

Canada's Children in a Wired World: The Parents' View

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for
Industry Canada,
Health Canada
and
Human Resources Development Canada

Prepared by
the *Media Awareness Network*
based on analysis by
Environics Research Group

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	3
INTRODUCTION	6
METHODOLOGY.....	7
USE OF THE INTERNET BY PARENTS	8
NO ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AT HOME	11
MAIN INFLUENCES	12
CHILDREN’S USE OF THE INTERNET	13
GREATEST BENEFIT/CONCERN OF CHILDREN’S USE OF THE INTERNET	14
PERSPECTIVES ON THE INTERNET	16
KNOWLEDGE OF CHILDREN’S INTERNET USE	17
PARENTS’ VIEWS ON THEIR CHILDREN’S USE OF THE INTERNET.....	18
SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN	20
SUBMITTING PERSONAL INFORMATION	21
RULES REGARDING CHILDREN’S INTERNET USE	22
MONITORING CHILDREN’S INTERNET USE.....	23
SOLUTIONS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES	24
SOLUTIONS FOR SCHOOLS	25
REDUCING OFFENSIVE OR INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT ENCOUNTERED BY CHILD ON THE INTERNET	26
ACCESS TO INTERNET BY CHILDREN	28
RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTROL AND SUPERVISION OF THE INTERNET.....	29
REGULATION OF INTERNET ADVERTISING.....	31
SUMMARY	32

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

This project was initiated and funded by Industry Canada, in partnership with Health Canada and Human Resources Development Canada. The survey, which took place during the first two weeks of March 2000, was carried out by Environics Research Group.

The survey investigates patterns of Internet use in Canadian families and parental attitudes and perceptions about the nature, safety and value of children's online activities. It also seeks parents' opinions on measures that could be taken to make children's online experiences safe and worthwhile.

Households in the ten provinces of Canada were sampled. One thousand and eighty-one randomly selected parents with children aged 6-16 years who have a personal computer (PC) at home were questioned by phone.

OVERVIEW

Overall, Canadian parents are optimistic about their children's use of the Internet. Eighty per cent of parents think that the Internet is "the way of the future." They are aware of the benefits of this new medium and recognize that because this new technology is still in its formative stages, they can influence the way children will use it.

A great majority of parents (94 per cent) say educating children about safe, responsible Internet use is a top priority. Another 91 per cent mention the importance of educating parents about strategies for managing the Internet. Fifty-five per cent of parents believe that users have to take responsibility for family Internet use, while 44 per cent think that Internet content needs to be controlled.

Canadian parents clearly understand they have a responsibility to not only supervise and manage their children's online activities, but to teach their children how to be safe, wise and responsible Internet users. However, this is a job that Canadian parents feel they can't do alone. Many parents suggested a collaborative approach towards managing the Internet, involving public libraries, schools, Internet service providers (ISPs), community institutions, government and police.

One in ten parents specifically identify the interactive nature of the Internet as a benefit, and 14 per cent cite its interactivity as a concern. These low percentages indicate that most parents think of the Internet as a static source of information rather than a dynamic communication tool with both positive and negative implications for children.

Canadian parents say that their kids use the Internet primarily for educational activities and research. However, U.S. studies show that there are significant discrepancies between what parents think their kids are doing online, and what their kids are actually doing online.

Canadian education, library and industry stakeholders have recommended that immediate follow-up studies be conducted with children and teens so that Canadians can be informed about the specific nature and risks of their children's online activities.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Canadian families with computers are very active Internet users.

The majority of parents in this group are Internet users and consider themselves to be Internet-aware. More than seven in ten parents have Internet access in the home, and more than eight in ten say they have used the Internet. Among these, seven in ten say that they have been using the Internet for over a year, and sixty-five per cent consider themselves to be intermediate, advanced or expert users.

Parents use the Internet for a variety of purposes. They report that the most common uses are for conducting research (50 per cent); general browsing (32 per cent); e-mail (32 per cent); and work-related activities (26 per cent). The percentages for parents' recreational and personal usage of the Internet is much lower.

Of those parents that don't have Internet access at home, 39 per cent report that they plan to get access in the next six months. Cost/value is the main barrier (40 per cent) towards home access, while 19 per cent report that they simply have "no interest" in getting online.

According to parents, Canadian children use the Internet primarily for educational activities, but also for "fun and games."

Eighty-six per cent of the children use the Internet. The difference between usage rates between boys (84 per cent) and girls (86 per cent) is negligible; though girls tend to use the Internet more than boys for communication, while boys favour entertainment and playing games. Children primarily access the Internet from home (81 per cent) and also from: school (66 per cent); a friend's home (35 per cent); a public library (19 per cent); parent's workplace (9 per cent); or a community access point (five per cent).

Sixty-three per cent of parents say that they are "very familiar" with their child's use of the Internet, 25 per cent say they are "somewhat familiar," and 12 per cent say they are "not very familiar" or "not at all familiar" with their child's use of the Internet.

When parents were asked, "As far as you know, what does your child use the Internet for?" the following open-ended responses were recorded: schoolwork (65 per cent); search for information (31 per cent); playing games (29 per cent); instant messaging (28 per cent); chatrooms (28 per cent); email (18 per cent); meeting new friends (15 per cent); personal Web page (six per cent); downloading music (six per cent).

A discrepancy between these findings and recent U.S. studies of children's online habits would suggest that parents need to become more familiar with their children's online habits, and with the interactive nature of the Internet in general.

Parents perceive that there are great benefits to their child being on the Internet.

When asked their opinion about the greatest benefit of their child being on the Internet, 66 per cent of parents cite educational advantages; 20 per cent convenience; 11 per cent entertainment benefits; ten per cent social benefits (including "socializing with friends and family" and "exposure to the world/new people"); and ten per cent computer literacy competence.

Despite the benefits, parents reveal significant concern about Internet content they deem "inappropriate."

Asked about their greatest concern regarding their child being on the Internet, 51 per cent of parents state that "inappropriate content" (including pornography, violence and hate propaganda) is their main concern. Eighteen per cent of parents mention "interaction and safety issues" as being a concern, and 13 per cent have "other" concerns. Twenty-three per cent of parents have "no concern" about their child being on the Internet.

In general, parents think that their child's Internet use is under control. Seventy-five per cent report that the family PC is located in a common area of the home, and sixty-eight per cent think that children usually do searches with an adult. Fifty-five per cent of parents think their children always ask permission before submitting information or participating in Web activities. Sixty-one per cent of parents think that children know what to do if they encounter an uncomfortable online situation. Forty-six per cent think their children have learned to protect their privacy while online.

Seventy per cent of parents say that they have set rules for Internet use. Most parents said that they would not allow their children to submit personal information to a Web site, including their photograph (95 per cent); phone number (94 per cent); postal address (92 per cent); name (84 per cent); birth date (78 per cent); personal e-mail address (67 per cent); or sex (56 per cent).

Many parents say they monitor their child's Internet use at home. Sixty-seven per cent report that they check bookmarks or browser history. Seventeen per cent use blocking software, and 16 per cent use monitoring software.

While confident about home Internet use, parents want online safety addressed in schools and libraries.

Eighty-six per cent of parents think it is very important that schools improve the online safety of children using school computers. Eleven per cent think this is somewhat important. The following options were considered "very effective" at protecting children while they are online at school: blocking software on computers (75 per cent); supervising students (75 per cent); Internet education (65 per cent); workstations in public areas (61 per cent); instituting acceptable use policies (54 per cent); and posting Internet use rules (42 per cent).

Seventy-two per cent of parents reported that they think it is very important for libraries to improve the online safety of children using library computers. Twenty-one per cent think this is somewhat important. The following options for improving online safety in libraries were considered “very effective”: blocking software on library computers (78 per cent); supervising children when they are in the library (70 per cent); putting Internet stations in a public place in the library (54 per cent); providing Internet education for children (54 per cent) and adults (52 per cent); instituting acceptable use policies (43 per cent); and posting signs about Internet rules (40 per cent).

Overall, parents see controlling Internet content as a responsibility to be shared by ISPs, Internet users, independent organizations, government, and Web site producers.

Parents were asked who, if anyone, should be responsible for managing or supervising Internet content. (Multiple responses were permitted.) Thirty-six per cent of parents say that it is the job of ISPs to manage or supervise Internet content, while 34 per cent say that it is the responsibility of Internet users. Thirty-two per cent think that government has a role to play, while 28 per cent would give the responsibility to an independent organization and 23 per cent to Web site producers. Five per cent think the Internet should be neither managed nor supervised.

Respondents rated the following suggestions for reducing the amount of offensive or inappropriate content as “very effective”: teaching kids to be “Net safe” (65 per cent); providing Internet education for parents (54 per cent); using a family-friendly ISP (52 per cent); setting up a hotline for reporting illegal content (52 per cent); establishing a mandatory industry code of conduct (47 per cent); and developing an industry content rating system (40 per cent).

Eighty-seven per cent of parents surveyed report that they have never complained about “inappropriate” content they or their family found on the Internet. Of those parents, 52 per cent did not know who to complain to.

An overwhelming majority of parents (89 per cent) think online advertising aimed at children should be regulated.

There were few significant regional discrepancies in the survey responses. However, the responses of Quebecois parents would suggest that parents there have slightly different views towards the Internet. Overall, residents of Quebec were less likely to have set rules for Internet use, and were more likely to have confidence in their children’s abilities to regulate their own Internet use. They were also slightly more likely to suggest that the government should take primary responsibility for Internet education, and regulating online advertising aimed at children.

INTRODUCTION

Internet penetration is increasing across Canada and Canadians are making greater use of the Internet, whether at home, the workplace, school or the library.

Canadians are using the Internet for a variety of purposes, including e-mail, leisure and entertainment, accessing information on educational pursuits and other activities.

Children and teens are the heaviest users of the Internet and tend to be drawn to this exciting medium. With Internet access available in schools, households, public libraries and community outlets, children are increasingly becoming involved in this new technology.

The Internet is a powerful tool. It can turn a home, a school or a library into a place of unlimited information and communication. The Internet can help a family find educational resources, help children with their homework and allow family members to learn and have fun together.

However, along with these benefits come risks which include: exposure to material considered to be obscene, pornographic, violent, hate-filled, racist, or generally offensive; contact with individuals who may jeopardize the safety of children or other family members; harassment; and exploitation by online marketers.

This study examines the use of the Internet by families and by children. It also looks at parents' perceptions and awareness about the risks and benefits of Internet technology and their attitudes towards online safety measures and responsibilities.

METHODOLOGY

The results of the survey are based on questions posed to 1,081 households with children six to 16 years of age who have a personal computer (PC) at home. Respondents were sampled within the ten provinces of Canada. The survey was conducted by telephone during the first two weeks of March 2000.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The sampling method was designed to complete approximately 1,100 interviews within households selected across Canada. The sample was selected from areas within each province where the incidence of children living at home was 60 per cent or greater. As much as possible, each province was proportionally represented according to the number of households with children.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING

Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses. Ten per cent of each interviewer's work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Canadian Association of Marketing Research Organizations.

A minimum of five calls were made to a household before classifying it as a "no answer."

COMPLETION RESULTS

A total of 1,081 interviews were completed. The following table presents the detailed completion results.

The effective response rate for the survey is 24 per cent: the number of completed interviews (1,081) divided by the total sample (11,657) minus the non-valid/non-residential numbers, the numbers not in service and the numbers that presented a language barrier (7,210).

The actual completion rate is 34 per cent.

The margin of error for a sample of 1,081 is +/-3.0 percentage points, 19 times in 20. The margins are wider for demographic sub-samples.

The following table presents the detailed completion results for this survey of 1,081 interviews.

	#	%
Number of calls	11,657	100
Household not eligible	4,972	43
Non-residential/not in service	1,692	15
Language barrier	546	5
Subtotal	7,210	62
<hr/>		
New Base (11,657-7,210)	4,447	100
<hr/>		
No answer/line busy/ respondent not available	1,246	28
Refusals	2,038	46
Mid-interview refusals	82	2
Subtotal	3,366	76
<hr/>		
Net Completions (4,447-3,366)	1,081	24
<hr/>		
Completion Rate (1,081/[4,447-1,246])		34

USE OF INTERNET BY PARENTS

Most computer-equipped parents with children aged six to 16 living at home are Internet users and consider themselves to be Internet-aware.

More than seven in ten parents say they have Internet access at home. Internet access is more common among men, more educated and more affluent parents, those who are married and those who consider themselves as advanced or expert users of the Internet.

More than eight in ten parents say they have used the Internet. Usage rates are highest in British Columbia. They are also higher among men, more educated and more affluent parents. The usage rate in Manitoba is the lowest of the provinces.

Among those who have used the Internet, seven in ten say they have been using the Internet for more than one year. Only three in ten say they have been using the Internet for between six to 12 months (13 per cent), or less than six months (17 per cent).

Internet access and use

Percentage saying "yes"



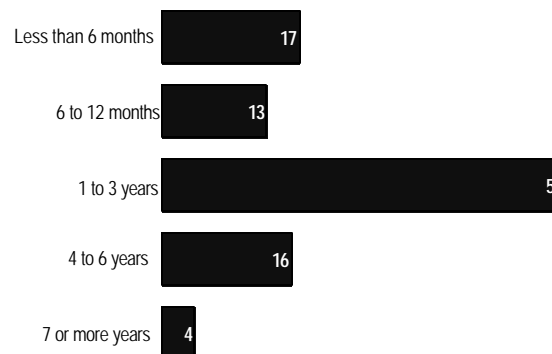
Q.8

Do you currently have Internet access from your home?

Q.9

Have you ever personally used the Internet?

Length of time using Internet



Q.10

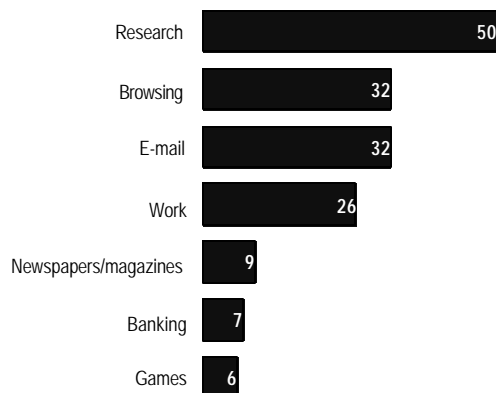
For how long have you been using the Internet?

Subsample: Respondents who have personally used the Internet

Parents who are familiar with the Internet use it for a wide range of activities. The most common activities reported are conducting research (50 per cent); browsing in general (32 per cent); e-mail (32 per cent); and work-related activities (26 per cent). Fewer users mention reading newspapers and magazines (9 per cent); banking or paying bills (7 per cent); playing games (6 per cent); purchasing goods and services (5 per cent); window-shopping for goods (5 per cent); chat rooms/ICQ (5 per cent); and hobby/interest sites (5 per cent). Twenty-three per cent report using the Internet for other activities. Women are more likely than men to use the Internet for e-mail. Men, more educated and more affluent parents and those who consider themselves to be advanced users of the Internet are more likely to use the Internet for work-related activities.

Among parents who have Internet access from home, 51 per cent report that, in the past month, they have gone online every day or almost every day. Twenty-three per cent say they have gone online every few days and another twenty-three per cent say a few times during the month. Those who consider themselves to be advanced or expert users are more likely than others to report going online every day. Women and those who consider themselves to be novice users are more likely to report going online only a few times during the month.

Parent's uses for Internet

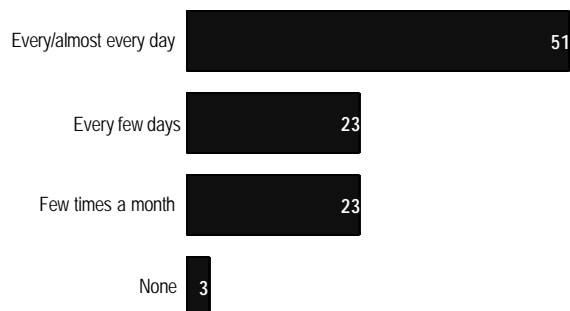


Q.11

For what do you yourself use the Internet?

Subsample: Respondents who have personally used the Internet

Frequency of going on-line from home in past month



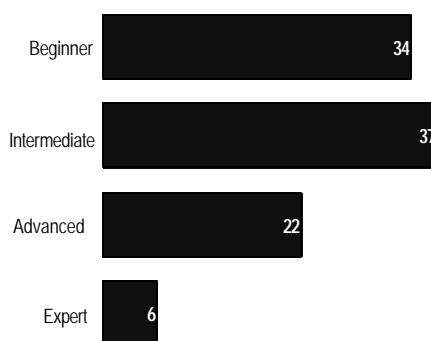
Q.13

In the past month, how many times did you go on-line from home? Did you go on-line every day or almost every day, every few days, or a few times during the month?

Subsample: Respondents who have Internet access at home

Among parents who have used the Internet, 65 per cent characterize their abilities to go online and navigate the Internet as intermediate (37 per cent), advanced (22 per cent) or expert (6 per cent). Thirty-four per cent consider themselves a beginner. Men, more educated and more affluent parents are more likely than others to consider themselves advanced or expert users. Women, those with less education and less affluent parents are more likely than others to consider themselves beginners.

Internet expertise



Q.16

How would you characterize your abilities to go on-line and navigate the Internet? Would you say you are a beginner, an intermediate user, an advanced user or an expert user?
Subsample: Respondents who have used the Internet

NO ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AT HOME

Only four in ten parents without home access plan to get Internet access in their home within the next six months. The cost of access is the main barrier.

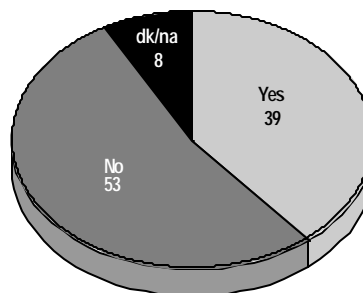
However, a significant proportion also mention lack of interest.

Among those who do not have Internet access at home, only 39 per cent plan to get online access in the next six months. A majority (53 per cent) do not plan to get access in this time period. Parents aged 35 to 44 and those who are married are more likely than others to plan to get Internet access in the next six months.

Of the 25 per cent of parents polled who do not have Internet access at home, cost factors are mentioned as the major barrier. From this group, 40 per cent mention cost factors such as “the Internet connection monthly fee is too expensive” (14 per cent); “equipment or software is too expensive” (13 per cent); their computer is “too old or not powerful enough” (11 per cent); and “don’t have proper hardware or modem” (five per cent). Twenty-seven per cent of those not online mention factors related to a lack of interest, such as “not interested” (19 per cent); “don’t need it” (five per cent); and “don’t use it enough/know enough about it” (four per cent); 15 per cent mention factors that deal with logistics, such as “use it from another location” (ten per cent); and “not enough free time” (six per cent); and 13 per cent mention factors related to concerns about, or opposition to the Internet, including concerns about safety and content. Nine per cent gave “soft” reasons, such as “waiting until my kids are older,” and “shopping around for an ISP.”

Men are more likely than women to mention cost-related barriers. Women are more likely to mention factors related to lack of interest and concerns about, or opposition to the Internet. Single parents and those with a daughter aged six to 16 are more likely to mention cost-related factors.

Plan to get Internet access in next six months

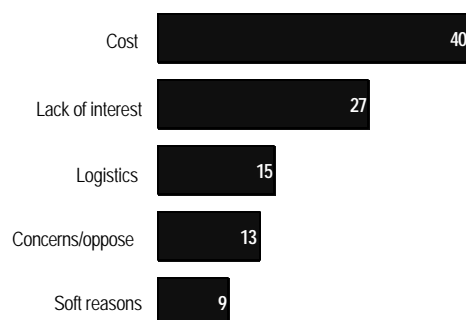


Q.22

Do you plan to get on-line access in your home in the next six months?

Subsample: Respondents who do not have Internet access at home

Reasons for not having Internet access



Q.24

Why do you currently not have Internet access at home?

Subsample: Respondents who do not have Internet access at home

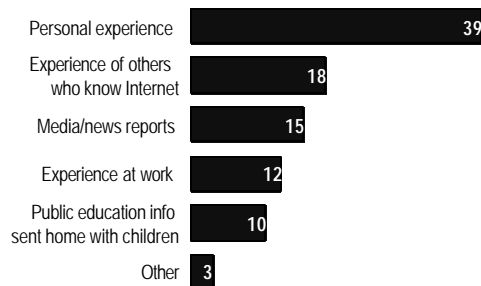
Parents report that their views of the Internet are based on personal online experience, as well as the experiences of their acquaintances.

When parents are asked to choose from a list of items that have influenced their views of the Internet, they are most likely to cite “personal experience” (39 per cent). Eighteen per cent say “the experience of other people who know the Internet.” Smaller proportions say “the media and news reports or advertising” (15 per cent); “experience using the Internet at work” (12 per cent); and “public education through information sent home with their children” (ten per cent). Three per cent mention other influences. Men, more educated and more affluent parents, those who are married, those with Internet access at home and those who consider themselves to be advanced users of the Internet are more likely than others to mention “personal experience.” Women and those who consider themselves to be novice users of the Internet are more likely than others to mention “the experience of other people who know the Internet.” Less affluent parents and those who consider themselves as novice users are more likely to mention “media and news reports or advertising and public education.” Those who consider themselves advanced or expert users of the Internet are more likely than others to mention “experience using the Internet at work.”

Most parents say that their children were not influential in their decision to go online from home.

Among those with children aged six to 16 who have Internet access at home, a majority of two-thirds say their children had “not much influence” (16 per cent); or “no influence at all” (51 per cent) in their decision to get hooked up to the Internet at home. Only 33 per cent say their children had a “great deal of influence” (11 per cent); or “some influence” (22 per cent) on their decision. Quebecois parents are less likely than others to say their children were influential in their decision to go online at home. Parents aged 45 to 54, those with children aged 13 to 16, those who say their child uses the Internet and those who consider themselves to be novice users of the Internet are more likely than others to say their children were influential in their decision.

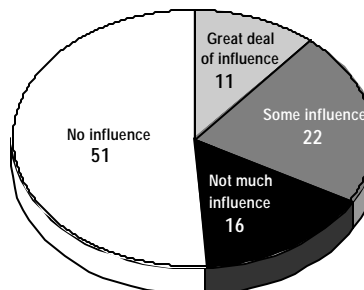
Influences on views of Internet



Q.25

Which of the following most influences your views of the Internet...?

Influences on decision to go on-line from home



Q.26

How much influence did your child have in the decision to get hooked up to the Internet at home? Did he/she have a great deal of influence, some influence, not much influence or no influence at all?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child six to 16 years and who have Internet access at home

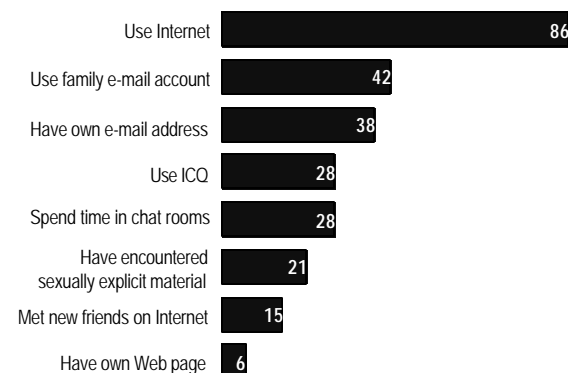
Parents report that their children are Internet-active.

Eighty-six per cent of parents surveyed say their children use the Internet (88 per cent of girls and 84 per cent of boys). Parents with a child aged ten to 16 and those with online access at home are more likely to report that their child uses the Internet. Girls are more likely to use the Internet for communication (chatting, instant messaging), while boys are more inclined to use the Internet for entertainment (downloading music and videos) and playing games.

Four in ten parents say their child has his/her own e-mail address. Forty-two per cent also report that their child uses the family e-mail account. Six per cent report that their child has his/her own Web page. Just under three in ten say that their child has access to instant messaging such as ICQ (28 per cent); or has spent time in a chat room (28 per cent). More than one in ten (15 per cent) report that their child has made new friends over the Internet. Two in ten (21 per cent) report that their child has come across sexually explicit material when surfing the Internet.

Those who consider themselves to be advanced or expert users of the Internet are more likely than others to say their child has done or experienced all of these things. Those aged 45 to 54, those with a daughter aged six to 16 and those with a child aged 13 to 16 are more likely to say that their child has his/her own e-mail address, has access to instant messaging such as ICQ, has spent time in a chat room and has made new friends over the Internet. Those with more education and more affluent parents are more likely to say their child uses the family e-mail account. More affluent parents are also more likely to say that their child has spent time in a chat room. Those living in Quebec, those with less education and less affluent parents are more likely to say their child has made new friends over the Internet. Those with an older child, (aged ten to 16) are more likely to say their child uses the family e-mail account and has come across sexually explicit material when surfing the Internet.

Children's uses of the Internet



Q.18

Does your child use the Internet?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 years, or who said their children used the Internet

Q.51

Does your child have his/her own e-mail account?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

Q.52

Does your child ever use the family e-mail account?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

Q.53

Does your child have access to instant messaging such as ICQ?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

Q.55

Has your child ever spent time in a chat room?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

Q.57

Has your child made new friends over the Internet?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

Q.58

Has your child ever come across sexually explicit material when surfing the Internet?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

Q.80

Does your child have his/her own Web page on the Internet?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

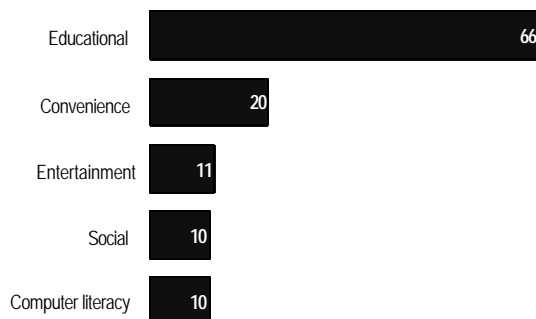
GREATEST BENEFIT/CONCERN OF CHILDREN'S USE OF THE INTERNET

In an open-ended question, parents with children who are Internet users cited educational advantages as the greatest benefit of their children's use of the Internet. Concerns are focused on their children accessing inappropriate sites.

When asked about the greatest benefit, almost seven in ten parents focus on educational benefits, including "helping their child with their school work and research." Two in ten mention benefits associated with convenience of access, such as "easy access to information" (16 per cent) and "access at home saves time/reduced library trips" (five per cent). One in ten mention social benefits, such as "e-mail/socializing" (eight per cent) and "exposure to the world/new people" (three per cent). Another one in ten mention benefits related to entertainment, such as "entertainment/games/interest" (eight per cent) and "fun/keeps child occupied" (three per cent). One in ten mention "computer literacy/Internet skills." Two per cent say there are "no benefits" and two per cent mention other benefits.

Residents of Quebec are slightly less likely than others to mention educational benefits and are more inclined than others to focus on the social and entertainment benefits of their children being on the Internet. Men, those with a daughter aged six to 16 and those with a child aged ten to 16 are more likely to mention social benefits. Those with a son aged six to 16 and those with a child aged six to nine are more likely to focus on computer literacy/Internet skills. Those with a child aged six to nine are also more likely to mention entertainment benefits.

Biggest benefit for child being on the Internet



Q.29

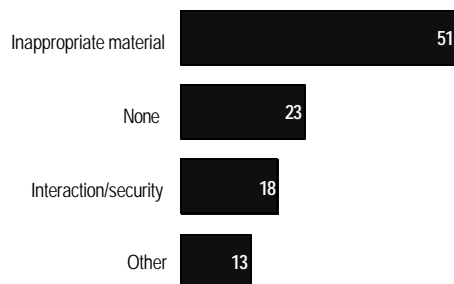
What is the biggest benefit for your child being on the Internet?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 years who uses the Internet

When asked about their greatest concern about their children being on the Internet, five in ten parents are focused on the possibility of their children accessing sites featuring inappropriate content, which includes: “pornography” (31 per cent); “inappropriate sites in general” (26 per cent); “violence” (three per cent); and “hate sites” (two per cent). Eighteen per cent mention concerns relating to interaction with strangers or security, such as “chat rooms” (11 per cent) and “predators/security” (ten per cent). Seven per cent say, “the Internet is a waste of time.” Ten per cent mention other concerns. Twenty-three per cent say they have no concerns at all.

Men, those with a son aged six to 16 and those with a child aged six to 12 are more inclined to say their greatest concern is the possibility of their child accessing sites featuring inappropriate content. Women, those with a daughter aged six to 16 and those with a child aged ten to 16 are more likely to express concerns related to interaction with bad/dangerous people. Older people, those with a child aged 13 to 16 and those with only one child are more likely to say they have no concerns about their child being on the Internet.

Biggest concern with child being on the Internet



Q.30

What is your biggest concern with your child being on the Internet?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 years who uses the Internet

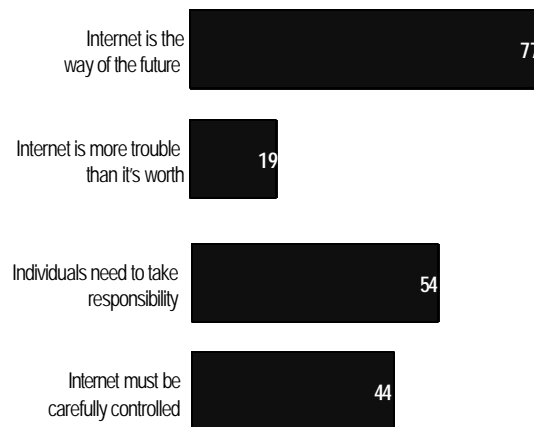
A large majority of parents believe the Internet is “the way of the future.” A slight majority think that personal responsibility for online protection is preferable to putting controls on the Internet.

When asked to choose between two views of the Internet, a large majority (77 per cent) agree with the view, “The Internet is the way of the future, that the problems we see today are minor and soon to be resolved, and that if you are not on the Internet, you and your family will be left behind.” Only 19 per cent take the view “The Internet is more trouble than it is worth. The difficulty finding things and concerns about issues like privacy prevent it from being worthwhile.” Majorities in all demographic groups think that the Internet is the way of the future. However, women, older, less educated and less affluent parents, those who consider themselves less capable users of the Internet and those whose child does not use the Internet are more likely than others to think the Internet is more trouble than it’s worth.

When asked to choose between two views concerning control of the Internet, 44 per cent think, “the Internet needs to be controlled to protect people’s personal lives and privacy.” A slight majority (54 per cent) think that “the Internet can never really be ‘controlled,’ so we need to learn to find ways to live with it, taking individual responsibility for protecting ourselves and our families.” There are few significant demographic variations in response to this question. However, residents of Quebec and single parents are slightly less likely than others to think the Internet needs to be controlled.

Overall, the survey findings suggest that Quebecois parent’s attitudes towards the Internet differ from those across the other nine provinces surveyed. They are less likely to focus on the educational benefits of the Internet (55 per cent versus the national average of 66 per cent), and more inclined to see the social (21 per cent versus the national average of 10 per cent) and entertainment (31 per cent versus the national average of 11 per cent) benefits. They were also more confident in their children’s abilities to protect their online privacy (60 per cent versus the national average of 46 per cent) and were less likely to have “set rules” pertaining to Internet use, such as supervision, or permission (13 per cent, versus the national average of 29 per cent).

Attitudes toward Internet



Q.36

Here are some statements about the Internet. Please tell me which opinion is closer to your own: Some people think that the Internet is more trouble than it is worth. They think that the difficulty finding things and concerns about issues like privacy prevent it from being worthwhile. Other people think that the Internet is the way of the future, that the problems we see today are minor and soon to be resolved, and that if you are not on the Internet, you and your family will be left behind. Which of these views is closer to your own?

Q.37

Which of these two statements is closer to your own opinion? Some people think that the Internet needs to be controlled to protect people’s personal lives and privacy. Others think that the Internet can never really be “controlled”, so we need to learn to find ways to live with it, taking individual responsibility for protecting ourselves and our families.

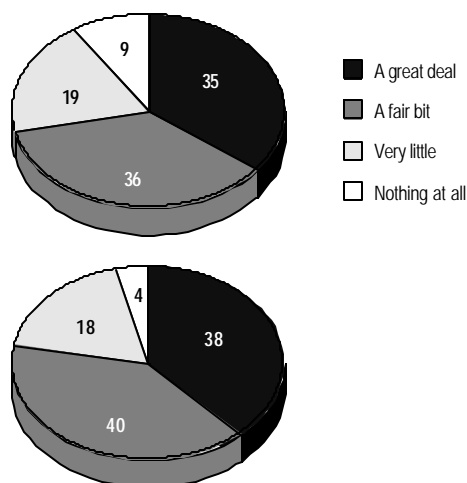
KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD'S INTERNET USE

Most computer-equipped parents think they are fairly knowledgeable about their children's Internet use and say they talk to their children fairly often about Internet usage.

Among parents with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet, seven in ten say they know a "great deal" (35 per cent), or a "fair bit" (36 per cent) about the Web sites their child visits. Only 28 per cent think they know "very little" (19 per cent), or "nothing at all" (nine per cent). Parents with higher levels of education, those who are married, those with younger children, especially those with a child aged six to nine, those with online access at home and those who consider themselves more capable users of the Internet are more likely than others to think they know a great deal about the Web sites their child visits.

Among parents with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet, just under eight in ten say they talk to their children about Internet usage a "great deal" (38 per cent), or a "fair bit" (40 per cent). Only 22 per cent say they talk to their children about this topic "very little" (18 per cent), or "not at all" (four per cent). Married parents, those with online access at home and those who consider themselves more capable users of the Internet are more likely than others to say they talk to their child about Internet usage a great deal.

Parents' knowledge of children's Internet use



Q.40

And how much would you say you know about the Web sites your child visits? Do you know a great deal, a fair bit, very little or nothing at all?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

Q.41

And would you say you talk to your child about his/her usage of the Internet a great deal, a fair bit, very little or not at all?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

PARENTS' VIEWS ON THEIR CHILDREN'S USE OF THE INTERNET

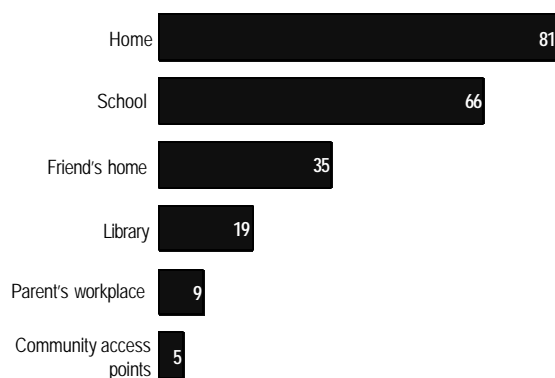
Parents believe that their children's use of the Internet is under control and that their children know how to take care of themselves online.

Among parents with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet, sixty-five per cent say their child uses the Internet for schoolwork. Three in ten say their child uses the Internet for conducting research (31 per cent) and playing games (29 per cent). Smaller proportions mention e-mail (18 per cent); general browsing (13 per cent); chat rooms (12 per cent); downloading games (11 per cent); and downloading music (six per cent). Seventeen per cent mention other uses. Parents who are married and those with children aged ten to 16 are more likely to think their child uses the Internet for conducting research. Those with children aged ten to 16 are also more likely to mention schoolwork. Those with a son aged six to 16 are more likely than others to mention playing and downloading games. Those with a daughter aged six to 16 are more likely to mention e-mail and chat rooms. Those with a child aged six to nine are more likely to mention playing games. Those with a child aged 13 to 16 are more inclined to mention e-mail and chat rooms.

Among parents with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet at home, 75 per cent say that when their child uses the Internet from home, the PC most often used is in a public room, such as a family room, den, kitchen or living room. Much smaller proportions cite a bedroom other than the child's (seven per cent); home office (six per cent); the child's bedroom (five per cent); and computer room/spare room (three per cent). There are few significant demographic variations in response to this question.

Among those with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet, a majority (68 per cent) think that when their child searches for information on the Internet, they usually do it with the guidance of a parent, teacher or some other adult. Only 30 per cent think their child conducts searches alone. Parents aged 45 to 54, those with an older child, especially those with a child aged 13 to 16 and those with online access at home are more inclined than others to think their child conducts searches on the Internet on his/her own.

Location of children's Internet use



Q.19/20

From which of the locations mentioned above does your child access the Internet most often?

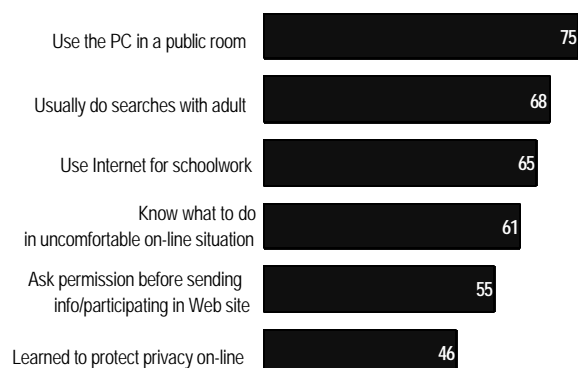
Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

Among parents with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet, a slight majority (55 per cent) think their child always asks for their permission before submitting information to Web sites or participating in site-based activities. Twelve per cent think their child does this most of the time and five per cent saysome of the time. Only one-quarter (26 per cent) think their child never asks them for permission. Those with a son aged six to 16 and those with a child aged six to nine are more likely than others to think their child always asks them for permission. Single parents, those with older children, especially those with children aged 13 to 16, those with no online access at home, and those who consider themselves less capable users of the Internet are more likely to think their child never asks them for permission.

Among parents with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet, 46 per cent think their child has learned how to protect his/her own privacy online. Another 21 per cent think their child is somewhat able to do this. Only 29 per cent think their child has not learned how to do this. Residents of Quebec, parents with older children, especially those with children aged 13 to 16, and those with online access at home are more likely to think that their child has learned how to protect his/her own privacy online. Younger parents, those with a child aged six to nine and those with no online access at home are more inclined than others to think their child has not learned how to do this.

Among parents with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet, a majority (61 per cent) think their child has learned what to do if an online situation makes him/her uncomfortable. Another 12 per cent think their child is somewhat able to do this. Only 22 per cent think their child has not learned how to do this. Single parents, those with older children, especially those with a child aged 13 to 16, those with only one child and those with online access at home are more inclined to think their child would know what to do if they were in an uncomfortable online situation. Married parents and those with a child aged six to nine are more likely to think their child would not know what to do.

Parents' perceptions of children's Internet use



Q.39

*As far as you know, what does your child use the Internet for?
Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet*

Q.43

*When your child uses the Internet from home, is the PC most often used located in...?
Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet at home*

Q.47

*When your child is searching for information on the Internet, does he or she usually do it alone, or usually with the guidance of a parent, teacher, or some other adult?
Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet*

Q.62

*Does your child ask for your permission before submitting information or participating in activities on Web sites he/she visits?
Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet*

Q.65

*Do you think your child has learned how to protect his/her own privacy on-line?
Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet*

Q.67

*Do you think your child has learned what to do if an on-line situation makes him or her uncomfortable?
Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet*

Parents' supervision of their children's Internet use is in line with supervision of other media use, such as the amount of time their children spends watching television or playing computer games.

Parents with a child aged six to 16 who own a PC were asked the degree of supervision they provide when their child is engaged in various activities.

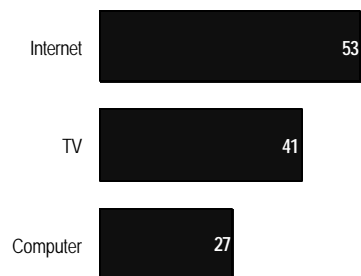
A slight majority (53 per cent) of parents say they provide "a great deal of supervision" of their child's Internet/online use. Another 30 per cent say they provide "some supervision" in this area. A total of 17 per cent say they provide "not much supervision" (nine per cent), or "none at all" (eight per cent). Parents with a son aged six to 16, those with a child aged six to 12, those with more children and those with online access at home are more likely to say they provide a great deal of supervision in this area.

Four in ten parents say they provide a "great deal of supervision" over the amount of television their child watches. Another 44 per cent say they provide "some supervision" in this area. A total of 14 per cent say they provide "not much supervision" (nine per cent), or "none at all" (five per cent). Parents with a child aged six to 12 and those with more children are more likely to say they provide a great deal of supervision in this area.

Just under three in ten parents say they provide a "great deal of supervision" regarding the amount of time their child spends playing computer games. Another 38 per cent say they provide "some supervision" in this area. A total of 35 per cent say they provide "not much supervision" (23 per cent), or "none at all" (12 per cent). Residents of Quebec, women, those with a son aged six to 16 and those with a child aged six to 12 are more likely to say they provide a great deal of supervision in this area.

Parental supervision

Provides a great deal of supervision



Q.7

I would like to ask you first about a few areas in which parents may supervise their children. For each of the following, please tell me whether you provide a great deal of supervision, some supervision, not much supervision, or none at all ...the amount of television your child watches ...your child's Internet/on-line use ...the amount of time your child spends playing computer games?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 years in the home

SUBMITTING PERSONAL INFORMATION

Most parents say they do not allow their children to submit personal information to child-oriented Web sites.

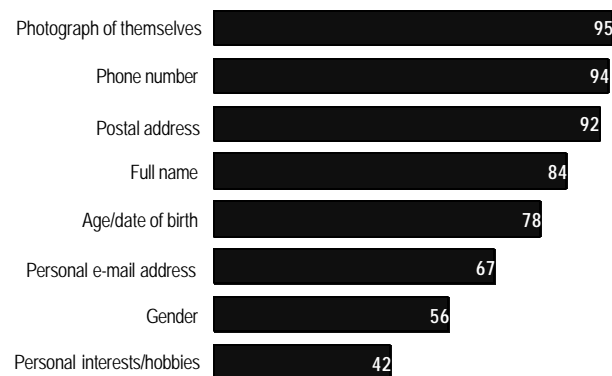
Parents with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet were asked if they would allow their child to submit a variety of personal information to child-oriented Web sites.

Overwhelming numbers say they would not allow their child to submit a photograph of themselves (95 per cent), his/her phone number (94 per cent), or his/her postal address (92 per cent). Large majorities also say they would not let their child submit information, such as his/her full name (84 per cent), his/her age and date of birth (78 per cent), or his/her personal e-mail address (67 per cent). A small majority (56 per cent) would not allow their child to submit information on his/her sex, but a large minority of 41 per cent would allow this. A minority of 42 per cent say they would not allow their child to submit information on his/her personal interests or hobbies, but a slight majority of 52 per cent would allow this. A minority (33 per cent) would permit their child to submit their personal e-mail address.

Men are more likely than women to say they would allow their child to submit information, such as his/her full name, age and date of birth and personal e-mail address. Younger parents are more likely than others to say they would allow their child to submit information on his/her sex and personal interests or hobbies. Those who consider themselves more capable users of the Internet are more likely than others to say they would allow their child to submit information on his/her age and date of birth, personal e-mail address and personal interests and hobbies. Residents of Quebec are slightly more inclined than others to say they would allow their child to submit information, such as his/her full name, age and date of birth, sex and personal interests or hobbies.

Allow children to submit personal information to Web sites

Percentage saying "no"



Q.72-79

Would you allow your child to submit the following to child-oriented Web sites... ?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

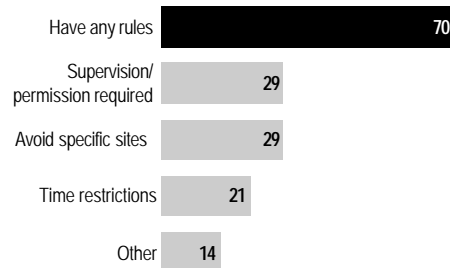
RULES REGARDING CHILDREN'S INTERNET USE

Most parents have set “rules” regarding their children’s Internet use.

Among parents with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet, seven in ten say they have set “rules” regarding their child’s usage of the Internet. Of these, three in ten (29 per cent) have set rules related to supervision or permission, such as “adult supervision” (15 per cent), “parents must know which sites visited” (six per cent), “parental permission required” (six per cent), “leave/report questionable sites to adult” (two per cent) and “parents must be home” (two per cent). Another three in ten (29 per cent) have rules related to avoidance of specific sites, such as “avoid restricted sites” (11 per cent), “no pornographic sites” (ten per cent), “no chat rooms/chat room restrictions” (six per cent) and “no violent/hate sites” (two per cent). Twenty-one per cent have set time restrictions. Fourteen per cent mention other rules. Thirty per cent have not set any rules.

They are especially less inclined to have set rules related to supervision or permission. Those with younger children, especially those with a child aged six to nine, are more likely than others to have set rules related to supervision or permission. Residents of Quebec and those with only one child are less likely than others to say they have set “rules.” Women, the most affluent parents, those who are married and those with older children, especially those with a child aged 13 to 16, are more likely than others to have set rules related to the avoidance of specific sites. Those with a son aged six to 16 are more inclined to have set time restrictions.

“Rules” for Internet use



Q.46

What rules, if any, have you set regarding your child’s usage of the Internet?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

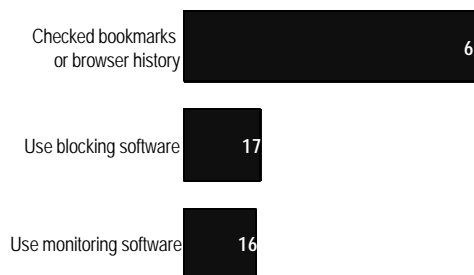
Most parents say they have checked the bookmarks or browser history to see which Web sites their children have visited. Small proportions say they use blocking or monitoring software.

Among those with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet at home, a majority of 67 per cent say they have checked the bookmarks or browser history log to see which sites their child has visited. Men, those who are married, those with a son aged six to 16, those with a child aged ten to 12 and those who consider themselves more capable users of the Internet are more likely than others to say they have monitored their child's Internet use in this way.

Among those with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet at home, only 16 per cent use any monitoring software to track what their child does while on the Internet. A majority of 83 per cent do not. Those who consider themselves advanced or expert users of the Internet are slightly more likely to say they use monitoring software.

Among those with a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet, only 17 per cent say they use blocking software, filters, or devices on their browser to limit access to certain sites by their child. A majority of 79 per cent say they do not. Men, parents who are younger, have more education, those with a son aged six to 16 and those who consider themselves more capable users of the Internet are slightly more likely to say they use blocking software.

Monitoring of child's Internet use
Percentage saying "yes"



Q.44

Have you ever checked the bookmarks or browser history log to see which sites your child has visited?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet at home

Q.45

Do you use any monitoring software to track what your child does while on-line or on the internet?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet at home

Q.48

And do you use any blocking software, filters, or devices on your browser to limit access to certain sites by your child?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child aged six to 16 who uses the Internet

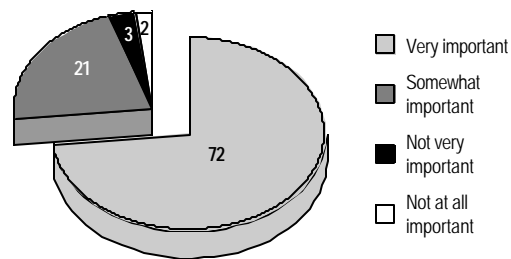
Seven in ten parents think it is very important that public libraries improve the online safety of children using library computers. Blocking software and supervision of children are seen as the most effective measures for public libraries in this area.

Seventy-two per cent of parents think it is very important that public libraries do something to improve the online safety of children using library computers. Few think this is not very or not at all important. Women and parents with younger children are slightly more inclined to want action on Internet safety in public libraries.

Large majorities of parents think “using blocking software, filters and devices on library computers to block children’s access to certain Web sites” (78 per cent) and “supervising children when they are on the Internet” (70 per cent) would be very effective measures in libraries. Smaller majorities say “setting up Internet workstations in a public part of the library where the screens can be seen by others” (54 per cent), “having libraries give educational programs to children and young people about how to use the Internet wisely” (54 per cent) and “educating library patrons about how to use the Internet wisely” (52 per cent) would also be very effective. Four in ten parents think “instituting Internet acceptable-use policies in libraries” (43 per cent) and “posting signs to notify library patrons about rules for Internet users in the library” (40 per cent) would be very effective measures. A small percentage think most of these measures would be “not very” or “not at all” effective.

Women, parents with less education and residents of Quebec are more likely than others to think that library Internet workstations in public areas, education programs for children on wise Internet use, instituting Internet-acceptable use policies and signs indicating Internet use rules would be very effective measures. Single parents are more likely than others to think that using blocking software on library computers, supervising children’s library Internet use and instituting Internet-acceptable use policies would be very effective.

Internet safety in libraries

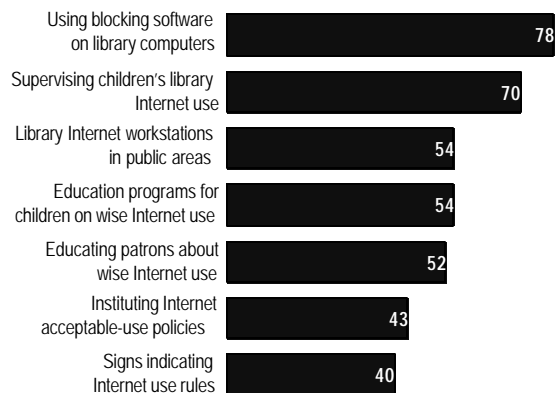


Q.97

How important is it that something be done by public libraries to improve the Internet safety of children using library computers?

Solutions for public library Internet use

Percentage saying “very effective”



Q.99-105

For each of the following measures, please indicate to me whether you think it would be very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective or not at all effective in public libraries...?

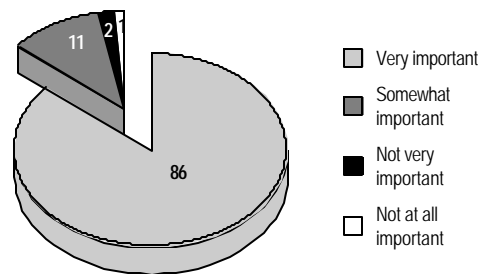
Almost nine in ten parents think it is very important for public schools to improve the online safety of children using school computers. Blocking software and supervision of students are seen as the most effective measures for schools in this area.

An overwhelming majority of parents (86 per cent) think it is very important that public schools do something to improve the online safety of children using school computers. Few think that this is not very or not at all important. Women and parents with younger children are slightly more inclined to want action on Internet safety in public schools.

Large majorities of parents think “using blocking software, filters and devices on school PCs” (75 per cent) and “supervising students when they are on the Internet in a school” (75 per cent) would be very effective measures. Smaller majorities say the same of “setting up Internet workstations in a public part of the school where the screens can be seen by others” (61 per cent) and “having an Internet acceptable-use policy for schools” (54 per cent). A large minority (42 per cent) think “posting signs to notify students about rules for Internet users in the school” would be very effective. Small proportions think most of these measures would be “not very” or “not at all” effective.

Women and residents of Quebec are more likely than others to think that school Internet workstations in public areas, instituting Internet acceptable-use policies and signs indicating Internet use rules would be very effective measures. Parents with less education and those who are single are more likely than others to think that supervising students’ school Internet use and instituting Internet acceptable-use policies would be very effective. Parents with less education are also more likely to say the same of signs indicating Internet use rules.

Internet safety in schools

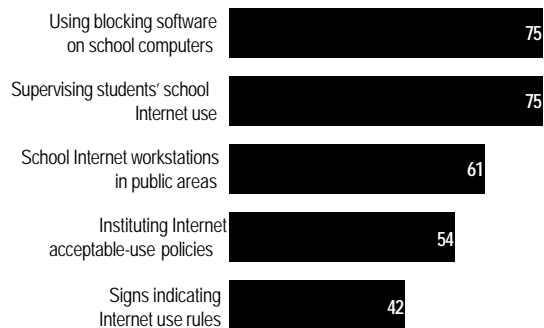


Q.98

How important is it that something is done by public schools to improve the Internet safety of children using school computers?

Solutions for school Internet use

Percentage saying “very effective”



Q.106-110

For each of the following statements, please indicate to me whether you think it would be very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective or not at all effective in schools...?

REDUCING OFFENSIVE OR INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT ENCOUNTERED BY CHILDREN ON THE INTERNET

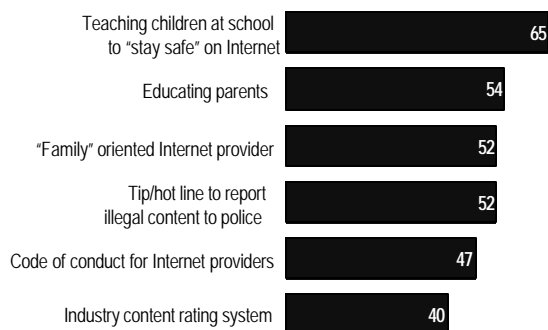
Teaching children at school about how to safely search the Internet is seen as the most effective measure for reducing the amount of offensive or inappropriate content children might encounter on the Internet.

A large majority of parents (65 per cent) think that teaching children at school about how to “stay safe” on the Internet would be very effective in reducing the amount of offensive or controversial content their children might encounter on the Internet. Smaller majorities say the same of “providing Internet education for parents” (54 per cent), “using an Internet service provider that only provides access to content suitable for families and children” (52 per cent), and “setting up a tip line or hotline to report illegal content to the police” (52 per cent). A significant percentage also think that “getting the Internet service provider industry to have a code of conduct with which providers must comply” (47 per cent) and “getting the Internet industry itself to develop a content rating system for Web sites, similar to that now used for movies and videos” (40 per cent), would be very effective measures.

Parents with children aged ten to 16 are slightly more likely to think that teaching children at school to “stay safe” on the Internet and setting up a tip/hotline to report illegal content to police would be very effective. Those with children aged 13 to 16 also think using a “family” oriented Internet provider would be a very effective measure.

Measures for reducing amount of offensive or controversial content encountered by child

Percentage saying “very effective”



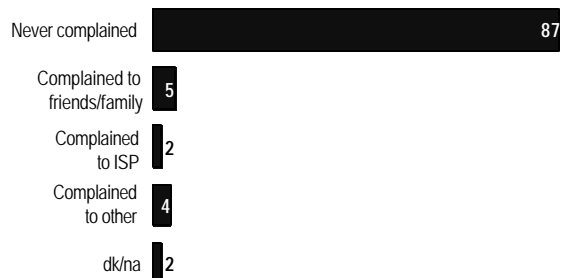
Q.91-96

For each of the following statements, please indicate to me whether you think it would be very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective or not at all effective at reducing the amount of offensive or controversial content your children might encounter on the Internet...?

Eighty-seven per cent of parents said they had never complained about something they or their family had found on the Internet. Of the 13 per cent that did complain, five per cent said they complained to friends or family and two per cent complained to their ISP. Women, parents with less education and less affluent parents were more likely to say they didn't know who to complain to.

Of the 87 per cent of parents that had never complained, over half of them (52 per cent) said they didn't complain because they did not know who to complain to. Twenty per cent said they didn't think complaining would help, 16 per cent thought complaining would be an inconvenience, and 11 per cent said they simply ignored the problem or dealt with it personally.

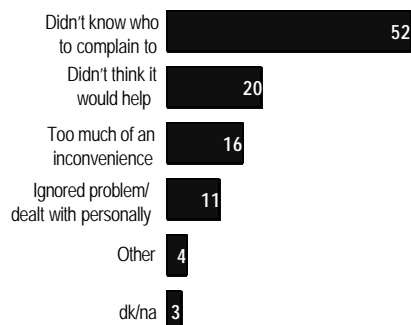
Complained about Something on Internet



Q.114

Have you ever complained to someone about something you or one of the member of your family found on the Internet? If so, to whom did you complain?

Reason for Not Complaining



Subsample: Respondents who use the Internet and who found something to complain about but who say they did not complain about something someone found on the Internet

Q.115

Why did you not complain?

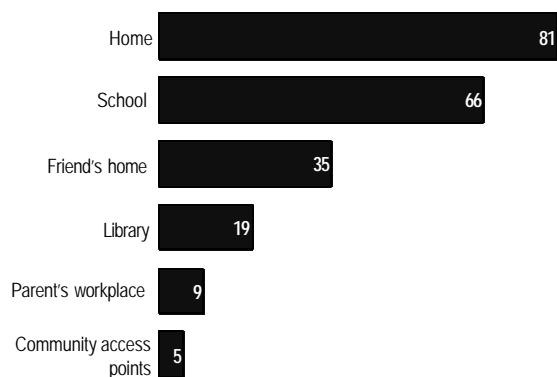
ACCESS TO INTERNET BY CHILDREN

Parents are inclined to think their children most often access the Internet from home.

Among those with children aged six to 16 who use the Internet, eight in ten (81 per cent) say their child accesses the Internet from home. More than six in ten (65 per cent) say their child accesses the Internet from school. More than three in ten (35 per cent) say a friend's home. A small per cent mention the library (19 per cent), parent's workplace (nine per cent) and community access points (five per cent). Men, those with more education, more affluent parents and those who are married are more likely to say their child accesses the Internet from home. Women are slightly more likely than men to say access is from school. Those with children aged ten to 16 are more likely to mention a variety of access points, such as school, someone else's house, or a public library. Single parents are more inclined to say their child accesses the Internet from someone else's house.

When asked from which of these locations their child accesses the Internet most often, eight in ten say from their home. Almost seven in ten (66 per cent) say from school. More than three in ten (35 per cent) say from someone else's house and two in ten (19 per cent) say from a public library. Five per cent mention some other location. Men, more educated and more affluent parents, those who are married and those who consider themselves more capable users of the Internet are more likely than others to think their child most often accesses the Internet from their home. Women and those with older children, (aged ten to 16) are more likely to think most Internet access is from school.

Location of children's Internet use



Q.19/20

From which of the locations mentioned above does your child access the Internet most often?

Subsample: Respondents who have a child six to 16 who uses the Internet

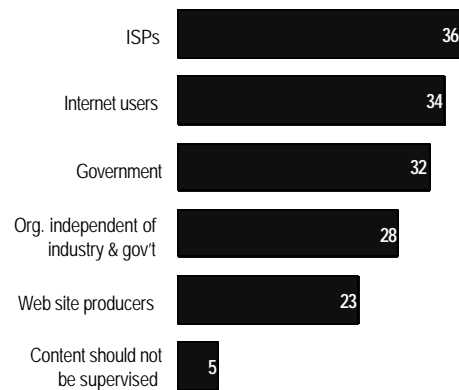
Parents strongly indicate that management and supervision of the Internet should be a shared responsibility.

When parents are asked who should be responsible for managing or supervising content on the Internet they cited a number of different players, including: Internet service providers (36 per cent); Internet users (34 per cent); government (32 per cent); an organization that is independent of industry and government (28 per cent); and producers of Web sites (23 per cent). Five per cent mention other responses. Five per cent say content on the Internet should not be managed or supervised.

Residents of Quebec and Manitoba are more likely than others to think that the government should manage or supervise content on the Internet. Residents of Quebec are also slightly less likely to think this responsibility should be placed on Internet service providers, Internet users or an independent organization. Women are more inclined than men to say this responsibility should be placed on Internet users, government, independent organizations and producers of Web sites. Single parents and those with more education are more likely to say an independent organization. Married parents, those who do not have online access at home (22 per cent of respondents) and those who consider themselves less capable users of the Internet (37 per cent of respondents) are more likely to think that government should be responsible for this. Men and those who consider themselves advanced or expert users of the Internet are more likely than others to say that content on the Internet should not be managed or supervised.

Similarly, parents feel educating families about safe and responsible Internet use is a shared responsibility. They cited families (35 per cent), government (30 per cent), Internet service providers (28 per cent) and schools (18 per cent) as having a key role to play in Internet education.

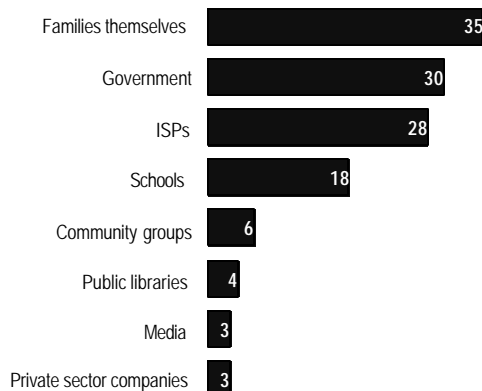
Responsibility for supervising Internet content



Q.38

Who, if anyone, should be responsible for managing or supervising content on the Internet?

Responsibility for education about safe Internet use



Q.113

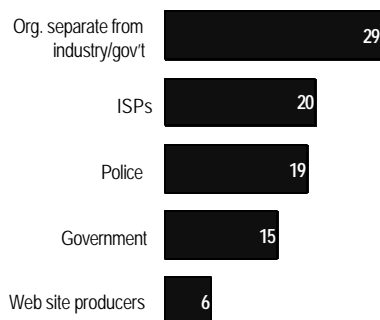
Who do you think should be responsible for educating families about how to use the Internet safely and wisely?

Residents of Quebec are more inclined than others to think that government should be responsible for educating families about how to use the Internet safely and wisely, and are less likely to think that this responsibility should be placed on families themselves. Men, the most affluent parents, those who are married, those with a daughter aged six to 16, those with a child aged ten to 16, those with online access at home and those who consider themselves more capable users of the Internet are more likely than others to think that families themselves should be responsible. Single parents and those whose child uses the Internet are more likely to say government. The least affluent are more likely than others to place this responsibility on schools.

Once again, there is no single player favoured by parents to operate a “hotline” to receive and address complaints about inappropriate content on the Internet. Parents are divided among an organization separate from industry and government (29 per cent), Internet service providers (20 per cent), the police (19 per cent) and government (15 per cent). Nine per cent offer other responses and four per cent mention a combination of players.

Residents of Quebec are more likely than others to think that government should operate a “hotline” to receive and address complaints about inappropriate content on the Internet. Men, those with more education and those with online access at home are more inclined to think the “hotline” should be operated by an organization separate from industry and government. The most educated and the least affluent parents are more likely to say government. Those with online access at home are more inclined to say Internet service providers. Parents with less education, those with a daughter aged six to 16 and those with no online access at home are more likely to think this task should be undertaken by the police.

Responsibility for operating hotline about inappropriate Internet content



Q.116

If there were a hotline established to receive and address complaints about inappropriate content on the Internet, who do you think should operate it?

REGULATION OF INTERNET ADVERTISING

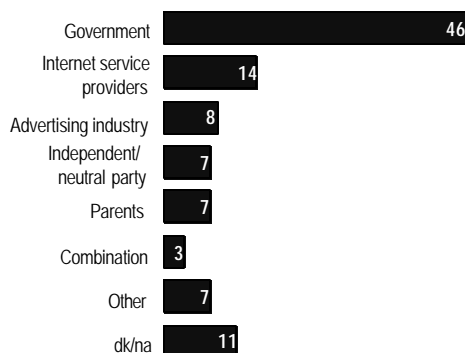
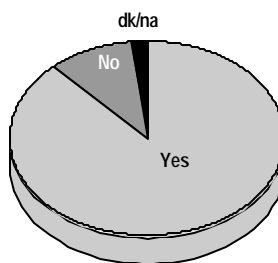
An overwhelming majority of parents think Internet advertising aimed at children should be regulated. A clear plurality of respondents think this should be the responsibility of the government.

Almost nine in ten parents believe that Internet advertising aimed at children should be regulated. Overwhelming majorities in all demographic groups agree with this view.

When asked who should regulate Internet advertising targeted at children, 46 per cent say this should be done by government. Much smaller proportions think this should be done by Internet service providers (14 per cent), by the advertising industry through self-regulation (eight per cent), by independent/neutral party (seven per cent) and by parents (seven per cent). Seven per cent mention other responses and three per cent mention a combination of players. Eleven per cent offer no opinion.

Parents with children aged six to 12, residents of Quebec and men are slightly more likely to think that Internet advertising aimed at children should be regulated by government. Men are also slightly more likely to think this kind of advertising should be regulated by Internet service providers. Those with children aged 13 to 16 are slightly more inclined to say the advertising industry through self-regulation. Those who consider themselves advanced or expert users of the Internet are slightly more likely to think this should be regulated by an independent/neutral party.

Regulation of Internet advertising



Q.111

Do you believe that Internet advertising aimed at children should be regulated?

Q.112

Who do you think should regulate Internet advertising targeted at children?

Subsample: Respondents who think Internet advertising aimed at children should be regulated.

SUMMARY

Canadian children are increasingly using the Internet for a variety of purposes. The rise of Internet use in schools, public libraries and homes has transformed children's learning environment into a vast technological landscape, with numerous benefits and pitfalls.

The vast majority of parents are fairly confident about their children's abilities to use the Internet in a safe and responsible way. In fact, it would appear that they have more concerns about Internet content than their children's abilities to navigate the Internet. Results reveal that inappropriate and offensive material topped parents' list of concerns. Canadian parents clearly believe that there is a need to protect and guide children in their online adventures.

The survey results show that parents are not as concerned about the hazards of e-mail, chat rooms or instant messaging activities as they are about inappropriate Internet content – primarily pornography. This would indicate that Canadian parents have yet to grasp the full interactive capabilities that the Internet is offering to their children, and the potential risks this interactivity introduces.

When it comes to protecting children's online safety, Canadian parents believe this is a responsibility to be shared by all the players – families, government, schools, libraries, and the Internet industry. Similarly, Canadian parents are in favour of sharing the responsibility for Internet education initiatives, online protection policies and managing Internet content.

The Internet is still a relatively new phenomenon in the lives of Canadian families. Like all new media, it will be a matter of time before people gain the insight and experience needed to properly critique and evaluate its impact on Canadian society, and in particular, Canadian children.