

# Norton<sup>™</sup> Online Family Report:

## Global insights into family life online

June 2010

**62% of children worldwide  
have had a negative online  
experience**

Allow

Deny





**D**o you think your child spends too much time online? Do you worry about them seeing violent or indecent images and chatting with strangers? Do you fear them meeting up with someone they've befriended online? If you do, **you are not alone.**

More than 7,000 adults and 2,800 children, aged eight to 17, in 14 countries took part in research for the **Norton Online Family Report.**

## SUMMARY

The **Norton Online Family Report** examines children's online behavior and experiences compared with parents' knowledge and understanding of these. It highlights key contrasts and disconnects between parents and their children and offers advice and guidance for parents on how to bridge the gaps.

The Report finds that children are spending an increasing amount of time online, and in general parents are aware of this and have a fair idea of the main activities their children participate in online. Parents are concerned about children accessing indecent material or giving out personal information online, yet they underestimate the extent to which children download games, music and video. These are key activities which may expose children to inappropriate content and encourage them to disclose their personal details.



The **good news** is that children actually want more parental involvement in their online lives.

The perceived need for parents to control children's online activities varies hugely. In Canada and the US, **six in 10 adults** think parents should have **full control** over everything their child does online. In Italy and China, however, parents are more likely to believe in **empowering** their children to make the right decisions.

One of the most surprising insights from the Report is parents' lack of awareness about the extent of children's negative experiences online. Almost **two thirds** of children have had a negative experience online, whereas only **45%** of parents realize this.

Children take an enormous sense of responsibility for their negative experiences online, perhaps without justification. They report feelings of anger, being upset and fear when they encounter an unpleasant situation.

The **good news** is that children actually want more parental involvement in their online lives. The majority state they would like to turn to their parents for support and advice when things go wrong.

Children understand that ethical behavior is as important online as it is offline and are setting their own rules for acceptable online behavior. Children's own rules include not bullying or harassing people online, not passing on embarrassing photos or posts about others, telling parents if they or others are being bullied, and not saying or doing things online that they wouldn't do in an offline world.

There is clearly an important role for parents to play by increasing their understanding of the Internet, the role it plays in their children's lives, and the experiences their children are having online. Children need 'parenting' online as much as they do in their offline lives, and they would welcome more parental involvement. Please read on for further details.



“As a professional Internet safety advisor, even I am surprised by some of the findings in this new Report,” says Marian Merritt, Norton Internet Safety Advocate.

“Parents do worry about predators, but they seem to be overlooking more common threats, such as cyberbullying. And more than half of all families are putting themselves at risk through children’s unchecked downloading behavior.

“Technology is part of the solution, but a lot of it is about **good parenting**. The singularly most effective way to help keep your children safe online is to have an **ongoing dialogue** with them.

There’s so much we can do to make sure our children have a positive experience online. This Report shows us where to focus our efforts right now.”





**10%** increase in children's time online<sup>1</sup>

## KIDS' TIME ONLINE

Globally, children are spending more time online: on average, more than **1.6 hours per day**.

This adds up to around 11.4 hours per week, an **increase of 10%** compared to 2009 figures.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps surprisingly, nearly half (**48%**) of children worldwide think they spend too much time online.

Brazilian children go online the most, spending on average **18.3 hours** online a week. However, **eight of ten** admit this is too much.

In Japan, where youngsters spend only **5.6 hours** on the Internet, less than **two in ten** think this is excessive.

## PARENTS GET WISER

Parents are generally wising up to children's online lives. Last year, parents underestimated the time children spent online by **50%**. Now they are more in sync.

In India, parents know **exactly** how many hours their children spend online. And Spanish families are in tune with each other too.

But parents in China still **underestimate** the time their children spend online.

1. Norton Online Living Report 2009: children spent 9.17 hours online per week





## WHO'S IN CONTROL?

In total, **44%** of adults think parents should have full control of their children's online activities. This rises to **61%** in Canada and the USA.

**Four out of ten** parents say they *always* know what their child looks at online, but **52%** say they only know *sometimes*.

Swedish parents are the least likely to know what children look at (**17%**).

**Five percent** of all parents admit they have no idea what their children are doing online, although **20%** of children claim this.

This may, in part, be down to parents' lack of knowledge about children's access to the Internet.

## Top Tip:

To see what your child sees online, use:

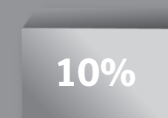
- the 'History' button on your web browser
- the 'Search' tab or 'Web Activity' tab within **Norton Online Family**
- **OnlineFamily.Norton.com**

## KNOWLEDGE GAP

Children who have Internet access via their mobile phone:



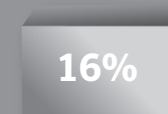
Percentage of parents who know this:



Children who access the Internet outside of the home:



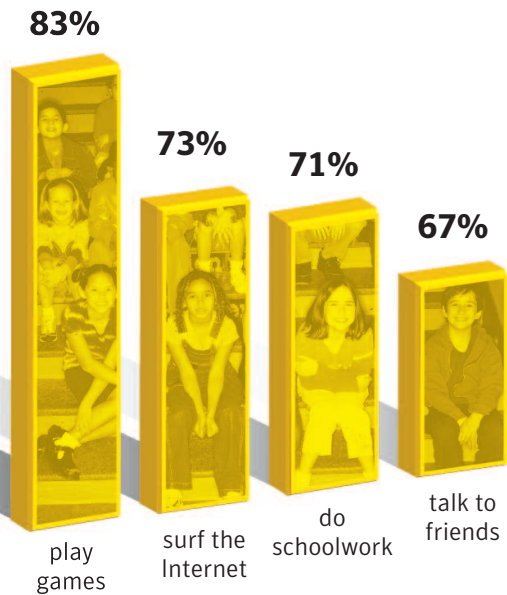
Percentage of parents who realize this:



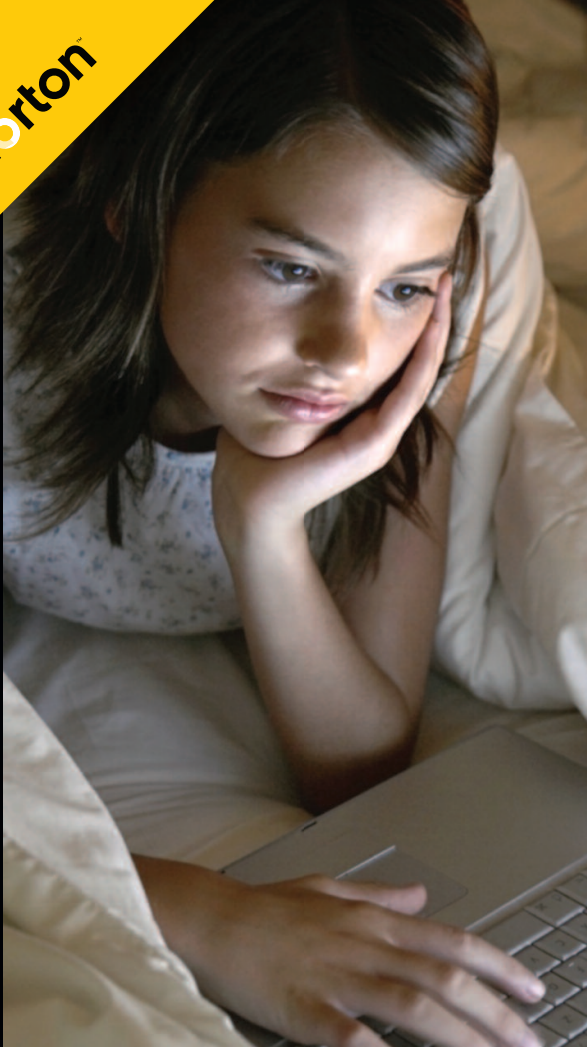
## WHAT KIDS DO ONLINE

Children in Canada are the top gamers (**93%**). Brazilian children are very active online, **9 in 10** doing school work online, surfing the net and talking to friends online.

### Global Data







**On average, 62% of children worldwide have had a negative online experience.**

## PARENTAL FEARS

Parents correctly identify children's top four online activities. But they are anxious about their children being online.

**Six out of ten** parents:

- worry about their children being exposed to indecent material
- fear they'll give out too much personal information

The research shows that parents have good cause for concern ...

## NOT ALL FUN AND GAMES

While playing games is children's number one activity, it's not always fun online. On average, **62%** of children worldwide have had a negative online experience. This is significantly higher than parents realize. Only **45%** of parents thought their children had suffered any negative online experience.

"I went in for fun, I got 5 or 6 pop ups every few seconds, totally disgusting: let's have cam chat — please remove your clothes."

*Ronak, India*

## CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES

someone I don't know tried to add me as a friend on a social networking site:



I downloaded a virus:



I've seen violent or nude images online:



someone I don't know online tried to get me to meet them in real life:





IT'S MY  
FAULT

## THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT

These are the mixed emotions associated with negative online experiences for children:

ANGRY UPSET  
WORRIED *afraid*  
SHOCKED  
ANNOYED  
ASHAMED *disgusted*  
confused  
DISTRUSTFUL

**One third** of children feel  
anger, upset, fear and worry

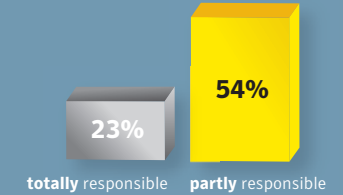


**One fifth** of children feel embarrassed  
and live with online regrets

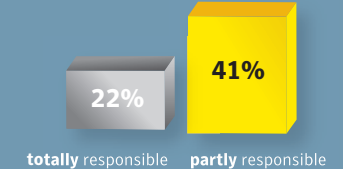


Children feel increasing levels of responsibility for their negative experiences online, and sometimes without justification.

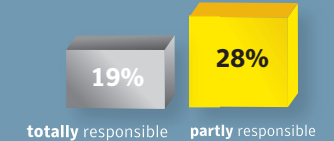
I downloaded a **virus** to the computer:



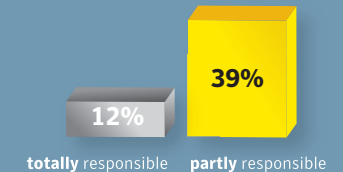
I responded to an online/email **scam**:



I received **sexual images** of someone I know:



I've seen **violent/nude** images:



## EXPERT INSIGHT



According to Marian Merritt, Norton Internet Safety Advocate, “This is a **dangerous cocktail**. Children are feeling responsible about many things that are **not their fault** and emotions are running high.

“As adults, we tend to visit a number of trusted websites whereas children surf the Internet much more freely – for fun and for homework. This exposes them, and their families, to many more online risks.

“A 13-year old boy isn’t going to tell you if he’s searched for and seen a naked woman. But he may get upset if he innocently comes across indecent images or downloads a virus.

“It’s crucial children know their parents will listen to them and partner with them to set things right.

“If they think they’ll be blamed or punished, they’ll simply push things underground.”





# HELP!



The **good news** is that if something goes wrong online, children do turn to adults for help, support and advice.

**87%** would seek adult support if threatened with physical harm

**84%** would tell an adult if they were being blackmailed or threatened online

**71%** would report something suspicious or inappropriate

## PARENTAL GUIDANCE?

Parents are doing different things to try and protect their children online. More than **90%** have some rules/controls about their child's use of the Internet.

**Nine out of 10** children say they follow their family's rules.

However, almost half of children (**48%**) think *they* are more careful online than their parents.

**71%** of parents have spoken to their kids about safe online habits



**54%** of parents have rules about how much time kids may spend online



**47%** of parents check their child's Internet usage



**45%** of parents have rules about safe websites



**34%** of parents check their child's social network site



"I'm more worried about the kids than cybercrime... they're always one step ahead of adults who are **behind the times.**"  
*Andrea, parent, USA*

## DOWNLOAD DANGERS

More than half of children **(51%)** said their parents let them download computer games on their own, without supervision.

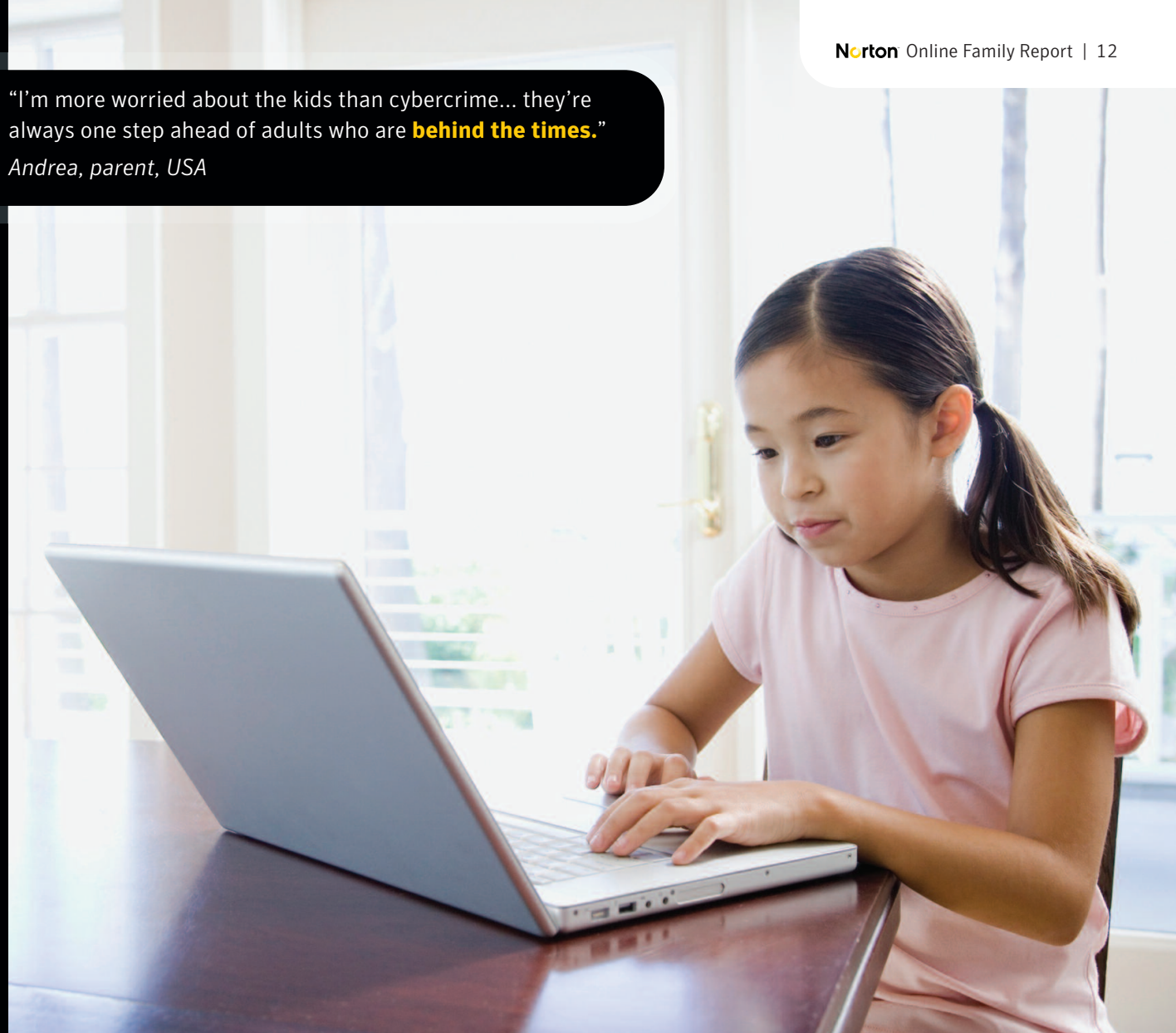
Parents need to realize the risks of 'free' downloads. Without up-to-date protection the family computer — and any networked computers — could easily become infected with a malicious application.

Children could also fall victim to unexpected contracts and charges if they don't check the smallprint. For instance, some firms ask for a cellular phone number and charge that instead of a credit card or bank account.

**51% of children download computer games on their own, without supervision**

Allow

Deny







## KIDS ESTABLISH ONLINE RULES

In addition to parents' Internet rules, **95%** of children have established their own online rules.

While parents focus on time and search limits, children are setting the standards for good online manners and behavior. Children's rules say:

don't bully or be mean to others online **68%**

tell a parent if I'm being bullied **67%**

don't harass or stalk people online **62%**

don't pass on embarrassing photos or posts about others **58%**

don't pass on spam **54%**



**More than half** of young people also say they wouldn't:

- do or say anything online that they wouldn't do or say offline
- talk to people online who they don't know in the real world

On average, children have **56 online friends**. The majority (**82%**) have met more than half their online friends in the real world.

Children in China and Brazil are the **least likely** to have met *all* their online friends in real life.



## USING COMMON SENSE

Children are aware of several common sense rules for protecting themselves online. However, there are some important things they are missing:

### Passwords

While **seven in 10** children know never to give out their password, less than **four in 10** use complex passwords and change them regularly.

### Pop-ups

Even though **six in 10** are wary of opening emails, only a **third** are wary of pop-ups or banner ads.

### Online offers

Over **four in ten** children watch out for 'too good to be true' offers and only a **third** mistrust them.





## TIPS FOR PARENTS

Parents can improve children's online experiences through technology, by talking openly about issues and preparing children for what they may encounter online.



Download the free Norton Online Family service at: **OnlineFamily.Norton.com**

### TECHNOLOGY

Parents should make sure that:

- Internet security software is installed
- they teach children to check their Internet security software and say if it's not working or has expired
- parental controls are set to filter out adult content

Parents can check what sites their children visit by using:

- the History button on their web browser
- the Search tab or Web Activity tab within **Norton Online Family**.

### TALKING

Parents need to involve children in setting family rules. Explaining *why* you don't want children to access certain material is more positive than simply blocking sites. Similarly, say why you'd feel better about monitoring their activity rather than prying without discussion.

Talking about your online experiences will help children see the bigger picture and how their behavior impacts the whole family.

*"Empowering your children online is far more effective than trying to control every aspect of their online activity." —Marian Merritt*

### SOCIAL NETWORKING SAFETY TIPS

- Tell children only to add friends they know and not add 'friends of friends'
- Have your children add you as a friend so you can see who their friends are
- Make sure your child tells you if someone online wants to meet them in person
- Always go with your child if you agree for them to meet a peer in real life

### LISTENING

Children need to know that they can rely on parents to always be there for them. So be ready to listen and help and support. Watch out for changes in emotions and encourage your children to talk.

### PHONES

Parents also need to be aware of the online risks to children via their cellular phones and should:

- regularly check phone bills and account activity
- make sure phones are left and charged in a family room, not taken into bedrooms at night

### DON'T BAN ACCESS

Make sure children know the consequences of not sticking to your family's rules, but do not ban access to their favorite technologies. They will only seek access elsewhere and become emotional in the process.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Norton Online Family Report 2010 is based on research conducted in February 2010 by StrategyOne, an independent market research firm, on behalf of Symantec Corporation.

StrategyOne conducted an online survey among:

7,066 adults aged 18 and over. Of this group, 1,669 were parents of children aged eight – 17 who completed a separate five minute parent-focused survey.

2,805 children aged eight – 17 who spend more than one hour online per month.

The survey was conducted in 14 countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States).

The survey was conducted in the primary language of each country.

Questions asked were identical across all countries, with some overlap between the adult and children surveys.

Interviews were conducted between 2nd – 22nd February 2010.

The margin of error for the total sample of adults (N=7,066) is  $\pm 1.16\%$  at the 95% level of confidence.

The margin of error for the total sample of parents, defined as parents with children aged 8-17, (N=1,669) is  $\pm 2.39\%$  at the 95% level of confidence.

The margin of error for the total sample of children (N=2,805) is  $\pm 1.85\%$  at the 95% level of confidence.

Quotes from families are taken from international qualitative research conducted by Infinia Foresight during November 2009.

Children's Internet usage figures 2009 taken from the Norton Online Living Report 2009.

## ADVICE

Advice and tips provided by Marian Merritt, Norton Internet Safety Advisor

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