Appendix 3 — Student Profiles by Grade

⟩ Profile of Kids in Grades 4 and 5

Going Online

In grades 4 to 5, kids are mainly going online through shared family computers. A minority, however, owns their own cell phone or smartphone (24%), while a third (31%) has regular access to someone else's phone. For these younger students, cell phones are primarily a way to communicate with family, although friends are a close second.

Even at this young age, a third of kids worry that they might be spending too much time online, with one in five reporting they sleep with their cell phones so that they won't miss any messages. On the plus side, most say they voluntarily go offline to spend more time with friends or family or to go outside to play.

Favourite Activities

The Internet is mainly a source of fun and entertainment for this age group, with YouTube as the top website for both boys and girls.

The most popular online activities are:
- playing games;
- downloading/streaming music, TV shows or movies; and
- socializing in virtual worlds (Club Penguin, Webkinz and MoshiMonsters are the most popular online communities).

Privacy Attitudes

Like their older peers, kids in grades 4 and 5 use the Internet to connect with others: just under one third of Grade 5 students have a Facebook account (even though you have to be 13 to legally join). A majority (61% and 74%) are comfortable with friends being able to read their social networking posts, while most (80% and 84%) agree that their parents should be able to see their posts.

These younger students are very comfortable having their parents involved in many other aspects of their online lives:
- 63 percent of kids in Grade 4 and 66 percent of kids in Grade 5 are willing to share passwords with their parents.
- The majority believe that parents can be trusted to help solve online problems.
- Most (79% and 63%) think that parents should keep track of their kids online all the time. (This is interesting given that an overwhelming majority of this age group (93% and 95%) also believe that their parents trust them to do the right thing online.)

Even at this age, kids are quite proactive when it comes to protecting their privacy:
- Most would turn to their parents if an unwanted photo of them is posted online or would ask the poster to remove it.
- Half have assumed other identities online to protect their privacy.

However, there is still much for them to learn about how companies collect and use personal information: three quarters mistakenly believe that if a website has a privacy policy it will not share their personal information with others. This could be because half of these students have never had an online privacy policy or terms of use explained to them or have learned about how companies collect and use personal information online.

Online Meanness

Perhaps because they are still quite young, kids in grades 4 and 5 are the least likely of students who were surveyed to report being mean or cruel to someone online, being recipients of online meanness or cruelty or being threatened online. They also are the least likely to report helping someone who is being picked on online.

For those students who have faced online harassment, most say it wasn't a problem for them – although 17 percent of kids in Grade 4 said it was a serious problem.

For those who report being mean or cruel to someone else online, half say it generally involved name-calling. For one quarter of these students, the incident took place in an online game.

Once again, parents are a primary source of support with over two thirds of these children asking their parents for help if they encounter mean, cruel or threatening behaviour. Younger students are also the most likely group to ask teachers for help with cyberbullying (28%).

Learning Skills for the Internet

While students in grades 4 and 5 understand that not everything online is true, whether or not they take steps to check the information depends on what they need it for. For example, a majority will try to make sure online information is correct if it's for homework, but the numbers are much lower if it's for friends or family or to post on social media.

When trying to decide if online information is correct, two thirds of Grade 4 students will ask their teacher. By Grade 5 students are just as likely to try to see if other sources say the same thing as they are to turn to a teacher for help.

When looking at what they are learning – and from whom – parents emerge as the most significant source for most Internet issues. This is especially true when it comes to being safe online with three quarters of students learning this at home and under half learning about this at school.

Interestingly, although three quarters of students in these grades believe that they could be hurt if they talk to someone they don't know online, most (77% and 88%) are confident that they know how to protect themselves.

When asked what Internet issues they want to learn more about in school, students say, in this order:
- how to tell if online information is true;
- how to be safe online; and
- cyberbullying.

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

⟩ 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.

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⊳ Profile of Kids in Grades 8 and 9

Going Online

Students in grades 8 and 9 are most likely to connect to the Internet through laptops and cell phones or smartphones. We see the impact mobile devices like these are having on parents' ability to supervise their children's Internet use with half of these kids reporting going online without an adult around.

The majority of these young teens have access to a cell phone or smartphone and there is a significant leap in phone ownership from Grade 8 to Grade 9 (from 68% to 83%). Most are using their phones to stay in touch with friends and family and close to half admit to sleeping with their phone at night.

Favourite Activities

Social networking continues to grow with Facebook accounts jumping from 78 percent in Grade 8 to 87 percent in Grade 9. Twitter and Instagram are also gaining popularity: approximately half of Grade 9 students have accounts on these sites (53% and 47% respectively).

The top activities for this age group are:

- reading or posting comments and pictures on friends' social networking pages;
- playing online games;
- reading or posting comments and pictures on their own social networking pages; and
- downloading/streaming music, TV shows or movies.

Looking for news and current events starts to overtake searching for entertainment and sports online. Some Grade 9 students are also starting to use the Internet to get information on more sensitive topics, such as sexuality (10%) and issues relating to physical health (27%) and mental health (18%).

Privacy Attitudes

Many students in grades 8 and 9 pretend to be someone else online for a variety of reasons, including:

- to be older to register on age-restricted websites (51% and 57%);
- to protect their privacy (43% and 48%); and
- to play jokes on friends (39% and 47%).

They also actively manage their online privacy, with just over half of Grade 8 students and three quarters of Grade 9 students having deleted content to prevent someone else from seeing it.

There is a strong desire for general privacy in these grades, with asking for someone to take something down so 'no one' can see it as the most likely reason given for removing content (compared to keeping it from specific groups like parents, friends or teachers).

The likelihood of students talking to their parents about unwanted photos posted online drops significantly in these grades (from 26% to 12%).

Teens in this age group are moving away from parents and towards peers when it comes to sharing aspects of their online lives. For example, the majority say that their friends should be able to read their social networking posts (93% and 94%), distantly followed by their parents (67% and 59%). As well, they want any sharing with parents to be consensual: most feel that parents should not listen in on their kids' online conversations, read their kids' texts or force their kids to friend them on social networking sites.

The good news, however, is that an overwhelming majority believe that their parents trust them to do the right thing online, although there is a comparatively lower level of trust that parents can help them to solve online problems.

Online Meanness

Online conflict rises as kids hit the teen years and the use of social networks increases:

- A third of students in grades 8 and 9 have been mean or cruel to someone online, with name calling the most frequent type of bullying.
- Grade 9 is the peak period across all grades for making threats online and harassing someone in an online game.
- Four out of ten of these students have been recipients of mean or cruel behaviour: but most – three quarters – say this was rarely or never a problem for them.

The most common responses to being bullied online for Grade 8 students is ignoring it, asking friends for help, asking parents for help and talking face-to-face with the person. By Grade 9, fewer kids are turning to their parents for help, continuing the trend of teens seeking more autonomy in dealing with online issues.

While Grade 9 is the peak period for kids helping peers who are being bullied online (71%), it is also the grade where students are *least* likely to agree that it's important to speak out about racism and sexism online and most likely to say that "it's not my place to say anything." This may reflect a move into more adult-oriented online spaces where they feel less confident speaking out and trying to influence the values of the community.

Sexting Activity

Among students who own a cell phone, four percent in Grade 8 have sent a sext of themselves to someone. That number doubles to eight percent by Grade 9. Higher percentages – 17 percent for Grade 8 and 26 percent for Grade 9 say they have received a sext directly from its creator – suggesting that those kids who send sexts of themselves do so to multiple recipients.

The more troubling activity of forwarding sexts is quite low for this age group: in fact these students are actually less likely than those in Grade 7 to forward sexts on to others.

Learning Skills for the Internet

The most popular strategies for finding information online for students in grades 8 and 9 are searching inside reliable sites and using multiple search engines. If it's for school work, three quarters will compare their findings to other sources to double check what they've found.

Kids in this age group are least likely to have learned about the following topics:

- how companies collect and use personal information online (6 out of 10 mistakenly think that if a website has a privacy policy it won't share personal information with others);
- how to deal with racist and sexist content online (although three quarters say it's important to speak out so people know racist and sexist talk is wrong, half also say it's not their place to say something); and
- what's legal and illegal to do online (nearly half of Grade 8 students and 6 out of 10 Grade 9 students believe that illegally downloading is not a big deal).

Almost all of these students say that they've learned about online safety. Like younger students, they are also overwhelmingly confident that they know how to protect themselves online.

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▶ Profile of Kids in Grades 10 and 11

Going Online

Cell phone and smartphone ownership peaks in grades 10 and 11 (87% and 85% respectively) with students primarily going online through their phones or portable computers. These grades are also the peak years for students reporting they sleep with their cell phones and using them in class to chat with friends without their teacher knowing.

Given these are older teens, it's not surprising that over half say there is no supervision of their Internet use at home. Household rules have also declined, with 26 percent of Grade 10 students and 37 percent of Grade 11 students saying there are no Internet rules in their homes. Although kids in these grades are the least likely to turn to their parents if they have a problem online, it's important to note that over half (57% and 55%) still say they trust their parents to help them.

Favourite Activities

Students in grades 10 and 11 are fully immersed in social media, with nearly all (94% and 95%) having Facebook accounts. Online gaming has declined while downloading and streaming music, TV shows or movies is up. (Although students were not asked if they had illegally downloaded content, the majority say that illegal downloading is not a big deal.)

Interestingly, students in Grade 11 spend more time looking up online news and current affairs (65%) than sports (41%) and celebrities (56%). This age group is also more likely to look online for sensitive topics such as sexuality with the number doing this doubling from Grade 8 (10%) to Grade 11 (20%). Looking for pornography also peaks with these older students, with more than a third (33% and 35%) admitting to doing this.

Privacy Attitudes

More than half of these teens pretend to be older to register on age-restricted websites. Many also assume other identities to protect their privacy (45% and 50%) and to play jokes on friends (46% and 50%).

Given the popularity of social networking, it is not surprising that these students are active – and proactive – in managing their social lives online:

- Three quarters have deleted things they've posted online to prevent someone else (most often parents and family members) from seeing it.
- Two thirds have asked someone who had posted something about them to remove it to prevent someone else (most often friends, parents and family members) from seeing it.
- If an unwanted image is posted, most will ask the poster directly to take it down (85% and 79%) or will untag the photo themselves (71% or 72%).
- Six out of ten have used privacy tools to block strangers from seeing their social networking posts.

Kids this age are much less willing to share their online lives with the adults in their lives:

- 95 percent say their friends should be able to read their social networking posts, compared to half who would share them with parents and only 9 percent who would share them with teachers.
- By Grade 11, 33 percent would share their password with their best friend compared to 14 percent who would share it with parents (over half say they wouldn't share their passwords with anyone).
- Three quarters say kids should not be forced to friend their parent(s) on social networking sites.

Online Meanness

Students in Grade 10 are more likely than students in other grades to say they have been the recipients of mean or cruel online behaviour (47%). At the same time, 57 percent say it was rarely a serious problem for

them. This could be explained by the fact that the main way this age group engages in mean online behaviour is through name calling (82%).

These older teens have a number of strategies for dealing with cyberbullying, with their top choices:
- ignoring it;
- talking to the person face-to-face; and
- asking friends for help.

Turning to adults is a less popular option. By Grade 11 only 19 percent would ask parents for help and that drops to 4 percent who would ask a teacher and 5 percent who would contact the police.

These students are most likely to have encountered sexist or racist content online: a third say this happens at least once a week. While most believe this sexism and racism is wrong and it's important to speak out, almost seven out of ten say they don't do so because most of the time people are just "joking around". They also have similar attitudes towards cyberbullying, with most saying that sometimes parents/teachers call it bullying when kids are really just joking.

Sexting Activity

Students in grades 10 and 11 with cell phones are more likely than younger students to have sent a sext of themselves to someone, although these numbers are still relatively small (11% in Grade 10 and 14% in Grade 11). One quarter of students in Grade 10 who have sent a sext of themselves say it was forwarded by the recipient; a number that declines to 17 percent in Grade 11. Students in this age group are also more likely than students in grades 7 to 9 to report having received a sext directly from someone.

Learning Skills for the Internet

Although most students in grades 10 and 11 try to make sure online information is correct when doing schoolwork (89% and 87%), they're less likely to do so than their younger peers. However, they still turn to teachers when they need help in similar numbers, with half of them doing this.

While many of these teens are still learning about Internet topics from their teachers and parents, they are more likely than their younger peers to be learning about these topics independently – either by reading about them online or from their friends.

Students in grades 10 and 11 have learned about the following topics:
- searching for information online: from teachers (48% and 52%); from parents (38% and 31%), from the Internet (27% and 32%) and from a friend (38% and 38%);
- authenticating online information: from teachers (47% and 51%); from parents (26% and 25%), from the Internet (23% and 30%) and from a friend (19% and 19%); and
- how to use privacy settings: from teachers (15% and 11%); from parents (30% and 21%), from the Internet (38% and 52%) and from a friend (38% and 34%).

There are still gaps in these students' education: a majority – the highest of all the grades – have never had someone explain online privacy policies or terms of use to them (77% and 80%), and a third have never learned how companies collect and use personal information online.

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