A Case Study Investigation on the Safe Use of the Internet by 12-18 year olds in an Irish Post Primary School

Louise Lawlor

Master of Arts in Digital Media Developments for Education

University of Limerick

Supervisor: Joe Collins

Submitted to the University of Limerick, September 2011
“I hereby declare that this is entirely my own work and that it has not been submitted for the award of any degree at any other university”.

__________________
Louise Lawlor
Student ID: 0583898
September 2011
Abstract

This case study examines the nature of Internet use by students and teachers in a post primary school and attempts to determine to what extent students’ online activities reflect unsafe practices and patterns. It investigates how much students and teachers know about Internet safety and establishes from what source students have received information on safe Internet use to date. Finally, it investigates whether the study school is following recommended guidelines on Internet safety strategies.

Research involved a mixed methodology approach. A variety of sources were used to gather information thus ensuring the notion of triangulation. Teaching staff and students from the study school were surveyed, semi structured interviews with management and teaching staff were conducted, comments made from teachers concerning students’ safe Internet use were noted and relevant ICT documentation was reviewed.

The study identified that students and teachers are using the Internet both at home and in school. Overall, students are involved in reasonably safe practices whilst online, however, there are a small minority engaging in what might be deemed ‘risky’ behaviour. In relation to ensuring students e-safety, some teachers have provided training to students on safe Internet use. In addition, the school has implemented an AUP and filtering systems are in place on the school network, however, evidence suggests there are a number of areas that need addressing. These include shortcomings with the AUP, the lack of training on safe Internet use reported by students and teachers and the bypassing of filtering systems by a number of individuals.

Accordingly, this study suggests the need for continuing work to be carried out on promoting and ensuring Internet safety for students and young people both inside and outside of school. It recommends that schools follow the recommended guidelines set out by the NCTE on the implementation of AUPs, by involving relevant parties in the drawing up and implementation of the policy and in providing training to all staff on its contents so that they can ultimately relay the information to students. Research also highlights the need to educate teachers and parents on potential Internet dangers as it is crucial in ensuring young people are kept fully informed on how to make safe and responsible decisions whilst online.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following people for their help and support whilst writing this thesis:

Mr Joe Collins, my tutor and supervisor, for his relentless guidance, support and encouragement. Joe gave freely of his time to provide constructive, positive feedback. Thank you.

The management of the study school who granted me permission to conduct my research.

The parents of the students that participated in this study who gave their permission for their children to contribute.

The staff and students that participated in this study. Their time and assistance was much appreciated.

My parents, Marie and James, for always encouraging and supporting me to further my education and for always being there to offer loving support and encouragement.

Last but not least, my loving partner, Harry for his constant support, patience, encouragement and kindness. Thanks for being there throughout it all!
# Table of Contents

List of Appendices ........................................ vi
List of Abbreviations ....................................... vii
List of Figures ............................................... viii
List of Tables ............................................... x

Chapter 1 – Introduction
  1.1 Introduction ........................................... 1
  1.2 Statement of Topic .................................... 2
  1.3 Research Questions ................................... 3
  1.4 Relevance ............................................. 3
  1.5 Significance .......................................... 4
  1.6 Background to the Study ............................ 4
  1.7 Research Methodology ................................. 5
  1.8 Structure ............................................. 5

Chapter 2 – Literature Review
  2.1 Introduction ........................................... 7
  2.2 The Internet .......................................... 8
  2.3 ICT in Education ..................................... 10
    2.3.1 The Pedagogical Rationale ..................... 10
    2.3.2 The Social Rationale ............................ 11
    2.3.3 The Economic Rationale ....................... 12
  2.4 Irish Policy Initiatives to Integrate ICT into Education 13
    2.4.1 Schools IT 2000 project ....................... 13
      2.4.1.1 The Technology Integration Initiative .... 14
      2.4.1.2 The Teaching Skills Initiative ............ 14
      2.4.1.3 Schools Integration Project ............... 14
Chapter 3 – Methodologies

3.1 Introduction 38
3.2 Background to Research 38
3.3 Research Setting 39
3.4 Research Questions 40
3.5 Research Methodology 41
   3.5.1 Methodology Chosen 42
3.6 Research Instrument 42
   3.6.1 Online Questionnaire 43
   3.6.2 Semi Structured Interviews 44
   3.6.3 Comments Made by Teachers 45
   3.6.4 Examination of Documentation 45
3.7 Sample Group 46
3.8 Limitations of Sample Group 47
3.9 Reliability and Validity of Research 47
3.10 Ethical Considerations 48

Chapter 4 – Findings

4.1 Introduction 49
4.2 Profile of Respondents 49
   4.2.1 Profile of Students 49
   4.2.2 Profile of Teachers 51
4.3 Findings by Research Question 52
   4.3.1 What is the Nature of Internet Use by Students
       and Teachers in a Post Primary School? 52
   4.3.1.1 Internet Use by Students 52
   4.3.1.2 Internet Use by Teachers 56
   4.3.2 How Much do Students and Teachers Know About
       Internet Safety and From Where have Students
       Received Information on Safe Internet Use to Date? 60
4.3.3 Is the School Following Recommended Guidelines on Internet Safety Strategies? 69
4.3.4 To What Extent do Students’ Practices and Patterns Reflect Unsafe Internet Use? 74

Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1 Introduction 87
5.2 Discussion of Research Findings 87
  5.2.1 What is the Nature of Internet Use by Students and Teachers in a Post Primary School? 87
  5.2.2 How Much do Students and Teachers Know About Internet Safety and From Where have Students Received Information on Safe Internet Use to Date? 90
  5.2.3 Is the School Following Recommended Guidelines on Internet Safety Strategies? 94
    5.2.3.1 Acceptable Use Policy 94
    5.2.3.2 Filtering and Monitoring 96
  5.2.4 To What Extent do the Students’ Practices and Patterns Reflect Unsafe Internet Use? 97

5.3 Summary 101

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

6.1 Introduction 102
6.2 The Nature of Internet Use by Students and Teachers in a Post Primary School 103
  6.2.1 Recommendations 104
6.3 Students and Teachers Knowledge on Internet Safety and From Where and From Whom are Students Receiving Information on Safe Internet Use? 104
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1 Recommendations</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 The Schools Role in Ensuring Students are Safe Whilst Using the Internet In School</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.1 Recommendations</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 The Extent to which Students are Practicing Unsafe Internet Use</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.1 Recommendations</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Summary</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 Limitations/Recommendations for Future Study</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>Letter to the Board of Management Seeking Permission to Conduct the Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>Letter to Parents Seeking Permission for their Child to Participate in the Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>Explanatory Email to Colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>Teacher Online Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E</td>
<td>Student Online Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F</td>
<td>Summary of Teacher Results from Online Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix G</td>
<td>Summary of Student Results from Online Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix H</td>
<td>Issues to be addressed by the Semi Structured Interviews (Guide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix I</td>
<td>Comments Made by Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix J</td>
<td>Study School Acceptable Use Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix K</td>
<td>School Publications and Website Permission Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Abbreviations

AUP       Acceptable Use Policy
CIPA      Children’s Internet Protection Act
COPPA     Children Online Privacy Protection Act
CSPE      Civil, Social & Political Education
DIT       Dublin Institute of Technology
ECDL      European Computer Driving License
EU        European Union
ICT       Information and Communications Technology
IT        Information Technology
LCVP      Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
LEA       Local Education Authorities
LSE       The London School of Economic and Political Science
MS        Microsoft
NCTE      National Centre for Technology in Education
NPADC     National Policy, Advisory and Development Committee
OECD      Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONCE      Online Children in Education Project
RBC       Regional Broadband Consortia
SAFT      Safety Awareness for Teens
SIP       School Integration Project
SN        Social Networking
SPHE      Social, Personal & Health Education
TII       Technology Integration Initiative
TSI       Teacher Skills Initiative
TY        Transition Year
UK        United Kingdom
UKCGO     UK Children Go Online
UNESCO    United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA       United States of America
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>PIES Model for Limiting E-safety Risks in Schools</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Students access to a PC or Laptop at home</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Subjects taught by teachers</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Students that use a mobile phone or games console to access the Internet</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Location and frequency of students’ use of the Internet</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>What is the nature of students Internet use?</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Do students use the Internet for homework?</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Teachers use of computers</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Teachers use of computers in teaching and learning</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Nature of Internet use by teachers in teaching and learning</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Teachers use of the Internet in their free time</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Students opinions on their own level of Internet knowledge and their teachers and parents</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>How do teachers rank their own Internet safety knowledge?</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Sources of Internet safety information to students</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Source of student Internet safety information in school</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Comparison between junior and senior cycle students who did not receive any Internet safety information from school</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>Source from which students would most like to get their Internet safety information</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Where do teachers feel students should receive Internet safety education from?</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>What Internet safety rules are enforced at home?</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>Students familiarity with their school’s safe Internet use procedures</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>Teachers awareness and familiarity with the AUP and also their contribution to the school website</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.21 Do students bypass school filtering systems? 72
4.22 The location of students PCs 74
4.23 Do students tend to chat in open or closed groups? 75
4.24 Do students know everyone they chat with online personally? 76
4.25 Do students tend to provide personal information on the Internet? 77
4.26 Have students ever felt vulnerable whilst on the Internet? 78
4.27 Have students ever received unwanted comments whilst on the Internet 79
4.28 Comparison between male and female students receiving unwanted comments online 80
4.29 Who do students tend to tell when they receive unwanted comments online? 81
4.30 Comparison between male and female students regarding whom they would tell 82
4.31 Do students tend to make contact with someone they have met over the Internet? 83
4.32 Comparison between male and female students and whether they tend to make contact with someone they have met over the Internet? 84
4.33 Do students think there are risks when using the Internet? 85
## List of Tables

2.1 Risk associated with using the Internet .......................................................... 17
2.2 Parents’ Opinions about their Children’s Online Safety Behaviour .................. 36
4.1 Other responses listed by teachers on their use of computers in teaching and learning .......................................................... 57
4.2 Teachers’ perceptions to an array of safety issues concerning students’ safe use of the Internet .......................................................... 86
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Young people today have grown up in an age of technology. They are accustomed to interaction:

instant access to knowledge, vivid imagery embodying and supplementing information and control of information flow and access.

(Stommen & Lincoln 1992)

Today’s youth are comfortable with new technologies and confident in their use. Technologies are a source of information, recreation and communication. The report, “Their space: education for a digital generation”, reported that:

The use of digital technology has been completely normalised by this generation, and it is now fully integrated into their daily lives.

(Green & Hannon 2007)

The benefits of modern technology in teaching and learning are also well documented:

The Internet is one of the most powerful pedagogical tools available to educationalists in recent years as teachers are offered endless opportunities to improve the learning experience of their students.

(NCTE 2003)

Technology use in teaching and learning is bridging the gap between students’ home and school lives. Schools have the opportunity to transform education by integrating ICT into teaching and learning but students also need to learn how to safely and responsibly use the Internet to avoid potential risks associated with it.
It is generally agreed that schools and parents have a fundamental role in ensuring the safety of students; however, two surveys conducted on hundreds of students in Ireland found that the majority of young people would prefer to receive Internet safety information from their school (NCTE 2003; Webwise 2006). Green and Hannon (2007) found that:

contrary to society’s assumptions about safety, this generation is also capable of self-regulation when kept well-informed about levels of risk.

(Green & Hannon 2007)

Sharples et al. (2009) report:

A central dilemma that schools must address in a consideration of e-safety and Web 2.0 activity is how they can support children to engage in productive and creative social learning through Web technologies while protecting them from undue harm.

(Sharples et al. 2009)

With this in mind, this research will investigate how students and teachers in one urban post primary school are using Web technologies and will also examine how the school is encouraging the safe and responsible practices of its students whilst using new technologies.

1.2 Statement of Topic

To what degree are Web technologies being used by pupils and teachers in one Post Primary School in Ireland? Are students participating in safe and responsible practices online at home and in school and to what extent is the school equipping its pupils, with the knowledge and skills needed, to protect them from exposure to negative experiences online?
1.3 Research Questions

This study will focus on the safe and responsible adoption of modern technologies in one post primary school in urban Ireland. The research questions of this study are:

1. What is the nature of Internet use by students and teachers in a post primary school?
2. How much do students and teachers know about Internet safety and from where have students received information on safe Internet use to date?
3. Is the school following recommended guidelines on Internet safety strategies?
4. To what extent do the students’ practices and patterns reflect unsafe Internet use?

1.4 Relevance

The Internet has become an integral and accepted part of everyday life. It is being used by young people as a medium for communication, expression, recreation and education. Schools are also increasingly using the Internet in the teaching and learning of students and the Irish government has been investing in ICT for schools since 1998 to ensure students are equipped with the necessary ICT skills needed to function in a modern world. With new forms of media comes the concern as to whether it is safe for young people. Teachers and parents have a role to play in ensuring students are safe when they go online. To date the Irish government has undertaken a number of initiatives in promoting e-safety. They have developed two websites with information and advice for parents, schools and students and have launched a module on Safe Internet use for schools. The National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) has also collaborated on a number of European Union (EU) Internet safety initiatives and a large amount of statistics relating to areas such as students’ use of the Internet, risk issues, digital literacy, coping responses, perceptions and safety practices have been gleaned from these studies.
1.5 Significance

The significance of identifying students’ use of the Internet and how one school is dealing with safeguarding its students by following the recommended guidelines of the NCTE could influence how other schools in Ireland deal with the e-safety of its students. Information gathered could influence the NCTE on any future awareness campaigns and Internet safety strategies. The study could also influence the Department of Education and Skills (DES) on possible curriculum changes that might include the integration of safe Internet use across a variety of subjects.

1.6 Background to the Study

The author of this study has taught in the study school for the last 5 years and has noticed a drive by management to integrate technology into lessons over the last 2 years. The author is fully aware of the online risks and irresponsible online practices some students might engage in when they are not properly educated or informed about potential Internet dangers. It is hoped this study will provide insight into students’ online activities and safety practices, on whether they have received any information on safe Internet use and if so, from where and from whom have they received e-safety information.

The author is aware that there is an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and filtering systems in place in the school. The author is also conscious that a larger number of teaching staff and students are not familiar with the AUPs contents and training has never been provided to staff on the risks associated with the Internet and on how it can be used safely and responsibly. This study aims to highlight the shortfall in the schools strategies to safeguard students against potential dangers of the Internet in a hope that these issues can be addressed and resolved.
1.7 Research Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this study to address the research questions. The quantitative data was gathered from two separate online questionnaires, one for the teaching staff and one for students (n=120). The qualitative data was obtained from conducting semi structured interviews with management and teaching staff, the noting of comments made from teachers concerning students’ safe Internet use and the reviewing of ICT documentation. This study therefore, is a result of data gathered from a variety of sources and thus supports the notion of triangulation. Throughout the study the author was careful to ensure the information gathered was reliable and valid. Ethical issues were also considered and implemented throughout all stages of the research.

1.8 Structure

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter one, Introduction, details the topic being investigated and establishes the context for the study.

Chapter two, Literature review, reviews relevant literature on the topic of the ‘Internet’ and its growing significance in our lives. With this in mind it discusses the rationale of policy makers in deciding to invest in ICT in education and summarises various initiatives and policies of the Irish government in integrating technology into education. It continues by looking at the balance between the benefits of the Internet and the risks associated with it and refers to the role schools and parents play in equipping students with the necessary skills needed to safeguard them from harm whilst using the Internet. Strategies which school management and teachers can employ to protect young people against potential Internet hazards are also reviewed here.

Chapter three, Methodologies, initially presents the background to the research, describes the setting where the research was conducted and outlines the research
questions under investigation. It then discusses various research methodologies and explains the rationale for choosing the methodologies that were used in this study. The research instruments employed, sample group used and the limitations of the sample group are then discussed. To conclude, methods used in the study to ensure the reliability and validity of the research are referred to and the ethical procedures used by the researcher conducting the study are explained.

Chapter four, Findings, presents the findings of the qualitative and quantitative research conducted by addressing each research question.

Chapter five, Discussion, discusses the findings from chapter four and explores how the research obtained relates to existing data in this area by considering the literature review in context with the findings.

Chapter six, Conclusion, summarises the key findings of the study. It also outlines recommendations and looks at areas for further research within this field.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by briefly discussing the Internet and its growing significance in our lives. The increased importance of technology raises questions for policy makers in ensuring citizens are equipped with the necessary skills to participate in an increasingly technological world. The next section reviews literature on the rationale of policy makers in deciding to invest in ICT in education and summarises various initiatives and policies of the Irish government in integrating technology into education.

As more and more people are using technology in every aspect of their lives, questions can also be asked in relation to the balance between the benefits of the Internet and the risks associated with it. Online risks are reviewed, followed by initiatives to promote Internet safety internationally and particularly on a national level.

Schools play a vital role in preparing students for adult life and are therefore, responsible for ensuring students become competent, safe and responsible users of ICT. For this reason the literature includes strategies in which school management and teachers can safeguard young people against potential Internet hazards.

Parents have a major role in ensuring the wellbeing and safety of their children. With this in mind, the chapter concludes by examining recent literature and studies on parental involvement and strategies employed by parents to protect their youngsters.
2.2 The Internet

The Internet can be described as:

a medium that carries multiple forms of information that provide numerous ways of representing data including textual, visual, abstract, musical, social and kinesthetic.

(Brown 1999)

Leiner et al. (2009, p.22) describe the Internet as being:

At once a world-wide broadcasting capability, a mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic location.

(Leiner et al. 2009, p.22)

The Internet has developed rapidly since 1957 and has revolutionised computer use and communications (Leiner et al. 2009). During the 1990s, a more “content sharing” aspect of the Internet appeared when Ward Cunningham wrote the first wiki in 1994-1995 and blogging capabilities evolved to allow for a more user friendly experience, accessible to the less technical among us (Franklin & Van Harmelen 2007). O Reilly in 2004 described this more participatory experience of Internet usage as Web 2.0. According to O Reilly (2005), it is supposedly a second upgraded version of the web that is more open to collaboration and participation. In the former web (Web 1.0) a few content authors provided content for a wider audience of relatively passive readers, however, Web 2.0 allows everyday users to generate, collaborate and share content themselves.

Web 2.0 encompasses a variety of different meanings that include an increased emphasis on user generated content, data and content sharing and collaborative effort, together with the use of various kinds of social software, new ways of interacting with web-based applications, and the use of the web as a platform for generating, re-purposing and consuming content.

(Crook et al. 2008)
Doctor Tanya Byron in her report on ‘Safer Children in a Digital World’ refers to Web 2.0 as:

a term referring to the increasing use of the Internet by individuals to create and distribute their own content, in audio-visual as well as written form.

(Byron 2007)

Software commonly thought of as Web 2.0 software includes social networking (SN), wikis, blogs, media sharing services and collaborative editing tools.

Web 2.0 platforms are seen to have an emerging role in the transformation of teaching and learning (Alexander and Levine 2008). The DES view Web 2.0 tools as facilitating greater interactivity and user-generated content activities (DES 2008). Green and Hannon (2007), refer to benefits gleaned from young people participating in SN. These include:

creativity, ideas generation, presentation, leadership, team building, confidence, communication, innovation, initiative, critical awareness in information gathering, and ability to evaluate, question and prioritize information.

(Green & Hannon 2007)

As well as growing opportunities afforded from these new technologies, Web 2.0 technologies have also been criticised for contributing to potential dangers to young people using the Internet.

Interacting with social network (SN) and media sharing sites such as Facebook, Bebo, MySpace and YouTube also presents particular risks to young people, including exposure to online bullying, inappropriate material, possibility of contact with harmful strangers and opportunities to cause harm to others.

(Sharple et al. 2009)

This view is further substantiated by Livingstone and Brake (2009). They refer to the opportunities of these social networking sites. They offer:
Opportunities for the representation of the self, for learning, for constructing a wide circle of relationships, and the management of privacy and intimacy.

(Livingstone and Brake 2009)

But Livingstone and Brake (2009) also stress the risks that Web 2.0 applications present. Atkinson and Newton (2010), provide research that confirms the risks of new interactive features of Web 2.0 technology i.e. Webcams.

The risks to young people that these new technologies might present are included in detail further on in this literature review.

2.3 ICT in Education

ICT in education has, in recent years, emerged as a policy area in many Countries (Johannessen 2009). In the last two decades the Irish government has invested significantly in ICT in education. The motivation for governments’ investment in ICT in education stems from a pedagogical, social and economic viewpoint. The 2001 OECD report ‘Learning to Change, ICT in schools’ outlines these rationales. Kozma (2008) also supports these principles. The three rationales are further discussed now.

2.3.1 The Pedagogical Rationale

The pedagogical reasoning for the use of ICT in teaching and learning is based on the potential of ICT to increase the breadth and richness of children’s learning (DES 2008). According to the Minister for Education’s strategy group (2008) there are many potential advantages for using ICT in teaching and learning:

When ICT is used well it can enrich and enhance learning. It invigorates classroom activities and is a powerful motivational tool that encourages learners to progress in a more personalised and self-directed way.

(DES 2008)
Bryant (2006) also reinforces this:

New technologies are seen to hold considerable potential for addressing the needs of today’s diverse students, enhancing their learning experiences through customisation, personalisation, and rich opportunities for networking and collaboration.

(Bryant 2006)

2.3.2 The Social Rationale

The social rationale for planning for ICT use in classrooms focuses on the development of ICT competence, as an essential “life skill” (OECD 2001). The children of today have grown up in an age of technology and are enthusiastic and competent users of technology. This is supported by Hanafin (2008):

The children of today have been born into this age of technology and they are generally very comfortable and capable users.

(Hanafin 2008)

They use technology for socialising and communicating with friends and family and for recreational purposes. Many children start to use ICT at an early age, and the home and the family are, in many cases, an arena for the initial acquisition of digital skills (Johannessen 2009). The use of the Internet, online gaming, iPods and mobile phones are the norm for students. 97.8% of children aged between 9-16 years have a PC at home (Webwise 2006) and 92% of 9-16 year old users go online at least weekly (57% go online everyday or almost every day) (O Neill et al. 2011). Other findings from the most recent EU Kids online II study found that Irish children access the Internet via a personal computer (64%) or shared Laptop (51%) which is located in a public room at home (56%). According to O’Neill et al. (2011) access via mobile phone or games console are the next most common (46% and 44%) ways for Irish children to access the Internet.
Young people are enthusiastic and frequent participants of Web 2.0 and much informal learning is taking place through Web 2.0 interactive social networking sites (Gee 2003 and Williams & Facer 2003 cited in Becta 2007). The most popular online activities conducted by Irish children according to the EU Kids Online II study are ‘watching video clips’ and ‘playing Internet games’ (76% in each case), followed by ‘using the Internet for school work’ and ‘visiting a social networking profile’ (58% in each case).

Schools have a role to play in furthering the informal learning taking place and the skills being developed by students at home and in their everyday lives based on pedagogy and safe and responsible practices. Green & Hannon report that ‘schools need to respond to the way young people are learning outside the classroom’ and ‘develop strategies to bridge formal and informal learning, at home and in school’ (Green & Hannon 2007). It is important that the school life and the home life of students are not in opposition and that links are made between both.

There should not be a dramatic transition between the use of technology at home and at school. We need to be stimulated and challenged in a modern learning environment.

(Union of Secondary Students cited in DES 2008)

2.3.3 The Economic Rationale

The economic rationale according to the OECD report (2001) focuses on the potential of schools to prepare children to meet the perceived needs of the economy – present and future. A number of researchers attributed growth in the economy to the Internet. The recession of 2009 has seen a further emphasis on the knowledge economy as the future of Ireland’s economic well being (O’ Mahony 2009). Accenture, which provides management consultation, technology services and outsourcing, defines the knowledge economy as:

..an economy in which the generation and the exploitation of knowledge has come to play the predominant part in the creation of wealth.

(Accenture 2004 p3)
Mary Hanafin (2007 cited in DES 2007), views ICT literacy as a lifelong skill necessary for progression and participation in the global knowledge world.

Ireland's continuing development as an advanced knowledge society will rely on the skills of our young people. The development of strong ICT literacy in all of our children will be an essential life skill for them as they look to participate in the opportunities of the global knowledge society.

(Hanafin 2007 cited in DES 2007)

Minister Hanafin backs up the argument of schools’ role in equipping students with ICT skills when she says “It is imperative that our schools provide opportunities for all of our children to develop to their full potential in that regard" (Hanafin 2007 cited in DES 2007).

2.4 Irish Policy Initiatives to Integrate ICT into Education

2.4.1 Schools IT 2000 Project

In Ireland, the Schools IT 2000 project launched in 1997 placed increased emphasis on the introduction of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) into different subject areas in all Irish Secondary Schools (DES 1997). The National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) established in 1998 was initially charged with managing the initiative. Three initiatives were set up to support IT 2000 in achieving its aims:

- Technology Integration Initiative (TII)
- Teacher Skills Initiative (TSI)
- School Integration Project (SIP)
2.4.1.1 The Technology Integration Initiative (TII)

The purpose of this initiative was to build a technology infrastructure in schools and promote and support technology integration into teaching and learning. Schools were empowered to plan their own approach to technology integration and were funded to purchase their own hardware and software. £25 million was allocated to schools in direct grant aid between 1998 and 1999.

2.4.1.2 The Teaching Skills Initiative (TSI)

The professional development of teachers has been identified internationally as the primary factor in enabling effective integration of technology into schools (Phelan 2000). Training courses focusing on ICT skills, awareness training and pedagogical skills development were delivered across the country with vast numbers of teachers availing of the courses.

2.4.1.3 Schools Integration Project (SIP)

72 pilot projects ranging from software use, to Internet and email programs were conducted around Ireland. Over 350 schools participated in the initiative. According to the DES (1997), the aim of the SIP was to identify policy, training and support models, pedagogical strategies and classroom resources for ICT adoption in Irish schools.

A survey was conducted by the National Policy, Advisory and Development Committee (NPADC) in 2000 to assess the implementation of IT 2000 (NCTE 2001a). They reported that whilst achievements had been made in terms of providing necessary infrastructure, three issues concerning training, funding and equipment arose:

1. The need for more teachers training with a focus on pedagogical use of technology in classrooms.
2. The need for more funding, new equipment and computers.
3. The need for more technology support.
2.4.2 Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Irish Education

Following on from IT 2000, a “Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Irish Education” was published in 2001. This was a three year action plan which saw an investment of €78 million in capital aid for infrastructure and broadband and a further €29.2 million in support services (DES 2001). Unfortunately there was no review of the plan conducted and therefore little can be said about its impact (DES 2001).

2.4.3 Schools Broadband Programme

In 2004 the Irish government launched the “School’s broadband programme”. The aim of the Schools Broadband Programme was to provide all first and second level schools with a high-speed managed Broadband connection and additional centrally managed services (NCTE 2006). This programme provided a number of integrated services including broadband connection in schools, content filtering, webhosting and security services. The provision of broadband in schools increased the quantity, quality and efficiency of resources accessed in schools. The NCTE coordinate the Schools Broadband Programme for all primary and post-primary schools, and manage the Broadband Service Desk as a single point of contact for schools to support the delivery of online content and learning resources. A progress report in January 2008 found 98% of all Primary and Secondary schools now have Broadband access (O’Doherty 2008).

2.4.4 Schools ICT Initiative

In February 2007 the Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin, announced the allocation of €252 million for investment in ICT in education over a 6-year period (McGarr 2008). The new Schools ICT initiative aims:
to develop an e-Learning culture in schools that will ensure that ICT usage is embedded in teaching and learning across the curriculum. It will address teacher professional development, the maintenance of a national broadband network for schools, technical maintenance and support requirements and the upgrading and renewal of hardware along with the provision of software and digital content for learning.

(Hanafin M. cited in DES 2007)

A Strategy Group was appointed by Minister Hanafin to advise on the plan and their report was published in June 2008 entitled ‘Investing Effectively in Information and Communications Technology in Schools, 2008-2013’ (DES 2008).

2.5 Unsafe Internet Use

Over the decades new mediums of technology have been met with suspicion and scepticism from parents trying to protect their children from the perceived dangers of these new forms of media. Bauchard (1953) in the UNESCO report discussed the effects of press, film and radio on children. Bauchard expressed a great concern for the negative risks he perceived from popular song lyrics and from the new medium at the time, television. The more recent Byron Review on ‘Safer Children in a Digital World’ (Byron 2007) warns against the Internet.

The Internet presents huge potential for the development of innovative learning and teaching strategies and few people would deny the power of the Internet to release children’s creativity and offer new opportunities for learning, culture and community participation (Byron 2007). However, along with these potential benefits, schools, teachers, parents and pupils are being presented with a number of new risks. Sharples et al. (2009) refers to schools being caught between the rock of parental fears about Internet abuse and the hard place of helping children to develop responsible and creative use of Web 2.0 for learning.
Doctor Tanya Byron in the Byron report (2007) refers to risk in three categories: Content, Contact and Conduct. Table 2.1 was developed by the EU Kids online project and displays the risk categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Child as recipient</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ads</td>
<td>Violent/hateful content</td>
<td>Pornographic or unwelcome sexual content</td>
<td>Bias</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spam</td>
<td>Being bullied, harassed or stalked</td>
<td>Meeting strangers</td>
<td>Racist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>Being bullied</td>
<td>Being groomed</td>
<td>Misleading info or advice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal info</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unwelcome persuasions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Child as participant</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracking</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being bullied, harassed or stalked</td>
<td>Meeting strangers</td>
<td>Self-harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvesting personal info</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being groomed</td>
<td>Unwelcome persuasions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct Child as actor</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illegal downloading</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bullying or harassing another</td>
<td>Creating and uploading inappropriate material</td>
<td>Providing misleading info/advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial scams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Risk associated with using the Internet

The table clearly illustrates that a young person may be a recipient, participant or actor in online activities posing risk. Online activities posing risk include commercial, aggressive, sexual and values.

2.5.1. Inappropriate Material

There is no doubt that the Internet has increased the availability and accessibility of information exponentially. Web 2.0’s capability of user generated content is extremely beneficial; however, it has also given a voice to extremism with political, racial or sexist views. Children and adolescents have an increased access to inappropriate content and this is an issue.

Studies conducted by Valcke et al. (2008); Livingstone and Bober (2004); Kierkegaard (2008); all reported a high proportion of children being exposed to inappropriate content including pornography, violence, racism and hate.
In addition to this, research conducted in the US by Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak (2003) indicates that up to 25% of youngsters indicated being disturbed due to the nature of this type of content (USA, N=1501, 10-17 years old).

In terms of children viewing sexual or pornographic content, the EU Kids online survey (O’Neill et al. 2011) found 23% of Irish children have encountered sexual or pornographic content in the past 12 months. The study also uncovered that 25% of 11-16 year olds in Ireland, have been exposed to one or more types of potentially harmful user generated content: hate (12%), pro-anorexia (11%), self-harm (8%), drug-taking (7%), and suicide (5%) (O’Neill et al. 2011). This is slightly above the European average of 21%, placing Ireland somewhere in the middle of the 25 EU Countries where the study was conducted. The study found that most young people in Ireland came across sexual images online accidentally through pop ups, though 13% of older teenagers have seen them on an adult/x-rated website (O’Neill et al. 2011). Livingstone, Bober, and Helsper (2005) also reported a high proportion of older children accessing pornographic, violent, or racist online content intentionally. (UK, N=1257, 9-19 years old).

2.5.2 Contact with a Stranger

E-safety risks associated with contact are perhaps the ones which receive most press attention because of the fear of physical danger (Sharples et al. 2009). Contact risks seem to be related to specific types of Internet usage, such as blogging, chat room use, and instant messaging (Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor 2006, USA, N=1501, 10-17 years old; Ybarra & Mitchell 2008, USA, N=1588, 10-15 years old). Social Networking Sites, chat rooms and Instant messenger allow two way communications between users. Due to the anonymous nature of these new technologies adults can pose as a young person and strike up a conversation or ‘friendship’ online with a young person. Byron (2007) writes:
An adult masquerading as younger people is one of the biggest issues parents say they are most concerned about with the Internet.

(Ofcom 2007 cited in Byron 2007)

Strangers that make contact with children may be sexual predators that will use the Internet to ‘groom’ the young person. This sort of activity can represent a significant danger to young people particularly if the young person agrees to meet the stranger offline. One must also remember that all stranger contact might not present risk as it might be contact from peers or Internet friends of the same age, however, young people chatting with strangers should be discouraged.

A study conducted by Stahl and Fritz (2002) in the US reported that about 4% of their respondents attempted or made actual offline contact with a stranger (USA, N=213, 11-16 years old). Valcke et al. (2008) in a more recent study shows how 7.5% of children between 10-12 years old did already set up a meeting with an unknown person as a result of online contact. The EU Kids Online survey found that, “1 in 12 children have met an online contact offline”. The survey also reports however, that this risk rarely has a harmful experience (O Neill et al. 2011).

2.5.3 Cyber Bullying

‘Bullying’ is usually defined as being an aggressive, intentional act or behaviour that is carried out by a group or an individual repeatedly and over time against a victim who can not easily defend him or herself (Olweus 1993). In recent years bullying through electronic means, specifically mobile phones or the Internet, has emerged, often collectively labeled ‘cyber bullying’ (Smith et al. 2008). Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) attribute the reason for the Internet being a favourite bullying tool, to the fact that one can hide his/her own identity (Ybarra & Mitchell 2004).

Cyber bullying can involve the circulation of photographs, rumours or gossip (true or false), video content of “happy slapping” and other behaviour which would be distressing or hurtful to the child.

(Europe’s Information Society 2011)
Cyber bullying can lead to the victim feeling:

embarrassed, upset, depressed and afraid. It can damage their self esteem and can pose a threat to the psychological wellbeing of the victim.

(Becta 2007a)

In relation to Ireland the EU Kids Online survey ranked Irish children 21 out of 23 for those who had been bullied online in the last 12 months (Ireland 4%) (O Neill et al. 2011). The study also found that 15-16 year olds are the most likely age group to experience more electronically mediated forms of bullying (9% on the Internet and 10% by mobile phone) (O Neill et al. 2011). Livingstone, Bober, and Helsper’s (2005) study found that 33% of youngsters reported being bullied online or via SMS (UK, N=1257, 9-19 years old). A Canadian study was not as favorable, with findings indicating that 54% of 12-13 year olds (N=177) had been a victim of cyber-bullying (Li 2007).

2.5.4 Personal Data Misuse and Financial or Commercial Risk

According to research conducted by O’Neill, Grehan and Ólafsson (2011), there is little research on the topic of personal data misuse even though young people themselves frequently cite it as a topic of concern. The EU Kids Online II (2011) study found that 12% of Irish children overall have experienced some form of personal data misuse with the most common form of personal data misuse being someone using the child’s password or pretending to be them (10% of young people surveyed). The study reported examples of students’ Bebo and Facebook accounts having been hacked or someone impersonating them online (O’ Neill et al. 2011).

The disclosure of personal information by young people online including their age, name, address, and phone number is another area of concern. Up to 70% of the children felt at ease about giving someone their home address or email address (Kierkegaard 2008). Other studies further confirm the ease with which children divulge personal
information over the Internet (Dowell, Burgess and Cavanaugh (2009) and Valcke et al (2008)). According to O’Neill et al. 12% of Irish children’s social networking profiles are public and 8% of children include an address or phone number on their profile page. A study by Patchin and Huinduja (2010) of MySpace users, indicates that users exerted more discretion in posting personal information at a later stage (USA, N=2423, 16-19 years old).

The issue of identity theft is also on the increase as e-commerce continues to grow. Young people can be fooled into accepting ‘too good to be true’ offers from junk email or spam whereby they might give out personal information or their parents credit card details, resulting in unexpected consequences and charges. This is referred to as phishing. Being misled by premium-rate services is another risk that teenagers might encounter. This can include mobile phone companies offering ringtones, logos and competitions to young people.

2.5.5 Reliability of Online Content

Another problem facing young people, albeit at the other end of the spectrum from risks described previously, is their belief that everything they read online is true or reliable information. Valcke and Decraene (2007) state that the integrity of the information distributed via the Internet is rarely questioned by children.

The UK Children Go Online (UKCGO) study of 9-19 year olds’ use of the Internet between 2003 and 2005 reported that children lack key skills in evaluating online content (Livingstone & Bober 2005). It reported that 38 per cent of pupils trust most of the information online, and only 33 per cent of daily and weekly users have been taught how to judge the reliability of online information. (Livingston and Bober 2005). The 2007 Becta report “Signposts to safety, Teaching e-safety at Key Stages 3 and 4” also describes how young people lack the necessary skills needed to evaluate content available from the Internet (Becta 2007a). A US study conducted by Kortum, Edwards and Richards-Kortum (2008) involving secondary education learners, found that the
learners selected and used mainly incorrect information from the Internet (USA, N=34, 12-18 years old).

2.5.6 Plagiarism and Copyright

Information has never been more accessible than it is today. There is a risk that an adolescent might copy and paste information from the web and try and pass it off as their own work. This is known as plagiarism. Sharples et al. (2009) write that:

The challenge for schools is to enable children to develop essential skills of digital and media literacy, including personal media creation and critical understanding of computer media, while making clear the boundaries between creativity and plagiarism or collusion.

(Sharples et al. 2009)

The illegal downloading of music and games has also been popularised by new file sharing sites. It is important that young people realise that these actions might result in serious moral, financial and legal consequences.

2.5.7 Online Behaviour

“The risk element involved in using new technologies is often determined by behaviours rather than the technologies themselves” (Sharples et al. 2009). Certain types of online behaviour can make a young person more vulnerable to risk. This behaviour includes:

- Talking to people you do not know
- Chatting about sex
- Accessing pornography
- Being rude or nasty online

(Wolak et al. 2004)
In terms of Social Networking, not having your profile private, accepting people as ‘friends’ when you do not know them, or uploading private identifiable information are all activities that can make a young person vulnerable to risk.

Children in Ireland are amongst the most responsible users of social networking web sites (O’Neill et al. 2011). They are the least likely to publish their address or phone number on their profile page (Ireland 7%, EU 14%) and are more likely to have a private profile (Ireland 11%, EU 29%). However, the practice of ‘exaggerating’ one’s age is quite common in Ireland (25% compared to EU 17%).

### 2.6 Towards Safe Internet Use

Safe Internet use by children is being promoted in a variety of ways (Valcke et al. 2011). Two acts have been passed by the American government in an attempt to protect the privacy of children online. The first act, the ‘Children Online Privacy Protection Act’ (COPPA) of 1998 limits the possibilities to collect information from children, and requires putting warning signs on websites if harmful content is presented. The second act of 2000, the ‘Children’s Internet Protection Act’ (CIPA) focused on schools and libraries (CIPA 2001). Schools and libraries that implemented a safe Internet policy (rules, filter software), received a grant to develop their educational ICT (FCC 2011). Other countries have implemented legislation in line with the US governments approach, however, the Internet is not a national issue but an international one (Valcke et al. 2011). Kierkegaard (2008) supports this view and calls for ‘an international legislative focus’ where international illegal practices can be tackled.

Alternative strategies to keep young people safe whilst on the Internet are also in practice on a more micro scale. These include focusing on developing awareness, knowledge and skills in young people, teachers and parents, on the risks associated with modern technologies, particularly with Web 2.0 collaborative technologies. A holistic approach whereby schools, communities and homes are all involved in safe Internet use is called for by Livingstone (2001). It is also important to remember that some teachers
and parents lack the knowledge and confidence the ‘digital native children’ possess. Byron (2007) refers to this as a ‘digital divide’ and calls for education of teachers and parents on safe Internet use so that they are confident to advise young people on safe practices online.

Margie Roe (cited in Smyth 2010), the national childline manager for the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children affirms this belief and advises parents to educate themselves about the Internet and open channels of communication to their children regarding their own Internet experiences:

The most important advice for parents is for them to educate themselves about online activity and be open with their children about the Internet and share the experience with them.

(Roe cited in Smyth 2010)

This is further substantiated by Sharples et al. (2009):

With an increased focus on home access and parental engagement, using online tools, education and training will also be important for parents and carers also.

(Sharples et al. 2009)

2.7 Awareness Campaigns in Ireland

Over the last decade the Irish government has undertaken a number of initiatives in promoting e-safety. These initiatives include the establishment of two websites; Webwise and Watch Your Space. A safe Internet program in Junior Cycle, Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) classes has been set up and Irish students have participated in a number of European initiatives and studies.
2.7.1 Webwise

An Irish Internet Safety initiative, ‘Webwise’ was established in 2005 to raise awareness of online safety issues and practices among students, their parents and teachers. Their website was launched in February 2006. It is managed on behalf of the Department of Education & Science by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) and forms the Irish node of ‘Insafe’ a network of national nodes that coordinate Internet safety awareness in Europe.

Webwise aims:

1. To promote the safe use of the Internet among school children (ages 4-18), their parents and teachers.
2. To transform actual dangers into risks that they can master as autonomous, responsible users.
3. It provides information, advice and tools including streamed videos, Internet Acceptable Use Policy templates, interactive online resources, and advice sheets.
4. It promotes “Safer Internet Day” annually.

2.7.2 Watch Your Space

In February 2007 the then Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin launched a new campaign ‘Watch Your Space’ to raise awareness and promote safe and responsible practice by young people when online. The key message of ‘Watch your Space’ is be creative, be yourself and be in control. The ‘Watch Your Space’ website was developed in partnership with Childline and a key feature of the site is the advice given by teenagers to teenagers on how to cope with the fall-out from the misuse of social networking and picture-sharing websites.
2.7.3 Internet Safety Programme

In February, 2007, Minister of Education and Science, Mary Hanafin, launched a new Internet Safety Programme for post primary schools. This programme created by Webwise.ie in collaboration with the SPHE support service was the first educational programme of its kind in Europe. The aim of the programme is:

To address the personal safety needs of our young people when online and to help them become safe and responsible Internet users for life.

(Webwise 2011)

The programme consisted of a teachers’ Internet safety lesson plan, a resource pack for junior cycle SPHE classes and in-service training for SPHE teachers. The roll out of the programme saw in-service for teachers and seminars for parents to equip them with skills to engage with their childrens’ online lives. Materials covered in the programme include;

- Cyber bullying
- Rights and responsibilities online
- Personal information and the Internet
- Internet literacy and decision making
- Finding help and support

2.8 Ireland’s Participation in EU Safety Initiatives

The NCTE has collaborated on a number of EU Internet safety initiatives including:

- The EU Kids online study
- Safety Awareness for Teens (SAFT) survey
- Dot.Safe
- The Online Children in Education Project (ONCE)
2.8.1 The EU Kids Online Study

The NCTE and the Centre for Social & Educational Research, at the Dublin Institute of Technology have worked jointly under the leadership of the London School of Economics in a pan European research initiative investigating how children and young people use the Internet and new media.

(DIT 2009)

The EU Kids online study which is funded by the ‘EU Safer Internet Programme’ is made up of two studies: EU Kids online I and EU Kids online II.

The EU Kids Online I (2006-9) examined available findings from 400 + studies on cultural, contextual and risk issues in children's use of online technologies across 21 countries (LSE 2011). The EU Kids Online II (2009-11) study was a quantitative comparative study of 25 European Countries investigating children’s experiences of online risk by taking national representative samples of 1000 children aged 9-16 years old and their parents (LSE 2011). Key questions from the survey included questions on children's Internet use, digital literacy, coping responses, perceptions and safety practices. These studies aimed to ‘inform policy makers, educators and the public about emerging online trends and possible solutions’ (LSE 2011).

2.8.2 Safety Awareness for Teens (SAFT)

In 2002, the NCTE was involved with the SAFT project. This project aimed to increase awareness of the Internet and the risks associated with it. A comparative study in Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland and Norway was undertaken to gain knowledge on online risk behaviour and information to inform future Internet safety projects. Findings from the study were published in May, 2003. The findings include:
1. Children in Nordic Countries use the Internet more frequently than children in Ireland and have more email accounts.
2. The majority of Irish children (80%) say they have an Internet connection at home and 12 per cent of Irish children claim to use the Internet every day.
3. Chatting on the Internet is less common in Ireland than in the Nordic countries. Only 46 per cent of Irish children say they use chat rooms while 78 per cent of Swedish children engage in online chat.
4. Irish children generally use books when doing homework.
5. Findings revealed that 35 per cent of Irish children believe their homework improves when using the Internet.

In terms of safety:
1. There is a higher level of Internet safety awareness among children in Ireland.
2. Internet education is far more extensive in Ireland compared to the Nordic countries.
3. Girls are more conscious than boys of being contacted by strangers on the Internet when submitting personal information.
4. Irish children visit adult pornographic web sites far less than children from the Nordic countries.
5. Findings showed that 42 per cent of Irish children who visit pornographic websites find them either “cool” or “funny”.
6. Worryingly, 12 per cent of Irish chatroom users have met in person, someone they first chatted with on the Internet.

(NCTE 2003)

2.8.3 Dot.Safe

The Dot.Safe project ‘was a pilot project part-funded by the European Commission and supported by the various education and technology bodies across Europe’ (NCTE 2002). The aim of the project was ‘to equip educators and parents with the information and resources they need to teach children to stay safe online’ (NCTE 2002). The project
which officially ended on 30th June 2002 was the only project ‘focusing on teacher awareness, specifically head teachers, ICT co-ordinators and classroom teachers’ (NCTE 2002). Recommendations that arose from the analysis report (NCTE 2001b) are listed here.

1. The need for continuing work to be carried out on promoting and ensuring Internet safety for students and young people both inside and outside of school.
2. Increased awareness of the exposure of young people to explicit material and of the resources that are available to schools to prevent such incidences will ensure safer Internet use for all.
3. The importance of resources for school management, training and support for teachers and targeting those most in need should guide future developments.

(NCTE 2001)

2.8.4 The Online Children in Education Project (ONCE)

The Online Children in Education project ‘focused on parents and children and developed an interactive web-based education programme detailing Internet safety issues’ (NCTE 2002). The project was funded by the European Commission and co-ordinated and led by the Cyberspace Research Unit at the University of Central Lancashire. ‘Among the outcomes from the project was a database of websites voted both popular and safe by children and parents’ (NCTE 2002).

2.9 Schools and E-safety of Young People

Schools are increasingly recognising the benefits of technology – and particularly Web 2.0 technologies as an essential aspect of productive and creative social learning. They now need to:
Focus on a model of empowerment; equipping children with the skills and knowledge they need, to use technology safely and responsibly, and managing the risks, wherever and whenever they go online.

(Becta 2009)

Schools have a duty to help children and young people remain safe when online, whether that use of the Internet occurs inside or outside of school (Becta 2007a). Schools are ideally placed to embed a core set of e-safety skills from an early age, which will ultimately help protect children as they grow and mature, regardless of how the technology and risks evolve (Becta 2009). A study of O’Connel, Price, and Barrow (2004) in England shows that the school context is considered by children to be the most important place to learn about safe Internet usage (73%). Parents are considered by 72% of the respondents as the next most important information source. Other sources mentioned by the children are: television (37%), the Internet (23%), friends (19%), magazines (12%), radio (17%), and the movies (8%). A study conducted by Webwise in 2006 found 49% of teenagers would prefer to get their Internet safety information from school, rather than from parents (30%) or friends (20%) (Webwise 2006). The most recent EU kids’ online survey II reported that the majority of young people between 9-16 years in Ireland have received some form of mediation by teachers (87%) (O’Neill et al. 2011). According to the report the safety information delivered by teachers tends to be more in terms of rule making (91%) (O’Neill et al. 2011) rather than devoting a class or two to Internet safety practices. Another key finding from the latter survey found that 68% of children say their teachers have suggested ways to use the Internet safely (O’Neill et al. 2011). The study also found that older teenagers in the secondary school cycle received more safety information from their teachers than younger children. The statistic of 68% of children saying their teachers have suggested ways to use the Internet safely is 10% above the European average of 58%, though, in a number of countries where ‘Internet safety is fully embedded in the curriculum, higher figures are reported (the UK is 85% for instance)’ (O’Neill et al. 2011).
The NCTE’s Internet safety strategy for schools in Ireland includes a combined approach of the following actions:

2. Installing filtering.
3. Making students, teachers, and parents aware of the Internet risks and educating them to minimise these risks.

The PIES model for limiting e-safety risks also mirrors the advice of the NCTE. They too recommend a combination of effective policies and practice (AUP), a robust and secure technology infrastructure (filtering and monitoring), and education and training for both children and adults alike.

![Fig 2.1: PIES model for limiting e-safety risks in schools](image)
2.9.1 Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

An Acceptable Use Policy is a document which addresses all rights, privileges, responsibilities and sanctions associated with the Internet (NCTE 2008). Effective AUPs can help to establish, and reinforce, safe and responsible online behaviours. In order to be 'School ready' to be connected to the Schools Broadband Network, schools are required to have an up-to-date Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) governing the acceptable use of the Internet in the school to protect the interests of both pupils and staff (NCTE 2011a). The advice from researchers is that this document should be monitored and reviewed regularly and should be linked to other school policies where appropriate.

The main goals of an AUP as set out by the NCTE are:

- To educate students, parents and teachers about the potential of the Internet as a valuable learning resource
- To define the parameters of behaviour and specify the consequences of violating those parameters
- To identify the school strategy on promoting the safe use of the Internet and address the risks associated with its use
- To provide schools with legal protection from liability

AUPs will differ from school to school according to the schools needs. The best AUP are ones that have been signed by students and parents (Ofsted 2010). If a student or parent fails to sign the AUP then this should be followed up by the school (Ofsted 2010). A wide range of sample AUPs are available from Webwise.ie

A recent study by Sharples, Graber, Harrison, and Logan (2009), raises some doubts about the current school based safe Internet action. It found that in 55% of cases, teachers reported that their school had adopted a safe Internet policy; 3% indicated that no such policy existed, and 42% were not aware of such a policy.
2.9.2 Installing Filtering

Filtering is a term used to describe a way of limiting the content of web pages, emails, chat rooms and other electronic forums to which users may be exposed.

(NCTE 2011a)

It is another key element in the adoption of strategies and solutions to achieve a safe Internet environment for young people (Meeder 2005; Mitchell, Finkelhor & Wolak 2005; Wishart 2004; Valcke et al. 2011). Filter software has become a standard Internet usage feature in schools (Valcke et al. 2011). This is partly attributed to legislation and national projects. In England, the Local Education Authorities (LEA) and the Regional Broadband Consortia (RBC) support schools with a school Internet safety coordinator and the active promotion of filter software (Barrow 2006). Related research shows that this has resulted in 80% of the schools using filter software. Other studies point at a filter software penetration of 97% (Wishart 2005).

In Ireland, schools are not obliged to install filter software, however, an integral part of Irelands ‘Schools Broadband programme’ was the provision of a filtering system to schools (NCTE 2011b). The Filtering service provides Internet filtering which is based on ‘Fortinet’ services. Fortinet maintains and updates a database of over 27 million web sites. The filtering system

- Allows online access to websites or content that have been classified as appropriate for schools
- Blocks viruses from external Internet or email sources being sent to schools
- Blocks other known ‘malware’ such as Trojans or worms from websites or emails
- Blocks SPAM (unsolicited email)

(NCTE 2008)
One challenge encountered by schools with regard to filtering is the blocking of certain websites because of particular words in the title and content. Crook et al. (2008) report teachers being frustrated by filtering systems. Sites with political cartoons and sites with the word Holocaust were blocked (Crook et al. 2008). Sharples et al. (2009) substantiates this finding “A frequently occurring tension is the blocking of Internet sites causing difficulties for legitimate schoolwork”. Web 2.0 sites such as YouTube were blocked in Ireland by Fortinet up until last year. In March 2010, the NCTE updated the Schools Broadband Content Filtering service to allow schools to access more Web 2.0 type websites. New content filtering levels were added to provide more flexibility to schools. In order to change levels, the Principal of the school completed a form, indicating which level they wished their school to be at. Before making the changes schools were advised to first consider the implications that this change would have in the school and consider if this type of change was consistent with its school Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

While filtering systems can be effective tools they are not completely foolproof. Schools are finding that a blocking and banning approach, which merely limits exposure to risk, may no longer be a sustainable approach (Sharples et al. 2009). Sharples, Graber, Harrison and Logan (2009) found that some students can now bypass filtering systems by activating ‘proxy bypass sites’. They gave an example whereby pupils in a girls’ school were using proxy bypass sites to access email and Social Network sites:

They have e-mail and SN sites open for general chat during lessons, but they minimise the window when a teacher moves near.

(Harrison & Logan cited in Sharples et al. 2009)

At home students usually have unrestricted access to Web 2.0 tools. Because of this it is important that schools empower students to use these technologies safely and responsibly.
2.9.3 Student and Teacher Awareness

Education and training are essential for children and staff alike, providing an awareness of e-safety issues and risks, and strategies for dealing with safety risks whilst on the Internet (Becta 2009). It is recommended by Becta (2009) that e-safety education programmes to staff and students should be continuous, providing information about new and emerging technologies as well as those already embedded within the culture of the school, responding to specific incidents and issues as appropriate.

Wishart (2005) reported that 85% of the schools in her study developed a curriculum about safe and adequate Internet usage. However, in Sharples, Graber, Harrison, and Logan (2009) study, they report that teaching students about online safety was uncommon in schools: 42% of the teachers said they never did this, and only 11% did so frequently.

At home, students can access a whole range of services, such as webmail, chat rooms, instant messaging services and social networking sites. There might be minimal supervision by parents, no filtering technology, and a lack of guidelines or sanctions for misuse contrary to school practices. Therefore it is vital that even if schools do not allow the use of a certain technology within the school, that they teach pupils how to behave sensibly and appropriately when using it, and educate them about the risks.

2.10 Parental Involvement

Parents also have a responsibility in ensuring their children are practicing safe and responsible practices when they go online. “Parents and guardians’ have a key role to play in promoting e-safety at home” (Becta 2007a).

The 2009 study ‘E-safety and Web 2.0 for children aged 11–16’ by Sharples, Graber, Harrison, and Logan surveyed 121 parents in addition to students and teachers. It found
that 66% of parents had measures in place to prevent their children from visiting websites which they find inappropriate or unsuitable.

Some of the strategies parents reported having in place in the home to keep their children e-safe included saving instant messenger conversations without a child’s knowledge, password protecting certain websites, locating the computer in a shared area of the home and discussing e-safety with their child (Sharples et al. 2009). Table 2.2 below shows parents’ opinions about their children’s online safety behaviour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'I have measures in place to prevent my child visiting websites I disapprove of.'</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'I believe that my child knows how to create secure passwords.'</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'I think my child would never disclose personal details on the Internet.'</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Parents’ opinions about their children’s online safety behaviour (Sharples et al. 2009)

The EU Kids Online II study (O’Neill et al. 2011) shows Ireland to have the highest overall levels of restrictive mediation, or setting of rules in the home regarding Internet use, for children in Europe. The study reports that the majority of parents (91%) mediate their children’s Internet use in some way. Strategies included staying close or watching (72%) their children’s use of the Internet and talking to their children about their online activity (67%). O’Neill, Grehan & Ólafsson (2011) found that Internet safety advice was first received from a parent (72%). Some of the steps taken by a majority of parents included how to behave towards others online (62%) and talking about and discussing issues that might bother the child (64%) (O’Neill et al. 2011). It is reported that most rules apply to disclosing personal information, where 91% say that they are either not allowed to do this or that restrictions apply (O’Neill et al. 2011).

Findings from studies (Mitchell et al. (2003); Livingstone and Helsper (2008)) show that approximately 33% of all parents use filtering software. The EU Kids Online II (O’Neill et al. 2011) study found that the use of technical tools by Irish parents is relatively
lower in comparison to other parental mediation strategies with roughly a quarter of parents blocking or filtering websites (28%) and/or tracking the websites visited by the children (24%). Research by the European Commission (2008) found that 22% of the parents reported using filtering software. Mitchell, Finkelhor and Wolak, stated that up to 60% of parents had not installed filtering software, indicating possibly that they did not see the need as they trusted their children (Mitchell et al. 2005).

2.11 Conclusion

Few can deny the importance of the Internet and Web 2.0 tools in society and in education. There are risks associated with using these technologies, however, these risks can be managed so that children and their teachers can reap the many benefits. Schools can introduce policies and technology to support them in this effort. However, the most effective way of managing Internet threats is through the education of teachers, students and parents on safe and responsible practices.

Contrary to society’s assumptions about safety, this generation is also capable of self-regulation when kept well-informed about levels of risk.

(Green & Hannon 2007)
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies methodologies used in the study. It begins by presenting a background to the research and it continues by describing the setting where the research was conducted. The research questions are then addressed. Next, methodologies used to conduct research are discussed and the methodologies used in this study are explained. The research instruments employed, sample group used and the limitations of the sample group are then discussed. Finally, methods used in the study to ensure the reliability and validity of the research are referred to and the ethical procedures used by the researcher conducting the study are explained.

3.2 Background to Research

Worldwide Internet use has increased by 444.8% over the last 10 years. (Internet World Stats, accessed 26/3/11). The report of the education minister’s strategic group cite ICT as:

Increasingly at the heart of much that is integral to the social, educational, commercial and industrial life of the Irish people.

(DES 2008)

Alongside the positive educational and social benefits offered by ICT there are, unfortunately some dangers, particularly for young people whilst they engage with the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies. These dangers were referred to and discussed in the literature review. Teachers and schools are bound by a wider duty of care to raise awareness of e-safety issues among young people to ensure that they can fully exploit the extensive benefits of the Internet, safely and effectively.
This study investigates the type of Internet use by teenagers and attempts to gauge to what extent this activity could be considered risky or unsafe. It also examines where students have received Internet safety information from, to date. Teachers’ use of technology is examined and the role in which teachers and the school management play, in ensuring students are e-safety aware is considered.

3.3 Research Setting

The setting for the study is a large mixed post primary school in Dublin. The school has a student body of approximately 850 and a teaching staff of 65. There is a large cross section of teachers of all ages, both male and female, and students come from a variety of backgrounds and socio economic classes.

There is one computer lab equipped with 24 computers. This room is heavily timetabled by Transition Year (TY) students studying ECDL and other TY modules. The Leaving Cert Vocational programme (LCVP) is also timetabled for the computer room. After that, teachers wishing to avail of the computer room for their students must make a booking, if it is free. There is huge demand for access to the computer room as a large number of teaching staff in the study school are very much enthused to use the Internet and other IT applications in their teaching and for students learning. Currently there is one wireless access point; however, a wired network exists throughout the school.

The school has an external computer technician whose varied role involves anything from maintenance, installation, troubleshooting, purchasing equipment and providing support and advice to management and staff. There is an Acceptable Use Policy in place (appendix J) and students have a section in their journals asking parents/guardians to sign if they give permission for their child’s image or work to appear on the school website (appendix K).
This academic year has seen the redevelopment of the school website using ‘Wordpress’. Wordpress is an open source blog publishing application which is allowing for much more interaction of both teachers and students. At present there is a drive for teachers to contribute information, images, lessons etc. on the website to make it more appealing to students. There are also a number of students who have been given permission to enter information on the website.

Recently there has been a roll out of laptops and data projectors. Approximately 30 classrooms have been equipped with such technology and there is an ongoing commitment by management to provide every classroom with a digital projector and every teacher with a laptop before the end of the academic year.

The school would be typical of many other second level schools in Ireland and as a result information gathered would be representative of similar schools.

**3.4 Research Questions**

This study will ask:

1. What is the nature of Internet use by students and teachers in a post primary school?
2. How much do students and teachers know about Internet safety and from where have students received information on safe Internet use to date?
3. Is the school following recommended guidelines on Internet safety strategies?
4. To what extent do the students’ practices and patterns reflect unsafe Internet use?
3.5 Research Methodology

Before selecting a research methodology several research paradigms were investigated. These included action research, the case study, the mixed method approach and quantitative and qualitative research.

The aim of action research is:

to arrive at recommendations for good practice that will tackle a problem or enhance the performance of the organization and individuals through changes to the rules and procedures within which they operate.

(Denscombe 2002)

According to Lewin (1946), action research ‘is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action’. Due to the context of this study and the relatively short time frame, action research was considered impractical.

A case study approach ‘provides an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth’ (Bell 2005). Denscombe (2003) states a case study focuses:

On one (or just a few) instance of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instances.

(Denscombe 2003)

Bell (2005) refers to a case studies’ ability, ‘to combine a wide range of methods’. This is further supported by Denscombe (2003), who points to the strength of the case study approach as allowing:

The researcher to use a variety of sources, a variety of types of data and a variety of research methods as part of the investigation.

(Denscombe 2003)
De Vaus (2002) characterises the case study method as:

> Fully understanding the ‘wholeness’ of a particular case and understanding particular attributes of a person (or an organization or whatever the case is) within the context of the case’s other characteristics and history.

(De Vaus 2002)

The main point of the quantitative research method is that measurement (i.e. questionnaire, empirical analysis) is valid, reliable and can be generalised with its clear anticipation of cause and effect (Cassell & Symon 1994). Numerical data can be collected and analysed relatively quickly. Quantitative data can however be too abstract and general for direct application to specific local situations, contexts and individuals. This is in contrast to qualitative data which is primarily used to identify perceptions and feelings on a topic and to ascertain peoples’ opinions (Linehan and Cadogan 2007).

### 3.5.1 Methodology Chosen

Taking into account the characteristic of the action research and case study methodology, it was decided that the case study research approach was most fitting for the purpose of this study. A mixed methodology approach was applied combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. The use of two or more methods of data collection is referred to as triangulation by Cohen et al. (2005). Triangulation improves the reliability and validity of data by comparing one measurement with that of another measurement (Cohen et al. 2005). It also ensures the authenticity, credibility, validity and robustness of results and could mitigate researcher bias (Denzin 1978; Carter 1990).

### 3.6 Research Instrument

In order to answer the research questions a number of approaches were employed. Initially, two separate online questionnaires were carefully designed, piloted and distributed to the teaching staff and a sample of students. Following on from this, semi
structured interviews where conducted to elicit more specific and detailed information from management and teaching staff. Comments made from teachers concerning students’ safe Internet use were recorded throughout the whole process and ICT documentation in the study school was gathered and reviewed. This study therefore, is a result of data gathered from a variety of sources and thus supports the notion of triangulation.

3.6.1 Online Questionnaire

In this study, questionnaires were designed using the online resource, ‘Survey Monkey’. A separate questionnaire was designed for both teachers and learners. Care was taken when designing the questionnaires to ensure language used was accessible to the target audience and questions were carefully structured to avoid bias or ambiguity. A variety of questions were incorporated, including structured closed questions, open ended questions and questions on a likert and rating scale to ensure a more holistic approach to the topic chosen.

There were a number of benefits to using ‘Survey Monkey’. These include the ability to produce professional looking surveys economically, to distribute them relatively easily and environmentally, the option to program whether, one answer or multiple answers were acceptable in multiple choice questions and the ability to track responses and quicker response times.

Both questionnaires were piloted. Bell (2005) advises that all:

Data gathering instruments... be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear and to enable the researcher to remove any items which do not yield usable data.

(Bell 2005)
The questionnaire should be tried out on a group similar to the one that will form the population of your study.

(Bell 2005)

For the said reasons above, the teachers’ questionnaire was sent to teachers in different post primary schools (n=5) and the students’ questionnaire was piloted on 12 students ranging from 12-18 years in the study school (2 from each year group). Feedback from both groups was received and a number of amendments were made to the questionnaires as a result of information received.

Once the researcher was satisfied with the questionnaires, they where distributed to teachers, by email and to students, through a link which was password protected on the school website. All teaching staff (n=65) were invited to participate through their school email accounts, as the larger the sample size the smaller the sampling error. There was also an announcement made at a staff meeting prior to sending out the surveys detailing to staff the research objective. After two weeks there was a response rate of 54% (n=35). Cohen et al. (2005) recommend a minimum response rate of 30% for statistical analysis, thus the number of participants exceeds the recommended minimum by 24% (Final response rate = 60%, n=39).

3.6.2 Semi Structured Interviews

The interview is a means of evaluating or assessing a person in some respect for the purpose of gathering data (Cohen et al. 2005). Interviews can take on different formats. Structured interviews have a definite set of questions prepared prior to the interview. This format is useful:

when the researcher is aware of what she does not know and therefore is in a position to frame questions that will supply the knowledge required…

Semi structured and unstructured interviews do not have a predefined list of interview questions, however, semi structured interviews can provide the interviewee with a guide containing a list of issues to be addressed (appendix H). The list allows flexibility and helps to increase comparability of responses.

In this study, semi structured interviews were used to gather more detailed information from management and teachers. A purposive sample was chosen to get the views and opinions from all ICT teaching staff (n=3), other subject teachers (n=3) and a member of management (n=1) on students Internet safety in the school.

3.6.3 Comments Made by Teachers

During the academic year the researcher had a number of conversations about her study with members of the teaching staff. During these conversations a wide amount of comments and opinions were expressed by these individuals (appendix I). The researcher asked the teachers in question whether they would mind being quoted in her study. All contributors were assured anonymity and confidentiality. Every person agreed and their comments were carefully recorded in a notebook to which the researcher referred during the study.

3.6.4 Examination of Documentation

Primary source documentation was sought and studied by the researcher from the study school. This documentation included the Acceptable Use Policy (appendix J) and the consent form issued to parents asking for their consent for their child’s work/images to be included on the school website or in school publications (appendix K).
3.7 Sample Group

In this study the sampling frame was management, the teaching staff and students. The researcher selected a school in which she was familiar with both staff and students. This proved both convenient and practical and allowed for a large response rate. The sample was manageable and realistic to administer given the time constraints of the study.

As detailed above, all teachers were given the option to voluntarily complete the online questionnaire as administered by email. There is a total of 65 teaching staff excluding and 39 members of staff participated.

Management and a purposive sample of teachers were interviewed for their views on Internet safety issues affecting students, on how the school can best ensure all teachers and students are familiar with safe Internet practices and how the school can ensure it safeguards its students whilst online.

The student population in the study school is approximately 850 students. It was deemed impracticable to survey all and so a simple random sample, representative of the student population was selected. The sample included students from first through to sixth year of mixed ability, gender and socio economic backgrounds. 20 students from each year group were asked to complete the questionnaire. The students were accompanied to the computer room by the researcher and this ensured that the respondents could query or verify anything as they progressed through the questionnaire. Once a year group had completed the survey the researcher closed the link. When the next form group was ready to take the survey, a new link with a new password was uploaded. This allowed the researcher to control access to the survey and ensure reliability and authenticity of data.
3.8 Limitations of Sample Group

The study was a small scale study and limited in what it could achieve. Whilst it would have been desirable to conduct the research over a longer period or on a larger scale the researcher was constrained by time. That withstanding, the subject school is typical of any large public second-level school in the country (DES 2011) and it would be reasonable to assume that results obtained from the study school would be similar to other post-primary schools in Ireland, had the research been conducted there. The researcher chose a sample group of students which she felt was representative of the population of students and all teachers were given the opportunity to contribute to the teacher questionnaire.

3.9 Reliability and Validity of Research

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the study a number of strategies were adopted. Triangulation methods mentioned above, were used, applying qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data thus improving reliability and validity.

Questionnaires were designed carefully, eliminating any ambiguity and bias and these were piloted before distribution to ensure reliability. During the interviewing process the researcher was careful to be subjective and conduct the interview according to good practices outlined by Bell (2005). Careful consideration was taken when choosing the sample group and sample size of students to undertake the student questionnaire. The group selected encompassed students from first to sixth year in their form group classes. Form groups in the study school are of mixed ability and a form class can have 24-30 pupils. As there are 24 computers in the computer lab in the study school, it was decided that the first 20 on the roll, that had returned their permission form (appendix B) and were present on the day would participate in the study. This had a number of benefits including, ensuring that there were enough computers for students to access the
survey, allowing for any malfunction of computer hardware, ensuring that there was a balanced response from each year group and allowing for any absenteeism.

### 3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were considered and implemented throughout all stages of the research. Initially, before the objectives of the study were finalised, the researcher outlined the purpose of the study to the Principal of the study school. The practical benefits to the school were discussed and permission to conduct the study in the school was sought and granted (appendix A).

Following on from this, there was a staff meeting in January where the researcher explained to all staff that she was conducting a piece of research on Internet safety of students and their help was required by answering a simple online survey. Staff were informed that the survey was anonymous and research findings would be made available to all who wished to view them in the near future. An explanatory email was then sent to staff at the start of March, which contained a link to the online survey (appendix C).

Written consent from parents of students taking part in the study was also sought (appendix B). This is an important step when conducting research with students (Borg & Gall 1983), as the researcher is obliged to protect the participant from risk (Wiersma 2000). Letters were sent to parents of students from each year, from first through to sixth year. The process was explained to students taking part in the study and they were also informed that the questionnaire was confidential and anonymous.
Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the author’s research. The primary research tools used to gather the data included:

- Questionnaires distributed to all teaching staff (Appendix D)
- Questionnaires distributed to 120 pupils (Appendix E)
- A series of semi structured interviews conducted with management, ICT teachers (n=3), and a number of other teaching staff (n=3) (Appendix H, semi structured interview questions, (Guide))
- Comments made from teachers during the year (Appendix I)
- Review of documentation including the AUP (Appendix J) and school publication and website permission form (Appendix K)

This section begins by providing information on the profile of respondents. It then proceeds to exhibit findings from all research instruments per research question.

4.2 Profile of Respondents

4.2.1 Profile of Students

There are 850 students attending the subject school. A total of 120 participants were selected to complete the student online survey. This comprised of 20 students from each year group. A gender breakdown of respondents indicates that 53.8% are male and 46.2% are female. Of those surveyed, 50% of the participants were from junior cycle (1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} year) and 50% from senior cycle (4\textsuperscript{th}, 5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} year) (appendix G, p2).
Almost all participants surveyed (fig. 4.1) have access to either or both a PC and Laptop. Only 1.7% (n=2) of students reported not having access to a PC or Laptop in their home.

Figure 4.1: Students access to a PC or Laptop at home
4.2.2 Profile of Teachers

The teachers survey was sent to all teaching staff (n=65). Of the 65 teaching staff, 39 participated in the survey. This comprised of 26 females and 10 males. There were 3 non respondents to this question. Just over 33% of respondents have been teaching for 11-20 years, 25% for 1-5, 25% for 6-10 years, 11.1% for 21-30 years and 5.6% for 31 years or more (appendix F, p2).

Figure 4.2 below shows that responses were received from a wide cross section of subject teachers in the school.
4.3 Findings by Research Question

4.3.1 What is the nature of Internet use by students and teachers in a Post Primary school?

4.3.1.1. Internet Use by Students

Figure 4.3 indicates that 81.4% (n=70) of students have accessed the Internet through a mobile phone and 50% (n=43) have accessed the Internet through a games console. A number of students did not respond to this question (n=34, appendix G, q4, p3). This would signify that they have never accessed the Internet through one of these mediums of technology.

![Bar Chart]

Figure 4.3: Students that use a mobile phone or games console to access the Internet
Figure 4.4 (appendix G, q5, p4) depicts that 80.7% of students access the Internet from home everyday and 98.3% of students access the Internet from home once a week or more. It also shows that 35.1% of students access the Internet in school less than once a month, 31.9% never access the Internet in school, while 20.2% of students access the Internet in school a couple of times a week. The highest response rate of 84% indicated that students never use a library to access the Internet.

Figure 4.4: Location and frequency of students use of the Internet
It is quite clear from figure 4.5 that the most popular activity students engage with online are social networking sites e.g. Facebook and Bebo (77.1% (n=91) most days).

Young people are obsessed with Facebook these days. I hear them talk about it in school all the time. My own daughter spends hours on it in the evening.

(Teacher comment)

Viewing videos (40.7% (n=48) most days) is the next most popular activity students engaged with, followed closely by downloading music (with 36.9% (n=41)). Students indicated that they rarely (n=11) or never (n=81) specifically use chat rooms.

Figure 4.5: What is the nature of students Internet use?
Figure 4.6 below displays that, if students require information for their homework the majority of students (66%) would generally use the Internet to find it. The rest of the students (34%) would use books from school (30%), home (3%) and the library (1%).

Figure 4.6: Do students use the Internet for homework?
4.3.1.2 Internet Use by Teachers

When teachers were asked how often they use a computer, 97.4% (n=38) responded that they use a computer at home on a daily basis and 86.8% (n=33) used a computer in school daily. All respondents use a computer once a week or more (fig. 4.7).

![Figure 4.7: Teachers use of computers](image)

**Figure 4.7**: Teachers use of computers
Teachers use a variety of tools in their teaching including the Internet (100%, n=39), MS Word (94.9%, n=37), MS PowerPoint (79.5%, n=31), MS Excel (25.6%, n=10) and subject specific software (28.2%, n=11) (fig. 4.8).

**Figure 4.8:** Teachers use of computers in teaching and learning

Other responses are listed in table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other (please specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My own subject website linked to school website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerpoint websites (authorstream)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dedicated teaching sites = TES, onestopenglish, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>google maps, google earth, google sites website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.1:** Other responses listed by teachers on their use of computers in teaching and learning
Figure 4.9 indicates the nature of Internet use by teachers in the school. Search engines (94.7%, n=36) and You Tube (89.5%, n=34) are the two most popular uses of the Internet. Other uses by teachers in school include email (65.8%, n=25), wikis (18.4%, n=7), blogs (10.5%, n=4) and webquests (5.3%, n=2). The survey found teachers do not use social networking sites in teaching and learning. One teacher commented:

I use Facebook quite a bit at home to stay in touch with family and friends but I’m not sure how I could use Facebook in my teaching.

(Teacher comment)

Another teacher revealed that she has “a Facebook account to keep up to date with what might be going on outside of school”. A teacher of development education said:

I would like to use Facebook in class with students, to communicate with students from our partner school in Ghana, however, Facebook is blocked in the school.

(Teacher comment)
Teachers were asked how they use the Internet in their free time (fig. 4.10). Results were similar to how they use the Internet in teaching and learning with one significant difference: nearly half (47.4%, n=18) of teachers indicated that they access social networking sites such as Facebook/Bebo in their free time, compared with 0% using it in their teaching and learning (fig. 4.9, p58).

Figure 4.10: Teachers use of the Internet in their free time
4.3.2 How much do students and teachers know about Internet safety and from where have students received information on safe Internet use to date?

Figure 4.11 shows that 52.9% (n=63) of students feel they know a great deal about the Internet, 44.5% (n=53) feel they know a fair bit about the Internet and 2.5% (n=3) feel they know very little about the Internet. The majority of students think teachers (72%, n=85) and their parents/guardians (50.8%, n=60) know a fair bit about the Internet. Teachers’ Internet knowledge fares generally well according to students, however, 4 students think their parents know nothing about the Internet.

Figure 4.11: Students opinions on their own level of Internet knowledge as well as their opinions on their teachers and parents knowledge
An examination of figure 4.12 displays that 71.8% of teachers feel they have a good or satisfactory knowledge of Internet safety. This is consistent with responses from interviews conducted by the researcher. One teacher commented; “I feel I know quite a bit about safety issues on the Internet” (Teacher comment). Only 15.4% of teachers say they have a poor knowledge of Internet safety (fig 4.12). This result is quite similar to students’ views that teachers know very little about the Internet (15.3%, fig 4.11). A number of teachers commented that they would benefit from training on safe Internet use.

I would like training in school on what exactly we should be making students aware of when they are on the Internet and a list of do’s/ don’ts.

The Internet is evolving and changing all the time. We should be given some training on safe Internet use.

(Teacher comments)

All three IT teachers indicated that they think there should be some sort of training provided to staff on e-safety issues (Semi structured interview 1, 2, 3).

![Teachers Internet safety knowledge](image)

**Figure 4.12:** How do teachers rank their own Internet safety knowledge?
Students report receiving their Internet safety knowledge from a variety of places (fig. 4.13, p63). School is the most popular place to receive safety information (50.4%, n=59) (fig. 4.13). All ICT teachers interviewed said they provide Internet safety training in their computer classes; however, fourth year students are the only year group that receive computer classes specifically (ECDL). There is also a development education module for fourth years which requires computer access and is timetabled. Junior cycle students (1st, 2nd, 3rd) are not timetabled for using the computer room at all unless a particular subject teacher books them in. Likewise there are few opportunities for senior cycle students to use the computer facilities in the school due to minimal resources and a heavily timetabled computer room. The LCVP students are timetabled but again the rest of senior cycle computer room access is dependent on subject teachers scheduling a time to take a class to the computer room.

The next most likely place students receive Internet safety knowledge after school is from a parent (fig 4.13). 48.7% (n=57) of students report getting their Internet safety information from their mother and 40.2% (n=47) report receiving information from their father. Other sources of information include the Internet (29.1%, n=34), the TV (28.2%, n=33), a magazine (24.8%, n=29) or a friend (22.2%, n=26) (fig 4.13).

Figure 4.13 indicates that 14.5% (n=17) of students reported that they have not received any Internet safety information from any source.
Figure 4.13: Sources of Internet safety information to students
A more detailed breakdown of where students have received Internet safety information in school is shown in figure 4.14 below. These include various school subjects (23.1%) including civil social political education (CSPE), SPHE (social personal health education), ECDL (European computer driving license), computer studies and religion class (appendix G, p8). Form class, school assemblies and letters home are also important sources of Internet safety information in school. A number of form teachers interviewed, concurred that they have provided Internet safety information in form time.

**Figure 4.14: Source of student Internet safety information in school**
The researcher looked at the number of junior and senior cycle students reporting that they had not received safety information from school. Figure 4.15 shows that the number of junior cycle students (52%) and senior cycle students (48%) not receiving any Internet safety information in school is very similar.

**Figure 4.15**: Comparison between junior and senior cycle students who have not received any Internet safety information from school
When students were asked from what source they would most like to get their Internet safety information from, most students said through a parent 32.2% (n=37), followed by 23.5% (n=27) saying they would like to receive this information from school (fig. 4.16). Slightly over 15% of students do not know who/where they would like to get Internet safety information from. Other responses include receiving safety information from the Internet (8.7%, n=10), TV (7.8%, n=9), magazines/books or a friend (4.3%, n=5) and the radio or another place not indicated (1.7%, n=2).

Figure 4.16: Source from which students would most like to get their Internet safety information
The majority of teachers agree that teachers and parents are responsible for teaching students safe and responsible Internet practices and uses (97.4%, n=38). This is clearly shown in figure 4.17. One teacher stated “Teachers and parents most definitely have a role in ensuring students Internet safety” (Teacher comment). This comment is supported by management (semi structured interview 7) and a number of other teachers interviewed.

Another teacher commented, “Parents also need to sit down with their children and explain the dangers of the Internet” (Teacher comment). A different teacher stated, “Their parents are responsible for setting rules and boundaries at home” (Teacher comment).

![Figure 4.17](image)

**Figure 4.17:** Where do teachers feel students should receive Internet safety education from?
It appears parents are setting down strict rules to their children for accessing the Internet at home (fig. 4.18). Over 68% (n=81) of students have been told by their parents not to meet someone they have befriended online and 59% (n=70) of students are told not to give out personal information on the Internet. Other rules include, not to visit certain sites, rules about how much time they spend on the Internet, buying items online, not to insult others whilst online and rules about downloading software or music and videos. Nearly 18% (n=21) of students reported not having to abide by any Internet rules at home.

Figure 4.18: What Internet safety rules are enforced at home?
4.3.3 Is the school following recommended guidelines on Internet safety strategies?

Many students are unaware of the schools safe Internet use procedures (43.4%, n=49) (fig. 4.19). This is in line with teachers views that students know very little about these rules and procedures (Interview 4, 5 and comments). “I don’t think students are aware of Internet safety procedures in the school” (Teacher comment). Just under 29% (28.3%, n=32) of students stated they are aware of their school’s Internet safety procedures and an equal number of students reported that they are somewhat conscious of their school’s Internet safety procedures.

Figure 4.19: Students familiarity with their schools safe Internet use procedures
Figure 4.20 (p71) reveals that 64.1% (n=25) of teachers are aware that there is an AUP for use of computers in the school; however, 71.8% (n=28) of teachers say they are not familiar with its contents: “What sort of information is contained in the Acceptable Use Policy?” (Teacher comment). All teachers interviewed including all ICT teachers did not know where to access the AUP. One teacher interviewed stated:

I suppose I have my own set of rules for use in the computer room and I am confident in e-safety issues so I never had a need to access it. If there was a need for it I would just ask management where I would find it.

(Teacher comment)

Another teacher interviewed said that she was aware:

There is an AUP, however, I am unfamiliar with the contents; in fact I don’t even know where I could find it from.

(Teacher Interview)

This teacher feels “staff need to be involved in drawing up the policy, in particular ICT staff”. She also feels ‘parents and students’ should be ‘involved in some way too’. Other teachers felt that all teaching staff should also be given a copy of the AUP (Semi Structured Interviews 1,2,3,4 and 5, Teacher comments).

Most teachers also sense students are unaware of the AUP contents (59%, n=23) (fig. 4.20). One teacher’s blunt but honest comment regarding students’ familiarity with the AUP was, “Are students aware of the AUP? I’d doubt it! Teachers don’t even know where to access it from” (Teacher comment).

Figure 4.20 also displays whether or not teachers in the study school have contributed to the website to date. Over half have not or are unsure. There is some nervousness amongst staff to contribute students work or images to the website as discovered through comments and interviews by teachers. One teacher stated, “I wouldn’t put any work or images of students on the website, it’s just too risky” (Teacher comment). A teacher that contributes regularly to the school website actually stated that he “Didn’t realise you
could not identify any individuals on images that you put up on the school website” (Teacher comment).

**Figure 4.20:** Teachers awareness and familiarity with the AUP and also their contribution to the school website
When students were asked whether they ever bypassed the school’s filtering systems to access restricted web pages, 50.8% (n=60) of students indicated they had not, however, 33.1% (n=39) of students admitted to bypassing the system (fig. 4.21). In addition, 16.1% (n=19) are unsure as to whether they have bypassed it. Table 4.2 (p86) shows that 70.3% of teachers ranked students accessing inappropriate material as their highest concern and 44.4% are most worried about students interfering with filtering systems. Teachers have witnessed students bypassing the filtering systems in the school (Semi Structured Interviews 1, 2 and Teacher comments). “You would need eyes in the back of your head in that computer room” (Teacher comment). “Most students are bypassing the systems to go onto Facebook” (Teacher comment).

One teacher quite honestly stated that she has bypassed the filtering systems in place in the school. “I myself have bypassed filtering systems to go onto perfectly appropriate sites, which are blocked in the school”.

Figure 4.21: Do students bypass school filtering systems?
Other teachers talked of the frustration they had experienced when they found educational sites blocked. “I use You Tube a lot in my subject, but up until last year this was blocked in the school.”

Surprisingly the ICT teachers interviewed are not too concerned about students accessing inappropriate material. One ICT teacher remarked that he is “not concerned about students accessing inappropriate material in school as they know” that he monitors “their actions and they would not want” him “to catch them doing so”. He feels that “students are also fully aware of” his “rules and the consequences of breaching these rules” (Semi Structured Interview 1).
4.3.4 To what extent do the students’ practices and patterns reflect unsafe Internet use?

Students’ PCs are located in a family room for nearly three quarters (71.7%) of those students surveyed in the figure below (fig. 4.22). These rooms included the kitchen (15.1%), the living room (37.7%) and the study (18.9%). The remaining 28.3% of students’ PCs are located in a bedroom.

Figure 4.22: The location of students PCs
As figure 4.23 demonstrates, 81% of students always or usually chat in a closed group and 14.7% of students never chat online. The figure also reveals that 4.3% always chat in an open group. It is important to note that when the author refers to ‘chatting’ in figure 4.23 (below) and figure 4.24 (p76), it is not exclusive to chat rooms but also includes chatting on SN sites, Instant Messenger, email etc.

![Pie chart showing chat habits](image)

**Figure 4.23: Do students tend to chat in open or closed groups?**

A teacher told the researcher of how she had overheard a conversation amongst a number of fourth year students concerning the use of chatroulette. “Chatroulette is a website that pairs random strangers from around the world together for webcam-based conversations”. (Wikipedia, access 11/4/11).

I heard students talking about a new website called ‘Chatroulette’. When I quizzed them as to what it was they got slightly embarrassed. Some started laughing. The response I got from one of the girls was ‘It’s disgusting Ms. There are lots of perv’s on it. Lots of naked men ……, you should just go on to it and check it out!!’

(Teacher comment)
When students were asked if they know personally everyone they chat to online, 45.7% (n=53) of students reported knowing everyone they chat with personally (fig. 4.24) and 43.1% (n=50) know most people they chat with. A mere 1.7% (n=2) of students chat with strangers all the time and 9.5% (n=11) reported that they do not chat online.

**Figure 4.24**: Do students know everyone they chat with online personally?
An examination of figure 4.25 shows that 80.9% (n=89) of students have not given out personal information to someone they have met online. The remaining 19.1% (n=21) of students have given out personal information to someone they have met on the Internet. Teachers are most concerned about students providing personal information online (ranked third in overall concerns at 54.1%) (table 4.2, p86). A number of teachers expressed real concern regarding the amount of personal information young people tend to put up online. The vice principal talked about one incident where a student put on Facebook details of a party at his house whilst his parents were away for the night. He supplied his home address online. This resulted in large numbers arriving at his home including a number of strangers. Things could have really got out of control had the neighbours not called the guards after they suspected something amiss.

Figure 4.25: Do students tend to provide personal information on the Internet?
When students were asked if they ever felt vulnerable while online, 9.4% (n=11) felt threatened, 16.2% (n=19) felt harassed, 17.1% (n=20) felt upset, 23.9% (n=28) felt embarrassed, 24.8% (n=29) felt bothered and 53% (n=62) of students reported never feeling any of the above (fig. 4.26). Becta (2007a) attributes students feeling upset, embarrassed or afraid to the serious issue of cyber bullying.

![Bar chart showing feelings of vulnerability](image)

**Figure 4.26**: Have students ever felt vulnerable whilst on the Internet?

Table 4.2 (p86) shows that 71.8% of teachers surveyed felt that cyber bullying was the most important safety issue concerning students’ safe use of the Internet. Two form teachers discussed having dealt with cyber bullying issues, one via Facebook and another through text messages. In both cases nasty comments had been made about the victims and these comments had caused great upset and embarrassment. Luckily both individuals reported the incident to their form teachers and the issue was dealt with in school.
Europe’s Information Society (2011) refers to the circulation of content which would be distressing or hurtful to a child as ‘cyber bullying’. Figure 4.27 reveals that 42.5% (n=48) of students have received unwanted comments whilst online while 57.5% (n=65) have not received unwanted comments.

Figure 4.27: Have students ever received unwanted comments whilst on the Internet
A higher number of females 58% (n=28) have received unwanted comments in comparison to 42% (n=20) of males as shown in figure 4.28.

**Figure 4.28**: *Comparison between male and female students receiving unwanted comments online*
Students are most likely to confide in a friend (48.6%, n=36) rather than a parent (13.5% n=10) or teacher (2.7%, n=2) when they had received unwanted comments (fig. 4.29). Significantly, 47.3% (n=35) of students reported that they had not confided in anyone that they had received unwanted comments.

Figure 4.29: Who do students tend to tell when they receive unwanted comments online?
Girls are most likely to tell a friend (63.9%, n=23) whilst boys are most likely not to tell anyone they received unwanted comments (62.2%, n=23) (fig. 4.30).

Figure 4.30: *Comparison between male and female students regarding whom they would tell*
Almost half of students (48.7%, n=56) have never met with someone they have encountered on line whilst 10.4% (n=12) have met a stranger in person (fig. 4.31). Figure 4.31 also shows that 7% (n=8) of students have emailed a person they have met online, 5.2% (n=6) have phoned a person they have encountered on the Internet and 35.7% (n=41) of students have never made contact with someone they have met on the Internet.

**Figure 4.31:** Do students tend to make contact with someone they have met over the Internet?
The responses to whether students ‘have ever made contact with someone’ they ‘met on the Internet’ were split into male and female replies. Figure 4.32 below indicates that male and female results were quite similar across the board.

**Figure 4.32**: Comparison between male and female students and whether they tend to make contact with someone they have met over the Internet.
The figure 4.33 below demonstrates that most students feel there are risks whilst surfing the Internet (90.6%, n=106).

Figure 4.33: Do students think there are risks when using the Internet?
Teachers’ perceptions to an array of safety issues concerning students’ safe use of the Internet was sought in table 4.2. They were asked to rank them on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important. Most teachers ranked cyber bullying as the most important issue (71.8%), followed closely by students accessing inappropriate material (70.3%). Over half of teachers felt a pupil giving out personal information was a real safety concern. Table 4.2 also reveals other safety worries teachers ranked highest including ensuring safe Internet access at school (45.9%) and at home (43.8%), students ability to interfere with filtering systems (44.4%) and students’ use of chat rooms (36.1%).
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study by looking at each research question posed by the author:

1. What is the nature of Internet use by students and teachers in a post primary school?
2. How much do students and teachers know about Internet safety and from where have students received information on safe Internet use to date?
3. Is the school following recommended guidelines on Internet safety strategies?
4. To what extent do the students’ practices and patterns reflect unsafe Internet use?

It explores how the research obtained relates to existing data in this area by considering the literature review in context with the findings.

5.2 Discussion of Research Findings

5.2.1 What is the nature of Internet use by students and teachers in a post primary school?

Previous literature on the nature of Internet use by students found that:

Young people are enthusiastic and frequent participants of Web 2.0 and much informal learning is taking place through Web 2.0 interactive social networking sites.

(Gee 2003 and Williams & Facer 2003 cited in Becta 2007b)

This study found that four fifths of students access the Internet from home everyday and 98.3% of students access the Internet from home once a week or more (fig. 4.4).
Students are increasingly mobile; accessing the Internet through mobile phone technology (81.4%) and games consoles (50%) (fig. 4.3).

These findings are very similar to findings from the recent study conducted by O Neill et al (2011). O Neill et al. (2011) reported in the EU Kids Online II study that 92% of 9-16 year old users go online at least weekly and 57% go online everyday or almost every day. They also reported that the majority of Irish children access the Internet via a personal computer (64%) or shared Laptop (51%) and accessing the Internet via mobile phone or games console are the next most common (46% and 44%) ways for Irish children to access the Internet.

The most popular activity conducted by students in this study was social networking (77.1%) (fig. 4.5). This statistic is 19.1% higher than the figure reported by O Neill et al. (2011) (58%). The difference might be attributed to the fact that the EU Kids Online II study included young children from the age of 9 up to 16. It is a policy of Facebook that users should be no younger than 13 years to register. As this study was conducted with students between 12-18 years one can see why there might be a higher proportion of adolescents accessing SN sites in comparison to the latter study.

Other popular activities that students are involved in include:

1. Accessing and viewing videos.
2. Downloading music.
5. Using the Internet for homework.

These findings show that students are indeed ‘digital natives’ as described by Byron (2007). They are comfortable with technology and use it regularly for a wide variety of activities.
In contrast to the large number of students accessing the Internet at home on a weekly and daily basis, this study also found that 35.1% of students access the Internet in school less than once a month and 31.9% never access the Internet in school (fig. 4.4). Figure 4.4 also revealed that 20.2% of students access the Internet in school a couple of times a week and 3.2% on a daily basis. This may be due to the significant demand being placed on the one computer lab available for a student body of 850 students. The issue of providing ‘more funding, new equipment and computers’ was cited in the study conducted by the National Policy Development Committee (NPADC) in 2000 to assess the implementation of IT 2000. Minister Hanafin in 2007 allocated €252 million for investment in ICT in education over a 6-year period (McGarr 2008). The aims were to:

1. Develop an e-Learning culture in schools that will ensure that ICT usage is embedded in teaching and learning across the curriculum.
2. Address teacher professional development, the maintenance of a national broadband network for schools and technical maintenance and support requirements.
3. Upgrade and renew hardware.
4. Provide software and digital content for learning.

(Hanafin cited in DES 2007)

This study showed that whilst there has been a recent drive to ensure that ICT usage is embedded in teaching and learning through the investment in the provision of digital projectors and laptops for classrooms and teachers, the study school is still lacking the necessary hardware to ensure all students can access computers.

Teachers in this study were found to be frequent users of computers both at home (97.4%) and in their work at school (86.8%) (fig. 4.7). In school they use a number of software applications like MS Word, PowerPoint and Excel and subject specific software (fig. 4.8), however, they are also using the Internet to search for information, email and view and download You Tube video clips (fig. 4.9). A very small number of
teachers are using wikis, blogs and webquests (fig. 4.9). This finding shows that whilst teachers have mastered certain technologies they are not familiar with a range of others i.e. Blogs and Wikis. This might indicate a need for more teacher training with a focus on the pedagogical use of Web 2.0 in the classroom.

Another interesting finding is the large number of teachers using ‘YouTube’ in their teaching (fig. 4.9) considering this was blocked by Fortinet up until the NCTE updated the Schools Broadband Content Filtering service to allow schools to access more Web 2.0 type websites (refer to literature review 2.9.2). Findings from this study also revealed that teachers do not use social networking sites in teaching and learning, however, a number of teachers have social network profiles and access SN sites at home. The blocking of social networking sites in schools may be a contributory factor to teachers not using SN sites in their teaching; however, there are other possible reasons for teachers not using these sites. These might include reluctance by teachers to access these sites in schools for fear of e-safety issues arising or they may lack the appropriate training on how to adequately apply them with a pedagogical view in mind. Indeed this study found that there was a desire expressed by one teacher to use Facebook in communicating with a partner school, however, another teacher suggested that there was a need for training on how to properly integrate Facebook into teaching and learning: ‘I’m not sure how I could use Facebook in my teaching’ (Teacher comment).

5.2.2 How much do students and teachers know about Internet safety and from where have students received information on safe Internet use to date?

The findings above show that young people are using the Internet and collaborative Web 2.0 tools more frequently. The majority of students are confident using the Internet with only a small percentage of students (2.5%) indicating that they know very little about the Internet (fig. 4.11). Minister Hanafin (2008) supports this view when she writes:
The children of today have been born into this age of technology and they are generally very comfortable and capable users.

(Hanafin 2008)

The increased use of technology by young people presents some risks that teenagers and indeed teachers and parents need to be aware of. These dangers are referred to in the literature review (Section 2.5). Livingstone (2001) calls for a ‘holistic approach whereby schools, communities and homes are all involved in safe Internet use’ (Livingstone 2001). The majority of teachers (97.4%) surveyed in this study support this view (fig. 4.17).

Schools have a duty of care and must ensure that they are able to safeguard young people and staff (Becta 2009). This study revealed that school is a common place for students to receive safety information (50.4%) (fig. 4.13) and students are mainly receiving safety knowledge from teachers of subjects with an ICT content (fig. 4.14) (ECDL and computer studies) or from SPHE and CSPE classes (SPHE is where the new Internet safety programme was introduced in 2007). It also found that students are generally confident in their teachers’ knowledge on the Internet (72%) (fig. 4.11).

The EU Kids Online Study found that 68% of children surveyed reported having received information regarding safe Internet usage in school. This is somewhat higher than the findings from this study. O’Connel, Price, and Barrow (2004) also found that the school context is considered by children to be the most important place to learn about safe Internet usage (73%). The figure of 50.4% of students receiving safety information from school is 22.6% lower than the latter study. This might indicate that the school in question may need to adopt a more active role in this context. Indeed findings from this study showed that teaching e-safety skills was not integrated throughout the curriculum. In contrast to the two previous studies mentioned, Sharples et al. (2009), reported that teaching students about online safety was uncommon in schools: 42% of the teachers said they never did this, and only 11% did so frequently.
A number of teachers interviewed indicated that safety information is for the most part conveyed through rules set in the computer room (Semi Structured Interview 1, 3). This is similar with a finding by O Neill et al. (2011) that reported most safety information is in terms of rule making (91%) (O Neill et al. 2011). A number of teachers in this study reported that there is a need for more training of staff on Safe Internet Use (interview/comments). Indeed 15.4% of teachers say they have a poor knowledge of safe Internet use (fig. 4.12). This result is quite similar to students’ views that teachers know very little about the Internet (15.3%) (fig. 4.11). Byron (2007) called for the education of teachers and parents on safe Internet use so that ‘they are confident to advise young people on safe practices online’. Becta (2009) advises that e-safety education programmes to staff and students should be continuous, providing information about new and emerging technologies as well as those already embedded within the culture of the school, and responding to specific incidents and issues as appropriate. A key recommendation of the Dot.Safe project (NCTE 2001b) also called for more training and support of teaching staff in the area of Internet safety. Findings from this study concur with Byron (2007), Becta (2009) and the NCTE (2001b) where ICT staff and other teachers are calling for more e-safety training.

I would like training in school on what exactly we should be making students aware of when they are on the Internet and a list of do’s/ don’ts.

(Teacher comment)

The Internet is evolving and changing all the time. We should be given some training on safe Internet use.

(Teacher comment)

This study revealed that a large number of students have received Internet safety knowledge from a parent (fig. 4.13). Students reported getting their Internet safety information from both their mother (48.7%) and father (40.2%). It also found that approximately half of students surveyed felt their parents (50.8%) know a fair bit about the Internet (fig. 4.11). This is similar to O’Neill et al’s (2011) finding that Internet safety advice was first received from a parent (72%). O’ Connel, Price, and Barrow (2004) also reported parents as the next most important source of information (72%).
Other sources mentioned by students in this study are similar to the previous study of O’Connel et al. (2004).

A slightly worrying finding from the research is the number of students not receiving Internet safety information from any source (14.5%, fig 4.13) and not receiving any Internet safety information from school (34.3%, fig. 4.14). Figure 4.15 showed the split of junior cycle and senior cycle students reporting that they have not received any Internet safety information from school. The statistics are quite similar for both cycles (52% of juniors and 48% of seniors). The number of juniors not receiving e-safety training may be attributed to them not having encountered it in their SPHE lessons yet or not having the opportunity to participate in computer modules which mainly occur in Transition year. The number of senior cycle students not receiving Internet safety information is more concerning because even if students haven’t studied a computer based module they should all have received some sort of Internet safety training in their SPHE class.

When students were asked from what source they would most like to get their Internet safety information from, 32.2% said through a parent and 23.5% said they would like to receive this information from school (fig. 4.16). This is in contrast to a study conducted by ‘Webwise’ in 2006 which found 49% of teenagers would prefer to get their Internet safety information from school, rather than parents (30%) or friends (20%). One can see how vital it is that parents in conjunction with teachers are involved in educating their children on safe Internet use and alerting them to potential dangers when they go online. Margie Roe (2010), the national childline manager for the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children affirms this belief and advises parents to educate themselves about the Internet. She encourages parents to open channels of communication to their children regarding their use of the Internet and their experiences whilst online:

The most important advice for parents is for them to educate themselves about online activity and be open with their children about the Internet and share the experience with them.
This is further substantiated by Becta (2009):

> With an increased focus on home access and parental engagement, using online tools, education and training will also be important for parents and carers.

(Becta 2009)

Findings from this study show that most parents are setting rules for Internet use at home. The results are shown in figure 4.18. Rules being set are similar to findings from studies conducted by Sharples et al. (2009) and O’Neill et al. (2011). Results showed that 17.8% of students do not have to abide by any Internet rules at home.

### 5.2.3 Is the school following recommended guidelines on Internet safety strategies?

The NCTE’s Internet safety strategy for schools in Ireland and the PIES model for limiting e-safety risks, recommend creating an AUP, a secure technology infrastructure by way of filtering and monitoring and providing the education and training for both children and adults alike on how to minimise risks online. The second research question has already attempted to deal with education and training for both students and teachers. In this section the researcher will endeavour to address further whether the school is following recommended Internet safety strategies by looking at the AUP and filtering systems in the school.

#### 5.2.3.1 Acceptable Use Policy

This study found that the study school had an up to date AUP in place governing the acceptable use of the Internet in the school to protect both pupils and staff.

>The aim of the AUP is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school’s Internet resources in a safe and effective manner.

(AUP from study school 2010)
The AUP defined the parameters of behaviour under headings of General, World Wide Web, Email, Internet Chat, School Website and Personal Devices. It specified the consequences of violating the parameters in place and included a section for parents and students to review and sign if they agreed to follow the policy set out. This is a measure supported by Ofsted (2010) ‘The best AUPs are ones that have been signed by students and parents’ (Ofsted 2010). While the researcher found the AUP to be both comprehensive and inline with recommendations set out by the NCTE, it appeared that students and teachers were unfamiliar with the contents of the AUP.

Results from the students’ questionnaire revealed that 43.4% were unaware of the schools safe Internet use procedures, 28.3% were somewhat conscious of the procedures and only 28.3% of students stated they were aware of the schools Internet safety rules (fig. 4.19). In view of the findings one can conclude that students and indeed parents have never received the AUP for reviewing and signing.

The teacher questionnaire showed that whilst most teachers were aware that there was an AUP (64.1%), most were not familiar with its contents (71.8%) (fig. 4.20). This was supported by comments from teachers and from the semi structured interviews. The semi structured interviews also revealed that ICT teachers didn’t know where to access the AUP from (Semi Structured Interview 2, 3, 4, 5).

There is an AUP, however, I am unfamiliar with the contents; in fact I don’t even know where I could find it from?

(Teacher Interview)

These figures reveal a number of things: Firstly they indicate that teachers were not consulted on the drawing up of the document, secondly they did not receive any information or training on the policy and thirdly they have not been involved in the reviewing or monitoring of the policy. This is not in line with best practices and guidelines on AUP implementation and delivery (NCTE 2011; Sharples et al. 2009; Ofsted 2010). This study found that teachers would like to be involved in drawing up
the AUP and were willing to receive training on Internet safety issues (Teacher comments).

Another finding that might be connected to the lack of familiarity with the AUP was the lack of contribution to the school website (over half had not contributed to the school website or were unsure if they have done so) (fig. 4.20). Whilst this might be attributed to teachers lacking knowledge on how to do so it could also be that teachers are nervous to contribute as they are unsure of the guidelines and rules regarding the uploading of students’ images or work. Indeed this was conveyed by a teacher that stated, “I wouldn’t put any work or images of students on the website, it’s just too risky” (Teacher comment). Another teacher showed his lack of familiarity with the AUP guidelines on the school website when he stated “I didn’t realise you could not identify any individuals on images that you put up on the school website” (Teacher comment).

5.2.3.2 Filtering and Monitoring

The study school has a filtering system in place provided by ‘Fortinet’. The system in place allows online access to websites or content that have been classified as appropriate for schools and blocks viruses and other known ‘malware’ such as Trojans or worms and SPAM. Facebook is blocked in the school, but YouTube is accessible due to a recent update which allows for more Web 2.0 generated content to be made available (literature review section 2.9.2). While filtering systems are in place the researcher found that they are not completely foolproof and some students are bypassing the system to access restricted web pages. Sharples, Graber, Harrison and Logan (2009) reported that some students can now bypass filtering systems by activating ‘proxy bypass sites’. This was also the case in the study school. This study revealed that 33.1% of students have bypassed the filtering system in school (fig. 4.21) and teachers on occasions have witnessed them doing so. Students are mainly accessing Facebook according to one teacher. A real worry for teachers (44.4%) is students’ ability to interfere with filtering systems and students accessing inappropriate material (70.3%) (table 4.2).
Another interesting finding from this research was the fact that a number of teachers reported having accessed restricted web sites themselves by activating ‘proxy bypass sites’ (Semi Structured Interview 2, 3 and Teacher comments). Teachers reported being frustrated when they found perfectly good educational sites blocked. This same finding was reported by Crook et al. (2008). Sharples et al. (2009) concur with this finding also “A frequently occurring tension is the blocking of Internet sites causing difficulties for legitimate schoolwork”.

The monitoring of students when online is conducted by teachers teaching the lesson or supervising in the computer room. Students are not allowed access to the computer room unsupervised. Teachers ranked supervising students as an issue that is of middle importance (40.6%) on the scheme of Internet safety concerns for students (table 4.2). One ICT teacher remarked that he is “not concerned about students accessing inappropriate material in school as “they know” that he monitors “their actions and they would not want” him “to catch them doing so”. He feels that “students are also fully aware of” his “rules and of the consequences of breaching these rules” (Semi Structured Interview 1).

5.2.4 To what extent do the students’ practices and patterns reflect unsafe Internet use

This section attempts to determine the students’ specific online experiences associated with risk. Sharples et al. (2009) and Wolak et al. (2004) refer to certain types of online behaviour that can make a young person more vulnerable to risk. “The risk element ......is often determined by behaviours rather than the technologies themselves” (Sharples et al. 2009). It is the opinion of the researcher that the level of risk behaviour presented by students in this study is relatively low; however, there are particular types of unsafe behaviour that demand further attention.
Figure 4.33 confirms that 90.6% of students feel there are risks whilst surfing the Internet and this would indicate that generally students in this study do not regard the Internet as a totally safe place. Unsupervised online activity can present a level of risk to a young person. One must take into consideration though that this study is dealing with teenagers from 12-18 years and this age group shouldn’t need as much monitoring or mediation as children below 12 years. This study found that while students are increasingly mobile and are accessing the Internet from mobile phone technology and games consoles, most PCs are located in a family room and only 28.3% of students’ PCs are located in a bedroom (fig 4.22).

Results from the first research question concerning the nature of Internet use by students, revealed that social network tools and applications (Web 2.0) are very much at the forefront of students use in their daily lives. Whilst these tools offer numerous new opportunities to their users (Alexander and Levine 2008; DES 2008; Green & Hannon 2007), they have also been criticised by Sharples et al (2008), Livingston and Brake (2009) and Atkinson and Newton (2010) for contributing to potential dangers to young people using the Internet. A lot of these new technologies invite users to exchange personal information, to chat online and to upload and exchange pictures and videos. These behaviours can make a young person more vulnerable to risk particularly if they are exchanging information with people they have befriended on the Internet and do not know on a personal level.

According to Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor (2006), contact risks seem to be related to specific types of Internet usage, such as blogging, chat room use, and instant messaging. These applications allow for two way communication between users and due to the anonymous nature of this technology can present risks to a young person. Figure 4.23 reveals that students generally chat in closed groups or not at all. It also shows that 4.3% always chat in an open group (fig. 4.23). There is also evidence from this study that certain students are chatting with random strangers and are using video technology to do so (Comment from teacher concerning chatroulette). Findings also showed that 7% of students have emailed a person they have met online and 5.2% have phoned a
person they have encountered on the Internet (fig. 4.31). The response from males and females on contacting strangers were quite similar to one another and warrant no further analysis (fig. 4.32).

This study indicated that one tenth of students have met a stranger in person (fig. 4.31). This is very frightening considering meeting with a stranger can present physical danger. A study conducted by Stahl and Fritz (2002) found a smaller percentage (4%) of respondents having attempted or made actual contact offline. A more recent study on Irish children, however, found that “1 in 12 children have met an online contact offline” (O Neill et al 2011). The survey also reported, however, that this risk rarely had a harmful experience (O Neill et al. 2011).

Divulging personal information on the Internet is another area of particular concern. This can lead to the exploitation of young people sexually or through identity fraud. O Neill et al. (2011) found that 12% of Irish children had experienced some form of personal data misuse. Other studies conducted by Kierkegaard (2008), Dowell, Burgess and Cavanaugh (2009) and Valcke et al. (2008) also reported on the ease with which children divulge personal information. This study revealed that 19.1% had given out personal information online (fig. 4.25). The teachers in this study ranked in third place the worry that students might disclose personal information (table 4.2).

Web 2.0’s capability of user generated content is extremely beneficial; however, in recent years bullying through electronic means, specifically mobile phones or the Internet, has emerged, often collectively labeled ‘cyber bullying’ (Smith et al. 2008). Cyber bullying can be particularly damaging to a young person. Table 4.2 shows that 71.8% of teachers surveyed felt that cyber bullying was the most important safety issue concerning students’ safe use of the Internet. Web 2.0’s ability of user contribution has also given rise to inappropriate material being more accessible online. As a consequence of cyber bullying and an increase in the level of inappropriate material on the Internet, young people are at risk of being exposed to a variety of harmful and damaging emotions.
This study attempted to determine whether students have experienced any negative emotions whilst using the Internet. Results showed that 53% of students never felt upset, harassed, bothered, threatened or embarrassed, however, 17.1% reported feeling upset, 16.2% feeling harassed, 24.8% feeling bothered, 9.4% feeling threatened and 23.9% feeling embarrassed (fig. 4.26). Findings from studies conducted by Valcke et al. (2008); Livingstone and Bober (2004); Kierkegaard (2008); all indicated a high proportion of children being exposed to inappropriate content. The study did not distinguish as to whether these emotions experienced were from bullying online and/or seeing and viewing inappropriate material, however, it did ask whether students had received any unwanted comments whilst using the Internet. This question is probably more applicable to cyber bullying. In this study, 42.5% of students reported having received unwanted comments whilst online (fig. 4.27). This statistic represents 58% of females having received unwanted comments in comparison to 42% of males (fig. 4.28). This indicates that boys are less likely to receive unwanted comments. The number of students experiencing bullying online in this study (42.5%) lies between two studies: Livingstone, Bober, and Helsper’s (2005) reported that 33% of young people have been bullied online or via SMS; Li (2009) found that 54% of 12-13 year olds have been victims of cyber-bullying.

Students were asked in this study whether they had told someone they had received unwanted comments. Results showed that 47.3% told no one, however, over half of students had told a friend (48.6%), parent (13.5%), teacher (2.7%) or someone else not mentioned (fig. 4.29). The study also revealed that boys tend not to seek advice or help when they receive unwanted comments (62.2%) (fig. 4.30). It is important students confide in someone if they experience unwanted comments.
5.3 Summary

Results from the study found that students and teachers are using the Internet both at home and in school. There was some variation in:

1. The amount of time students spend on the Internet at home in comparison to their use of the Internet at school.
2. Students use of Web 2.0 tools at home, in comparison to school.
3. Teachers’ use of Social Networking sites in their leisure time as opposed to not using them at all in school.

This study found that some teachers have provided training to students on safe Internet use. The school has implemented an AUP and filtering systems are in place on the school network. However, evidence suggests that there are a number of areas that need addressing. These include the need to familiarise all stakeholders on the contents of the AUP and where to access it from, the lack of training on safe Internet use reported by students and teachers and the bypassing of filtering systems by a number of individuals.

The study also reported that overall, students are practicing reasonably safe Internet practices, however, there are a small minority engaging in what might be deemed ‘risky’ behaviour.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The Internet offers many benefits from a pedagogical, social and economic viewpoint. It is used in work, in our leisure time and increasingly as a tool in our learning. The growing role of Web 2.0 technologies has contributed to increased collaboration, socialising and communication. Unfortunately Web 2.0 technologies also present new online risks that young people are particularly vulnerable to. Some of these include:

1. Exposure to inappropriate material.
2. Online bullying.
3. The possibility of contact with harmful strangers.
4. The opportunities to cause harm to others.

Schools have a role to play in ensuring the e-safety of students. The NCTE recommends that schools devise and adopt an AUP, install filtering systems and ensure teachers and students are aware of potential Internet risks so that they can avoid dangers and make responsible choices when on the Web.

This chapter summarises the key findings of the author’s study, makes appropriate recommendations and identifies areas for further research within this field.
6.2 The nature of Internet use by students and teachers in a Post Primary School

This study agrees with previous literature which supports the role of the Internet in the lives of young people. Students are engaging in a wide range of online activities at home on a daily basis. This study found that the activities students are generally engaging in are social networking, online gaming and the viewing and downloading of media such as video clips and music. These activities are all Web 2.0 based activities. This study seems to point to a difference in behaviour between home and school Internet access and activity. Significantly fewer students accessed computer facilities in school on a daily basis, with slightly less than one third of students reporting never having accessed computer facilities in the school at all. Social Networking sites are also blocked in schools thus ensuring a contrast between home and school online activity.

Whilst there are a larger number of students not accessing the Internet in school in comparison to home, the number of teachers accessing the Internet at home and in school is very much the same. A reason for this may be that the majority of teachers in the school possess their own school laptops that can be accessed at any time. In contrast, the student body has very limited access to computers (they are limited to 24 computers in the computer room). Even though teachers are engaging in online activities and using technology to support teaching and learning few teachers reported using particular Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis and blogs. The use of social networking was also a feature in a number of teachers’ lives at home and a couple of teachers expressed the desire for SN sites to be accessible in school.
6.2.1 Recommendations

1. There is a need for more computers in the school.
2. Students need to be granted increased access to computer facilities in school.
3. More software and digital learning content needs to be provided to teachers.
4. A more coordinated approach is needed, ensuring that students use of the Internet in school is more Web 2.0 based; similar to home activity.
5. Teachers need support and training in developing new teaching practices that embrace creative and social learning using Web 2.0 tools from a pedagogical viewpoint.
6. Fortinet should review its policy regarding the blocking of Social Networking sites such as Facebook.

6.3 Student and teacher knowledge on Internet safety and from where and from whom are students receiving information on safe Internet use?

Students in this study reported being confident with using the Internet and for the most part they are confident in their teachers and parents’ knowledge of the Internet. When asked where they might have received Internet safety information to date from, approximately half of students reported having received Internet safety information from school and a large number also reported having received information from a parent. In school, students were mainly given e-safety guidelines through an ICT module, SPHE or CSPE lesson. Approximately one third of students never received safety information from school. Another worrying finding from the research is the number of students that reported not receiving safety information from any source at all (14.5%). This shows the need for a more coordinated approach by schools and parents in the teaching of safe and responsible practices online.
A number of teachers (15.4%) reported having a poor knowledge of Internet safety (fig. 4.12) and expressed the desire for training on the issues (semi structured interviews 1,2,3). This is also an area that needs addressing if students are to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills they need to keep safe whilst using the Internet.

6.3.1 Recommendations

1. Students need to receive education and training on safe and responsible Internet practices.
2. Education on responsible behaviour online and staying safe on the Internet should be provided during pastoral time to ensure all students receive this training.
3. Safe Internet use could be integrated throughout the school curriculum to reinforce learning of all students on the issues.
4. Teachers need training on Internet safety and in promoting responsible Internet use to students.
5. Training of teachers needs to be continuous and have a focus on new users. It must also keep targeting the current users and must keep abreast of the changing trends of the Internet.
6. Parents also need to take an active role in educating their children on how to stay safe online and where appropriate to set rules and take measures to ensure they are safe.
6.4 The schools role in ensuring students are safe whilst using the Internet in school

The school has a role in ensuring that the students are safe whilst using the Internet in school. Guidelines suggest having a comprehensive AUP in place and adequate filtering and monitoring systems installed. This study found that the study school does indeed have an AUP which is detailed and follows recommended guidelines structurally; however, the author found a number of shortcomings with it also. These include:

1. A large number of students being unaware of the schools safe Internet procedures (43.3%) (fig 4.19).
2. The AUP not having been reviewed or signed by students and parents.
3. A large number of teachers reported being unfamiliar with its contents (71.8%) (fig. 4.20).
4. A significant number of teachers did not know where to access the AUP from.
5. No training was provided to teachers on the contents of the AUP.
6. Teachers were not consulted in the drawing up of the policy.

With regard to filtering and monitoring systems in the school, this study found filtering systems were in place and provided by ‘Fortinet’. Although filtering systems are installed on the school network the researcher found evidence to suggest some students are bypassing the system to access restricted web pages and in fact, a number of teachers reported having accessed restricted web sites themselves. Some teachers reported being frustrated when they found perfectly good educational sites blocked. The monitoring of students activity when online is conducted by teachers teaching the lesson or supervising in the computer room and not by monitoring technology. Students are not allowed access to the computer room unsupervised.
6.4.1 Recommendations

1. Regular staff development to raise awareness of e-safety should be provided.
2. An information session should be provided for all staff on the contents of the AUP and each staff member should receive a copy.
3. The AUP needs to be distributed to students and parents for their information and consent.
4. The AUP needs to be transparent to learners.
5. The AUP needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure it continues to be suitable and effective.
6. Management needs to ensure everyone (including staff and learners) are aware of the AUP.
7. School management needs to ensure that the school’s network is safe and secure.
8. Teachers and parents should not over rely on filtering systems to block inappropriate content.

6.5 The extent to which students are practicing unsafe Internet use

It is the opinion of the researcher that the level of unsafe Internet practices exhibited by students in this study is relatively low; however, findings from the student questionnaires do highlight some types of behaviour that might be deemed unsafe or risky.

The first of these is the lack of supervision of some students at home or when they access the Internet through mobile technology. When supervised young people will be limited as to what activities they engage in online, however, one must consider the age of students surveyed in this study and trust that they are responsible enough not to engage in risky behaviour and are aware of the potential dangers on the Internet.
The next type of practice that might present some danger to students is from the increased use of Web 2.0 technology. These technologies whilst beneficial in a number of ways have been criticised by a number of researchers for contributing to potential dangers to young people using the Internet.

Chatting to strangers online, arranging to meet a person one has met through the Internet and disclosing personal information on the Internet have all been deemed as risky behaviours in the literature review (section 2.5). This study revealed that the majority of students chat online with people they know personally, however, a small number of students reported chatting in open groups with strangers. One tenth of students surveyed have met an online contact in person (fig. 4.31) and 19.1% (fig. 4.25) have disclosed personal information on the Internet.

Students were also questioned as to whether they had ever experienced any negative emotions whilst using the Internet and if so had they sought help or advice from anybody. Emotions, which students reported feeling included: 17.1% feeling upset, 16.2% feeling harassed, 24.8% feeling bothered, 9.4% feeling threatened and 23.9% feeling embarrassed (fig. 4.26). A little less than half of students reported having received unwanted comments whilst online (42.5%) (fig 4.27), with more girls than boys reporting that they received unwanted comments (fig. 4.28). Findings revealed that 47.3% of students told no one that they had received unwanted comments; however, most students had told a friend, parent or teacher (fig. 4.29).
6.5.1 Recommendations

1. Ensure that students are aware of the numerous safety initiatives that are available and from where they can access advice and information on safe practices online.

2. Ensure students are knowledgeable and informed about the potential dangers of the Internet so that they are safe when accessing the Internet at home or through mobile technology.

3. Encourage students to talk to someone should they encounter any unwanted comments or feel any negative emotions whilst on the Internet.

6.6 Summary

We live in an ever increasing technological society, with young people engaging in new Web 2.0 technologies daily. With this, students are being presented with new online risks. Schools have a role to play in ensuring students are safe when they are on the Internet (as do their parents). Schools should have an AUP in place, which students and teachers are fully aware of and familiar with. Filtering and monitoring systems are also important. What happens, however, when students are unsupervised or using mobile technology? The key to preventing harm to youngsters is ensuring that they are educated on safe and responsible practices online, being aware of the potential dangers involved in using the Internet and how to minimise risks. Teachers and parents must also receive training so that they are confident in delivering e-safety education and advice to students.
6.7 Limitations/Recommendations for Future Study

This study was limited to one Post Primary school therefore results obtained cannot be generalised to all Post Primary schools throughout Ireland.

Whilst the NCTE has set out Internet safety strategies for schools in Ireland more comprehensive research is needed to ensure schools are fulfilling their duties in ensuring their students are safe and engaging in responsible practices online by following these guidelines.

The focus of this study was on Internet risks, safety measures and experiences reported by students and their teachers. A more coordinated response involving students, parents and schools should be adopted.

This study was limited in its scope on Internet dangers and risks.

A study conducted over a number of years is recommended to see if there is a connection between the level of risks students engage in and a school’s involvement in educating students against risks.
Bibliography


Becta (2007a) *Signposts to Safety Teaching E-safety at Key Stages 3 and 4*, Coventry: Becta.


*Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) 2001* [online], available: http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/cipa.html [accessed 26 Apr 2011].


DIT (2009) *Bachelor of Arts (Masters) in Early Childhood Education: Part B* [online], available:


LSE (2011) *The EU Kids Online II: Enhancing Knowledge Regarding European Children’s Use, Risk and Safety Online* [online], available: http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EUKidsFlyer.pdf [accessed 20 Jan 2011].


## Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>Letter to the Board of Management Seeking Permission to Conduct the Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>Letter to Parents Seeking Permission for their Child to Participate in the Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>Explanatory Email to Colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>Teacher Online Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E</td>
<td>Student Online Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F</td>
<td>Summary of Teacher Results from Online Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix G</td>
<td>Summary of Student Results from Online Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix H</td>
<td>Issues to be Addressed by the Semi Structured Interviews (Guide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix I</td>
<td>Comments Made by Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix J</td>
<td>Study School Acceptable Use Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix K</td>
<td>School Publications and Website Permission Form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Letter to the Board of Management Seeking Permission to Conduct the Research
Dear Mr Wegimont

I wish to seek permission to conduct research in Mount Temple School. I am completing a MA in Digital Media Developments for Education and as part of my master’s programme I am required to conduct research in the area of ICT/Digital media in schools. I propose to investigate ‘Safe Internet Use’ by students. My intention is to survey teachers and a sample of students. I would also like to conduct a number of semi structured interviews with staff. Before conducting the online questionnaires with students, I intend to seek the permission of their parents asking for their consent that their child be involved in the study. I hope that my research will benefit both students and staff. All results will be anonymous and I can assure you that neither the school nor the staff/students that participate in the research will be identified at any stage in the process.

I would be most grateful if the Board granted me permission to conduct this research.

Yours Sincerely,

Louise Lawlor.
Appendix B

Letter to Parents Seeking Permission for their Child to Participate in the Research
22nd November 2010

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am currently undertaking a Masters in Digital Media Developments for Education run by the University of Limerick. As part of the requirements of the Masters programme, I am required to write a thesis on a relevant topic. I am writing to ask your permission for your child to participate in this research project.

I will need a sample of students from 1st through to 6th year to complete a simple online questionnaire concerning ‘Safe Internet Use’.

All information gathered will be confidential and your child will remain anonymous throughout the study.

Please complete the consent form below indicating whether you consent to your children participating in the study.

Yours Sincerely,

_____________
Louise Lawlor

Please return to form teachers by 29th November 2010

Student Name: _______________ Form: _______________ Year: ____________

Please tick the relevant box:

I give my consent for my child to participate in the research study. [ ]

I do not give my consent for my child to participate in the research study. [ ]

Appendix C

Explanatory Email to Colleagues
Dear Colleague,

I wish to ask your assistance with a survey I would like to carry out. As you may be aware I am currently undertaking a Masters of Arts in Digital Media Development for Education. As part of my study I must complete a small research project in the area of ICT and education. I have chosen to research ‘Safe Internet Use of Students’. I am surveying students to determine:

- The nature of their Internet use
- And to what extent, their Internet use, reflects unsafe practices.

In order to gain a better insight into students’ safe internet practices I must also survey teachers in this area. I would be most grateful if you would agree to take this short online survey. There are 10 questions and it should take no more than a couple of minutes. The questions are mainly tick the box questions. The survey can be accessed by clicking the link below:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3MGKXQY

The survey is anonymous and I will not be able to identify any individual responses. I hope that my research will benefit both students and staff. Information gathered will be available to all in due course.

Yours Sincerely,

Louise Lawlor
Appendix D

Teacher Online Questionnaire
Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey, your help is much appreciated. There are 10 questions in all and the survey should only take a couple of minutes.

**Q1**

1. **General information**

   Please select one option from each drop down menu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q2**

2. **Please select the main subject(s) you teach.**

   - English
   - Irish
   - Maths
   - Geography
   - History
   - Foreign Languages
   - Science
   - Business
   - Art
   - Music
   - Home Economics
   - PE
   - Religion
   - IT/Computers
   - SPHE/CSPE
   - Woodwork
   - Metalwork

   Other (please specify):
3. Please indicate how often you use a computer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Infrequently (Less than once a month)</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Please indicate which application(s) you have used in teaching and learning

- Internet
- Powerpoint
- Excel
- Word
- Subject specific software

Other (please specify):
## Q5

5. If you have used the Internet in teaching and learning, which tools have you used?

- [ ] Email
- [ ] Search engines
- [ ] You tube
- [ ] Bebo/facebook
- [ ] My Space
- [ ] Blogs
- [ ] Wikis
- [ ] Webquests

Other (please specify)


## Q6

6. In your free time do you use any of the following?

- [ ] Email
- [ ] You Tube
- [ ] Facebook/Bebo
- [ ] Blogs
- [ ] Wikis

Other (please specify)


7. Please tick the relevant box

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever contributed to the school website?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware there is an Acceptable User Policy (AUP) for computer use in the school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you familiar with the contents of the AUP?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think students are aware of school policies and procedures for safe and responsible use of the internet in School?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. What would you perceive the most important safety issue to be concerning students safe use of the internet? Please rank them on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessing inappropriate material</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring safe internet access at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring safe internet access at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students ability to interfere with filtering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils giving out personal details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students use of chat rooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyberbullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current awareness of internet safety issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. How would you rank your own knowledge of safe Internet use?
10. Do you think students should be taught safe and responsible use of the Internet:

- In school
- At home
- Both

Other (please specify)

[Blank field]
Appendix E

Student Online Questionnaire
Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. Your help is much appreciated. There are a total of 23 questions and the survey should only take ten minutes max to complete.

Q1
1. Select the relevant boxes
   - Male
   - Female

Q2
2. What year are you in, in school?
   - 1st Year
   - 2nd Year
   - 3rd Year
   - 4th Year
   - 5th Year
   - 6th Year

Q3
3. Do you have a PC or Laptop at home?
   - PC
   - Laptop
   - Both PC and Laptop
   - Neither
4. Do you ever access the internet using any of the following?
   - Mobile Phone
   - Games Console

5. Please tick how often you use the internet?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Everyday</th>
<th>Every second day</th>
<th>A couple of times a week</th>
<th>Once a week</th>
<th>Every second week</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>Less than once a month</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a friend's house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the go</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Please indicate how often you use the Internet for the following activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Most Days</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat Rooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Networking sites e.g. Facebook, bebo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downloading Music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant Messenger (IM)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Activity (please specify activity and how often)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. If you are required to seek information for homework where would you generally seek it from?

Other (please specify)

8. If you use a PC at home, where is it located?

- Kitchen
- Living room
- Study
- Bedroom

Other (please specify where)
9. Please indicate how much do you think the following people know about the internet?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>A fair bit</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>Nothing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Parents/Guardians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Where have you received internet safety information to date?

- School
- Mother
- Father
- Friend
- Internet
- TV
- Magazine
- Never received internet safety information from any source
- Other (please specify)

11. If you have received internet safety information in school was it in?

- Form class
- Assembly
- Letters home
- Not received any information from school
- In a particular subject (please specify which subject)
Q12. From what source would you most like to get your internet safety information from?
- School
- Internet
- Mother/Father
- TV
- Friend
- Magazine/books
- Radio
- Other place
- Do not know

Q13. Which of the following rules for using the Internet are in use at home?
- Not to give out personal information
- Not to visit certain sites
- Not to meet in person someone I only know from the Internet
- Not to buy things online
- Rules about how much time you spend on the Internet
- Not allowed to say insulting things on email, chatrooms, instant messenger (IM)
- Not allowed to download software
- Not allowed to download music or videos
- No rules
- Other rules not mentioned (please specify)

Q14. Are you aware of your schools safe internet use procedures?

-
15. When chatting on the Internet would you:
   - Always chat in a closed group
   - Usually chat in a closed group
   - Always chat in an open group
   - Never chat online

16. Do you know everyone you chat with online personally?
   - Yes, I know everyone personally
   - I know most people I chat with personally
   - No, I chat with people I don't know all the time
   - I don't chat

17. Have you ever provided personal information (address, phone number, surname) to someone you meet over the internet?

18. Whilst on the Internet, have you ever been ...
   - Upset
   - Harassed
   - Bothered
   - Threatened
   - Embarrassed
   - None of the above
19. Have you ever received any unwanted comments whilst online?

20. If you have answered yes to either or both of the two previous questions, did you tell someone?
   - Yes I told my parents
   - Yes I told a teacher
   - Yes I told a friend
   - Yes I told someone other than the three above
   - No, I didn’t tell anyone

21. Have you ever made contact with someone you meet on the Internet?
   - Yes, I meet with this person.
   - Yes, I emailed this person
   - Yes, I phoned this person
   - No, I've never made contact with someone I meet online.
   - I've never meet anyone I don't know online.
22. Have you ever bypassed your school's filtering systems to access restricted webpages?
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

23. Do you think there are risks whilst surfing the Internet?
- Yes
- No
Appendix F

Summary of Teacher Results from Online Questionnaire
1. General information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please select one option from each drop down menu</td>
<td>27.8% (10)</td>
<td>72.2% (26)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>11-20 years</th>
<th>21-30 years</th>
<th>31 years or more</th>
<th>1-5 years</th>
<th>6-10 years</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please select one option from each drop down menu</td>
<td>33.3% (12)</td>
<td>11.1% (4)</td>
<td>5.6% (2)</td>
<td>25.0% (9)</td>
<td>25.0% (9)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 36
skipped question 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT/ Computers</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPHE/CSPE</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 38
Skipped question: 1
### 3. Please indicate how often you use a computer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Infrequently (Less than once a month)</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>97.4% (38)</td>
<td>2.6% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td>86.8% (33)</td>
<td>13.2% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- answered question 39
- skipped question 0

### 4. Please indicate which application(s) you have used in teaching and learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerpoint</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excel</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject specific software</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Other (please specify) 1

- answered question 39
- skipped question 0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search engines</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebo/Facebook</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Space</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikis</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webquests</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 38
Skipped question: 1
6. In your free time do you use any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook/Bebo</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikis</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Please tick the relevant box

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever contributed to the school website?</td>
<td>43.7% (19)</td>
<td>48.7% (19)</td>
<td>2.6% (1)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware there is an Acceptable User Policy (AUP) for computer use in the school?</td>
<td>64.1% (25)</td>
<td>30.8% (12)</td>
<td>5.1% (2)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you familiar with the contents of the AUP?</td>
<td>12.8% (5)</td>
<td>71.8% (28)</td>
<td>15.4% (6)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think students are aware of school policies and procedures for safe and responsible use of the internet in School?</td>
<td>7.7% (3)</td>
<td>59.0% (23)</td>
<td>33.3% (13)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. What would you perceive the most important safety issue to be concerning students' safe use of the internet? Please rank them on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety Issue</th>
<th>Rating 1</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4</th>
<th>Rating 5</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessing inappropriate material</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring safe internet access at school</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring safe internet access at home</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students ability to interfere with filtering</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils giving out personal details</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising pupils</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students use of chat rooms</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyberbullying</td>
<td>71.8%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current awareness of internet safety issues</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No issues</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total answered question: 39
Total skipped question: 0
9. How would you rank your own knowledge of safe Internet use?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 39
skipped question: 0

10. Do you think students should be taught safe and responsible use of the Internet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In school</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>97.4%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify): 1

answered question: 39
skipped question: 0
Appendix G

Summary of Student Results from Online Questionnaire
### 1. Select the relevant boxes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**answered question** 119  
**skipped question** 1

### 2. What year are you in, in school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Year</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Year</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Year</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Year</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Year</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Year</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**answered question** 120  
**skipped question** 0
### 3. Do you have a PC or Laptop at home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both PC and Laptop</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 119
skipped question 1

### 4. Do you ever access the internet using any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games Console</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 86
skipped question 34
5. Please tick how often you use the internet?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Everyday (%)</th>
<th>Everyday (%)</th>
<th>Every second day (%)</th>
<th>Every second day (%)</th>
<th>Once a week (%)</th>
<th>Once a week (%)</th>
<th>Every month (%)</th>
<th>Every month (%)</th>
<th>Less than once a month (%)</th>
<th>Less than once a month (%)</th>
<th>Never (%)</th>
<th>Never (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>At home</strong></td>
<td>80.7% (96)</td>
<td>8.4% (10)</td>
<td>6.7% (8)</td>
<td>2.5% (3)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>1.7% (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In school</strong></td>
<td>1.1% (1)</td>
<td>1.1% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>1.1% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>1.1% (1)</td>
<td>11.7% (11)</td>
<td>84.0% (79)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In a library</strong></td>
<td>3.8% (4)</td>
<td>17.1% (18)</td>
<td>20.0% (21)</td>
<td>11.4% (12)</td>
<td>14.3% (15)</td>
<td>13.3% (14)</td>
<td>15.2% (16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In a friend’s house</strong></td>
<td>3.8% (4)</td>
<td>4.8% (5)</td>
<td>17.1% (18)</td>
<td>20.0% (21)</td>
<td>11.4% (12)</td>
<td>14.3% (15)</td>
<td>13.3% (14)</td>
<td>15.2% (16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On the go</strong></td>
<td>4.3% (4)</td>
<td>10.6% (10)</td>
<td>8.5% (8)</td>
<td>4.3% (4)</td>
<td>10.6% (10)</td>
<td>9.6% (9)</td>
<td>43.8% (41)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Please indicate how often you use the internet for the following activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Most Days</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>8.8% (10)</td>
<td>19.3% (22)</td>
<td>41.2% (47)</td>
<td>27.2% (31)</td>
<td>3.0% (4)</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat Rooms</td>
<td>2.9% (3)</td>
<td>2.8% (3)</td>
<td>3.9% (4)</td>
<td>10.6% (11)</td>
<td>78.4% (81)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Networking sites e.g. Facebook, bebo</td>
<td>77.1% (91)</td>
<td>9.3% (11)</td>
<td>5.1% (6)</td>
<td>6.8% (8)</td>
<td>1.7% (2)</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downloading Music</td>
<td>24.3% (27)</td>
<td>36.9% (41)</td>
<td>16.0% (20)</td>
<td>14.4% (16)</td>
<td>6.3% (7)</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Games</td>
<td>19.6% (22)</td>
<td>17.0% (19)</td>
<td>20.5% (23)</td>
<td>20.5% (23)</td>
<td>22.3% (25)</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>40.7% (48)</td>
<td>26.3% (31)</td>
<td>17.8% (21)</td>
<td>7.6% (9)</td>
<td>7.6% (9)</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant Messenger (IM)</td>
<td>19.1% (21)</td>
<td>10.0% (11)</td>
<td>16.4% (18)</td>
<td>16.2% (20)</td>
<td>36.4% (40)</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Activity (please specify activity and how often)

| Answered Question | 120 |
| Skipped Question  | 0   |

7. If you are required to seek information for homework where would you generally seek it from?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books from school</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books from Home</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books from Library</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify) 3

Answered Question 116
Skipped Question 4
8. If you use a PC at home, where is it located?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living room</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify where)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 106
skipped question 14

9. Please indicate how much do you think the following people know about the internet?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>A fair bit</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>Nothing</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>You</strong></td>
<td>52.9% (63)</td>
<td>44.5% (53)</td>
<td>2.5% (3)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your teachers</strong></td>
<td>12.7% (15)</td>
<td>72.0% (85)</td>
<td>15.3% (16)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your Parents/ Guardians</strong></td>
<td>17.8% (21)</td>
<td>50.8% (60)</td>
<td>26.0% (33)</td>
<td>3.4% (4)</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 119
skipped question 1
10. Where have you received internet safety information to date?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never received internet safety information from any source</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 117  
Skipped question: 3

11. If you have received Internet safety information in school was it in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Type</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form class</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters home</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not received any information from school</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a particular subject (please specify which subject)</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question:  
Skipped question: None
Results from q11 above: Students specifying from which subject they received safety information from in school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In a particular subject (please specify which subject)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>c.s.p.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C.S.P.E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>cspe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SPHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SPHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>computer studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CSPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>gardai talk on internet safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Internet safety talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>sphe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>sphe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>ECDL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>cspe or sphe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ocdl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>SPHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>in primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>in primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>sometimes teachers!!!!!!!!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>SPHE (primary school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Non Exam Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>sphe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>primary school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. From what source would you most like to get your internet safety information from?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother/Father</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine/books</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other place</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 115

skipped question 5
13. Which of the following rules for using the Internet are in use at home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not to give out personal information</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not to visit certain sites</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not to meet in person someone I only know from the Internet</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not to buy things online</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules about how much time you spend on the Internet</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not allowed to say insulting things on email, chatrooms, instant messenger (IM)</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not allowed to download software</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not allowed to download music or videos</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No rules</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other rules not mentioned (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 118  
Skipped question: 2

14. Are you aware of your schools safe internet use procedures?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 113  
Skipped question: 7
15. When chatting on the internet would you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always chat in a closed group</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually chat in a closed group</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always chat in an open group</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never chat online</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 116
skipped question: 4

16. Do you know everyone you chat with online personally?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I know everyone personally</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know most people I chat with personally</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I chat with people I don't know all the time</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't chat</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 116
skipped question: 4

17. Have you ever provided personal information (address, phone number, surname) to someone you meet over the internet?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 110
skipped question: 10
18. Whilst on the internet, have you ever been ...?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upset</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassed</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bothered</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 117
skipped question 3

19. Have you ever received any unwanted comments whilst online?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 113
skipped question 7

20. If you have answered yes to either or both of the two previous questions, did you tell someone?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes I told my parents</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes I told a teacher</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes I told a friend</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes I told someone other than the three above</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I didn’t tell anyone</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 74
skipped question 46
### 21. Have you ever made contact with someone you meet on the internet?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I meet with this person.</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I emailed this person</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I phoned this person</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I've never made contact with someone I meet online</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've never meet anyone I don't know online.</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 115  
skipped question 5

### 22. Have you ever bypassed your schools filtering systems to access restricted webpages?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 118  
skipped question 2

### 23. Do you think there are risks whilst surfing the internet?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90.6%</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 117  
skipped question 3
Appendix H

Issues to be addressed by the Semi Structured Interviews (Guide)
1. Describe your computer habits i.e. where you use the computer and for what?

2. E-safety Knowledge
   - How would you rank your e-safety knowledge?
   - Would you avail of training on e-safety if it was available in school?
   - Do you think that e-safety training should be provided to staff?
   - Have you ever discussed e-safety issues with students, in what subject?

3. The Acceptable User Policy
   - Are you familiar with the AUP?
   - Do you think teachers/students etc should have an input into the AUP contents?

4. Students use of the computer room
   - Have you ever brought your students to use the computer room?
   - Do you have a set list of rules for use in the computer room and are the students aware of these?
   - Do you remind students of appropriate behavior on line?
   - Are you ever nervous of bringing students to use the computer room? Why?
   - What sort of behavior have you observed in the computer room?
   - What sort of e-safety problems might you encounter with pupils?
     - Accessing inappropriate material?
     - By passing filtering systems? What sites might they be viewing that are restricted?
     - Cyber bullying
     - Plagiarism?
• What action have you taken?
• Would you have any reservations about posting information on the school website?
• Do you remind students about appropriate behavior on a regular basis?

5. **Filtering systems in school.**

• Do you feel the school has adequate filtering systems?
• Have you ever encountered any problems with the filtering systems in school?
Appendix I

Comments Made by Teachers
• “Teachers and parents most definitely have a role in ensuring students internet safety.”

• “How can we ensure they are not visiting inappropriate sites when they are at home and unsupervised?”

• “Their parents are responsible for setting rules and boundaries at home.”

• “There are undoubtedly dangers online however the benefits of the internet out way the risks.”

• “Students are bypassing the filtering systems to go on to Facebook.”

• “I myself have bypassed filtering systems to go onto perfectly appropriate sites, which are blocked in the school.”

• “I use You Tube a lot in my subject, but up until last year this was blocked in the school.”

• “Parents also need to sit down with their children and explain the dangers of the internet.”

• “You would need eyes in the back of your head in that computer room.”

• “I appreciate there are many benefits to chatting on line however there is also the danger of people misinterpreting what you are saying in the absence of facial expressions. This goes for text messaging too.”

• “As a Year Head, I have a Facebook account to keep up to date with what might be going on outside of school.”

• “Young people put too much personal information on Facebook.”

• “I’ve taught students about e-safety in SPHE class.”
• “There was a garda from child protection or something like that, that came to talk to the LCA class. He was very good. Students were shocked by some of the stories he had concerning meeting and chatting with strangers on the internet.”

• “The internet is evolving and changing all the time. We should be given some training on safe internet use.”

• “I didn’t realise you could not identify any individuals on images that you put up on the school website.”

• “Where do I get a copy of the Acceptable Use Policy?”

• “What sort of information is contained in the Acceptable Use Policy?”

• ‘I use Facebook quite a bit at home to stay in touch with family and friends but I’m not sure how I could use Facebook in my teaching?’

• “A number of students have requested me as a friend on Facebook, but I’ve declined each time.”

• “I feel I know quite a bit about safety issues on the internet.”

• “I would like training in school on what exactly we should be making students aware of when they are on the internet and a list of do’s/ don’ts.”

• “My primary concern for students would be that they would contact or meet a stranger they met online.”

• “I don’t think students are aware of Internet safety procedures in the school.”

• “I’m not concerned about students accessing inappropriate material in school as they know I monitor their actions and they would not want me to catch them doing so. Students are also fully aware of my rules and the consequences of breaching these rules.”

• “I have dealt with an issue whereby a student was being targeted on Facebook.”
• ‘I wouldn’t put any work or images of students on the website, it’s just too risky.”

• “Are students aware of the AUP? I’d doubt it! Teachers don’t even know where to access it from!”

• “I heard students talking about a new website called ‘Chatroulette’. When I quizzed them as to what it was they got slightly embarrassed. Some started laughing. The response I got from one of the girls was ‘It’s disgusting Ms. There are lots of perv’s on it. ……, you should just go on to it and check it out”!

• “The use of computers in school is for school work and not recreational work. I therefore feel there is no issue of e-safety in school if they are doing what they are supposed to do.”

• “Safe internet use should be taught in a variety of subjects and not just computer classes.”

• “Young people are obsessed with facebook these days. I hear them talk about it in school all the time. My own daughter spends hours on it in the evening.”
Appendix J

Study School Acceptable Use Policy
Internet Acceptable Use Policy

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources in a safe and effective manner. Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP annually. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

This version of the AUP was created on _______________ (date)

by _______________________________________________________________
(name of parties involved in drawing up the AUP)

School’s Strategy
The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

General
- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils’ Internet usage.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal floppy disks, memory sticks, CD-ROMs, or other digital storage media in school requires a teacher’s permission.
- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

World Wide Web
- Students will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
• Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
• Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is in direct breach of the school’s acceptable use policy.
• Students will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.

Email
• Students will use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
• Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
• Students will not reveal their own or other people’s personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
• Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
• Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.

Internet Chat
• Students will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication if it has been approved by the school.
• Chat rooms, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.
• Usernames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.
• Face-to-face meetings with someone organised via Internet chat will be forbidden.

School Website
• Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school’s website.
• The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
• Website using facilities such as guestbooks, noticeboards or weblogs will be checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain personal details?
• The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
• Pupils’ work will appear in an educational context on Web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission.
• The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will not be published on the school website without the parental permission. Video clips may be password protected.

• Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.

• The school website will avoid publishing the first name and last name of individuals in a photograph.

• The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named – will not use pupils’ names in image file names or ALT tags if published on the web.

• Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

**Personal Devices**

Pupils using their own technology in school, such as leaving a mobile phone turned on or using it in class, sending nuisance text messages, or the unauthorized taking of images with a mobile phone camera, still or moving is in direct breach of the school’s acceptable use policy.

**Legislation**

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

**Support Structures**

The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

**Sanctions**

Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.
Permission Form Template

Please review the attached school Internet Acceptable Use Policy, sign and return this permission form to the Principal.

School Name

Name of Pupil: ______________________________

Class/Year: ______________________________

Pupil

I agree to follow the school’s Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the Internet. I will use the Internet in a responsible way and obey all the rules explained to me by the school.

Pupil’s Signature: ______________________________ Date: _______________

Parent/Guardian

As the parent or legal guardian of the above pupil, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for my son or daughter or the child in my care to access the Internet. I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes. I also understand that every reasonable precaution has been taken by the school to provide for online safety but the school cannot be held responsible if pupils access unsuitable websites.

I accept the above paragraph □ I do not accept the above paragraph □
(Please tick as appropriate)

In relation to the school website, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child’s schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy relating to publishing children’s work on the school website.

I accept the above paragraph □ I do not accept the above paragraph □
(Please tick as appropriate)

Signature: ______________________________ Date: _______________

Address: ______________________________ Telephone: ________________
Appendix K

School Publications
and
Website Permission Form
School Publications and Website

In accordance with the Department of Education and Science guidelines, the school must seek the permission of each student’s parents/guardians for the use of photographic material for publication/website use.

I give permission for the use of school related photographic images on the school website/school publications that might include my son/daughter.

Signed (Parent/Guardian 1):

Signed (Parent/Guardian 2):

IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO GIVE THIS PERMISSION PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL.