## ◦ Profile of Kids in Grades 6 and 7

### Going Online

Students in grades 6 and 7 are most likely to go online at home through a portable laptop or shared desktop computer, however, just over half are starting to connect to the Internet through their MP3 players. Over half have access to cell phones or smartphones, with the percentage of kids who own their own phones rising from 38 percent in Grade 6 to 52 percent in Grade 7.

Dovetailing with increased phone ownership, more students in these grades report sleeping with their cell phones than in younger grades (26% in Grade 6 and 37% in Grade 7). A third worry they may be spending too much time online, although a significant number report going offline voluntarily to do things like spend more time with friends or family (81%) or go outside to play a game or sport (78% and 76%).

The favourite activities for these ages are:
- playing online games;
- downloading and streaming music, TV shows or movies for students in Grade 6; and
- reading or posting on other people's social networking sites for students in Grade 7.

Virtual worlds are still popular, but use of social networking platforms is growing:
- One third of Grade 6 students participate in virtual worlds like Club Penguin.
- 67 percent of Grade 7 students have a Facebook account compared to 45 percent in Grade 6.
- One third of students in Grade 7 have accounts on Twitter and four out of ten have Instagram accounts.

### Privacy Attitudes

Kids in grades 6 and 7 are just starting to learn skills for protecting their privacy online:
- Half have used privacy tools to block strangers from seeing their posts;
- Half pretend to be someone else online to protect their privacy (although they also admit to doing this to access sites they shouldn't, with half pretending to be older than they are on age-restricted websites).

Students in grades 6 and 7 are also starting to consider privacy as it relates to data collection: three quarters would like more control over what companies do with the information they post online.

Kids in this age group are still very open to sharing their online life with their parents:
- Parents are the number one accepted group when it comes to sharing passwords and being able to track your location.
- Three quarters of kids think their parents should be able to read their social networking posts (a larger percentage, however, would rather share their posts with friends).
- 85 percent of Grade 6 students and 77 percent of Grade 7 students trust their parent(s) to help them solve online problems.

### Online Meanness

There is a sharp jump between students in Grade 6 and students in Grade 7 who say that they have been mean or cruel to someone online: from 11 percent to 19 percent. Interestingly, the difference is smaller for being on the receiving end of online cruelty: 31 percent versus 36 percent. Most of this online meanness is in the form of name calling.

Kids in this age group have several techniques for dealing with mean and cruel online behaviour:

- Parents are the first people kids turn to for help, followed by friends, another trusted adult, and finally teachers.
- Over 40 percent ignore the problem.
- A third of kids talk face-to-face with the person who is being mean.

Encouragingly, a majority of these kids will intervene when someone is being picked on online – seven out of ten say they have stepped in to do this.

Students who have been mean to others online report a variety of motivations:

- The most common reason is "just joking around" (this is echoed in the high number of kids in these grades –three quarters – who agree that parents or teachers "sometimes call just kidding around bullying").
- The second most common reason is because someone said something mean about them first.

## Learning Skills for the Internet

Around half of students in grades 6 and 7 actively go online to find information on sports, entertainment, news and current events. Kids in this age group use different methods for finding information online. The most popular are: searching inside trusted sites; using more than one search engine; and asking a teacher.

To find out if the information they find is correct, students in grades 6 and 7 use the following strategies:

- Check with other websites to see if they say the same thing (69% and 72%);
- Ensure that the facts are from topic experts (60% and 59%); and
- Confirm with a teacher (58% and 55%).

Almost all kids in this age group take steps to authenticate information if it's for school (93% and 92%). However, significantly fewer do this for other situations: for example: 65 percent and 70 percent confirm information they find online for friends and family and 49 percent and 60 percent do this for things they post on social media.

When asked where they are learning about the Internet, kids in this age group report that their parents are more likely to be teaching them about privacy settings; general safety; what's legal and illegal; and how companies collect personal information. The only topic they are more likely to learn about from teachers is cyberbullying.

When asked what they would like to learn about the Internet in school, these students' top choices are:

- how to tell if information is true;
- what is and isn't legal to do online (despite one third agreeing with the statement that illegal downloading is 'not a big deal'); and
- how to be safe online.

Although half of kids in this age group believe the Internet is not a safe place for them – nine out of ten are extremely confident that they know how to protect themselves online. Additionally, an overwhelming majority (95%) say that their parents trust them to do the right thing online.

All statistics are from MediaSmarts' 2014 study *Young Canadians in a Wired World*, Phase III: www.mediasmarts.ca\ycww