	Social networking	72%	Youtube.com	Video sharing	77%
Google.com	Search engine	40%	Twitter.com	Microblogging / Social networking	43%
Twitter.com	Microblogging / Social networking	24%	Google.com	Search engine	36%
Wikipedia.org	Reference	9%	Tumblr.com	Blogging / Social networking	31%
Miniclip.com	Gaming	7%	Instagram.com	Photo/Video sharing/Social networking	21%
Tumblr.com	Blogging / Social networking	7%	Pinterest.com	Photo-oriented discovery and collection	10%
Reddit.com	Social news and entertainment	6%	Hotmail.com	Email	8%
Minecraft.net	Gaming	5%	Netflix.com	Media streaming	5%
Hotmail.com	Email	5%	Wikipedia.org	Reference	5%

Figure 1: Do you have an account on the following sites? Grade

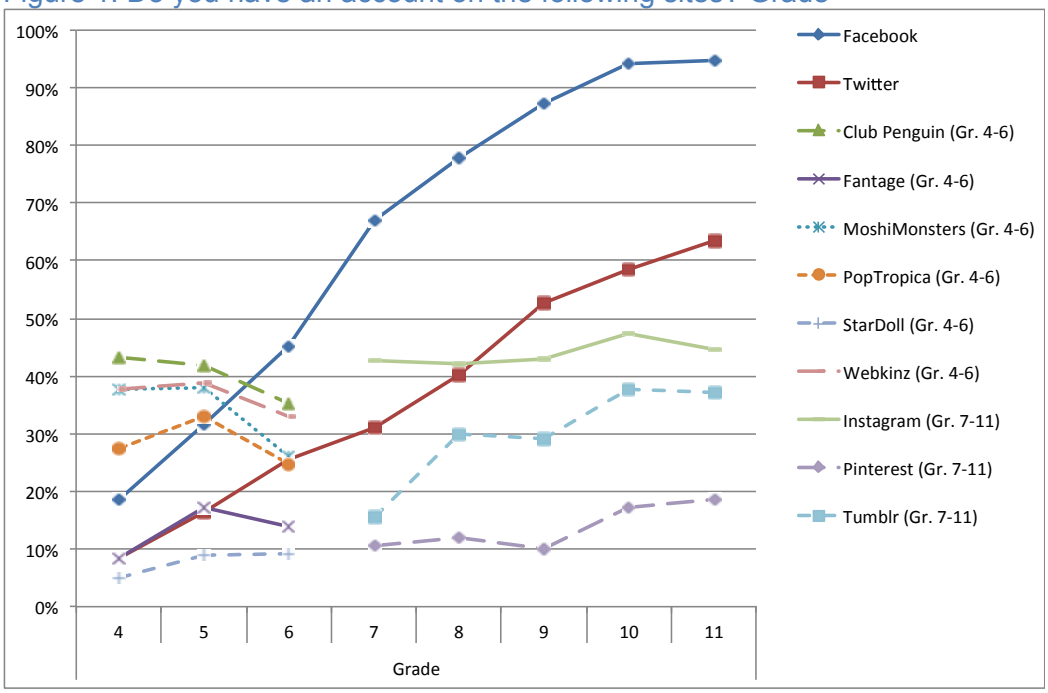


Figure 2: Grades 7-11: Do you have an account on the following sites? Gender

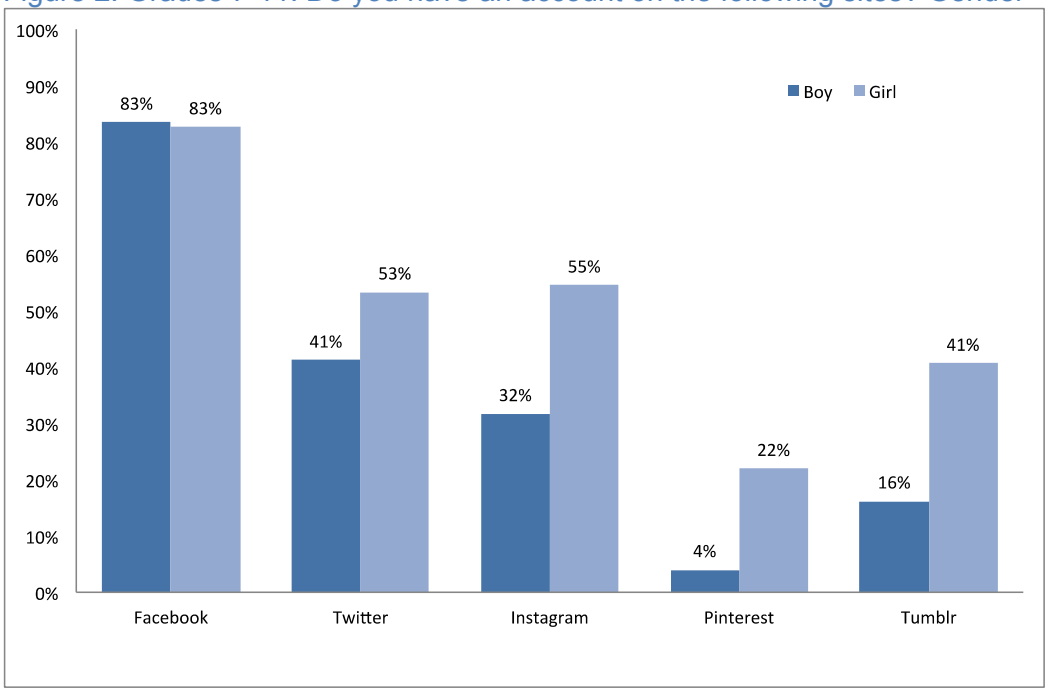


Table 2: Frequency of social networking activities

				Grade							
		Boys	Girls	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Post comments or pictures on your own social network site	At least once a day	13%	20%	8%	13%	15%	18%	18%	19%	18%	23%
	At least once a week	23%	25%	10%	15%	22%	28%	29%	26%	30%	27%
	At least once a month	19%	21%	8%	10%	16%	19%	24%	27%	27%	27%
	At least once a year	9%	5%	3%	3%	6%	6%	7%	11%	12%	9%
	Less than once a year	6%	3%	2%	4%	4%	4%	5%	6%	5%	5%
	Never	30%	25%	70%	55%	38%	24%	16%	11%	8%	10%
Read or post on other people's social network sites	At least once a day	27%	33%	9%	12%	20%	28%	34%	38%	45%	49%
	At least once a week	22%	23%	10%	13%	20%	27%	26%	27%	27%	24%
	At least once a month	13%	12%	5%	8%	11%	14%	14%	17%	14%	14%
	At least once a year	5%	4%	2%	3%	5%	4%	6%	4%	6%	5%
	Less than once a year	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	5%	2%	2%
	Never	30%	26%	71%	60%	40%	25%	17%	8%	7%	7%
Post your own tweets on Twitter	At least once a day	9%	15%	1%	4%	6%	8%	9%	19%	24%	27%
	At least once a week	8%	10%	4%	6%	5%	8%	10%	9%	13%	17%
	At least once a month	6%	8%	2%	5%	6%	7%	9%	8%	9%	9%
	At least once a year	3%	3%	0%	2%	4%	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%
	Less than once a year	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	5%	5%	4%	3%
	Never	71%	61%	90%	81%	76%	72%	65%	54%	47%	41%
Follow friends or family on Twitter	At least once a day	9%	15%	2%	7%	10%	8%	12%	15%	20%	25%
	At least once a week	7%	10%	4%	5%	4%	8%	9%	12%	14%	14%
	At least once a month	6%	8%	3%	4%	5%	6%	9%	10%	10%	11%
	At least once a year	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%
	Less than once a year	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%
	Never	71%	60%	87%	80%	74%	72%	65%	55%	49%	44%
Post your contact information (for example, your home address, email)	At least once a day	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%	4%
	At least once a week	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%	4%	5%
	At least once a month	7%	6%	3%	3%	4%	5%	6%	7%	11%	12%
	At least once a year	8%	6%	2%	3%	4%	5%	10%	12%	10%	10%
	Less than once a year	12%	12%	3%	5%	8%	10%	13%	17%	20%	19%
	Never	68%	72%	90%	87%	82%	77%	67%	59%	53%	50%

However, sharing personal information starts young for many students.

Part of this reflects the fact that about one third (32%) of students in grades 4-6 have a Facebook account and close to one fifth (16%) have a Twitter account (Figure 1), even though both sites are designed for children over 13. However, even kids who aren't on Facebook or Twitter are introduced to social media on sites geared to their age group. For example, many of the favourite virtual playgrounds frequented by students (especially girls) in grades 4-6 – like Webkinz, MoshiMonsters and Poptropica (Table 3) – also enable children to chat and share content. This both blurs the lines between online play sites and social media, and acclimatizes younger children to sharing information about themselves online. By Grade 6, well over one third of students are posting information on their own social network site (37%) and reading or posting information on other people's sites (40%) at least once a week.

Table 3: Top 10 favourite websites grades 4-6: Gender

What are your five favourite websites: grades 4-6					
Boys (grades 4-6)			Girls (grades 4-6)		
Site	**Content**	**Percent of respondents**	**Site**	**Content**	**Percent of respondents**
Youtube.com	Video sharing	70%	Youtube.com	Video sharing	61%
Minecraft.net	Gaming	31%	Facebook.com	Social networking	22%
Google.com	Search engine	27%	Google.com	Search engine	20%
Facebook.com	Social networking	22%	Webkinz.com	Gaming / Virtual pets	11%
Miniclip.com	Gaming	19%	Moshimonsters.com	Gaming / Social networking / Virtual pets	10%
Y8.com	Gaming	9%	Friv.com	Gaming	9%
Roblox.com	Gaming	9%	Twitter.com	Microblogging / Social networking	9%
Andkon.com	Gaming	8%	Poptropica.com	Gaming	9%
Friv.com	Gaming	7%	Y8.com	Gaming	8%
Twitter.com	Microblogging / Social networking	7%	Family.ca	TV / Entertainment news / Gaming	8%

The majority of students of all ages do not post contact information online.

Interestingly, in spite of this active engagement with social media, most students are careful with their contact information, such as their home address or email address (Table 2). Ninety percent of students in Grade 4 never post this kind of information. The number does decrease steadily across the grades, but even in Grade 11, where one half do post contact information, they do so infrequently (only 9% do so at least once a week and 19% do so less than once a year). Household rules may be a factor here, with the most common household rule reported by students being about posting contact information (55%)[3]. Girls of all ages are less likely to post contact information (72% never do, compared to 68% of boys). This suggests that young people – especially girls – are sensitive to the risks of inviting unwanted contact with strangers online, and expect to either communicate anonymously or communicate with people they already know offline.

[3] Steeves, V. (2014). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Life Online*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts, pp. 31. Available at: http://mediasmarts.ca/ycww/life-online

Now You (Don't) See Me: Identity Play

Our earlier *Young Canadians in a Wired World* research has pointed to the reasons why young people who use interactive media to socialize often play with their identities – for fun, to learn what it's like to be older, to get access to an adult world that is otherwise closed to them[4]. As Table 5 indicates, this trend continues in 2013: a significant number of students pretend to be someone else to play a joke on a friend (35%), flirt (13%) and register on websites designed for adults (48%).

However, our 2013 survey indicates that pretending to be someone else online is also a useful strategy for privacy protection.

Almost half (47%) of students surveyed report they have said that they were someone else online to protect their privacy.

There was very little difference between boys (48%) and girls (45%) and, surprisingly, between grades in this regard. Fifty percent or more of students in grades 5, 6 and 11 use a false identity to guard their privacy; the percentages in other grades range from 43 percent in grades 7 and 8, to 45 percent in Grade 10 and 48 percent in grades 4 and 9 (Table 4). Shielding one's identity online is a practice that appears to be learned young and is used consistently by a significant number of students of all ages.

This raises interesting questions about the potential benefits of enabling students to surf anonymously. Anonymity may shield harassment and other anti-social behaviour, but children may also benefit from anonymous access to the online public sphere. For example, our *Life Online* report indicates that the Internet is an important source of information for young people on matters related to their physical and mental health, sexuality and relationships[5]; and online tracking or other methods of identification may interfere with this access by removing the perceived veil that allows young people to seek out information privately. In addition, approximately one third (31%) of students surveyed pretend to be someone else to post comments on news or social media sites (Table 5). Although they may pretend to be someone else on social media for a variety of reasons, shielding their identity to participate in public debate on news sites has potential benefits. Accordingly, anonymity may be an important way to ensure that young people continue to enjoy the educational and democratic aspects of online media.

To date, regulators have tended to ignore the potential benefits of anonymous surfing. Instead, privacy laws assume that informed consent and not anonymity will best protect children's

[4] Steeves, V. (2005). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase II: Trends and Recommendations*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts, pp. 10-11. Available at: http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/publication-report/full/YCWWII-trends-recomm.pdf

[5] Steeves, V. (2014). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Life Online*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts, pp. 14-15. Available at: http://mediasmarts.ca/ycww/life-online

privacy, by giving children and their parents an opportunity to make informed decisions about the information children disclose online. However, parental involvement assumes that (at least young) children will identify themselves as children online and provide contact information so parents can be a part of the decision-making process. Similarly, since age restrictions on sites are intended to keep children away from adult content, many sites targeting children (or seeking to bar children from registering) ask for personal information to determine whether or not the person registering is a child. This emphasis on identifying children in order to protect them may be problematic because it closes down spaces for anonymous speech. But it is also less effective because it is so easy to sidestep.

Almost half (48%) of students surveyed report that they pretend to be someone else to register on a website they are too young to join.

Although there is very little difference between boys (50%) and girls (47%) in this regard, there is a steep jump across grades. The percentage of students who misrepresent their age online rises from almost one fifth (18%) in Grade 4, to approximately one half in grades 6-8, to 65 percent in Grade 11.

This complicates privacy-protective practices on sites that use more restrictive defaults for users who are under 18. For example, when a user registers on Facebook and indicates that his or her age is under 18, the default setting for location sharing is set to off (although it can be turned on), and people who aren't "friends" with the user will have limited access to private messaging. Since many students who are over 13 still use a false identity to register on sites, it is possible that they are seeking to avoid these kinds of restrictive defaults that limit their ability to interact with others online; they may also be trying to access content on popular sites such as YouTube and Tumblr that is age-restricted (Table 1). Either way, age restrictions may not deliver the protection they are designed to provide.

Table 4: Online identities: Grade

Grade	Protect your privacy	Pretend to be older to register on age-restricted websites	Post comments on sites
4	48%	18%	16%
5	51%	33%	22%
6	50%	48%	31%
7	43%	53%	32%
8	43%	51%	32%
9	48%	57%	39%
10	45%	61%	36%
11	50%	65%	36%

Table 5: Online identities

Have you ever said you were someone else online to do any of these things?	Percentage Yes
Play a joke on a friend ♂♀ Grade	35%
Flirt Grade	13%
Be mean to someone without getting into trouble ♂♀ Grade	10%
Protect your privacy	47%
Pretend you are older so you can register on a website you are too young to join Grade	48%
Post comments on sites (for example, news, Facebook) Grade	31%
Other ♂♀	22%

Control over Personal Content, Especially Photographs

Students also use other strategies to control who sees or has access to their online content, including deleting comments and photos that they have posted or deleting comments and photos that others have posted about them.

Around half of all students have either deleted something that they posted about themselves (51%) or asked someone to delete something that the other person posted about them (45%) in order to prevent someone else from seeing it (Table 6). Girls are especially more vigilant than boys when it comes to asking other people to delete things they have posted about them (54% versus 35%) and are also more likely to do this in order to keep content away from parents, other family members, friends and other kids/acquaintances. This suggests that girls may be more careful about managing their online image than boys.

French language students in Quebec (70%) are more likely to report that they have never deleted content or asked someone else to delete content compared to English language students in the rest of Canada (49%).

Attention to who may see content increases across grades. Whereas approximately three quarters of students in Grade 4 have never taken down something they have posted (77%) or asked someone else to do so (77%), by Grade 11 that proportion is flipped: 77 percent of students have deleted something they have posted and 66 percent have asked someone else to do so (Figures 3 and 4).

Table 6: Deleting online content

	Have you ever deleted anything you put online (for example, photos, comments) so someone would not see it? (Percentage Yes)	Have you ever asked someone to delete something they put online about you (for example, photos, comments) because you didn't want someone to see it? (Percentage Yes)
Yes, so my friends would not see it	Grade 22%	♂♀ Grade 21%
Yes, so my parent(s) would not see it	Grade 22%	Grade 16%
Yes, so my other family members would not see it	Grade 21%	♂♀ Grade 14%
Yes, so my teacher or principal would not see it	Grade 7%	Grade 5%
Yes, so my boss or someone who might hire me in the future would not see it (grades 7-11 only)	Grade 9%	6%
Yes, so my boyfriend / girlfriend would not see it (grades 7-11 only)	Grade 8%	8%
Yes, so other kids / my acquaintances from school or other places would not see it	Grade 14%	Grade 12%
Yes, so no one would see it	♂♀ Grade 24%	♂♀ Grade 24%
Yes, for another reason	♂♀ Grade 24%	♂♀ Grade 17%
No	♂♀ Grade 49%	♂♀ Grade 55%

Figure 3: Deleting online content posted by self: Grade

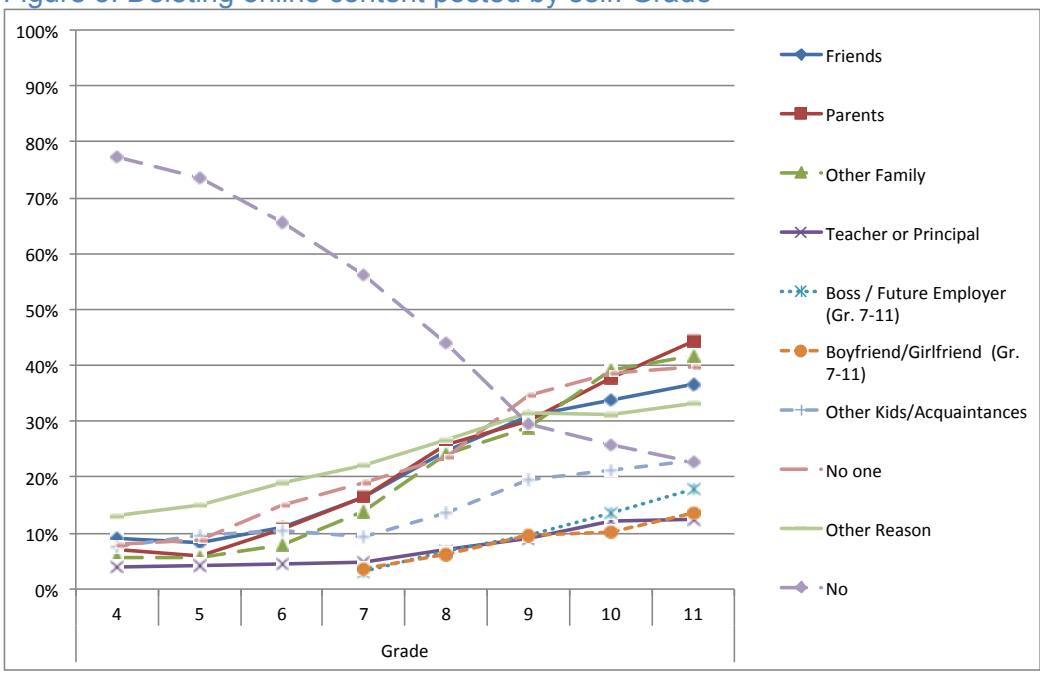
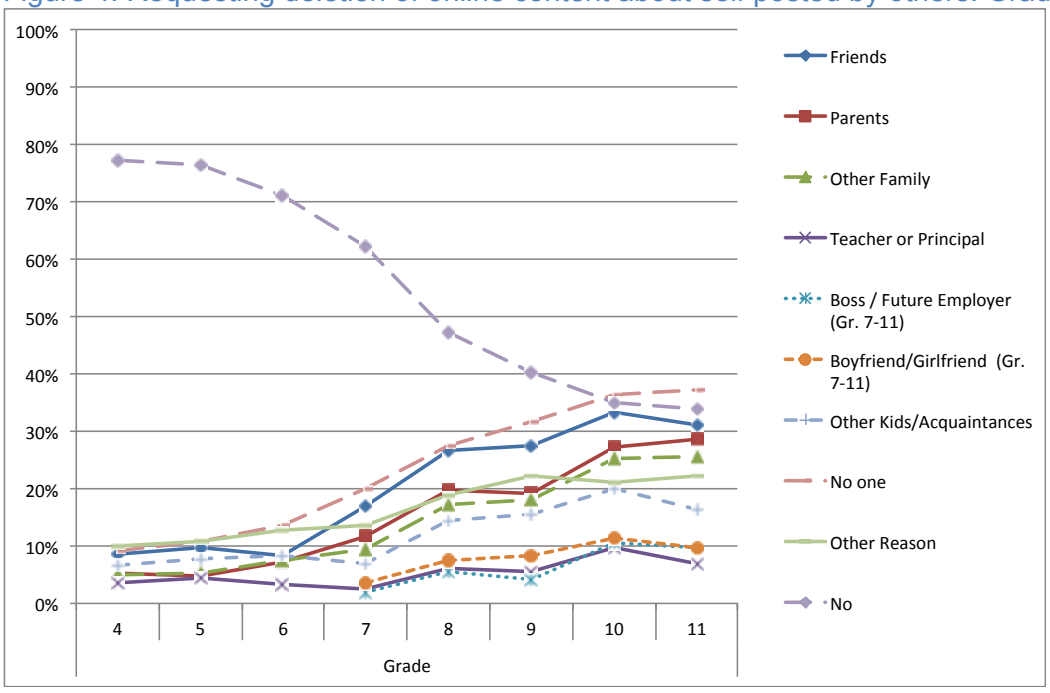


Figure 4: Requesting deletion of online content about self posted by others: Grade



Control over Photographs is Especially Important

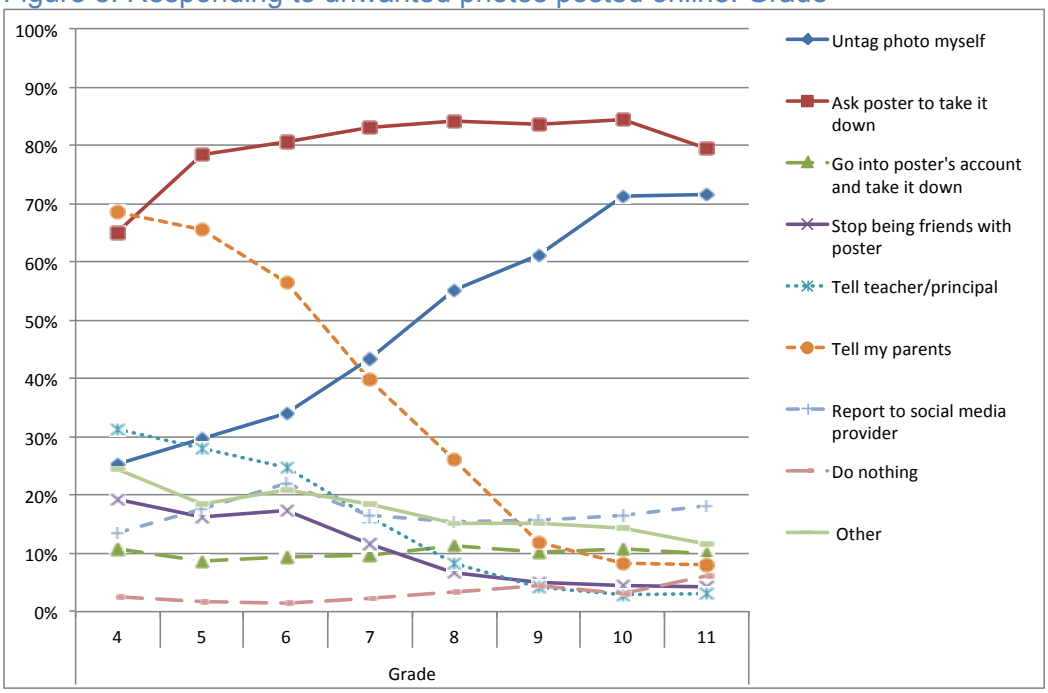
Ninety-seven percent of students would take steps to remove a photo of him or herself that they did not want other people to see (Table 7). Asking the poster to take the photo down is the most common response across all grades (80%), except in Grade 4, where it follows closely behind the first option of telling a parent (Figure 5). Telling an adult continues to be a primary option until Grade 8, when more students indicate that they would untag the photo (55% compared to 26% for telling a parent).

Other options that are more prevalent in Grade 4, including talking to a teacher/principal (31%) or stopping being friends with the poster (19%), decrease significantly across the grades. Older students are much less likely to talk to a teacher or principal – from 8 percent in Grade 8, to 3 percent in grades 10-11 – preferring to rely almost entirely on asking the poster to remove the photo (79% in Grade 11) or untagging the photo themselves (72% in Grade 11). Interestingly, the number of students who would go into the poster's account and remove the photo (which ranges from 9-11%) remains fairly consistent across grades. There is a bit more fluctuation with respect to the number of students who would report it to the social media provider, ranging from 13-22 percent of students in grades 4-6, to 18 percent of students in Grade 11.

Table 7: Responding to unwanted photos posted online

What would you do if someone posted a photo of you online that you did not want other people to see?	Percentage
I would untag the photo myself ♂♀ Grade	49%
I would ask the person to take the photo down ♂♀ Grade	80%
I would go into their account and take it down myself ♂♀	11%
I would stop being friends with them ♂♀ Grade	11%
I would tell my teacher/principal Grade	14%
I would tell my parent(s) ♂♀ Grade	35%
I would report it to the social media service provider	17%
I would not do anything about it ♂♀ Grade	3%
Other ♂♀ Grade	18%

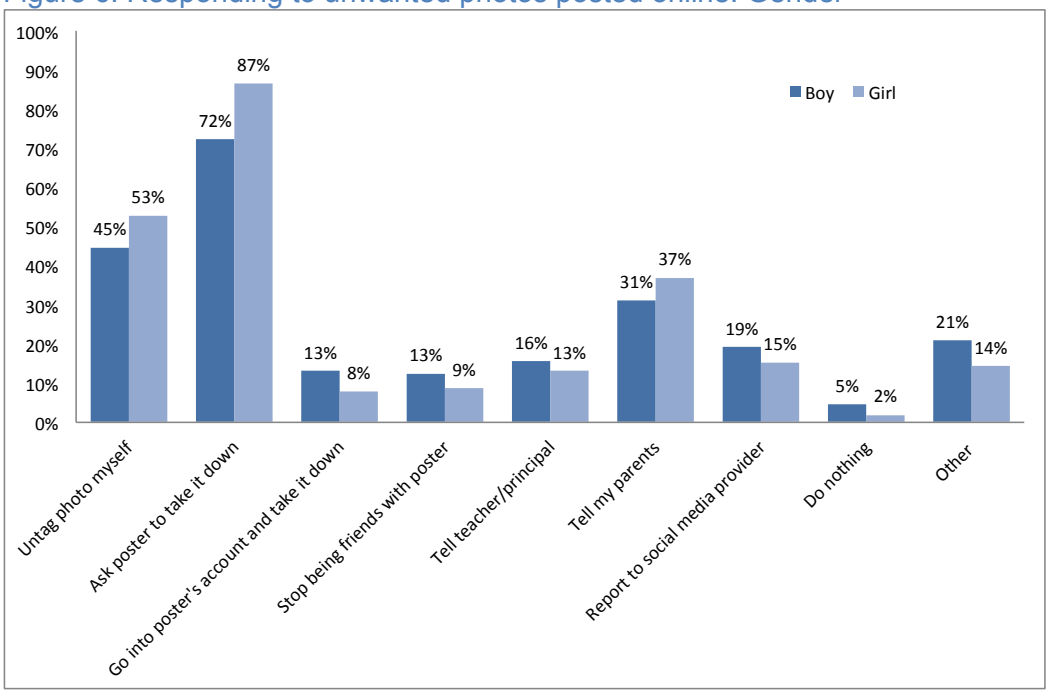
Figure 5: Responding to unwanted photos posted online: Grade



Almost all boys (95%) and girls (98%) would take action to remove an unwanted photo of themselves and they are likely to rely on similar methods, such as asking the poster to remove the content, untagging the photo and telling parents. However, girls tend to be more likely to do these things than boys (Figure 6). Boys, on the other hand, are more likely than girls to use less common strategies that call on an authority figure, such as reporting the photo to the social media provider, or telling a teacher or principal. Boys are also more likely than girls to take direct action, such as stopping being friends with the poster or going into the poster's account and taking it down themselves.

French language students in Quebec are more likely than English language students in the rest of Canada to stop being friends with the poster (21% compared to 10%) tell their parents (53% compared to 35%) or tell a teacher or principal (27% compared to 14%).

Figure 6: Responding to unwanted photos posted online: Gender



Our findings suggest that online self-presentation is carefully managed by students as they seek to protect some content while still remaining open to interaction with others. Successful management relies upon others meeting privacy expectations by complying with requests to delete content or screening photos before they are posted.

The importance of carefully managing photos is underlined by the impact that posting bad or embarrassing photos can have on friendships. Eighty-nine percent of students report that it is not okay for a friend to post a bad or embarrassing picture of a friend. However, perhaps more surprisingly, 54 percent of boys and girls would expect a friend to ask before posting a good picture of them online (Table 8). French language students in Quebec (28%) are less likely to indicate that posting a good picture without permission is okay than English language students in the rest of Canada (46%).

Boys are more likely to be comfortable with friends who post bad or embarrassing photos (13% compared to 9% of girls), but the overwhelming majority of both genders are not (Figure 7). The need for permission before posting decreases across the grades, from a high of 82 percent in Grade 4 to a low of 27 percent in Grade 11 (Figure 8): it reaches approximately 50 percent in Grade 8, when 78 percent of students have Facebook accounts (Figure 1). Concerns about bad or embarrassing photos also decrease across grades: even in Grade 11, 71 percent say it is not okay for a friend to post such a photo.

Table 8: Friends posting photos

Is it okay for a friend to do the following things?	Percentage Yes
Post a good picture of you online without asking first Grade	46%
Post a bad or embarrassing picture of you online ♂♀ Grade	11%

Figure 7: Friends posting photos: Gender

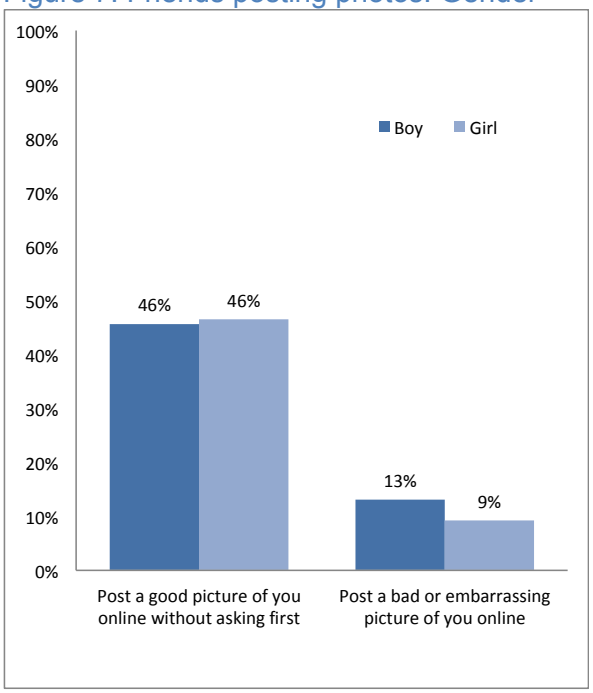
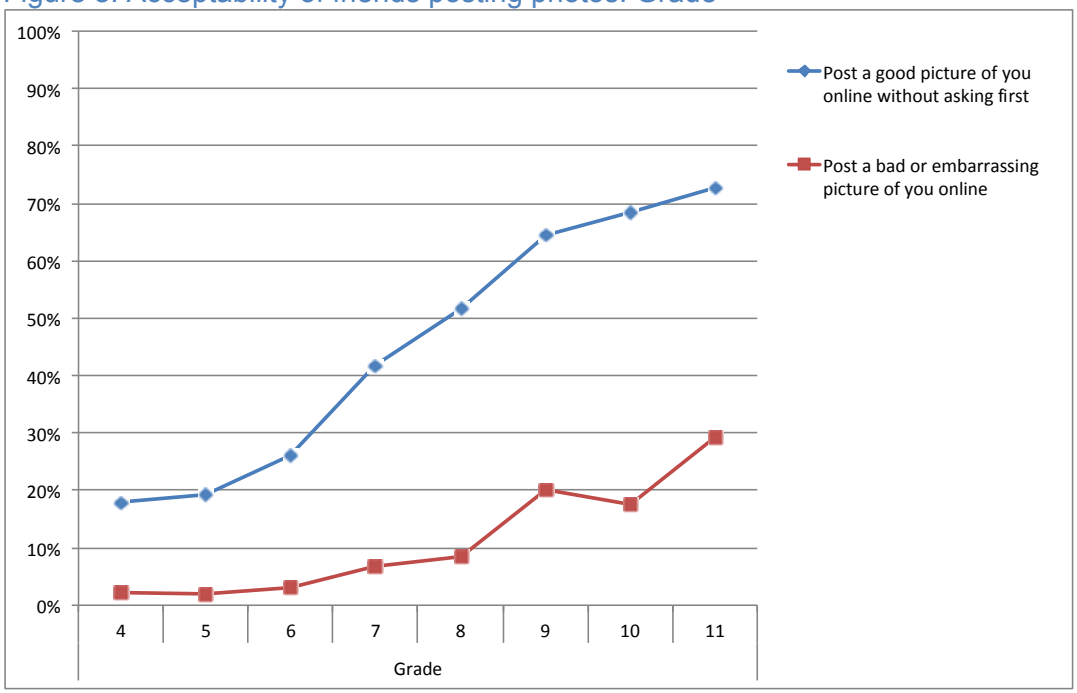


Figure 8: Acceptability of friends posting photos: Grade



Audiences Matter

Student attention to who can see photos and comments about them online underlines that, for young people, audiences matter. Our qualitative study suggests that their approach to online privacy and publicity is dialectical. Just because information about them is posted online, they do not consider it public to all. And even when they invite openness with certain audiences, like family and friends, they still expect those audiences to respect their privacy by asking for permission to expose some content (like "bad" photos) or simply respecting lines, like passwords, that separate communications with family and friends)[6]. They may or may not be successful in avoiding unwanted scrutiny but, as the following findings illustrate, they have very clear ideas of who should and shouldn't be watching them online.

To get a better sense of who their intended audiences are, we asked our survey respondents who should be able to read their social network posts. Their responses divide into three groups:

- The majority of students think people in their social circle should be able to see them online. In other words, when they post content on social media, they expect it to be seen by friends, family, boyfriends/girlfriends and "anyone who knows them".
- At the same time, a large majority do not think that their social media sites should be available to institutional actors, including the government, police, the company that owns the social networking site and teachers/principals.
- And almost all of them agree that strangers should not be able to follow them. Interestingly, the other group that is almost universally unwelcome is marketing companies that want to advertise to them.

People in Students' Social Circle

Friends and family members are the largest accepted audiences.

Eighty-six percent of students think that their friends should be allowed to see what they post on social media, and 68 percent think that their parents and family members should be allowed to see it as well (Table 9).

Family tops friends in grades 4 (80% compared to 61% for friends) and 5 (84% compared to 74% for friends), but that trend reverses from Grade 6 on (Figure 9). Grade 9 is the tipping point where boyfriends and girlfriends are more accepted than family members and, by Grade 11, 95 percent of students expect their friends to see them online. This is in keeping with developmental theories that suggest that children begin to seek space to individuate and separate from family as they enter their teen years. However, even in Grade 11, more than half

[6] Steeves, V. (2012). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Talking to Youth and Parents about Life Online*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts. Available at: http://mediasmarts.ca/ycww/talking-youth-parents-about-life-online

(56%) still want to be visible to parents and family members, suggesting that family continues to be an important audience, even for older students.

Of the top choices overall, girls are more likely than boys to report that friends and family members should be allowed to follow them on social media (Figure 10). However, virtually the same percentage of boys and girls think boyfriends and girlfriends should have access to their social media content.

The next largest block – after friends and family – is acquaintances, with 37 percent of boys and 36 percent of girls agreeing that "anyone who knows me" should have access to their social networking posts.[7]

Table 9: Who should be allowed to read your social network posts?

Who do you think SHOULD be allowed to read what you post on a social networking page like Facebook?	Percentage
My friends ♂♀ Grade	86%
My boyfriend/girlfriend (Gr. 7-11 only) Grade	59%
My parent(s) and people in my family ♂♀ Grade	68%
My teacher or principal Grade	14%
Kids my age I have not met before Grade	10%
Adults I have not met before ♂♀ Grade	3%
Anyone who knows me Grade	37%
The company that owns the site ♂♀	17%
Marketing companies that want to advertise to me ♂♀ Grade	5%
The police Grade	28%
Government ♂♀ Grade	20%
Other ♂♀ Grade	12%

[7] French language students in Quebec are less likely to agree with this (18% compared to 38% of English language students in the rest of Canada).

Figure 9: Who should be allowed to read your social network posts? Grade

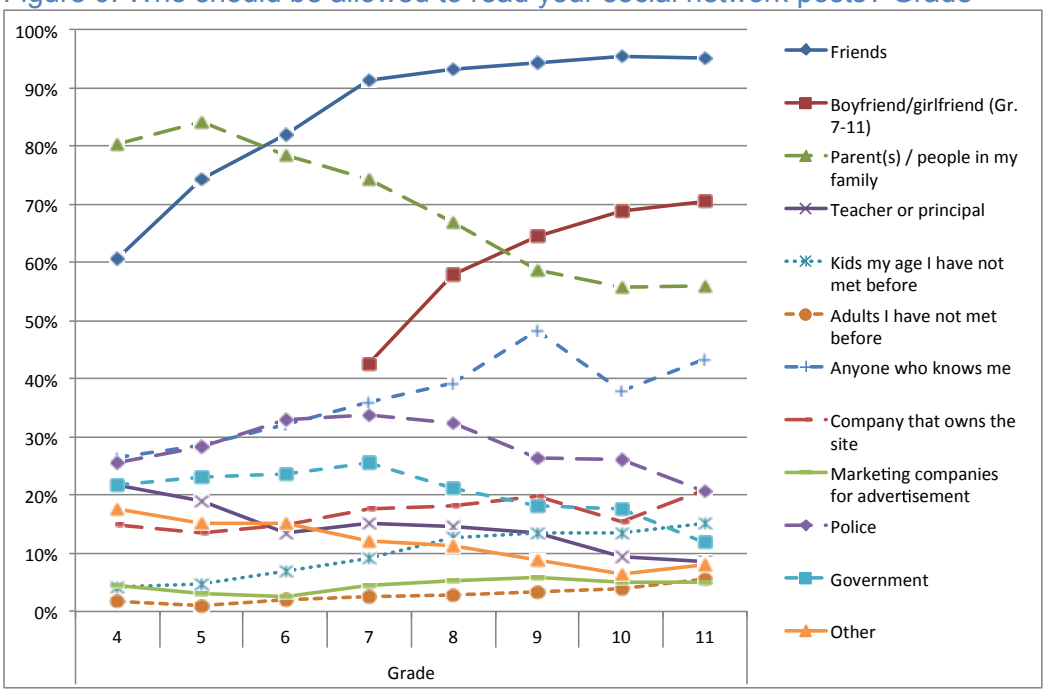
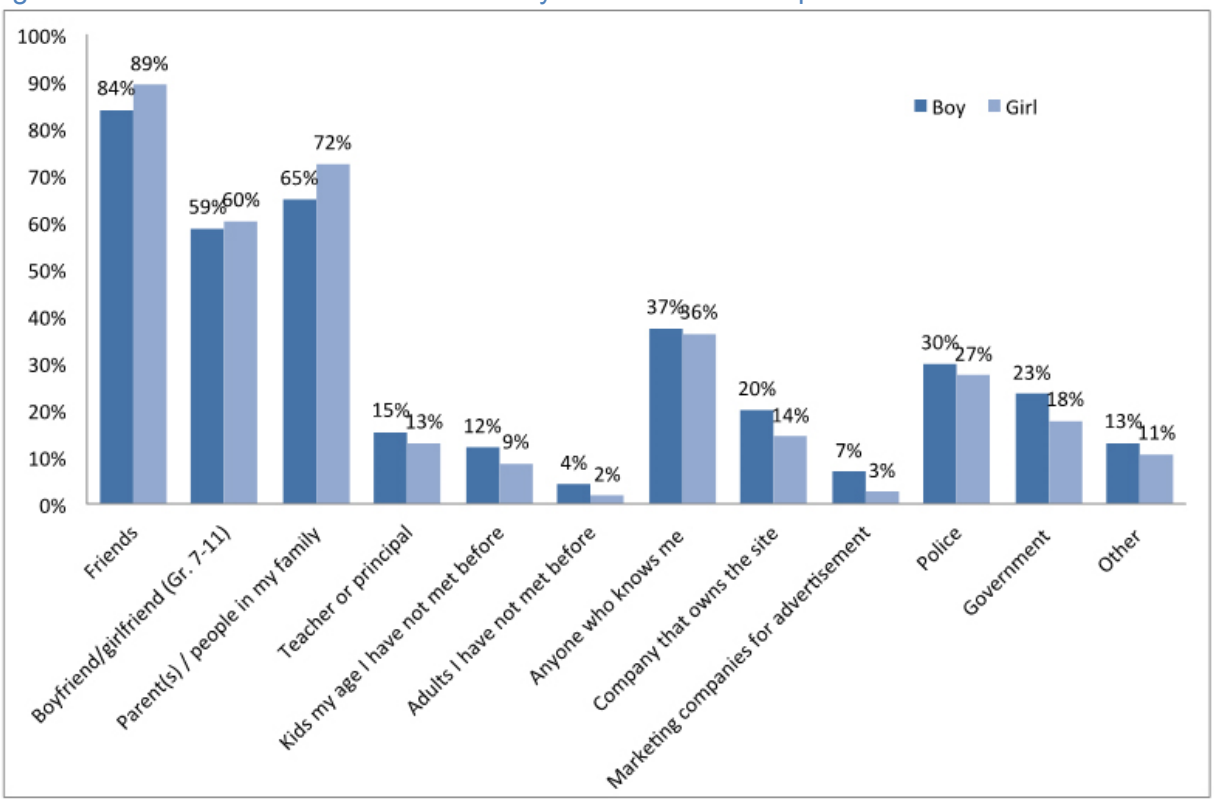


Figure 10: Who should be allowed to read your social network posts? Gender



This cluster of friends, family and acquaintances suggests that students are most comfortable being visible online to the people in their social circle.

However, even though they are comfortable with family and friends having access to their social media posts, many students – especially older students – delete information about themselves to limit what friends and family can see.

Approximately one quarter of students have removed content they have posted or content that others have posted about them to avoid anyone else seeing it. However, similar numbers of students have removed content to keep it from being seen by friends, parents, family members and acquaintances. So although most students do not object to people in their social circle following them on social media, they are still sensitive to the kinds of information friends, family and acquaintances may see, and take steps to remove things that they would prefer to keep private.

Girls are slightly more likely than boys to ask someone to remove content to keep it from friends (23% compared to 18% of boys), parents (18% compared to 14% of boys) and other family members (16% compared to 12%). They are also more likely to delete content so that no one else can see it (26% compared to 21% for boys regarding content they've posted and 30% compared to 17% of boys regarding content posted by others). This suggests that girls may be more sensitive than boys to how others perceive them online.

Older students are more likely than younger students to prune information posted about them (Figures 3 and 4).

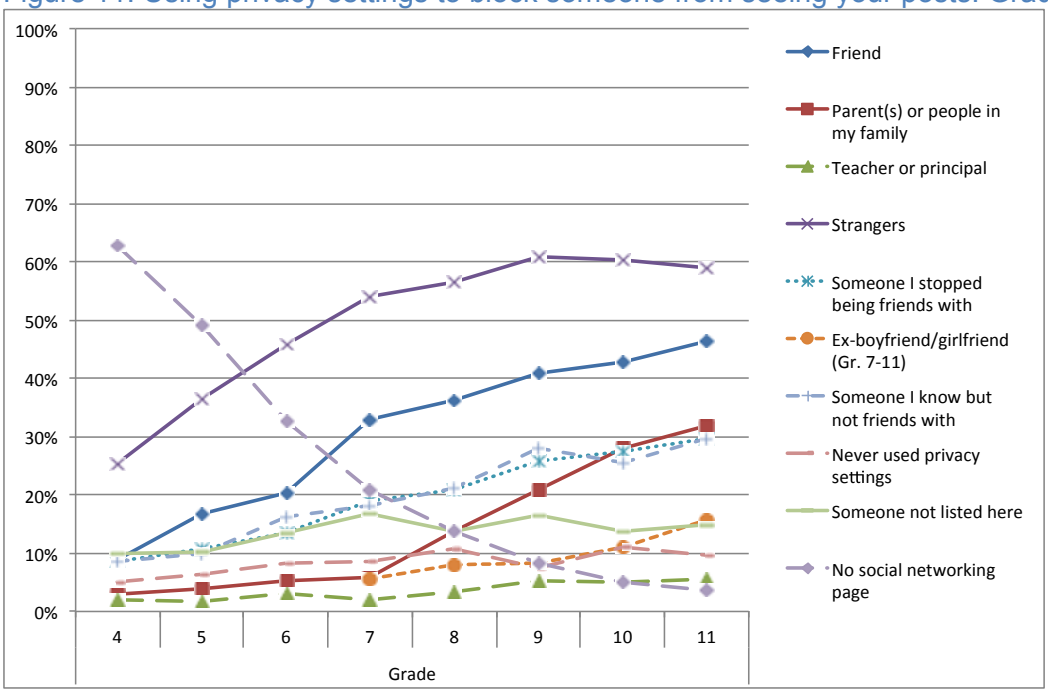
Students are more likely to use privacy settings to block friends and family members than any group, other than strangers (Table 10).

Thirty-one percent of students block friends, compared to 21 percent who block parents or family members. A fairly large percentage of students report using privacy settings to block someone they have stopped being friends with (20%), someone they know but are not friends with (20%) and ex-boyfriends or girlfriends (10% of grades 7-11 only) (Figure 11). This suggests that students use privacy settings not only to seek privacy from family members, but to actively manage their relationships with peers. The use of privacy settings to block access between various types of friends – ex-friends, ex-boyfriend/girlfriends, people they know but are not friends with — illustrates how students are using blocking tools in a fine-grained and nuanced way to draw lines between various categories of peers. It also suggests that, for young people, privacy is linked to self-presentation and the management of social relationships.

Table 10: Using privacy settings to block someone from seeing your posts

Have you ever used the privacy settings on a social networking site (for example, Facebook) to block someone from seeing something you have posted online?	Percentage
Yes, I have blocked a friend Grade	31%
Yes, I have blocked my parent(s) or people in my family Grade	21%
Yes, I have blocked my teacher or principal Grade	4%
Yes, I have blocked strangers ♂♀ Grade	50%
Yes, I have blocked someone I stopped being friends with	20%
Yes, I have blocked my ex-boyfriend/girlfriend (grades 7-11 only) Grade	10%
Yes, I have blocked someone I know but I'm not friends with Grade	20%
I have a social networking page but I've never used the privacy settings	9%
Yes, I have blocked someone not listed here	14%
I do not have a social networking page Grade	23%

Figure 11: Using privacy settings to block someone from seeing your posts: Grade



At the same time, the willingness to provide others with access to networked spaces by sharing passwords and locational information may be a marker of intimate relationships.

For example, although 41 percent of students are unwilling to share their passwords to their social networking account, email account or cell phone with anyone (Table 11), the largest groups that *are* trusted with passwords are parents (41%) and best friends (26%). Boyfriends or girlfriends (16% in grades 7-11 only) and other family members (12%) follow.

Girls are more likely than boys to share with parents (45% compared to 36% of boys) and best friends (31% compared to 21%). Boys, on the other hand, are more likely than girls not to share their passwords with anyone (46% compared to 35% of girls) (Figure 12). Not surprisingly, younger students are more likely than older students to be willing to share with parents, from a high of 66 percent in Grade 5 to a low of 14 percent in Grade 11 (Figure 13). However, more than a quarter of Grade 9 students and one quarter of Grade 10 students are still willing to share passwords with parents. The willingness to share with best friends and boyfriends or girlfriends rises across grades 7-11, to 33 percent and 24 percent, respectively, in Grade 11.

Table 11: Willing to share passwords

Would you share your password to your social networking account, your email account or your cell phone with these people?	Percentage
Your best friend ♂♀ Grade	26%
Your boyfriend or girlfriend (grades 7-11 only) Grade	16%
Your other friends	3%
Your parent(s) ♂♀ Grade	41%
Other people in your family Grade	12%
Your teacher or principal Grade	2%
Your employer or someone you would like to work for (grades 7-11)	1%
Other	3%
I would not share my password with anyone ♂♀ Grade	41%

Figure 12: Willing to share passwords: Gender

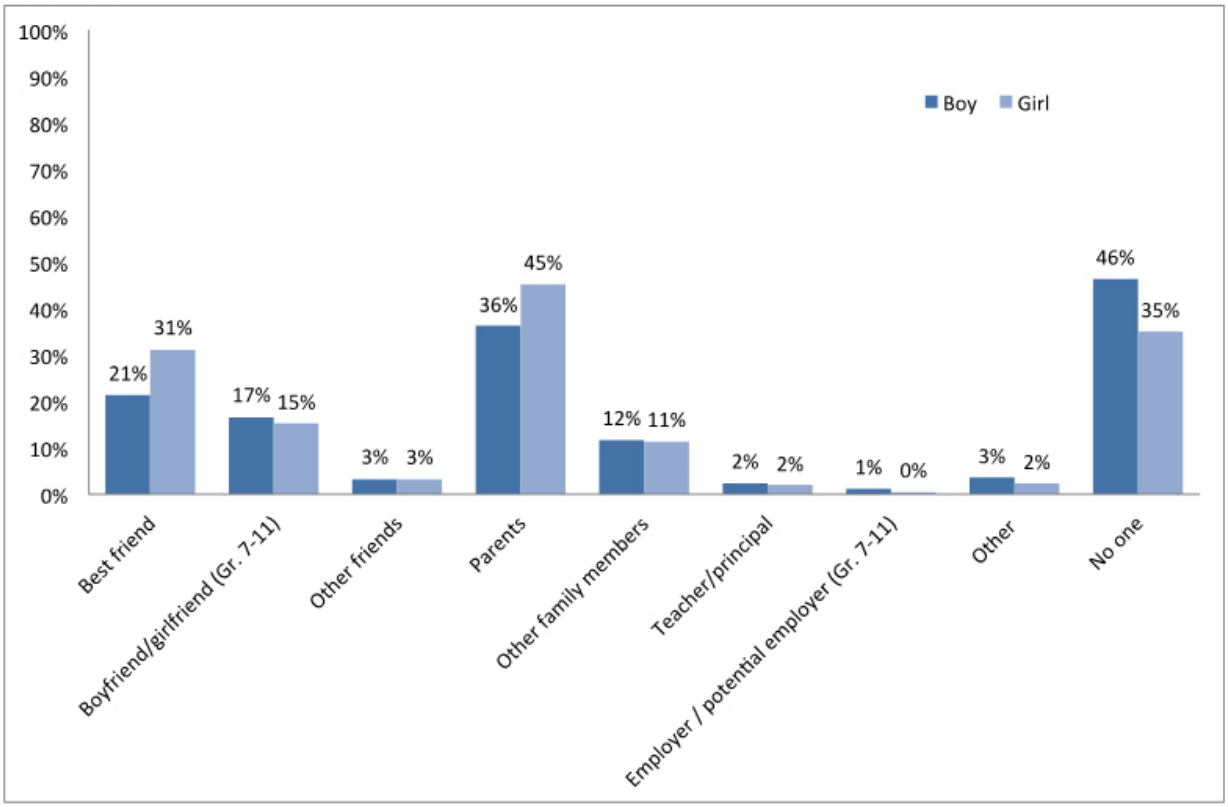
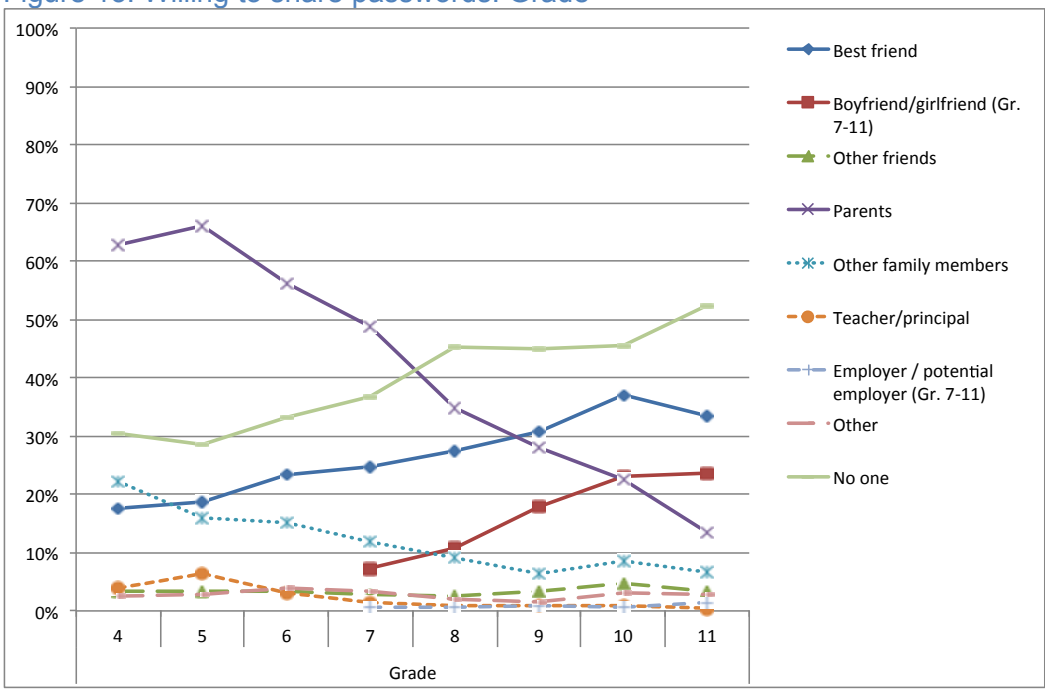


Figure 13: Willing to share passwords: Grade



Locational Privacy

Students are also more likely to say that parents/family (69%) and friends (39%) should be able to check and see where they are using a device or an app (e.g. GPS phone, Foursquare) than any other groups[8] (Table 12). Girls (72%) are more comfortable than boys (66%) with sharing this kind of locational information with parents/family (Figure 14). In general, comfort with parents/family falls across grades but, even in Grade 11, more students are still more comfortable sharing this information with parents/family (49%) than with any other group (Figure 15).

Even though acceptance of boyfriends/girlfriends being able to track where you are (at 27%), falls behind parents/family (69%) and friends (39%), this figure still represents one quarter of students.

It is also important to note that a significant percentage of students (20%) think that no one should be able to track their location. The percentage rises across grades, from a low of 11 percent in Grade 5 to a high of 30 percent in Grade 11.

Table 12: Who should be allowed to track location?

Some devices or applications (apps) can track where a person is located (for example, GPS phone, Facebook, Foursquare). Who do you think should be allowed to check and see where YOU are?	**Percentage**
My friends Grade	39%
My boyfriend/girlfriend (Gr. 7-11 only) Grade	27%
My parent(s) and people in my family ♂♀ Grade	69%
My teacher or principal Grade	8%
Kids my age I have not met before Grade	2%
Adults I have not met before Grade	1%
Anyone who knows me	9%
The company that owns the site or app ♂♀	4%
Marketing companies that want to advertise to me	1%
The police Grade	35%
Other	6%
No one should be allowed to check and see where I am Grade	20%

[8] The next largest group is police (35%), discussed below under *Institutional Actors*.

Figure 14: Who should be allowed to track location: Gender

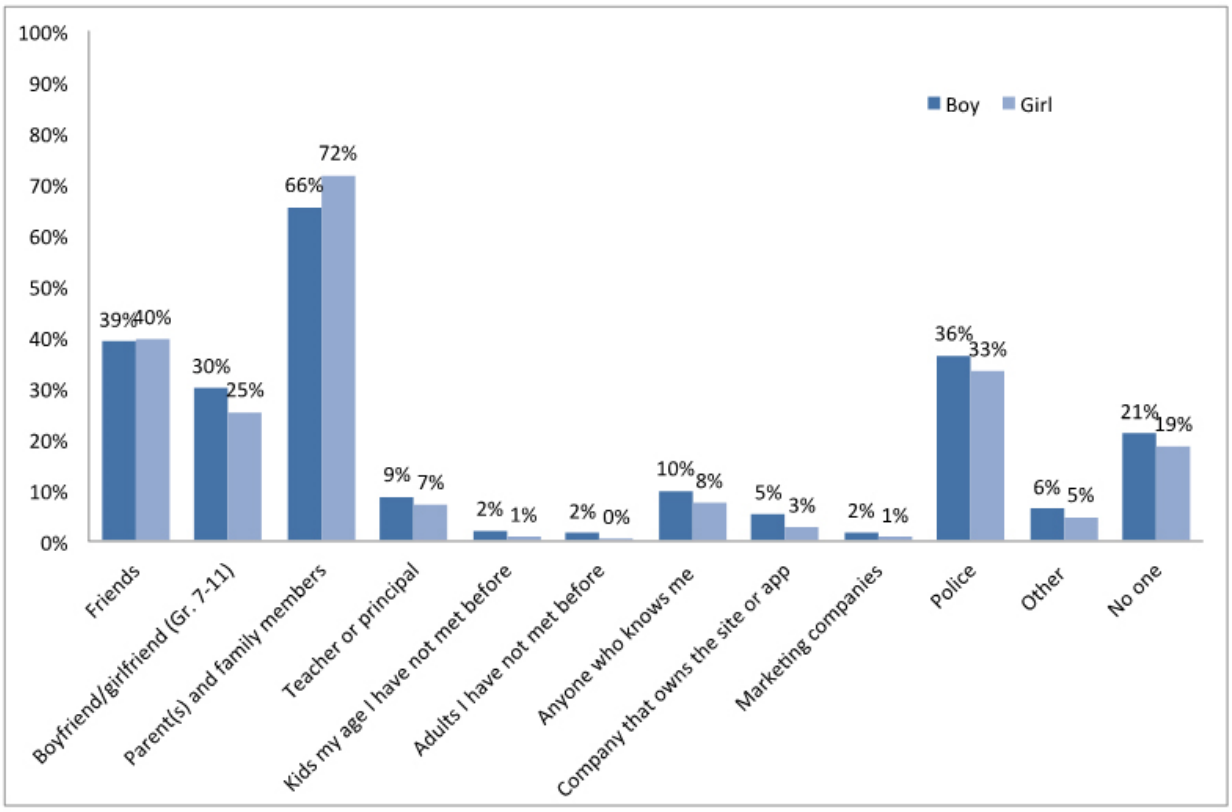
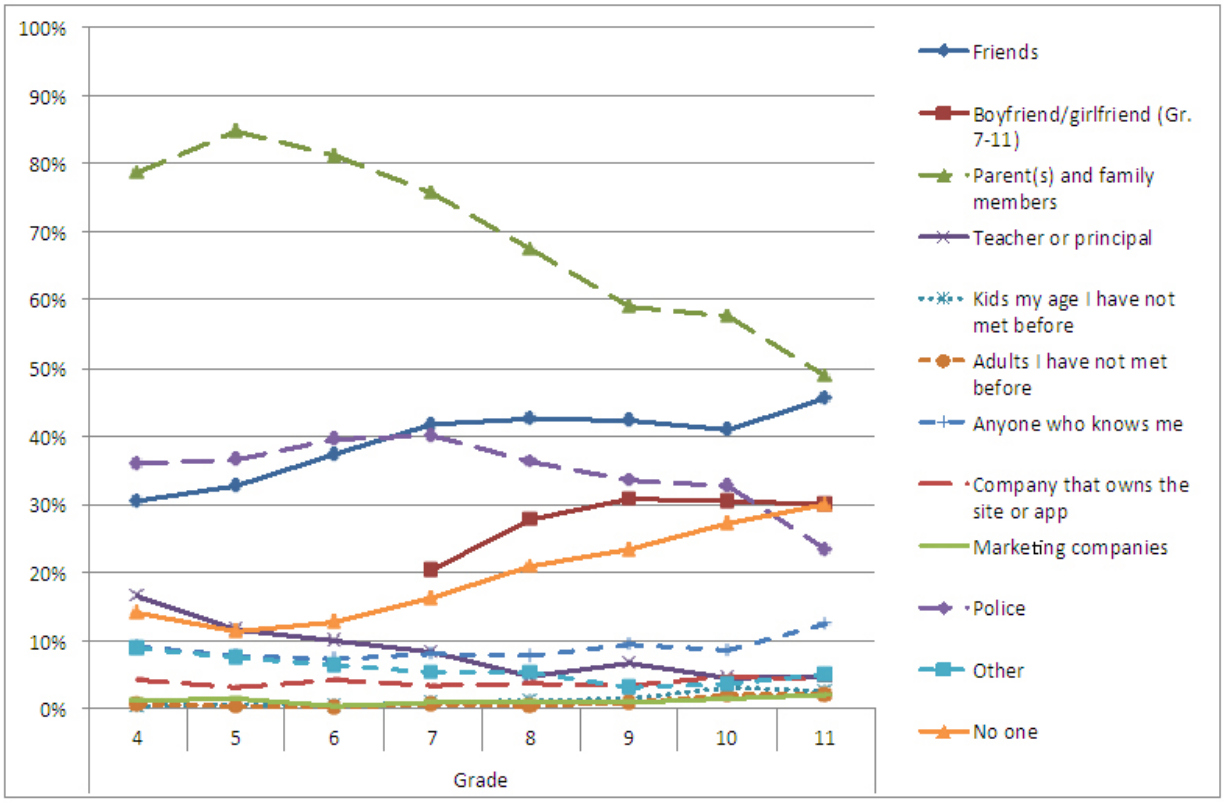


Figure 15: Who should be allowed to track location: Grade



Even though many students are comfortable giving parents access to their online lives, a large number, especially of older students, think that parents should not constantly keep track of them online, force them to "friend" them, ask for their passwords or listen in on their conversations.

The number of students who agree with the statement, "Parents should keep track of their kids online all the time," drops dramatically from 79 percent in Grade 4 to 23 percent in Grade 11 (Figure 16 and Table 13). The tipping point, again, is around grades 7 (50%) and 8 (35%), just when children are seeking more space from parents to individuate and begin the task of growing up.

Agreement with the statement, "Parents should not listen in on their kids' online conversations or read their texts" rises from 44 percent in Grade 4 to 83 percent in Grade 11. Similarly, agreement with the statement, "Kids should not be forced to friend their parent(s) on social networking sites," rises from 56 percent in Grade 4 to 77 percent in Grade 11; and agreement with the statement, "Parent(s) should not ask for their kids' passwords," rises from 36 percent in Grade 4 to 76 percent in Grade 11.

Girls (47%) are more likely than boys (41%) to agree with parental tracking and slightly more likely to be comfortable giving passwords to parents (50% compared to 47% of boys) and complying with parent demands to be "friended" on social networking sites (36% compared to 32% of boys) (Figure 17).

Overall, French language students in Quebec are much more comfortable with parental monitoring. Seventy-two percent agree that parents should keep track of their kids online all the time, compared to 44 percent of English language students in the rest of Canada. In addition, more French language students in Quebec (61%) are willing to share passwords with their parents than English language students in the rest of Canada (42%) and be comfortable with parents listening to their online conversations (47% compared to 32% of English language students in the rest of Canada).

Table 13: Opinions: Parental supervision and privacy

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Parental supervision and privacy	Agree Percentage
Parent(s) should keep track of their kids online all the time. ♂♀ Grade	44%
Parent(s) should not ask for their kids' passwords. Grade	51%
Kids should not be forced to friend their parent(s) on social networking sites (for example, Facebook). Grade	66%
Parent(s) should not listen in on their kids' online conversations or read their kids' texts. Grade	68%

Figure 16: Opinions: Parental supervision and privacy: Grade

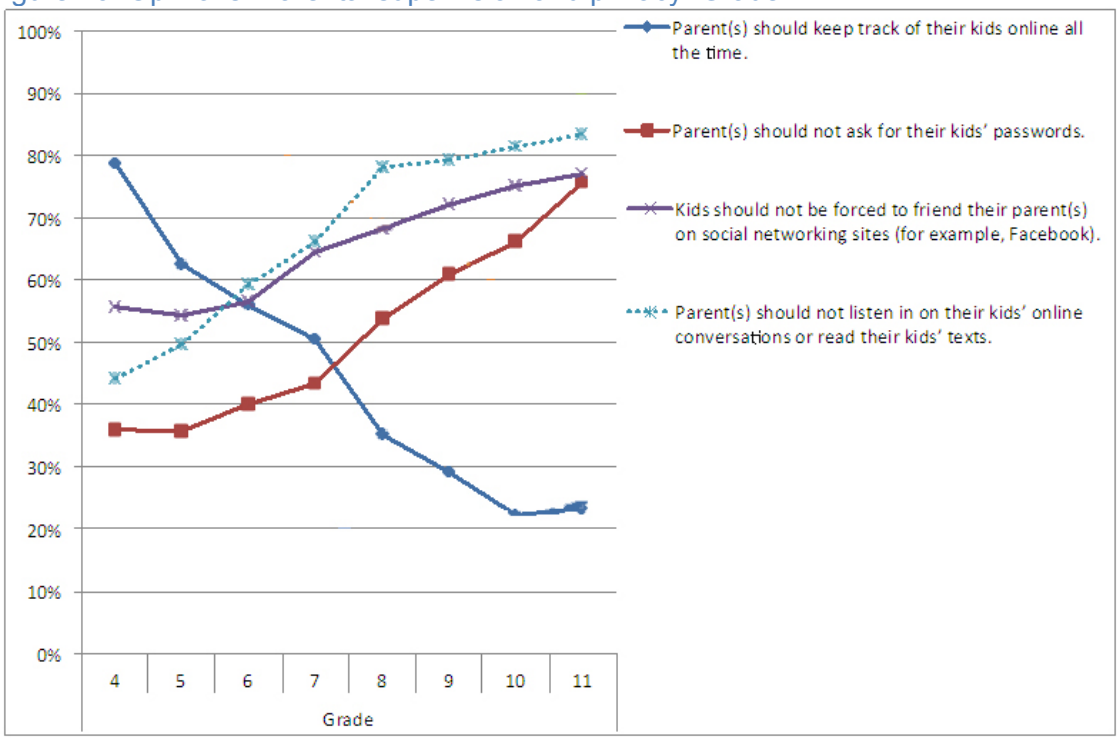
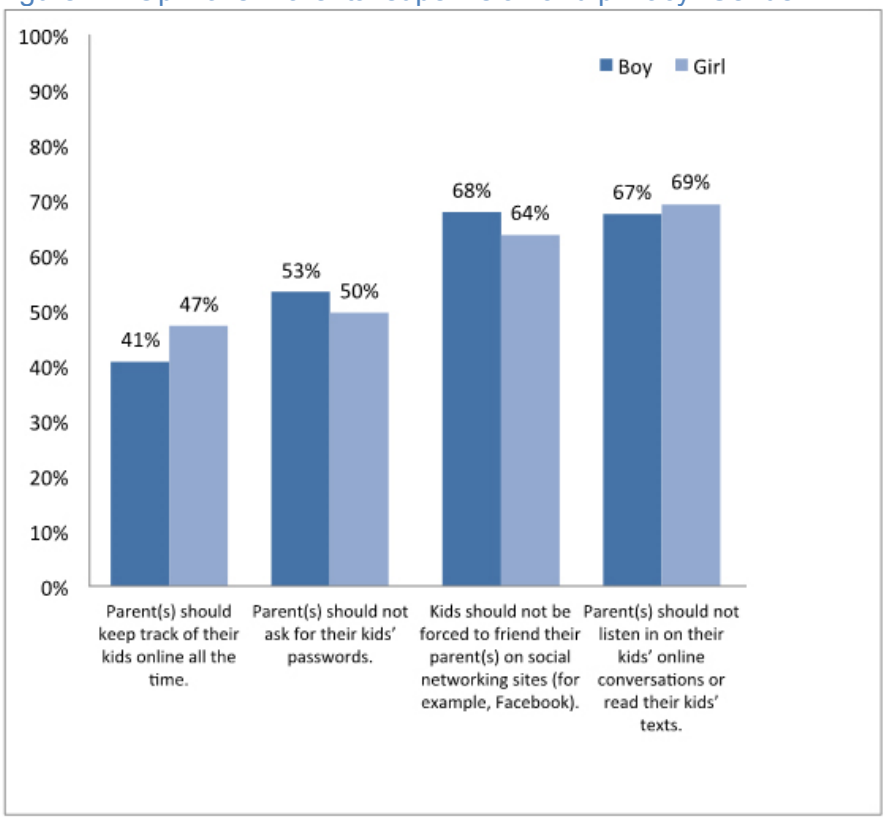


Figure 17: Opinions: Parental supervision and privacy: Gender



Institutional Actors

Less than one third of students say that institutional actors, including police (28%), government (20%), social media companies (17%) and teachers/principals (14%) should be able to see what they post on social media (Table 9).

Girls are less likely than boys to feel these actors should be able to see what they post, especially social media companies (6% difference) and government (5% difference) (Figure 10). The belief that institutional actors should not be able to see them online is fairly constant across the grades (Figure 9).

This raises interesting questions about students' comfort with the regulatory models that shape their online spaces. Since over 80 percent of them would prefer it if the companies that host their social media sites could not see the content they post, it is unlikely that they either fully understand or agree with the current regulatory model that equates posting with a consensual exchange of data for access to services.

The findings also suggest that students want a firm line between their social communications and their communications with educators. Although only a small number (4%) of students have used privacy settings to block their teacher or principal from their social media sites (Table 10), older students are more likely to do this: the percentage rises from 2 percent in Grade 4 to 6

percent in Grade 11 (Figure 11). ***And almost all students (98%) are not willing to share the password to their social networking account, email account or cell phone with their teacher or principal (Table 11).***

This is particularly true of students in grades 7-11, where the percentage drops to one percent or less. However, French language students in Quebec were more likely to be willing to do so (13% compared to 2% of English language students in the rest of Canada).

Social media is a contested area and some school boards discourage teachers from interacting with students on Facebook; others, however, are encouraging teachers to incorporate social media into their teaching strategies. Effective use of social media for learning may be predicated on respect for students' need for – and expectation of – privacy from educators.

In addition, students seek locational privacy from educators. ***The vast majority of students (92%) believe that teachers and principals should not be allowed to use a device or application to check on a student's location (Table 12).*** The percentage rises across grades from 83 percent in Grade 4 to 95 percent in Grade 11 (Figure 15).

However about one third of students are comfortable with police having access to their social media sites or locational information.

Of all the actors within this audience subset, government and police are most acceptable to students. It may be that this reflects a desire to have access to back up if students face some kind of conflict or threat online. For example, 35 percent of students think that police should be allowed to check their location, although this drops from over one third of students in grades 4-8 to 23 percent of students in Grade 11. It is possible that some students, especially younger students, may see police access to locational data as being related to safety.

Strangers and Marketers

Unsurprisingly, students are least comfortable sharing information about themselves with strangers. What is perhaps more surprising is that an overwhelmingly percentage of students do not think they should have to share their information with marketers.

Over 90 percent of students think that strangers should not have access to their social networking page.

When asked who should be able to read their social network posts, only 10 percent of students listed kids they have not met before and only three percent listed adults they have not met before (Table 9).

Girls are more concerned about strangers than boys. Two percent of girls, compared to four percent of boys, think that adult strangers should be able to follow them on social media. And only nine percent of girls, compared to 12 percent of boys, are comfortable giving access to peers they have not met before.

Openness to strangers does increase across grades (4-15% for peer strangers and 1-6% for adult strangers). However, all students are more leery of adults they have not met before than they are of people their own age. Students are also more likely to use privacy setting to block strangers than any other category. This is particularly true of girls (55% compared to 45% of boys). This may be related to attitudes towards online safety, as 82 percent of girls indicate that they could be hurt if they talk to someone they don't know online, compared to 63 percent of boys[9].

And even though a larger percentage of older students indicate that adult strangers should be able to see the information on their social networking site, older students (approximately 60% in grades 9-11) are also more likely to use privacy settings to block strangers than younger students (25% in Grade 4) (Figure 11). In addition, 99 percent of students agree that adult strangers should not have access to their locational information (Table 12).

Only five percent of students indicate that marketing companies that want to advertise to them should be able to read their social network posts (Table 9).

This is significantly lower than the 17 percent of students who indicate that the company that owns the social media platform should have access to their information, but both figures suggest that young people may not be comfortable with the current business model that assumes social media users disclose their information to companies in exchange for access to online services. Girls in particular seem to reject this model: only three percent of girls are comfortable with marketer's having access to their information, compared to seven percent of boys (Figure 10). Moreover, student discomfort with this practice is fairly constant across the grades (Figure 9).

The numbers are even lower with respect to locational information. Only four percent of students think that a company that owns a device or an app that provides locational information should be allowed to check and see where they are (Table 12). The number drops to one percent with respect to marketers. Again, the responses are gendered: three percent of girls think that companies should be able to track them, compared to five percent of boys; and one percent of girls think that marketers should be able to track them, compared to two percent of boys (Figure 14).

However, students' opinions about marketing are complex and there are some apparent inconsistencies in the data. For example, over one quarter (28%) of students agreed with the statement, "I like it when companies use the information I post to decide what products to advertise to me" (Table 14), even though 83 percent said that social media companies should not be allowed to read what students post. Gender also plays a role: only 22 percent of girls indicated that they like targeted advertising compared to 34 percent of boys (Figure 18). This suggests that we need to better understand student perceptions of marketing and the role it plays in their online lives, and provide more information to young people about the commercial relationships that underlie social media spaces. The need for more education about commercial

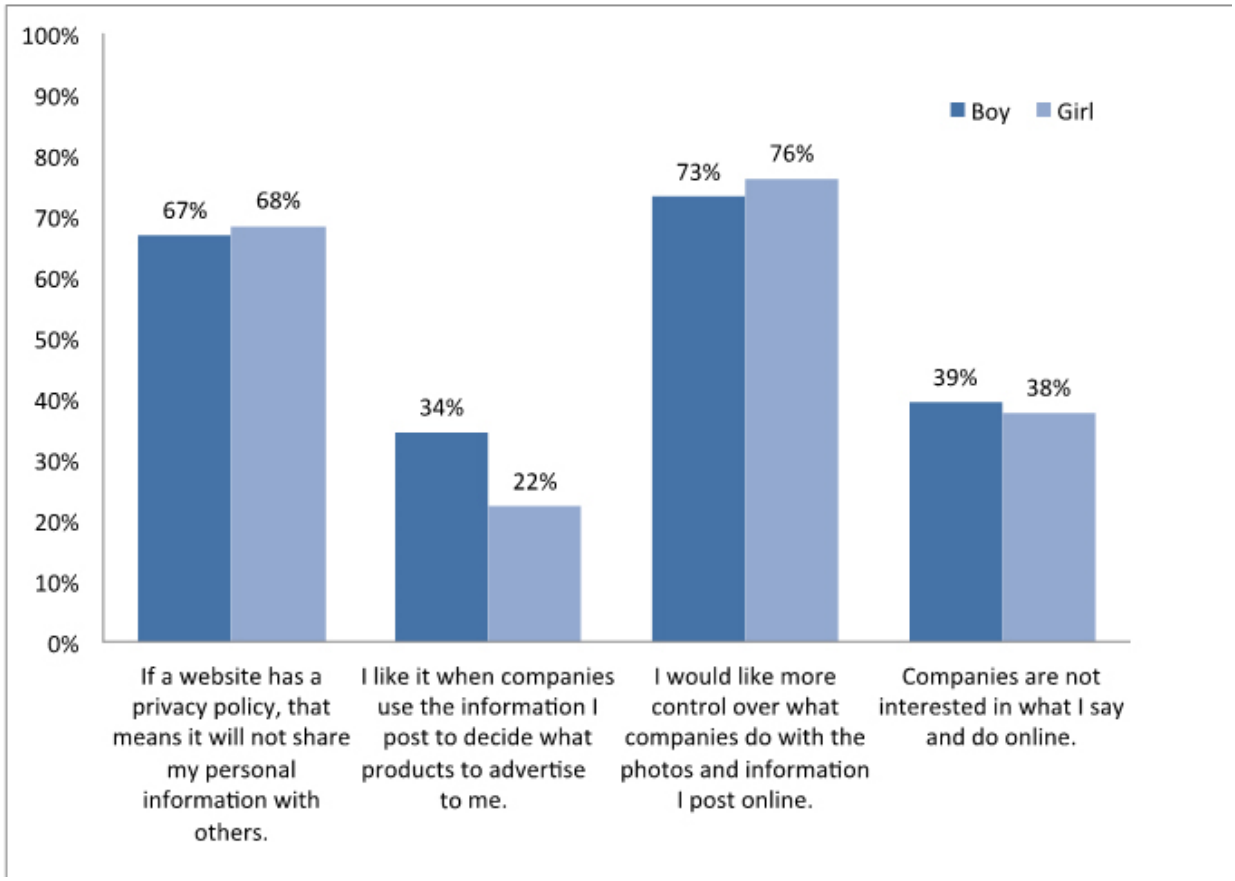
[9] Steeves, V. (2014). *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Life Online*. Ottawa: MediaSmarts, pp. 29. Available at: http://mediasmarts.ca/ycww/life-online

collection of online information is also underlined by the fact that three quarters of all students indicate that they would like more control over what companies do with the photos and information they post online.

Table 14: Opinions: Privacy from companies

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Privacy from Companies and Legality	Agree Percentage
If a website has a privacy policy, that means it will not share my personal information with others. Grade	68%
I like it when companies use the information I post to decide what products to advertise to me. ♂♀	28%
I would like more control over what companies do with the photos and information I post online. Grade	75%
Companies are not interested in what I say and do online. Grade	39%

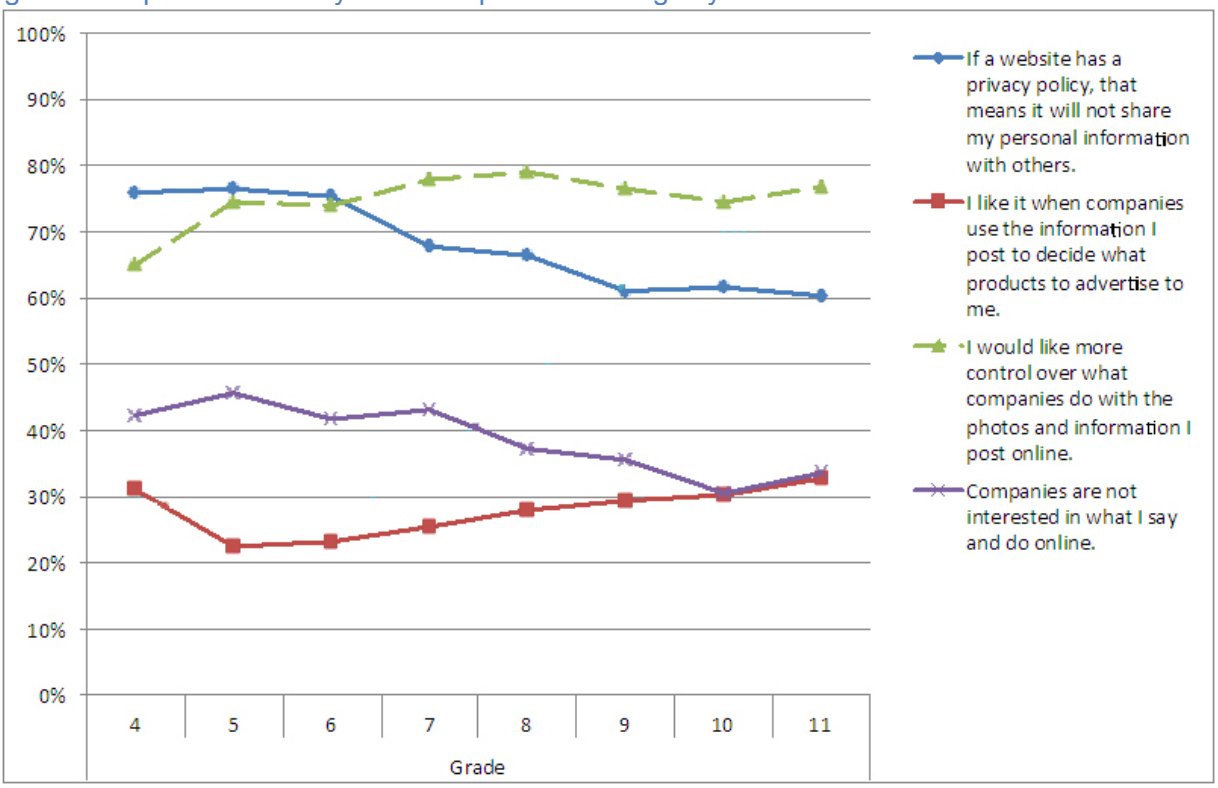
Figure 18: Opinions: Privacy from companies and legality: Gender



Learning about Online Privacy Protections

Our findings suggest that young people need to be better educated about the corporate uses of their personal information. It is noteworthy that 39 percent agree with the statement, "Companies are not interested in what I say and do online," and 68 percent agree that, "If a website has a privacy policy, that means it will not share my personal information with others" (Table 14). French language students in Quebec are more likely to be aware that the second statement is not true[10]: only 45 percent of them agreed, compared to 69 percent of English language students in the rest of the country. In addition, older students are also more likely to disagree with both statements (Figure 19). However, 60 percent of Grade 11 students continue to falsely believe that the presence of a privacy policy restricts information sharing and 34 percent are unaware of the intense attention that companies devote to the information they post online.

Figure 19: Opinions: Privacy from companies and legality: Grade



[10] Companies are required to provide details about their informational practices to individuals who use their sites. A privacy policy typically lists the personal information they collect, how they use it and to whom they disclose it. This is intended to enable young people (and their parents) to make informed decisions about what they disclose online.

Moreover, 65 percent of students (68% of boys and 63% of girls) indicate that no one has ever explained a privacy policy or terms of use agreement to them (Table 15).

Surprisingly, the numbers rise across grades 7-11, to a high of 80 percent in Grade 11.

Parents and family members are the most frequent source of education in this regard, especially for students in grades 4-6 (Table 15). Girls (31%) are more likely than boys (25%) to report that they learned about policies and agreements from family.

French language students in Quebec (48%) are less likely than English language students in the rest of Canada (65%) to report that policies or agreements have been explained to them. However, if they have been given an explanation, it is more likely it came from parents (42% compared to 29% of English language students in the rest of Canada) or a teacher/guidance counsellor (15% compared to 6% of English language students in the rest of Canada).

Table 15: Who has explained a privacy policy or terms of use agreement?

Has someone ever read a privacy policy or online terms of use agreement with you and explained what it means?	Percentage
Yes, my parent(s) or another person in my family [Grade]	29%
Yes, a teacher/guidance counsellor	6%
Yes, a librarian	2%
Yes, a coach, instructor, or community leader (for example, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts)	2%
Yes, someone else	6%
No [Grade]	65%

The encouraging news is that a majority of students (82%) report that they have learned about how to use privacy settings (Table 16). The primary source of this information is parents (41%), especially for girls (44% compared to 38% of boys). Other sources of information include friends and the Internet itself, although girls are more likely than boys to learn from friends (30% compared to 25% of boys), and boys are more likely than girls to learn from reading about privacy settings online (27% compared to 23% of girls) (Figures 20 and 21).

The findings in regard to learning about corporate practices online are more complex. Sixty-six percent of students report that they have learned about how companies use and collect personal information online. Parents (35%) and teachers (24%) are the most common sources of information, followed by reading online (20%) and friends (10%). Once again, girls tend to rely on parents more than boys and boys are more likely than girls to read about it online. However, a relatively high percentage of students continue to believe that having a privacy policy means that their information will not be shared and that companies are not interested in what they do online (Figure 19). Moreover, even though French language students in Quebec are more likely than English language students in the rest of Canada to report that they have never learned about privacy settings (42% compared to 17% of English language students in

the rest of Canada) or corporate practices (51% compared to 33% of English language students in the rest of Canada), they are also less likely to agree with these two misconceptions. This suggests that we still have a ways to go to help young people become fully digitally literate and that greater attention to providing adults with more information about the commercial priorities that structure online spaces is a necessary piece of the puzzle.

Table 16: Learning about online activities

I have learned about the following activities	From my parent(s)	From teachers	From friends	From reading about it online	I have never learned about this
How to use privacy settings	♂♀ Grade 41%	Grade 15%	♂♀ Grade 27%	Grade 24%	Grade 18%
How companies collect and use personal information online	Grade 35%	Grade 24%	Grade 10%	♂♀ Grade 20%	♂♀ Grade 34%

Figure 20: Learning about using privacy settings: Gender

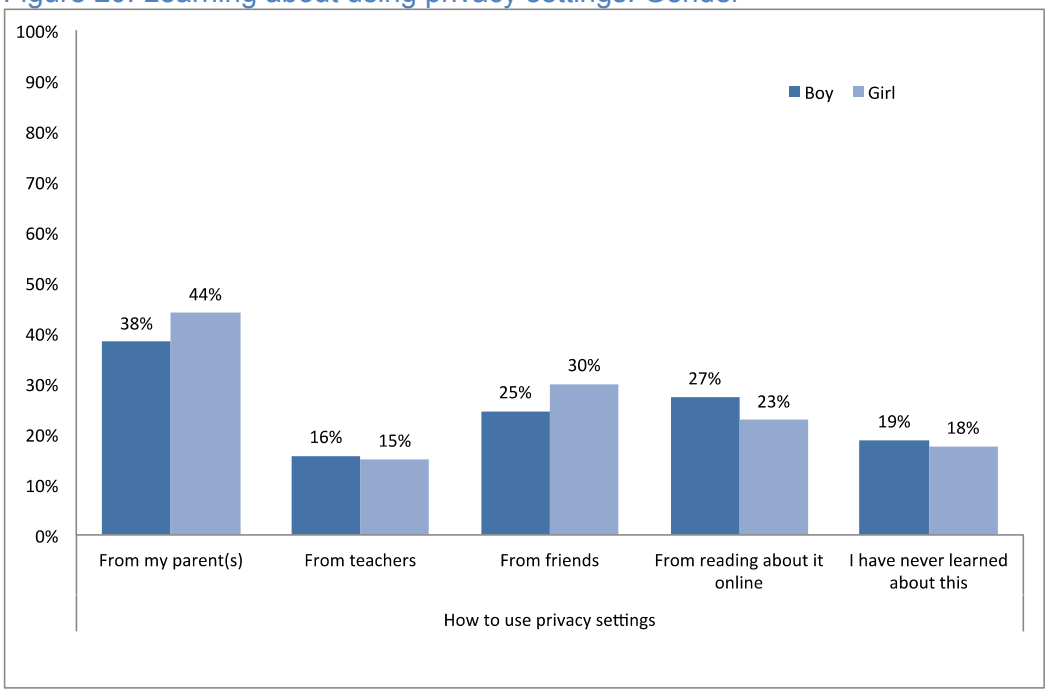
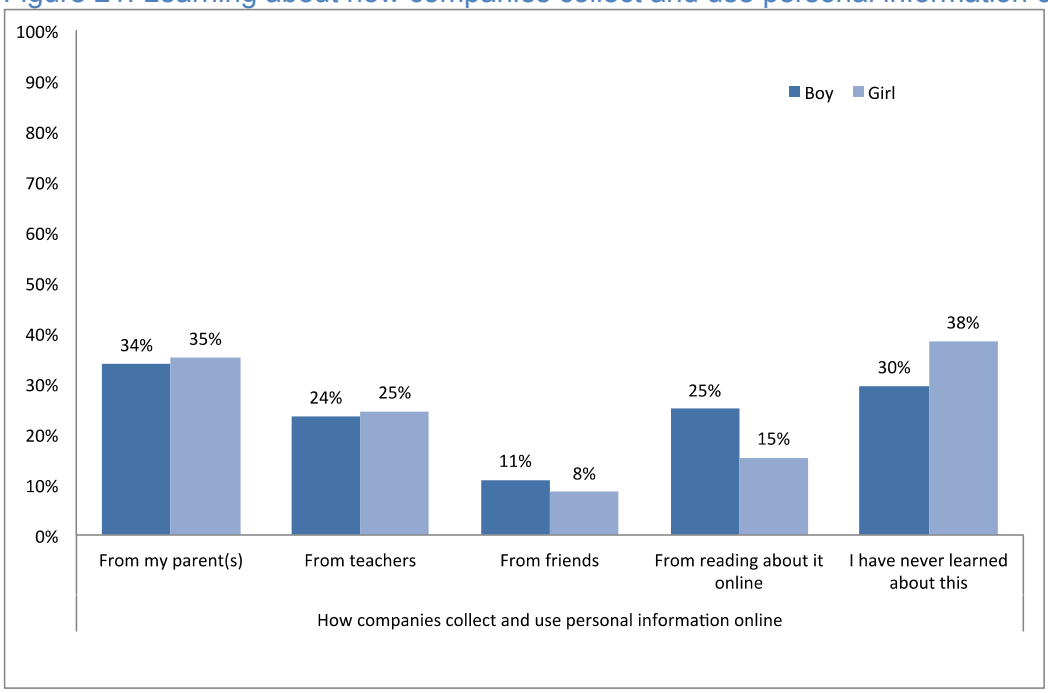


Figure 21: Learning about how companies collect and use personal information online: Gender



Methodology

This report is based on the findings of a survey that was administered in 2013 to 5,436 Canadian students in grades 4 through 11. The purpose of the survey was to explore the benefits and challenges children experience when they use networked devices such as computers, tablets, cell phones and iPods. The survey explored the social codes young people develop with respect to their online social interactions and their attitudes about online issues such as privacy, cyberbullying, sexting and offensive and hateful content. It also explored the ways young people use online media to support their learning (both in and out of school) and to create new content.

The survey instrument, consent documents, recruitment text, instructions and method of analysis were approved by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board.

Recruitment

Students were recruited through school boards and schools in all 10 provinces and three territories.

MediaSmarts contacted school boards that had participated in its 2005 survey. Additional school boards were also contacted. In total, 51 school boards (44 English and 7 French) agreed to assist in recruitment and all requisite board approvals were then obtained. In Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, approval was also obtained from territorial research institutes and the school boards' district education councils.

MediaSmarts then contacted principals of schools within participating school boards. The principals of schools that had participated in the 2005 survey were asked to provide access to the same number of classes and grade levels for the 2013 survey. Principals of new schools were asked to provide access to classes with teachers who were willing and able to assist with recruitment. In total, 140 schools (126 English and 14 French) agreed to assist with recruitment. The schools included a representative selection of urban and rural and public and Catholic schools.

Principals then approached teachers and asked them to assist with student recruitment. Teachers who agreed to do so received the survey documents from Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group (*Directions*). Survey documents included: student information letters; detailed parental consent forms; instructions for teachers; and (where applicable) paper copies of the survey. Teachers distributed the student information letters and parental consent forms to students in specific classes approved by the principal. Students interested in participating were asked to take the information home to their parents. Parental consent forms for all participating students were signed and returned to the teacher by the students.

Administration of the Survey

The survey instrument was developed by Valerie Steeves, with input from MediaSmarts and an advisory committee of experts in the field of children and technology, including Jacquelyn Burkell (Faculty of Information & Media Studies, University of Western Ontario), Wendy Craig (Department of Psychology, Queen's University), Bernard Froese-Germain (Researcher, Canadian Teachers' Federation), Sara Grimes (Faculty of Information, University of Toronto), Phillip McRae (Executive Staff Officer, Alberta Teachers' Association, University of Alberta, Faculty of Education) and Leslie Regan Shade (Faculty of Information, University of Toronto).

The survey was open from February to June of 2013. Students in grades 7 through 11 responded to 57 questions in total. However, since some of the questions dealt with age-sensitive content – including sexting, sexism, racism, romantic relationships, gambling, pornography, future employers and more complex digital tools (e.g. advanced search functions) — a shorter version of the survey without these questions was created for students in grades 4 through 6. Accordingly, those students responded to 52 questions in total.

Students in schools where the language of instruction was English completed the survey in English. Students in schools where the language of instruction was French completed the survey in French.

The surveys were completed during class time and administered by the classroom teacher, teacher-librarian, vice-principal or the principal. Participating students either completed the survey electronically or filled out a paper version, depending on the availability of Internet access and the preference of the teacher. Students were advised that: neither the teacher nor the school would see their responses; their answers would be kept anonymous; they could skip any question they did not want to answer; and they could stop filling out the survey at any time. Surveys completed on paper were placed in an envelope and sealed in the students' presence. The envelope was then mailed to Directions by express post. Surveys completed electronically were administered by Directions using Fluidsurveys online survey software.

In total, 5,776 surveys were received in paper and electronic formats. Data cleaning left 5,436 surveys (1,721 paper and 3,715 electronic) for analysis. Some students skipped questions and/or did not complete the entire survey. Accordingly, to minimize the loss of data, the analysis was conducted on a question by question basis. The results reported are therefore based on the number of students who completed each question and not on the number of students who completed the survey as a whole.

Notes on Statistical Analysis[11]

Statistical analysis was conducted by Directions and the tables and graphs included in this report were prepared by Directions.

[11] The paragraphs on Chi-squared tests and on interpretive and inferential caution were written by Directions and were included with the permission of the author.

Chi-squared tests were used to identify statistically significant differences in responses by gender, grade, primary language of instruction (French, English) or affluence. To compensate for the possibility that errors may be correlated with one another in some way when making multiple comparisons from the same data set, it is often helpful to establish a more stringent significance level. Thus, instead of the commonly used significance/alpha level of .05, it is sometimes recommended that one perform a Bonferroni Correction by dividing the alpha level (.05) by the number of items being compared, therefore establishing a higher and more stringent threshold for significance. For the current analysis, for each factor of gender or grade, 400 tests were run, thus, the significance/alpha level was calculated as = .05/400 = 0.000125 and applied to all of the tests.

In the results presented in this report, statistically significant differences by gender are indicated next to the question by ♀♂ and statistically significant differences by grade are indicated next to the question by Grade.

Comparing French language Students in Quebec and English language Students in the Rest of Canada

Throughout the report, we compare the responses of French language and English language students in the sample. Because the number of students in English language schools in Quebec (124) and the number of French language students outside of Quebec (204) was very low, comparisons between students on the basis of language of instruction alone would have made statistical comparisons difficult. To explore any differences between French language students and English language students, we therefore compared the responses of students in Quebec whose primary language of instruction was French with the responses of students in the rest of Canada whose primary language of instruction was English.

There were statistically significant differences between the two groups regarding access to technologies, privacy-related behaviours, the role of adults in students' online lives, cyberbullying and racism/sexism. However, interpretative and inferential caution is warranted because there were approximately eight times more English language students than French language students in the sample. Even though the analysis applied very stringent criteria (significance level of 0.000125), making strong inferences about the differences observed or generalizing the findings beyond the sample is not warranted.

Comparing High Affluence Students and Medium Affluence Students

A modified version of the Family Affluence Scale[12] was used to measure students' socioeconomic status. The scale is widely used in research with children because it enables researchers to solicit information about socioeconomic status directly from the children themselves and the scale shows some construct validity[13]. Although reports in regard to reliability are mixed, we opted to use the scale instead of relying on postal codes as a proxy for

[12] Currie, Candace E., Rob A. Elton, Joanna Todd and Stephen Platt. (1997). Indicators of socioeconomic status for adolescents: The WHO health behavior in school-aged survey. *Health Education Research*. 12(3), 385.
[13] Kehoe, Susan and Liam O'Hare. (2010). The reliability and validity of the Family Affluence Scale. *Effective Education*. 2(2), 155-164

socioeconomic status because of the number of rural schools with large catchment areas in the recruitment pool and the variability of socioeconomic status within individual Canadian schools.

The scale is based on responses to the following four questions:

1. Does your family own a car, van or truck?
   (No, we don't own a car, van or truck = 0; Yes, one car, van or truck = 1; Yes, more than one car, van or truck =2)
2. During the past 12 months, how many times did you travel away with your family?
   (Not at all = 0; Once = 1; Twice = 2; More than twice = 3)
3. How many computers does your family have?
   (None = 0; One = 1; Two = 2; More than two = 3)
4. How well off do you think your family is?
   (Very well off = 4; Quite well off = 3; Average = 2; Not very well off = 1; Not at all well off = 0)

We created a composite score for each student who responded to all four questions. The composite scores were then divided into categories of low affluence (including composite scores of 0, 1, 2 and 3), medium affluence (including composite scores of 4, 5, 6 and 7) and high affluence (including composite scores of 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12).

Only two percent of the sample fell into the low affluence category. Because the numbers of students (65) in this category was so low, statistical comparison between the low affluence group and the medium and high affluence groups was not possible. Accordingly, students on the low affluence category were not included in the analysis of socioeconomic status, and the results reported in this report are based on a comparison of the medium and high affluence groups only.

Limitations: Interpretive and Inferential Caution is Recommended

As with all survey data, readers should be cautious about the interpretations or inferences they draw from these findings. Regardless of the age of the respondents, answers from self-reports are typically less reliable than direct observation of a behaviour. All respondents manage the impression that they convey with their answers. Answers may represent what the respondent wants us to know or think about their behaviour, rather than how they actually behaved. In addition, differences in the percentage reporting behaviour between groups may reflect differences in how comfortable each group is in reporting the behaviour, rather than differences in how much each group actually engages in the behaviour.

When data are collected from different age groups in the same survey, it is tempting to want to interpret the differences in the percentages as increases or decreases from one age group to another. These data do not support such claims. The most that can be said is that a larger or smaller percentage of respondents in one or another age group said this or that. Moreover, when there are differences between age groups it is also tempting to infer that the differences

are attributable to maturity when they might simply reflect differences in the frame of reference or experiences that younger and older students have about the object of the question.

One should be cautious about comparing the findings from this survey to the findings in previous surveys for several reasons. First, technology has changed dramatically; online accessibility and content in 2013 is very different from that of 2005 or 2001. Second, in addition to the technological changes that have occurred the rapid nature of social and cultural changes occurring in the eight years since the last survey may mean that the Grade 4 students today are different from the Grade 4 students surveyed eight or 12 years ago.

Demographics of Survey Participants

Forty-one percent of survey participants were boys and 46 percent were girls. An additional 13 percent did not report a gender. The number of students per grade ranged from 424 for Grade 11 to 745 for Grade 7.

Table 17: Demographics: Number of survey responses by gender and grade

	Grade									
Gender	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**Not provided / other[14]**	**Total**
Boy	226	213	271	356	322	249	304	194	96	2231 (41%)
Girl	272	296	288	368	376	252	347	229	73	2501 (46%)
Not Provided	13	12	24	21	14	17	8	1	594	704 (13%)
Total	**511 (9%)**	**521 (10%)**	**583 (11%)**	**745 (14%)**	**712 (13%)**	**518 (10%)**	**659 (12%)**	**424 (8%)**	**763 (14%)**	**5436**

Survey participants were drawn from all 10 provinces and three territories. Eighty-six percent of students were enrolled in schools in which English was the primary language of instruction. The remaining 14 percent of students were enrolled in schools where the primary language of instruction was French. Seventy-three percent of the students enrolled in French schools were from Quebec; the remaining students enrolled in French schools were from Manitoba (20%), Ontario (3%), Prince Edward Island (2%) and New Brunswick (2%).

[14] 16 students from Grade 3 participated and 44 students from Grade 12 participated. This is likely because some classes are split Grade 3/4 and 11/12 and these classes participated as a whole.

Table 18: Demographics: Number of responses by language of instruction and province

Primary Language of Instruction				
	English	**French**	**Total**	
British Columbia	513		513	(9%)
Alberta	560		560	(10%)
Saskatchewan	382		382	(7%)
Manitoba	171	152	323	(6%)
Ontario	1992	24	2016	(37%)
Québec	124[15]	557	681	(13%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	162		162	(3%)
Prince Edward Island	106	16	122	(2%)
New Brunswick	373	12	385	(7%)
Nova Scotia	180		180	(3%)
Yukon	32		32	(1%)
Northwest Territories	24		24	(<1%)
Nunavut	29		29	(1%)
Unknown	26	1	27	(<1%)
Total	**4674 (86%)**	**762 (14%)**	**5436**	

The survey asked students to indicate what languages they spoke at home. Ninety-one percent spoke English at home and 28 percent spoke French at home. Two percent to 6 percent also reported speaking a language at home other than French or English.

[15] Eight students in an English language school took the survey in French as the survey was administered in their French Second Language class.

Table 19: Demographics: Languages spoken at home

What languages do you speak at home? [16]	% Speaking
English	91%
French	28%
Arabic	3%
Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin, other dialect)	6%
German	3%
Greek	2%
Italian	5%
Korean	2%
Panjabi (Punjabi)	3%
Persian (Farsi)	1%
Polish	2%
Portuguese	2%
Russian	2%
Spanish	4%
Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)	3%
Tamil	2%
Urdu	2%
Vietnamese	2%
Other	**11%**

A large majority of the students who completed the survey in one of the official languages reported that they spoke that language at home (96% English and 92% French).

Table 20: Demographics: Languages spoken at home by students taking survey in English or French

What languages do you speak at home?	English survey	French survey
English	96%	57%
French	19%	92%

Students were asked a series of questions to determine their socioeconomic status based on the Family Affluence Scale[17]. Only two percent of the sample scored in the low affluence category. Approximately two thirds self-reported as being high affluence.

[16] Twelve percent of respondents did not provide language information. In addition, some students reported an improbable number of languages spoken at home; however, these numbers were very low and these students' responses were included in the analysis.
[17] See Methodology for more information about the Family Affluence Scale.

Table 21: Demographics: Affluence

Affluence Level	Percent Respondents
Low	2%
Medium	32%
High	66%

Figure 22: Demographics: Frequency distribution of composite affluence scores