YouthNet

How young people look for information online:

A survey of views in six European countries

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Elena Di Antonio

Contents

1. Executive Summary

The present research has been undertaken as part of the *"European Digital Youth Information Project"* (EDYIP), a networking project on the theme of online information for young people. The aim of the research is to provide insights into the issues that young people face when searching for online information in order to inform *the development of good practice on how best to reach young people through the internet.*

An incentivised online survey was disseminated among 13 to 30 years old in Great Britain, Ireland, Finland, Belgium, Spain and Denmark between December 2010 and February 2010.

Results are not representative of the population of young people in these countries, because of the small sample size. Furthermore, the young people who have limited access to digital technologies are not likely to be represented in the findings, since the survey was online and disseminated mainly through online channels. These methodology constraints need to be taken into account when reading the findings. As result of this, the research does not claim to give a representative picture of the situation, but it aims to trigger more interest and study in this area.

The research explored people's use of the internet as source of information and advice-seeking by:
- Setting out the context of the research in terms of how young people (1) access information in their countries and (2) use digital media.
- Giving a picture of how young people use and feel about the internet as source of information.
- Analysing the role the internet has in building relationships

Context of the research: how young people access information in their countries
- The countries which best provide information to young people were Belgium and Finland, with an average of 68% and 67% young people respectively stating that their country provided information on all of the issues.
- Ireland and Spain were the countries where young people found it most difficult to access information on sensitive topics, with only 35% and 16% respectively able to do so
- Respondents found it easier to find information on education (an average of 56% respondents said this)

The countries which best provide information to young people were **Belgium** and **Finland**

Context of the research: how young people use digital media.

- On average respondents spent between 1 to 4 hours every day online
- The Finnish and the English respondents spent more than 4 hours per day online, with an average of 55% and 49% of respondents respectively.
- On average, the main motivation for young people to go online is to look for information for their own use (an average of 81% across the countries). While there was a significant consistency across respondents from different countries regarding their main purpose for going online, there was a significant difference across countries between those respondents who were actively looking for information, and those who were doing so passively .

*The main motivation for young people to go online is to look for information for their own use (an average of **81%**).*

*A high proportion of **Spanish** and **Belgian** respondents passively searched for information online (**69**% and **64**%), but were not particularly engaged with active ways of accessing online information such as participating in discussions forums (both **14**%) or asking questions online (**15**% and **10**%)*

- A high proportion of Spanish and Belgian respondents passively searched for information online for study purposes (69% and 64% respectively), but were not particularly engaged with active ways of accessing online information such as participating in discussions through forums (14% of Spanish and Belgian) or asking questions online (15% and 10% of respondents respectively)
- The situation is the opposite for the Danish respondents, who preferred active ways of sharing and looking for information, such as discussion forums (48%), rather than just looking for existing information for study purposes (28%).
- English, Irish and Finnish respondents tended to be particularly engaged in seeking information online, both through passive content consumption for study purposes and through more active ways of looking for information such as participating in discussion boards and asking questions online.

- Although looking for information for their own use was the main purpose for young people to go online, a significantly smaller proportion of respondents went to the internet to share their experiences (43%) and give online advice (40%).
- Finnish and English respondents were more likely than the others to talk with other people and share their experiences (57% and 55% respectively).
- Spanish respondents were the least actively engaged with the internet, with only 21% of them going online to share their experiences and 17% to give advice.

***Spanish** respondents were the least actively engaged with the internet, with only **21**% of them going online to share their experiences and **17**% to give advice*

Young people's use of the internet to access information

- Generally the internet was the most likely source for information on a range of topics, especially on issues such as drugs (an average of 41% across the countries), sex (39%) and to a lesser extent alcohol (35%).
- There are discrepancies in the behaviours of the respondents from different countries when choosing one source of information over others.
- Finnish, English and Irish respondents tended to go online as a *main* source of advice for the majority of issues: alcohol (57%, 42% and 37% respectively), sex (54%, 42% and 49% respectively), drugs (72%, 47% and 43% respectively) and health (44%, 33% and 35% respectively).
- Conversely, Spanish and Danish respondents were the least likely to use the internet as a source of information, since it did not appear to be the main source for any of the topics.

- The research attempted to explore the main challenges young people face when looking for information online. The main issues explored were around (1) the difficulty of trusting the accuracy of the information; and (2) the difficulty in finding relevant information.
- With the exception of English respondents, overall the majority of the young people surveyed were aware of the difficulty of finding accurate information online, 70% of respondents agreeing with the statement "I am wary of the information I find online".
- Respondents were also questioned on their ability to deal with the huge amount of information provided online and the difficulties of discerning what good advice was (54% of respondents). This barrier was seen as particularly challenging by Belgian and Spanish respondents.

- The research also attempted to explore how important anonymity is for young people when looking for information on sensitive issues
- On average, English and Irish respondents seemed to be more concerned than others about their anonymity when talking about sensitive issues
- Spanish respondents were less concerned about anonymity issues, with only 30% of respondents preferring to speak with strangers about sensitive issues and a similar percentage (32%) feeling more comfortable speaking online about certain issues.

The role the internet has in building relationships.

- To have a better understanding of how digital channels such as discussion forums and social media are used to share and get information, it is necessary to have an insight on how they are perceived in their broader meaning of "relationship-building".
- Generally respondents seemed to be more likely to recognise that the internet brings communities together rather than to claim they are part of the community themselves.
- This is particularly true in the case of Finnish and Belgian respondents
- Conversely, Danish respondents showed consistency between their perception of the internet as community building and their sense of belonging to this online community, 63% agreeing with both the statements.

Generally respondents seemed to be more likely to recognise that the internet brings community together, rather than to claim they are part of the community themselves.

For Danish respondents, the friends they can reach through the internet are mostly "online friends", since 58% of respondents have never met these friends in their real life.

Spanish respondents were least likely to use the internet to reach their friends when they need them

- Young people were also asked how the internet helped them develop and maintain their friendships. On average, respondents were more likely to perceive the internet as a broader community rather than a channel to reach friends when needed.
- More than half of Irish, Danish and English respondents appreciated the fact that through the internet they could reach their friends wherever they wanted
- For Danish respondents, the friends they can reach through the internet are mostly "online friends", since 58% of respondents have never met these friends in their real life.
- Spanish respondents were least likely to use the internet to reach their friends when they need them (17%) and least likely to have friends online they had never met in the real life (22%).

2. Introduction

2.1. *Aims and objectives of the research*

The present research has been undertaken as part of the *"European Digital Youth Information Project"* (EDYIP), a networking project on the theme of online information for young people. The project, which was funded by the European Commission's Youth in Action programme through the British Council, aimed to (1) identify good practice in the area of youth information online and (2) plan for future joint projects in the area. EDYIP ran from July 2010 to March 2011.

The project involved seven partners from six different countries: Spain, Finland, Belgium, UK, Ireland and Denmark (see Table 1) [1]. This project was an integral part of the continued development of the work of the organisations concerned. These partners have valuable expertise and experience in online youth information services; one of the objectives of the project was to share the learning and good practices with other European countries where knowledge and expertise about digital information for young people is less developed. This research report will help us meet this objective.

As part of the project, YouthNet - in consultation with the partners - designed a questionnaire to explore young respondents' attitudes and behaviours towards the internet and seeking online information. The research is a crucial part of providing deeper insights into the issues that young people face when searching for online information and *the findings will contribute to the development of good practice on how best to reach young people through the internet.*

As young people grow into adulthood in the "digital era", they are constantly finding new ways to communicate online. This can include seeking advice[2]. The internet is constantly revolutionising social relationships and the way people access information, and young people interact with people and information in a different way than previous generations do. Therefore, in order to be able to support youngster in the way that works for them, it is necessary to start analysing the complex interconnected Web which is their online home.

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[1] One organisation – Youth Agora – took part into EDYIP but not in the research. Therefore it is not included in the report

Table 1: partners involved

Name	Type of organisation	Country	Main services provided
SpunOut	Non-profit organisation	Ireland	Engaging young people to become active in creating personal and social change through online activities such as SpunOut's website and social networks.
Cyberhus	Non-profit organisation	Denmark	Virtual club offering interactive youth-to-youth forums and online counselling for vulnerable children and teens.
Xarxa Infojove	Public body	Spain	Online activities supporting young people. The main activities are: Generalist Information, Orientation, Counselling, Workshops, Peer education, Peer support, Blended learning, E-learning about issues as Education, Health, Jobs, Leisure Time, Rights, Housing, Enterprising in order to promote opportunities to young people, youth information workers and youth workers: by face to face and virtually.
National Coordination and Development Centre of Youth Information and Counselling Services	Public body	Finland	NCDC doesn't provide services for young people directly, but it nationally develops best practices, creates equal opportunities locally and regionally and supports municipalities and organisations helping young people to find information through centres, web services, phone services and face-to-face support.
YouthNet	Non-profit organisation	UK	Providing 16 to 25 year olds with online information and support on a range of different issues, through articles and factsheets, multimedia, user generated content, a personalised question and answer service, discussion boards and live chats
In Petto	Non-profit organisation	Belgium	In Petto specialises in youth information, youth and prevention. In Petto carries out on and offline programmes and projects involving young people, including a number of peer to peer projects.

2.2. *Context of the research*

There is a lack of research into the issue of young people's online advice-seeking behaviour. In order to fill this gap in the literature, in 2009 YouthNet commissioned research exploring how young people look for advice and support in a digital age[3]. The report explored how young people:

- Communicate and use digital media;
- Deal with the issues of online security ;
- Search for information, exploring the role of the internet as source of advice and comparing alternative sources (e.g.: peers).

The results of the study show that young people in the UK spend on average about two hours online per day and their main reason to go online is looking for information for their own use (82% of respondents)[4]. The internet appeared the first source of information for issues related to drugs (36% of respondents seeking information online as opposed to 13% turning to friends) and sex (29% as opposed to 27% turning to friends). The main reason young people go online for advice on sensitive issues is related to anonymity. 68% of respondents stated anonymity is the reason they would look for advice on the internet rather than speaking to someone face-to-face. The majority of people were aware of the risk surrounding the quality of the information found online, with 58% of respondents being wary of the information found online. The main concern young people face when looking for information online was that on the internet it is difficult to know

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[3] Professor Michael Hume, "Life Support. Young people's needs in a digital age" (October 2009) funded by the Nominet Trust
[4] Base: 994 16 to 24 years old

if people are who they say they are (77% of respondents agreed with the statement).

The findings from the research give a great insight into young people's patterns of behaviours when looking for information online, However, the fluid nature of digital media means approaches must be constantly revised and understood by organisations and stakeholders working in this field. In fact, young people's interaction with the internet is constantly changing as new technology, like smart phones, continues to develop and people and organisations working with youngsters need to be aware of these changes. Furthermore, there is a significant gap in the literature comparative studies on the issue of young people' online seeking behaviour across European countries. From here came the need to develop this piece of research, which reflects some of the issues and questions explored in the national survey conducted by YouthNet in the UK in 2009. The next step in the exploration of these issues among European countries will be to develop a questionnaire which will allow results to be representative of the young European population. Ideally the survey could be done every year, to keep up with the fast pace of the development of digital media.

2.3. *Structure of the report*

The questionnaire explored people's use of the internet as source of information and advice-seeking. The report is structured into different sections (as shown in

Figure 1 1):

- The first two sections set out the context of the research, by drawing a picture of how young people (1) access information in their countries and (2) use digital media.
- The third section gives a picture of how young people use and feel about the internet as source of information. The section explores (1) the use of alternative sources of information to the internet and (2) the barriers and benefits of using the internet to access advice on sensitive issues.
- The final section explores the role the internet has in building relationships. This is because in order to have a better understanding of how digital channels as discussion forums and social media are used to share and get information, it is necessary to have an insight on how they are perceived in their broader meaning of "relationship-building".

Figure 1: Structure of the report

How young people access information in their country

How young people access information online: the role of the internet as source of information

How young people use digital media

The role of internet as relationship- building
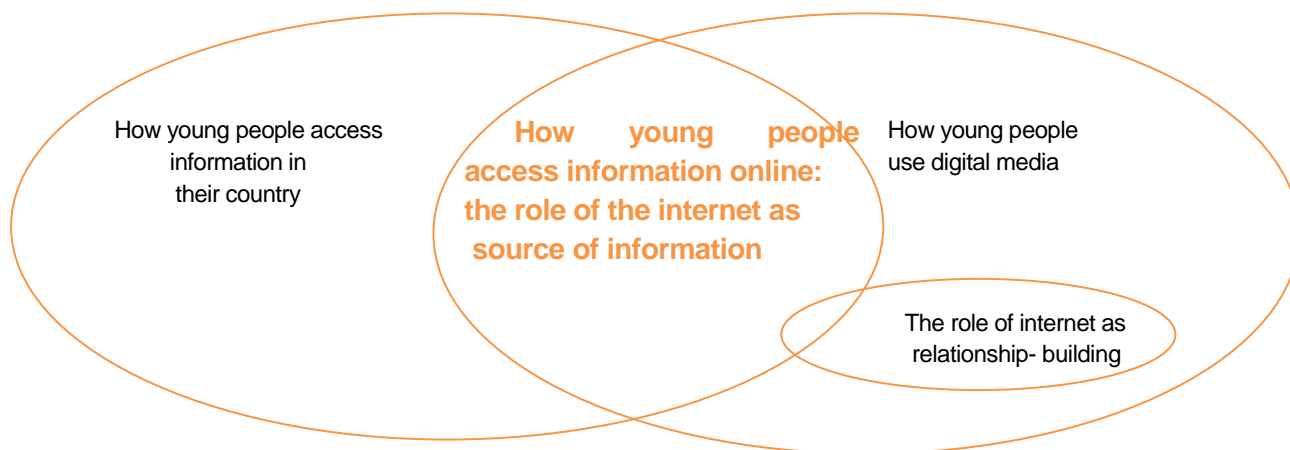
3. Methodology

3.1. *Overview*

An incentivised online survey was designed by YouthNet in consultation with the partners in October 2010 and the partners started disseminating it to young people at the end of December 2010. The survey was closed in January 2011, being open for around one month. Each partner used different channels to promote the survey.

YouthNet posted the link on Youthnet.org website and promoted it through our social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) and among members of our community, posting reminders on the discussion boards. We also promoted the survey via other youth organisations in the UK, such as British Youth Council, who featured it in their e-newsletter.

Cyberhus used a national network called volunteerjobs.dkand its network of volunteers. It also promoted the survey in partnership with relevant educational institutions.

NCDC sent the links via e-mail to its network and other associates. Some of the websites the links were published in are:
- NCDC web magazine for Youth Information and Counselling workers (www.koordinaatti.fi)
- The page for young people of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (http://www.mll.fi/nuortennetti)
- Media education web service (The Finnish Society on Media Education) (http://en.mediakasvatus.fi/)
- AlianssiExpress - The newsletter of the Finnish Youth Co-operation Alianssi (national service and lobbying organisation for youth work)
- The student forum of HUMAK University of Applied Sciences
- Online democracy tool for young people - Initiative Channel (www.aloitekanava.fi)
- The main organisations/ channels the link was sent to were: (1) the network of Youth Information and Counselling services in Finland; (2) Youth Workshops; (3) Media Groups of young people; (4) The Union of Finnish Youth Councils.

SpunOut promoted the survey through its existing online community by publishing the survey on their website, forum, Facebook page and Twitter.

Xarxa Infojove emailed the survey link to youth workers participating in peer to peer project s, asking them to promote the survey. The survey was also posted on the website.

3.2. *Sampling*

As Table 2 shows, the response rate varied across organisations, as did the channels through which young people were recruited for the survey.

Results are not representative of the population of young people in these countries, because of the small sample size. Furthermore, the young people who have limited access to digital technologies are not likely to be represented in the findings, since the survey was online and disseminated mainly through online channels.

The sample is not representative of the organisations' users either, either because of the small size (as in the case of Xarxa Infojove, Spunout and In Petto), or because the questionnaire was not targeted exclusively to the organisation's users (as in the case of Cyberhus, Youthnet and NCDC).

Even if the results are not representative of the young people across the countries participating in the research, the findings are a good indication of trends and patterns of behaviour in information-seeking .
As such, the aim of the report is not to draw robust conclusions, but to illustrate key themes and to pave the way for further and more substantial European research.

Table 2: Organisations involved and response rate

Name	Young people surveyed	Young people responding	Unique users (Monthly Average 2010)
SpunOut	Members of SpunOut online community	87	48,000
Cyberhus	Cyberhus users, network of young people through Facebook and other platforms, users of Habbo Denmark	328	11,000
In Petto		70	
Xarxa Infojove	Peer to peer participants and online users	149	
NCDC	Young people in Finland and Sweden, reaching them through different partners	569 (543 Finnish and 26 Swedish respondents)	NCDC do not directly target young people
YouthNet	English respondents and other young people in England	838	135,000 16-25 year olds from the UK

4. Demographic profile

Table 3 and Table 4 show the respondents' demographic breakdown in terms of gender and age. The vast majority of Finnish[5], Irish and Belgian respondents were female (respectively 83%, 76% and 73%), a slightly bigger proportion of Spanish and Danish respondents were male (64% and 56% respectively). The situation in England gave a more equal spread; a total of 54% of English respondents were female and the remaining 46% male.

Table 3: Gender

%	Male	Female	Prefer not to say
NCDC (Finland)	17	83	0
Spunout (Ireland)	24	76	0
In Petto (Belgium)	27	73	0
YouthNet (UK)	45	54	0
Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	64	36	0
Cyberhus (Denmark)	56	38	6

*Base: all respondents (*caution: low base size, self selection issues and variations among the bases of the different organisations)*

The target audience of this survey was young people between 13 and 30 years old; as Table 4 shows, within this range there were some differences among organisations' respondents. Denmark accounted for the youngest respondents since a majority of them were between 13 and 15 years old (accounting for 49% of the total), followed by Spanish respondents, where the majority of respondents were between 13 and 18 years old (64%). Belgian and Finnish respondents were mainly between 16 and 21 years old (accounting for the 70% and the 77% respectively of the total); Belgian respondents being more likely to be between 16 and 18 years old. English and Irish respondents were mainly between 16 and 24 years old (respectively 85% and 72%), with a fairly equal spread within this age group.

Table 4: Age

%	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 24	25 - 27	28 – 30
NCDC (Finland)	10	38	32	16	5	0
Spunout (Ireland)	6	29	23	20	15	8
In Petto (Belgium)	9	46	31	4	10	0
YouthNet (UK)	5	30	25	30	8	1
Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	28	36	14	11	7	4
Cyberhus (Denmark)	49	15	2	2	0	0

*Base: all respondents (*caution: low base size, self selection issues and variations among the bases of the different organisations)*

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[5] 26 respondents of NCSC were Swedish; for simplification we will not make difference between Finnish and Swedish respondents, but we will refer to them simply as Finnish respondents.

5. Information provided in the different countries

The research explores young people's attitudes and behaviours when it comes to looking for advice, particularly focusing on their use of online sources of information. In order to set the findings within the context of information provision in each of the countries concerned, respondents were asked whether it was easy for young people in their country to access information on different issues. Specifically, respondents were asked to reflect on the availability of information on education, work & careers, finance, health[6], sex & relationships and issues faced when growing up.

5.1. ***How young people in partner countries are given information about different issues***

As Table 5 shows, on average, the countries which scored highly in terms of providing information to young people were Belgium and Finland, with an average of 68% and 67% respondents respectively stating that their country provided information on all of the issues. England came next (with 54% of respondents stating there is information available for young people), followed by Denmark (54%). In Ireland 35% of young people stated there is online information available on these topics in their countries and in Spain only 16% stated so.

With the exception of searching for information and advice on finance, this general trend was consistent across the different categories of information in the research. In the case of seeking financial information, while Belgian respondents were more likely to be given information on most of the topics than the rest of the countries involved in the research, they did not think financial advice was easy to access.

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[6] Respondents were asked separately about mental and physical heath, but to simplify the analysis the two areas have been averaged.

Table 5: Agreement that young people in partner countries are given lots of information about different issues

%	In Petto (Belgium)	NCDC (Finland)	YouthNet (UK)	Cyberhus (Denmark)	Spunout (Ireland)	Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	Average info provided across countries
Young people in the country are given info on **EDUCATION**	80	81	64	57	23	MISSING	56
Young people in the country are given info on **ISSUES FACED WHEN GROWING UP**	81	63	63	57	45	28	51
Young people in the country are given info on **SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS**	79	72	62	54	38	9	47
Young people in the country are given info on **WORK AND CAREERS**	66	69	58	55	29	10	44
Young people in the country are given info on **HEALTH**	64	67	55	56	30	12	44
Young people in the country are given info on **FINANCE**	40	48	52	43	46	23	42
Average info provided in the country	68	67	59	54	35	16	

Table 5 also shows that overall around half of respondents stated they could easily find information on these issues in their countries.

Respondents found it easier to find information on education (an average of 56% respondents said this), followed by information on issues faced when growing up (51%) and sex and relationships (47%). They found it slightly less easy to access information on work and careers (44%), health (44%) and finance (42%).

The trend was fairly consistent across the different countries. Nevertheless, it is interesting to a few exceptions.
Accessing information on finance was generally perceived to be more difficult than accessing information on other issues except among Irish and Spanish respondents who were more likely to be given information on finance than on the other topics.
In comparison, formation on education and on issues faced when growing up was generally easiest to access except for Finnish and Irish respondents, who found getting this type of information more difficult than getting advice on other issues.

5.2. *To summarise:*

> ➢ Respondents were also asked how easy it is for young people to get information on different issues. The countries which were best at providing information to young people were Belgium and Finland, where around seven in ten young people found it easy to access information. Ireland and Spain appeared to be the countries where young people found it most difficult to access information, with 35% and 16% of respondents respectively being provided with adequate advice.
>
> ➢ Overall, around half of all respondents said they could easily find information on these issues in their countries. On average, respondents found it easiest to find information on education, followed by information on issues faced when growing up and then information on sex and relationships. They found it slightly less easy to access information on work and careers, health and finance.

6. Use of the digital media

In order to better understand how young people access online information, it is first necessary to be aware of how they relate to digital media, how many hours they spend online, which online activities they engage with and the reasons why they go on the internet.

6.1. *Number of hours spent on the internet*

Young people were asked how much time they spent online each day. As Figure 2 shows, overall respondents spent between 1 to 4 hours every day online, with a small percentage spending less than an hour per day (an average of 5% across all the organisations involved).

As Figure 2 shows, the Finnish and of the English respondents spent the most time online (with an average of 55% and 49% of respondents respectively spending more than 4 hours per day online).

Figure 2: Time spent on the internet each day
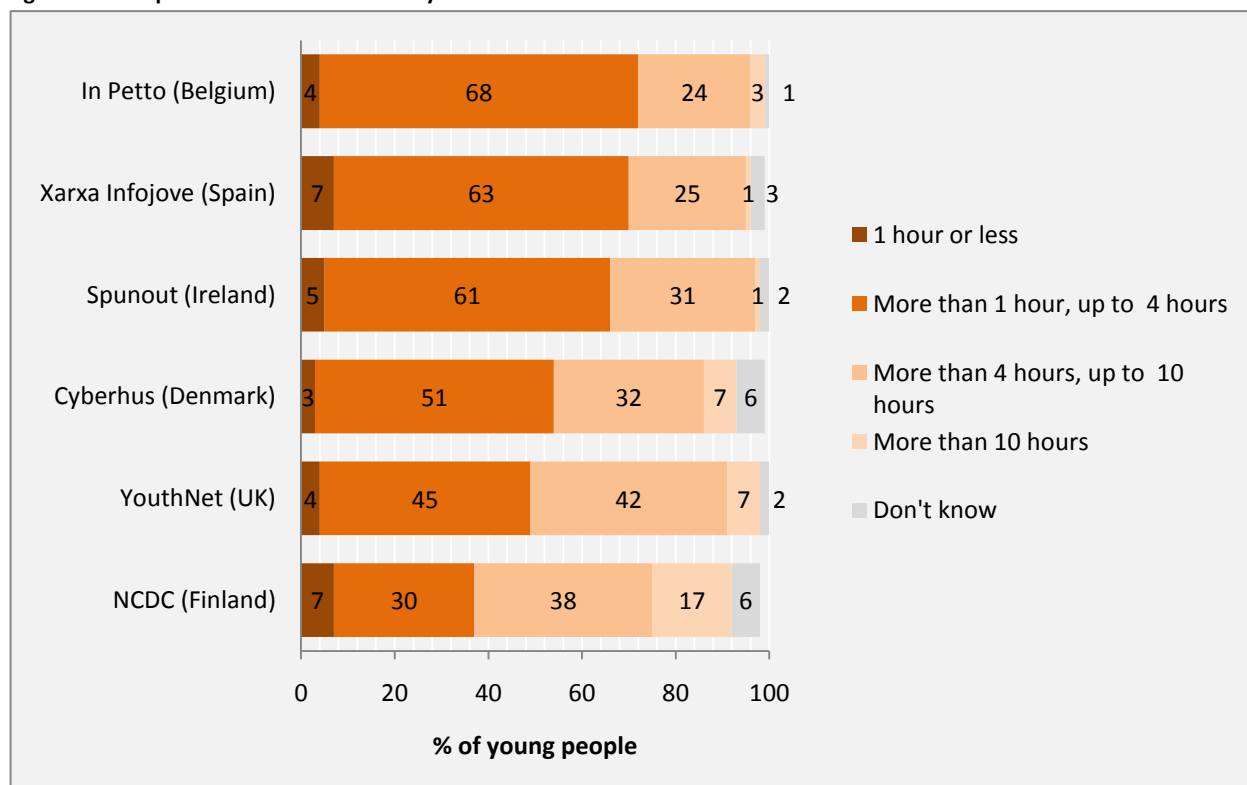
*Base: all respondents (*caution: low base size, self selection issues and variations among the bases of the different organisations)*

6.2. *Online activities*

Respondents were asked which types of activities they performed online the week before the survey. As Table 6 shows, the majority of respondents used social networking sites (an average of 88% across the countries taking part in the research) the week before completing the survey, with the Belgian respondents being the most engaged with social networks (96%) and the English respondents the least engaged (77%).

Other online activities we enquired about were:

- **Instant messaging services** (an average of 55% across countries), which the Belgian and Spanish respondents were more likely to engage with than other respondents (69% and 65% respectively)
- **Creating content**, such as using Twitter and posting videos on Youtube (accounting for overall engagement levels of 28% of respondents) and writing reviews (15%). As shown in Table 6, English respondents were the most engaged in creating and developing content, with around four out of ten creating content through YouTube, Twitter, blogging (36%) and around three in ten writing reviews (28%).
- **Accessing 'adult' internet content** (an average of 12% across organisations), with English and Irish respondents more likely to access this type of content (22% and 21% respectively)

For the purpose of the research, the focus is on the active and passive ways young people interact with the internet when searching for information.

- **Passively looking for information**: the more traditional way to search for information. Information of this type is usually static, non-interactive and created for a wide, nonspecific audience - for example factsheets, videos or audio content.
- **Actively looking for information:**
    - o **Discussion boards**: an interactive way to share experiences in a safe online environment where respondents can receive advice and support from their peers, facilitated by moderators
    - o **Asking questions**: seeking 1-to-1 confidential advice and support from an expert

As Table 6 shows, the young people involved in the research were more likely to browse the internet for study purposes (an average of 59% across the countries involved) than to participate in discussion boards (35%) or ask a question (22%).

English, Irish and Finnish respondents tended to be particularly engaged with seeking information online, both through passive content consumption for study purposes (respectively 60%, 61% and 72%), and through more active ways of looking for information, for example by participating in discussion forums (41%, 52%, 42% respectively) or by asking questions (the least common option, with 33%, 24% and 28% of respondents respectively using this service).

Table 6: Activities performed online the week before the questionnaire

| %	Used social network	Looked for info for study purposes	Used an instant messaging service	Taken part in discussion forums	Created content	Asked a question	Written reviews	Accessed "adult" internet content	Base
In Petto (Belgian)	96	64	69	14	23	10	10	20	70
NCDC (Finland)	92	72	54	42	30	28	10	14	569
Spunout (Ireland)	90	61	44	52	24	24	13	21	87
Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	87	69	65	14	22	15	23	5	149
Cyberhus (Denmark)	83	28	45	48	35	20	6	9	328
YouthNet (UK)	77	60	53	41	36	33	28	22	838
AVERAGE	88	59	55	35	28	22	15	12	

*Base: all respondents (*caution: low base size and significant variations between the bases of the different organisations)*

Figure 3 (below) shows there was a significant difference across respondents from the different countries between those who were actively and passively looking for information online.

Interestingly, a high proportion of Spanish and Belgian respondents passively searched for information online for study purposes (69% and 64% respectively), but were not particularly engaged with active ways to access online information. In fact only 14% of Spanish and Belgian respondents took part in interactive discussions through forums (against an average of 35%) while 15% and 10% of their respondents respectively engaged in more proactive activities such as asking questions online (against an average of 22 %).

The situation is the opposite for the Danish respondents, who preferred active ways to share and look for information, such as discussion forums (48% against an average of 35%), rather than just looking for existing information for study purposes (28% against an average of 52%).

Figure 3: Activities performed online the week before the questionnaire
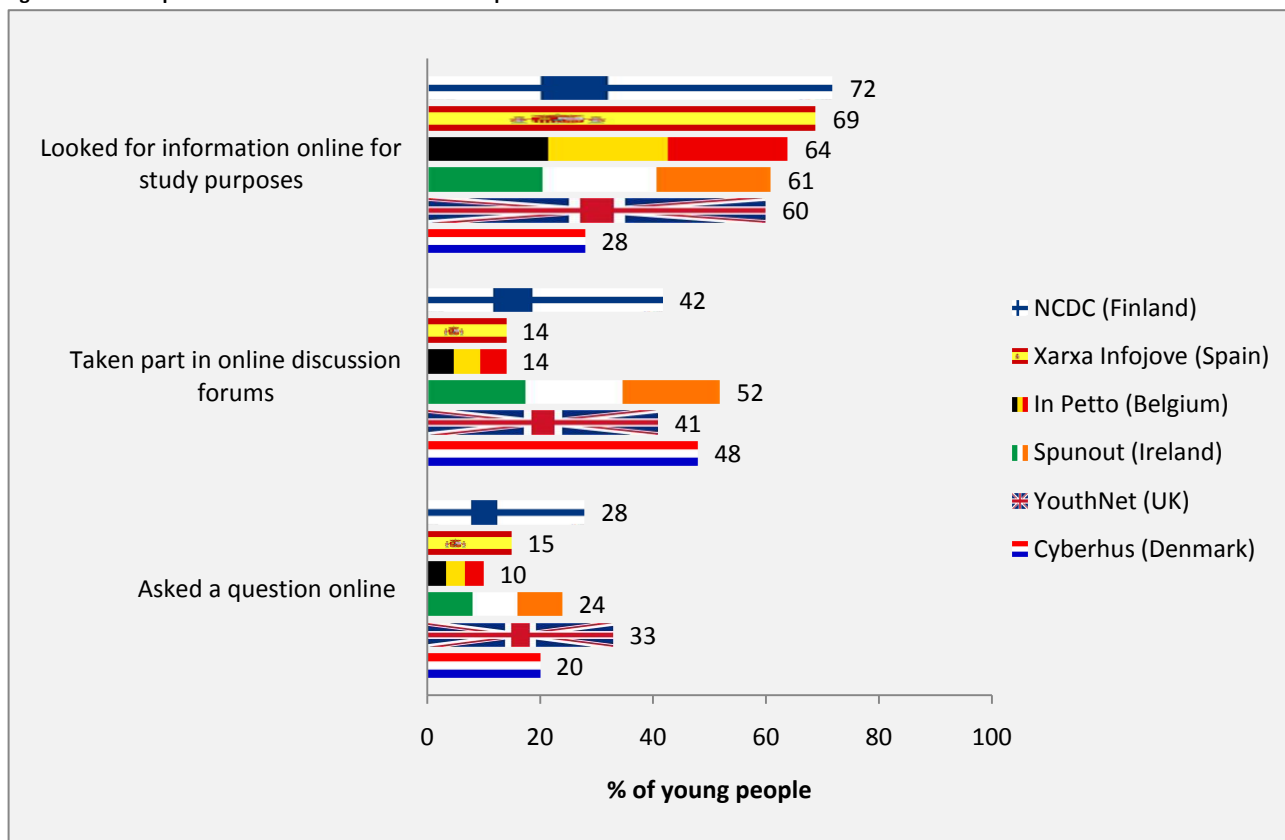
Base: all respondents (*caution: low base sizes and significant variations between the bases of the different organisations).

6.3. *Motivations to go online*

Respondents were asked whether they used the internet to look for information or advice for their own use, to give advice or to share experiences.

As Figure 4 shows, overall the young people responding to the survey used the internet to look for information for their own use (an average of 81% across the countries); Finnish, Irish and Belgian respondents were more likely than the others to use the internet for this reason (accounting for 94%, 92% and 91% of the total respectively).

By comparison, a significantly smaller proportion of respondents were actively engaged with the internet, with only 43% sharing their experiences online and 40% giving online advice.

Finnish and English respondents were more likely than the others to talk with other people and share their experiences (57% and 55% respectively). English respondents were also the most likely to give advice, with 54% of them doing so against an average of 40% across the countries.

Spanish respondents were least actively engaged with the internet, with only 21% of them going online to share their experiences and 17% to give advice.

Figure 4: Use of the internet
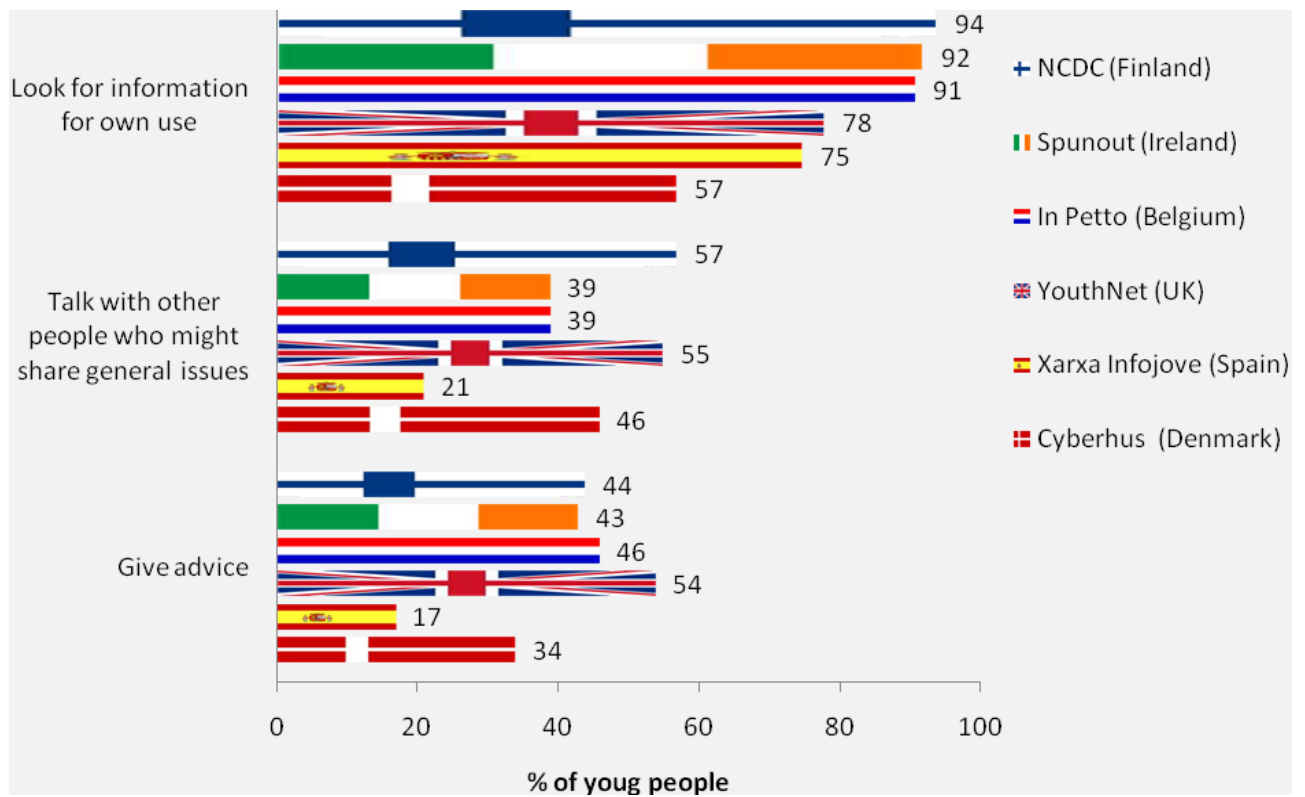
Base: all respondents (*caution: low base size and significant variations among the bases of the different organisations

6.4. *To summarise....*

> ➤ Overall, the young people surveyed across the six organisations in Europe were likely to spend between 1 and 4 hours a day on the internet. The English and Finnish respondents spent more time online than the others, since a significant majority of them tended to spend more than 4 hours per day online (55% and 49% respectively)
>
> ➤ The online activity that respondents were most engaged with was using social networks, with a vast majority of them engaging with this online activity the week before completing the survey.
>
> ➤ It is interesting to note the difference regarding passive and active searches for information online. When it comes to the main reasons for young people to go online, it appeared overall respondents used the internet to look for information for their own use (an average of 81% across the countries) rather than to actively engage with the internet as a means of giving advice (an average of 40% across the countries) and to share their experiences (an average of 43% across the countries).
>
> ➤ Finnish and English respondents were more likely than the others to talk with other people who might share their experiences (57% and 55% respectively). Conversely,, Spanish respondents were the least engaged with active online activities, with only 21% using the internet to share their experiences and only 17% giving advice online.

7. The internet as a source of information

Respondents were asked where they get information and advice on different topics; the use of the internet to access information was compared to other sources of information such as the guidance of professionals, parents and teachers or advice from friends or peers. Furthermore, respondents were asked to reflect on how they approach issues of trust and security online. Finally, young people were probed around the significance of anonymity when seeking advice on sensitive issues.

7.1. *Different sources of advice and information*

Respondents were asked which sources of information they used for different issues. As Table 7 shows, generally the internet was the most likely source for information on a range of topics, especially on issues such as drugs (an average of 41% across the countries), sex (39%) and to a lesser extent alcohol (35%).

This differed for other issues, for example, young people generally went to their parents and teachers for advice about finance.

Young people appeared to turn to their peers for information on relationships (accounting for 56% of respondents across the countries). Interestingly, a particularly small percentage of Spanish respondents used the internet as source of information on relationships (only the 5%). At the other extreme, English and Irish respondents were more likely to use the internet as source of information on relationships (26% of respondents).

When it comes to health issues, young people were likely to use various sources of information without preferring one in particular, asking for advice from professionals (an average of 32% across the countries), parents and teachers (an average of 28% across the countries) and going online (an average of 27% across the countries).

There was significant variation in the respondents' behaviours towards seeking information on health. The main source of information on health for Belgian and Danish respondents was parents and teachers (46% and 40% respectively); however, the biggest proportion of the Spanish respondents turned to professionals (54%), and the main source of information on health for Finnish respondents was the internet (44%).

Table 7: Most likely to turn to for advice...

	NCDC (Finland)	Spunout (Ireland)	In Petto (Belgium)	YouthNet (UK)	Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	Cyberhus (Denmark)
Alcohol	Online (57%)	Online (37%)	Online (34%)	Online (42%)	Peers (38%)	Parents& teachers (35%)
Sex	Online (54%)	Online (49%)	Online (50%)	Online (42%)	Peers (41%)	Peers (28%)
Drugs	Online (72%)	Online (43%)	Online (48%)	Online (47%)	Professionals (26%)	Parents& teachers (24%)
Relationships	Peers (50%	Peers (24%)	Peers (19%)	Peers (48%)	Peers (53%)	Peers (57%)
Finance	Parents& teachers (46%)	Parents& teachers (49%)	Parents& teachers (67%)	Parents & teachers (37%)	Parents& teachers (64%)	Parents& teachers (65%)
Health	Online (44%)	Online (35%)	Parents& teachers (46%)	Online (33%)	Professionals (54%)	Parents& teachers (40%)

*Base: all respondents (*caution: low base size, self selection issues and variations among the bases of the different organisations)*

Table 7 also shows that there are discrepancies in the behaviours of the respondents from different countries when choosing one source of information over others.

Finnish, English and Irish respondents tended to go online as a *main* source of advice for the majority of issues: alcohol (57%, 42% and 37% respectively), sex (54%, 42% and 49% respectively), drugs (72%, 47% and 43% respectively) and health (44%, 33% and 35% respectively).

Conversely, Spanish and Danish respondents were the least likely to use the internet as a source of information, since it did not appear to be the main source for any of the topics.

The Danish respondents were the most likely to ask their parents and teachers about issues on finance (65%) health (40%), alcohol (35%) and drugs (24%), demonstrating a very open relationship with adults. However, on topics such as sex and relationships they were more likely to ask for advice from their peers (28% and 57% respectively).

Spanish respondents tended to turn to their peers if they needed information or advice on relationships (53%), sex (41%) and alcohol (38%). In contrast to respondents from other organisations, they tended to use professional advice as a main source of information for drugs (26%) and health issues (54%).

7.2. *Challenges in dealing with online information*

The research attempted to explore the main challenges young people face when looking for information online. The main issues explored were around (1) the difficulty of trusting the accuracy of the information; and (2) the difficulty in finding relevant information.

As Figure 5 shows, overall the majority of the young people surveyed were aware of the difficulty of finding accurate information online, agreeing with the statement "on the internet you never know if somebody is who they say they are" (an average of 72% across the countries) and with the statement "I am wary of the information I find online" (70%).

Interestingly, there were not strong variations in the answers of the respondents from different countries. The only exception was English respondents, who generally tended to be slightly less worried about the information they find online (43% agreeing with the statement "I am wary of the information I find online" and 66% with the statement "on the internet you never know if somebody is who they say they are").

Respondents were also questioned on their ability to deal with the huge amount of information provided online and the difficulties of discerning what was good advice; they were asked to what extent they agree that "there is so much information out there, it is impossible to know what it is good advice and what isn't". Around half of respondents agreed with this statement (54%).

As Figure 5 shows, on average Belgian and Spanish respondents found it more difficult to separate good advice from bad advice than the other respondents interviewed (with 69% and 65% respectively agreeing with the above statement). Finnish and Danish respondents seemed to have the least trouble discerning what was good information (with 44% and 47% respectively agreeing with the statement "there is so much information out there, it is impossible to know what it is good advice and what isn't").

Figure 5: People agreeing with the following statements on trusting online information
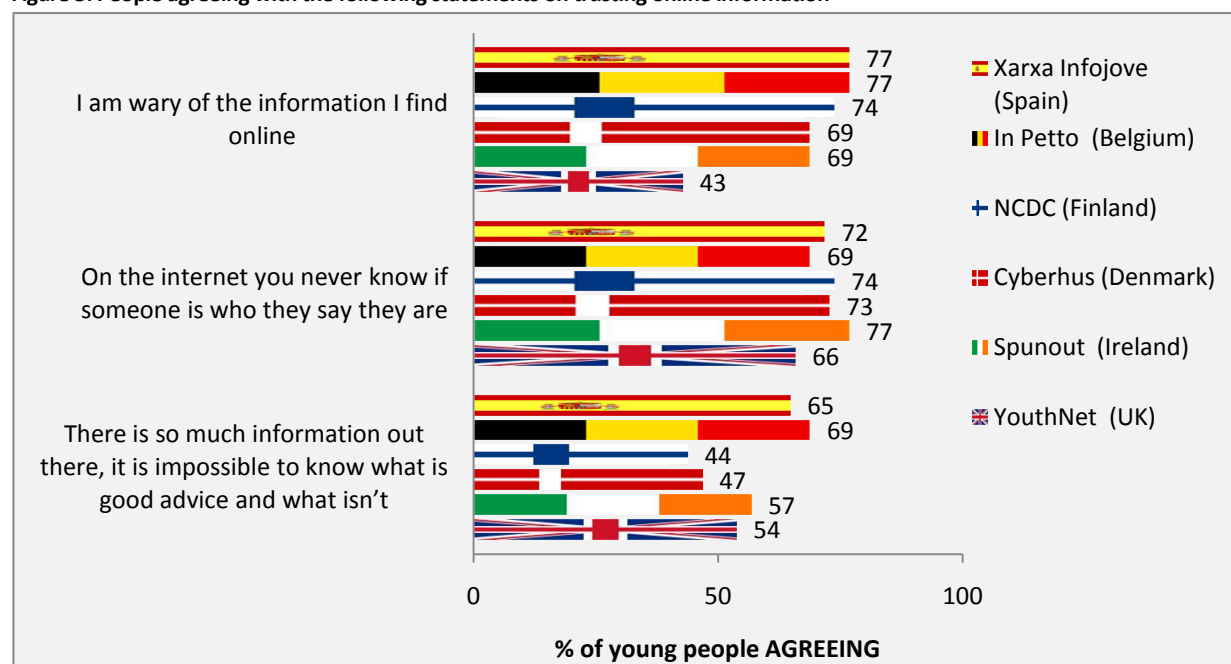
Base: all respondents (*caution: low base size, self selection issues and variations among the bases of the different organisations)

Young people were also asked an open question about the challenges they faced when using the internet for information. The analysis of the answers shows that young people tended to find it difficult to discern the good information from the bad, since there is much contradictory advice and often the authors of information are unknown. Another common challenge was a failure to use search engines, such as Google, in the most effective way. [7]

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[7] The answers analysed are from YouthNet's, Spunout and Xarxa Infojove', Cyberhus respondents (because of translation limitations)

"The only problems I have faced have been when I have used online forums. You don't always get the advice you want/need as you can get people using these forums who aren't very nice" (respondent from YouthNet)

"When looking at health related problems, internet diagnosing isn't the best idea. So much stuff comes up and something simple like a stress headache can be diagnosed as a brain tumour for example, via a search on google. Which then doesn't help the stress levels. "(respondent from YouthNet)

"Recognising a trustworthy website" (respondent from YouthNet)

"Searching for things and being unable to locate them. Searching for things and having inappropriate results show up" (respondent from YouthNet)

"False information, and lots of stupid adverts "(respondent from YouthNet)

"The unreliability and contradictions on the internet make it difficult to know what is fact and what is opinion" (respondent from

"Too much out there, hard to pick" (respondent from Spinout)

"Most of the times I cannot find what I am really looking for, I often find pages which have no useful information whatsoever and this is frustrating! "(respondent from Xarxa Infojove)

"Getting my head around the themes I have been looking for. I end up in pages that have nothing to do with what I have been originally looking for" (respondent from Xarxa Infojove)

"Many times the information is not accurate" (respondent from Xarxa Infojove)

"The only problem is that usually the information is wrong and from people who don't have a clue about the subject" (respondent from Xarxa Infojove)

> "Sometimes it is hard to decide which is the best advice when two different viewpoints can conflict" (respondent from YouthNet)

> "It is not always, that the information you get are true. You have to be careful and be realisitic when you search for information on the web. wether it is for schoolwork or for private use." (respondent from Cyberhus)

> "There is alot of bullshit on google, and it is difficult to know, what is true" (respondent of Cyberhus)

> "Yes, sometimes when I search for stuff, a pop-up window appears and ask me to fill out stuff, and then I leave again" (respondent of Cyberhus)

7.3. *Benefits of online information*

Respondents were questioned about the benefits of using the internet as source of information for sensitive issues. In analysing the benefits of online information, the research focused on the issue of anonymity. Young people looking for information on sensitive issues *online* (1) do not need to show their face or their voice and (2) can talk with perfect strangers who won't be able to associate the person with the issues discussed.

Figure 6 shows that, on average, English and Irish respondents seemed to be more concerned than others about their anonymity when talking about sensitive issues, with 65% and 63% respectively agreeing with the statement "when it comes to sensitive issues, I would rather speak to people who do not know me personally" and 56% and 53% agreeing with the statement "I can talk about things online that I can't talk about to people face to face".

Spanish respondents were less concerned about anonymity issues, with only 30% of respondents preferring to speak with strangers about sensitive issues and a similar percentage (32%) feeling more comfortable speaking online about certain issues.

Figure 6: People agreeing with the following statements
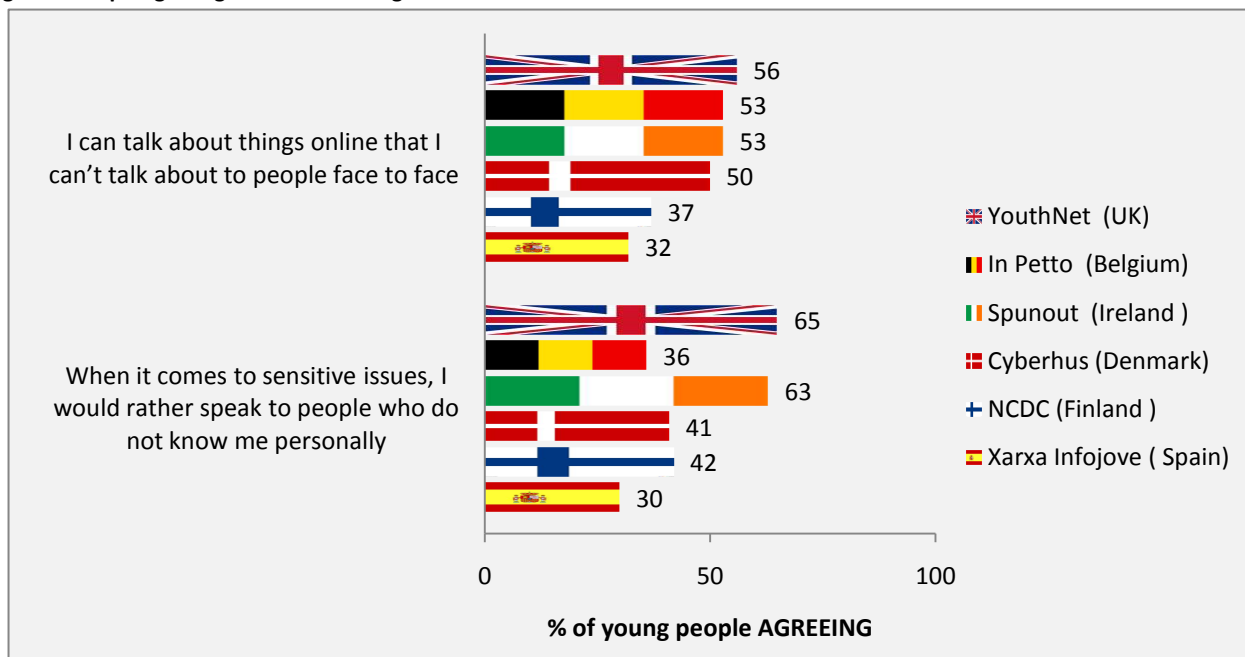
Base: all respondents (*caution: low base size, self selection issues and variations among the bases of the different organisations)

7.4.   *To summarise….*

> ➢ On average the internet was the most common source for information on a range of issues, especially for issues such as drugs (an average of 41% across the countries), sex (an average of 40% across the countries) and to a lesser extent , alcohol (an average of 40% across the countries).
>
> ➢ Finnish, English and Irish respondents tended to go online as a main source of advice for the majority of the issues: alcohol, sex, drugs and health. Spanish and Danish respondents were the least likely to use the internet as source of information
>
> ➢ Young respondents confirmed the hypothesis that the difficulty in discerning accurate and trustworthy information online is a big issue. Respondents were also probed about how they feel about the fact that when searching for information online their identity can be kept anonymous. On average, English and Irish respondents seemed to appreciate more than others the fact that the internet is an anonymous source of information.
>
> ➢ Spanish respondents were less concerned with anonymity issues.

8. Young people's use of the internet for building relationships

Finally, the survey analyses the role that the internet plays in building up online relationships, both with a close circle of people and with a broader community. Even though this issue is not the key focus of the research, it has to be recognised that the boundaries between the internet as a "source of information" and as "community- building" are often blurred. Therefore, in order to have a better understanding of how digital channels such as discussion forums and social media are used to share and get information, it is necessary to have an insight into how they are perceived in their broader meaning of "relationship- building".

8.1. *Internet as community building*

Young people taking part in the survey were asked a series of questions about the role of the internet in relationship-building, both in creating broader relationships and as facilitating closer relationships with online and offline "friends".

Young people were asked whether they felt the internet brings communities of people together and whether they saw themselves as part of this community. As Figure 7 shows, generally respondents seemed to be more likely to recognise the internet brings community together than to claim they are part of the community themselves. This is particularly true in the case of Finnish and Belgian respondents; they are more likely than other respondents to agree with the statement "the internet brings communities of similar people together" (88% and 87% of them respectively, against an average of 79%); however, they are the least likely to agree with the statement "thanks to the internet I feel part of new groups and community" (42% and 44% of them respectively, against an average of 51%).

Conversely, Danish respondents showed consistency between their perception of the internet as community building and their sense of belonging to this online community, 63% agreeing with both the statements. Danish respondents were also most likely to feel part of an online community themselves, followed by Irish and English respondents (59% and 47% agreeing with the statement "thanks to the internet I feel part of new groups and community" respectively). The majority of English and Irish respondents were also likely to think that the internet brings community of similar people together (85% and 82% respectively)

Figure 7: People agreeing with the following statements
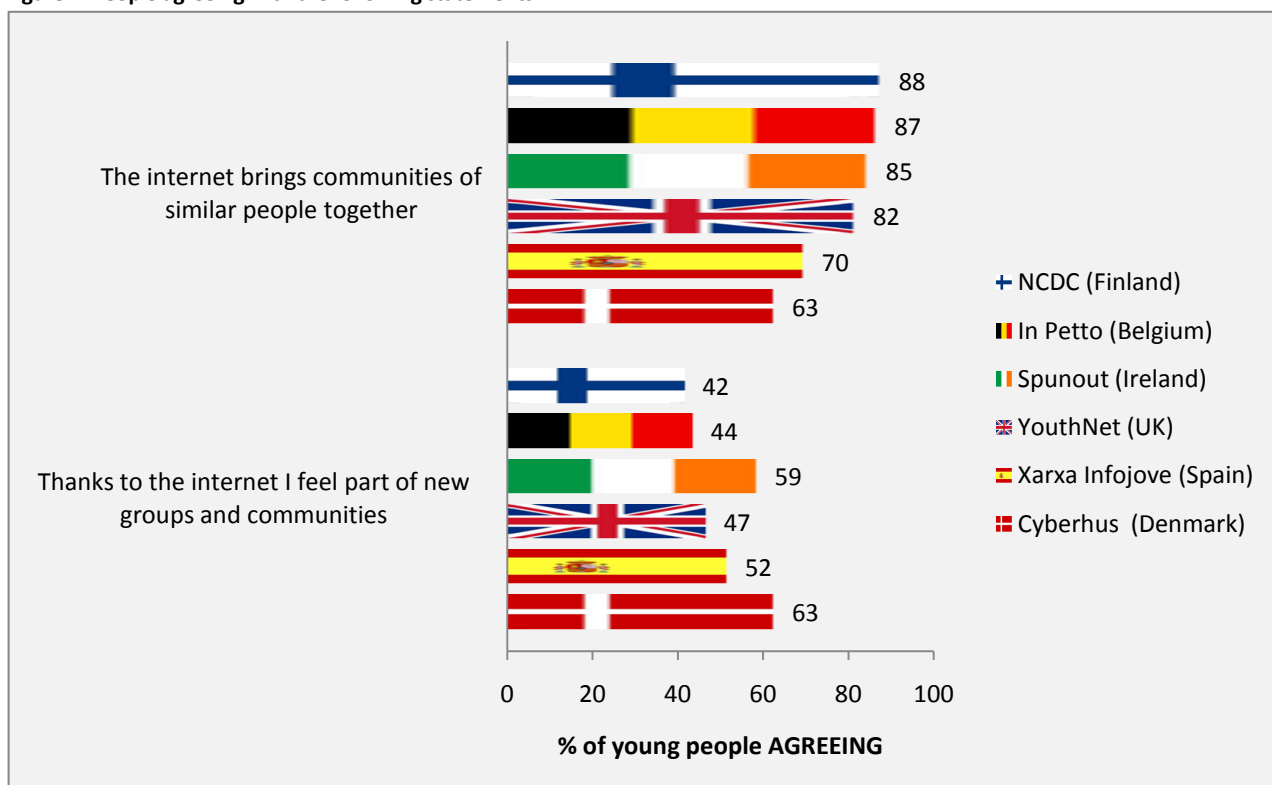
The internet brings communities of similar people together
- 88
- 87
- 85
- 82
- 70
- 63

Thanks to the internet I feel part of new groups and communities
- 42
- 44
- 59
- 47
- 52
- 63

Legend:
- ✚ NCDC (Finland)
- ▮▮ In Petto (Belgium)
- ▮▮ Spunout (Ireland)
- 🇬🇧 YouthNet (UK)
- 🇪🇸 Xarxa Infojove (Spain)
- 🇩🇰 Cyberhus (Denmark)

% of young people AGREEING

*Base: all respondents (*caution: low base size, self selection issues and variations among the bases of the different organisations)*

8.2. *Internet as helping relationship with friends*

Young people were also asked how the internet helped them develop and maintain their friendships. On average, respondents were more likely to perceive the internet as a broader community than a channel to reach friends when needed. This difference is clear especially in the case of Spanish respondents, since 52% of them felt part of new groups and communities thanks to the internet, and only 17% of them recognised that the internet made their friends more available when they needed them.

Figure **8** shows that more than half of Irish, Danish and English respondents appreciated the fact that through the internet they could reach their friends wherever they wanted, 60%, 56% and 53% respectively agreeing with the statement "the internet means my friends are there when I need them".

For Danish respondents, the friends they can reach through the internet are mostly "online friends", since 58% of respondents have never met these friends in their real life. On the other hand, Irish and English respondents tended to use the internet to reach friends they have in their real life, since only 33% and 40% respectively stated that they have friends online they had never met in real life.

Spanish respondents were least likely to use the internet to reach their friends when they need them (17%) and least likely to have friends online they had never met in the real life (22%).

Figure 8: People agreeing with the following statements
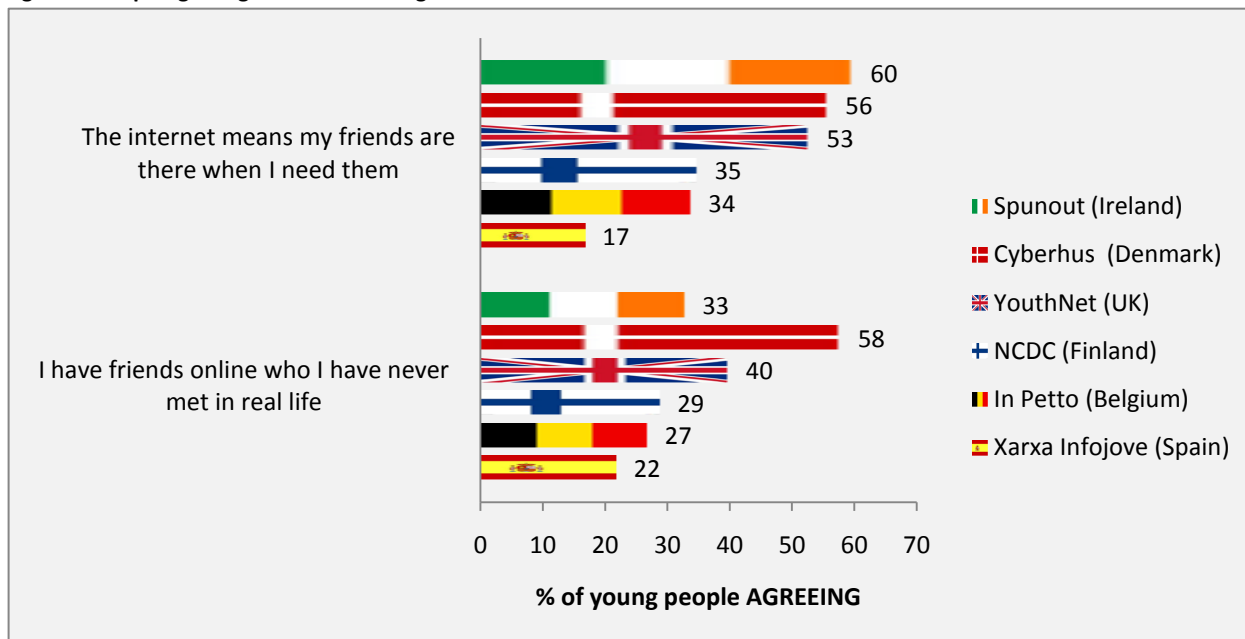
Base: all respondents (*caution: low base size, self selection issues and variations among the bases of the different organisations)

8.3. *To summarise….*

> ➢ Respondents seemed to be more likely to recognise the internet brings community together than to claim they are part of the community themselves.
> ➢ On the other hand, Danish respondents showed consistency between their perception of the internet as community building and their sense of belonging to this online community
> ➢ Irish and English appreciated the role of the internet in making their friends available at all the time but they tended to use the internet to reach their friends they have in their real life.
> ➢ Spanish respondents are the least likely to use the internet to reach their friends when they need them

9. Some typical narratives

The following paragraphs present the survey findings built into narrative form to represent "typical" respondents from each of the six countries involved. The narratives cannot be taken as representative of young people in these countries, but they are a provisional indication of the situation which then requires validation through further research.

Esben is a 14 years old boy from Denmark.

He usually spends between two and four hours online. Esben mainly uses the internet to communicate with his peers though social networks (his main online activity), instant messaging services and taking part in discussion forums. In fact, Esben mainly goes online because he wants to be part of new groups and communities and to access his friends when he needs. Interestingly, Esben has a lot of good friends online that he has never met in real life, showing that his online community is separated from his real life.

Esben rarely uses the internet to find information for his own purposes. In fact, Esben never uses the internet as his primary source of information when it comes to finding the answer to different issues. He rather prefers to ask his parents and teachers about questions related to health, finance and even alcohol and drugs. When it comes to questions on sex and relationships, Esben prefers to go to his peers. Like his European friends, Esben is wary of the information he finds online; at the same time, Esben is pretty confident he can discern what is good advice and what is not.

Esben

Francisco is a 16 year old male from Spain.

He spends less time online than his European friends, around two hours per day, in particular on social networks. Francisco recognises that the internet makes him feel, somehow, part of a broader community.

However, Francisco says he does not go online to share his experiences with others. For example, he hardly ever uses discussion forums, not feeling particularly comfortable about speaking about sensitive issues with people he doesn't know. Furthermore, he doesn't feel he needs the internet to access his friends when he needs them and all his friends are real people he relates to in his real life: Francisco doesn't feel that he needs the internet to build new friendships.

Francisco uses the internet mainly to look for information for his own use, especially for study purposes. Interestingly though, when asked whether he uses the internet as main source of information for sensitive issues, he realises that he prefers to ask parents and teachers questions on finance, a professional if he has doubts on health and drugs and his peers questions on alcohol, sex and relationships. Francisco is wary of the information he finds online.

Francisco

Maya is a 17 year old girl from Finland - although she lived the first six years of her life in Sweden.

She is online for more than 4 hours most days, more than her European friends. When she goes online she always engages with social networks, being more familiar with them than most of her European friends.

Maya often goes online to talk with other people who might share general issues and in fact she often participates in discussion forums. However, when asked about the reasons why she uses an online platform to share her experiences, she is not sure. Interestingly, Maya's online behaviour does not match her responses to the survey. For example, one might expect a young person who frequently uses discussion forums (such as Maya) to feel a part of a community, to dislike talking about issues face to face, and to prefer to speak about sensitive issues anonymously and with people they do not know personally. However, despite the fact that she often uses discussion forums, Maya does not agree with these statements.

The main reason why she goes online is to search information for her own use. In fact, compared to her European friends, she is the most likely to use the internet for study purposes. She uses the internet as main source of information for a range of topics such as alcohol, sex, drugs and health. She is used to searching for information online, therefore she is more capable than her European friends to discern what it is good advice and what is not. Still, she is wary of the information she can find online, almost as much as her Spanish and Belgian friends.

Maya

Bridget is a 17 year old girl from Belgium.

She usually spends between two and four hours online per day.

While Bridget recognises the power of the internet in bringing communities together as through social networks, contradictorily she does not particularly feel part of this online community and she does not recognise the role that the internet has in making her friends always available.

She is the most likely of her European friends to use social networks; she also uses instant messaging services very often and definitely more frequently than the other people answering the questionnaire. On the opposite side, Bridget never participates in discussion forums since she does not particularly make use of the internet to talk with people who might share sensitive issues, preferring to speak about these issues with people who know her personally rather than to strangers online.

Bridget mainly goes online to look for information for her own purposes. She uses the internet as a main source of information on issues such as alcohol, sex and drugs. Nevertheless, she is very wary of the quality of this information and she is the least confident of her European friends in discerning good from bad advice. Finally, when asked whether young people in her country are given enough information about certain topics important to them, she recognises that overall they are, with the exception of information on finance, and health to a lesser extent. When she has questions on these issues Bridget prefers to ask her parents or teachers.

Bridget

Caroline is an 18 year old girl from Ireland.

She usually spends between two and four hours online per day, mainly on social networks.

She also spends more time than her European friends on discussion forums. Caroline, like her English friend Susan, is the most concerned about her anonymity when talking about sensitive issues. She recognises that for her it's easier to talk about things online that she couldn't talk about to people face-to-face and she prefers to discuss sensitive issues with people don't know personally.

Furthermore, Caroline strongly thinks that the internet has the power to bring similar people together and to some extent she feels part of this online community. The internet also means for her that her friends are there when she needs them, even if Caroline mostly uses online channels to be in contact with her real life friends from, as opposed to exclusive online friends.

From what Caroline indicated, the main reason why she goes online such as participates in discussion forums is usually to access information for her own use, rather than to share her experiences. In fact, the internet is her main source of information for issues as sex, drugs, alcohol and health.

Caroline

Susan is a 20 year old girl from England.

She spends more than four hours online most days –more than her European friends.

In comparison to the other respondents, Susan is engaged in a number of various online activities. Like her European friends, she mainly uses social networks, but she often uses the internet for study purposes and she also engages in instant message services.

She also participates in discussion forums quite often; in fact, Susan stated that a significant reason for her to go online is so that she can talk with people who might share her issues and to give advice. Furthermore, Susan is more conscious than her European friends of her anonymity when searching for answers to sensitive issues. She prefers to talk online about particular issues and to open up to people who don't know her personally. Therefore, participating in anonymous discussion boards offers a suitable opportunity to find answers without disclosing her identity.

Finally, unlike her European friends, Susan sometimes creates online content (e.g. though Twitter or Youtube). Less often she writes online reviews, but she is definitely more engaged in this activity than her European friends.

Even if she is engaging with so many different online activities, Susan accesses the internet mainly to search information for her own use; in fact the internet is her main source of information for issues such as drugs, alcohol, sex and health. Of her European friends, she is the least concerned about the difficulties of finding accurate information online, even if she recognises that there is so much information online that sometimes if difficult to discern what it is a good advice and what it is not.

Susan

10. Conclusions

The findings from the online survey draw an initial picture of young people's attitudes and behaviours towards the internet and online information-seeking behaviour across six countries in Europe.

The report shows the majority of young people surveyed around Europe are mainly using the internet to access information for their own use; however, the online channels they use, whether the internet is their main source of information for sensitive issues, their attitudes towards anonymity and their ability to discern good from bad advice vary from country to country.

The exception is Danish respondents, who seemed to be the least likely to use the internet to look for advice for their own use, mainly using the internet to access their online friends and to be able to feel part of new groups and communities.

Generally, English, Finnish and Irish respondents tended to be the most likely to use the internet as the main source of information for sensitive topics.

Irish and English respondents appeared to be the more familiar with handling a great quantity of uncertain information and the ones most concerned about their anonymity when looking fro information online. Interestingly Finnish respondents appeared to be very wary about the information they find online preferred to speak about sensitive issues with people they know and face-to face rather than online.
Conversely Belgian and Spanish respondents seemed to be the least likely to use the internet as main source of information, preferring to get face-to-face advice on several issues because of concerns about the quality of the information found online.

The findings regarding young people' patterns of behaviours when searching for information online are rather blurry, because they are not representative of the users of organisations taking part in the research, and, due to the small sample size, they also do not precisely reflect young people in Spain, Ireland, England, Denmark, Finland and Belgium. Nevertheless, this picture discloses many themes that need to be explored further and it will serve to direct research into areas for further investigation.

11.   Appendix

11.1.   *Tables*

Table 8: Amount of time spent on the internet

	1 hour or less	More than 1 hour, up to 4 hours	More than 4 hours, up to 10 hours	More than 10 hours	Don't know	Base
NCDC (Finland)	7	30	38	17	6	569
YouthNet (UK)	4	45	42	7	2	149
Cyberhus (Denmark)	3	51	32	7	6	328
Spunout (Ireland)	5	61	31	1	2	70
Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	7	63	25	1	3	838
In Petto (Belgians)	4	68	24	3	1	87

Table 9: Activities performed online in the last week

%	Used social network	Looked for info for study purposes	Used an instant messaging service	Taken part in discussion forums	Created content	Asked a question	Written reviews	Accessed "adult" internet content	Base
In Petto (The Belgian)	96	64	69	14	23	10	10	20	70
NCDC (Finland)	92	72	54	42	30	28	10	14	569
Spunout (Ireland)	90	61	44	52	24	24	13	21	87
Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	87	69	65	14	22	15	23	5	149
Cyberhus (Denmark)	83	28	45	48	35	20	6	9	328
YouthNet (UK)	77	60	53	41	36	33	28	22	838
AVARAGE	88	59	55	35	28	22	15	12	

Table 10: Main sources of information for different issues[8]

%	Source most likely to turn for info on alcohol				Source most likely to turn for info on sex				Source most likely to turn for info on drugs			
	Parents & teachers	Professionals	Peers	Online	Parents and teachers	Professionals	Peers	Online	Parents and teachers	Professionals	Peers	Online
NCDC (Finland)	13	7	18	57	2	8	15	54	8	9	5	72
Spunout (Ireland)	11	7	35	37	5	7	31	49	6	8	33	43
In Petto (The Belgian)	17	2	32	34	3	1	35	50	10	10	22	48
YouthNet (UK)	12	11	22	42	10	8	29	42	11	10	18	47

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[8] Note that different categories have been summed up together (NOT averaged) to facilitate the analysis: parents + teacher; friends + brother and sisters: internet search + online forums + online help site.

Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	24	9	38	19	19	17	41	16	21	26	22	19
Cyberhus (Denmark)	35	4	27	20	21	6	28	24	24	20	18	19
AVAREGE	19	7	29	35	10	8	30	39	13	14	20	41

Table 11: Main sources of information for different issues[9]

%	Source most likely to turn for info on relationships				Source most likely to turn for info on finance				Source most likely to turn for info on health			
	Parents & teachers	Professionals	Peers	Online	Parents and teachers	Professionals	Peers	Online	Parents and teachers	Professionals	Peers	Online
NCDC (Finland)	11	1	50	26	46	13	3	30	14	31	2	44
Spunout (Ireland)	10	1	60	24	49	11	10	22	17	32	6	35
In Petto (The Belgian)	3	1	70	19	67	6	4	15	46	21	4	23
YouthNet (UK)	11	4	48	26	37	13	13	26	15	31	10	33
Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	25	5	53	5	64	15	4	11	35	54	3	7
Cyberhus (Denmark)	18	2	57	10	65	12	2	9	40	20	5	18
AVAREGE	13	2	56	18	55	12	6	19	28	32	5	27

Table 12: Whether used the internet to find information

	Look for information for yourself	Give advice	Talk with other people who might share general issues	Base
Cyberhus (Denmark)	57	34	46	328
Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	75	17	21	149
YouthNet (UK)	78	54	55	838
In Petto (Belgians)	91	46	39	70
Spunout (Ireland)	92	43	39	87
NCDC (Finland)	94	44	57	569

Table 13: Agreement with statements on the internet

	When it comes to sensitive issues, I would rather speak to people who do not know me personally	I can talk about things online that I can't talk about to people face to face	Base
YouthNet (UK)	65	56	838
Spunout (Ireland)	63	53	87

[9] Note that different categories have been summed up together (NOT averaged) to facilitate the analysis: parents + teacher; friends + brother and sisters: internet search + online forums + online help site.

In Petto (Belgian)	36	53	70
Cyberhus (Denmark)	41	50	328
NCDC (Finland)	42	37	569
Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	30	32	149

Table 14: Agreement with statements on the internet

	I am wary of the information I find online	There is so much information out there, it is impossible to know what it is good advice and what isn't	On the internet you never know if someone is who they say they are	I think the internet is a safe place as long as you know what you're doing	Base
In Petto (Belgian)	77	69	69	72	70
Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	77	65	72	68	149
Spunout (Ireland)	69	57	77	80	87
NCDC (Finland)	74	44	74	85	569
Cyberhus (Denmark)	69	47	73	78	328
YouthNet (UK)	43	54	66	73	838

Table 15: Agreement with statements on the internet

	Thanks to the internet I feel part of new groups and communities	The internet brings communities of similar people together	The internet means my friends are there when I need them	Thanks to the internet I feel part of new groups and communities	Base
Cyberhus (Denmark)	63	63	56	58	328
Xarxa Infojove (Spain)	52	70	17	22	149
YouthNet (UK)	47	82	53	40	838
Spunout (Ireland)	59	85	60	33	87
In Petto (Belgium)	44	87	34	27	70
NCDC (Finland)	42	88	35	29	569

11.2. *Questionnaire*

1. How much time do you spend on the internet each day?
- Less than an hour
- Between one hour and two hours
- More than two hours, up to four hours
- More than four hours, up to six hours
- More than six hours, up to ten hours
- More than ten hours
- Don't know

2. Thinking of the internet, which have you done in the last week?
- Taken part in online discussion forums/chat rooms
- Created or contributed online content (e.g. YouTube videos, Irc, blog posts)
- Used a social networking site (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, IRC Galleria)
- Used an instant messaging service (e.g. MSN)
- Asked a question online for other people to answer online
- Written reviews of products or events
- Looked for information online for study purposes
- Accessed 'adult' or sexually explicit internet content
- None of these

3. What would you say you use the internet for the most?
- Open-ended
- Don't know

4. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
- The internet brings communities of similar people closer together
- I think the internet is a safe place as long as you know what you're doing
- Thanks to the internet I feel part of new groups and communities
- I have good friends online who I have never met in real life
- I feel happiest when I'm online
- On the internet you never know if someone is who they say they are
- I couldn't live without the internet
- I trust the opinions of people who give me advice on online forums and discussion boards
- I am wary of the information I find online
- The internet means my friends are there whenever I need them
- I am concerned about coming across inappropriate websites by accident
- I would like information about how to use the internet safely

  - o Agree strongly
  - o Agree slightly
  - o Neither agree nor disagree
  - o Disagree slightly
  - o Disagree strongly
  - o Don't know

5. **We'd like to understand more about what you do and where you go when you need information, help or advice about issues you are worried about. Which of the following sources of advice would you be most likely to turn to for information or advice about alcohol?**

[same for sex, relationships, drugs, finance and health]

- Friends
- Parents
- Brothers or sisters
- Magazines
- A professional or expert in the subject (e.g. doctor, lawyer)
- Internet search
- Online forums/discussion groups
- An online 'help site' (e.g. talktofrank.com for UK)
- A telephone or 'chat' helpline (e.g. Samaritans for UK)
- Teachers or other adults at school, college or university
- Other – please specify
- None of these

6. **Have you ever used the internet to…**
- Look for information and advice for yourself
- Look for information and advice for someone else
- Give advice to others on sensitive issues
- Talk with other people who might share general issues and concerns
- None of these

NCDC ONLY:

7. **Have you used any particular websites to look for information, advice and guidance online? If so, which ones?**
- Open-ended
- Don't know

ALL ORGS:

8. **Have you faced any challenges or problems when looking for information, advice and guidance online? If so, please tell us about them.**
- Open-ended
- Don't know

9. **How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**
- When it comes to sensitive issues that are personal to me, I would rather speak to people who do not know me personally
- I can access all the information and support I need online – there is no need to speak to a real person about my problems
- There's so much information out there, it is impossible to know what is good advice and what isn't
- I can talk about things online that I can't talk about to anyone face to face
- I am a different person online to offline
- I would never talk to people online about my personal life
- Other people the same age as me are more likely to understand my problems than my parents or other older adults

- o Agree strongly
- o Agree slightly
- o Neither agree nor disagree
- o Disagree slightly
- o Disagree strongly
- o Don't know

10. **As a young person from Finland, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**
- Young people in [country] are given lots of information, advice and guidance about issues they might face when they are growing up
- It's easy to get useful and relevant information about my finances in [country]
- It's easy to get useful and relevant information about sex and relationships in [country]
- It's easy to get useful and relevant information about housing in [country]
- It's easy to get useful and relevant information about mental health in [country]
- It's easy to get useful and relevant information about physical health in [country]
- It's easy to get useful and relevant information about my education in [country]
- It's easy to get useful and relevant information about work and careers in [country]
- It's easy to get useful and relevant information about what to do in my spare time in [country]

- o Agree strongly
- o Agree slightly
- o Neither agree nor disagree
- o Disagree slightly
- o Disagree strongly
- o Don't know

11. **In your own words, please tell us about your experience of seeking information, advice or guidance as a young person in [country]. What have you found useful? What have you found less useful? What improvements do you think could be made?**
- Open ended
- Don't know

12. **Which of the following websites have you heard of?**
- [List of IAG websites in country]

13. **You said you've heard of these websites. Which have you used?**
- [List of IAG websites in country]

ALL ORGS:

Finally, please can you tell us a bit about yourself? We'll only use this information for analysis.

14. **Are you...**
- Male
- Female
- I'd prefer not to say

15. How old are you?
- [Enter number]
- I'd prefer not to say

16. Where do you live?
- [List of regions]

IF 16 to 25 FROM THE UK:

17. Are you happy for us to contact you for further research on this topic? If so, don't forget to leave your email address on the next screen.
- Yes
- No

18. For your chance to win one of ten pairs of movie tickets, please enter your email address below. Don't worry we won't use your address for anything else unless you said we can in the last question.
- Open-ended