Safeguarding Children Online:

A service-specific view on risks and parental attitudes

Council Working Group on Child Online Protection

October 10, 2023

About the study

- An understanding of children's connectivity at a service-specific level is lacking.
- Knowledge gaps remain regarding how children and parents experience different online offerings, and what approaches parents use to safeguard their children online.

The study focused on five online services:

Messaging Applications (MA)

Examples:
- Signal
- Telegram
- WhatsApp

Online Games (OG)

Examples:
- Apex Legends
- Candy Crush
- Fortnite
- Minecraft
- Supermario
- Solitaire

Social Media (SM)

Examples:
- Facebook
- Instagram

Streaming Services (S/TV)

Examples:
- Amazon Prime
- Disney+
- HBO Max
- Netflix

User-generated content platforms (UGC)

Examples:
- Snapchat
- TikTok
- YouTube

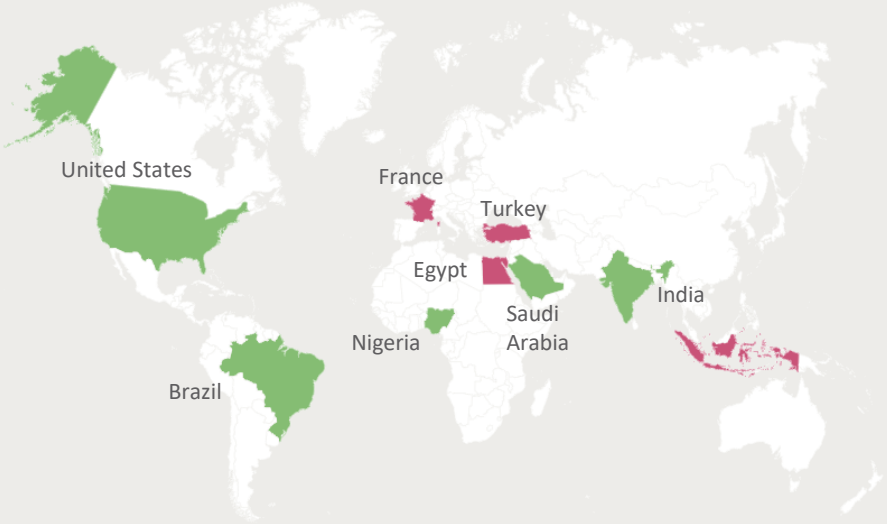
Methodology

Quantitative phase:
Online survey

TMG and Geopoll conducted an online survey from April 16-May 8, 2023, with parents with children ages 5-17 to collect cross-sectional data. In total, 4,971 parents participated in the survey.

Qualitative phase:
In-depth online interviews

Based on the online survey results, TMG and Geopoll conducted 100 in-depth online interviews from July 6-28, 2023, with children and parents, to deepen understanding of the quantitative data.



Quantitative and qualitative countries:
Brazil, India, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia (KSA), United States (U.S.)

Quantitative only countries:
Egypt, France, Indonesia, Turkey

Objectives

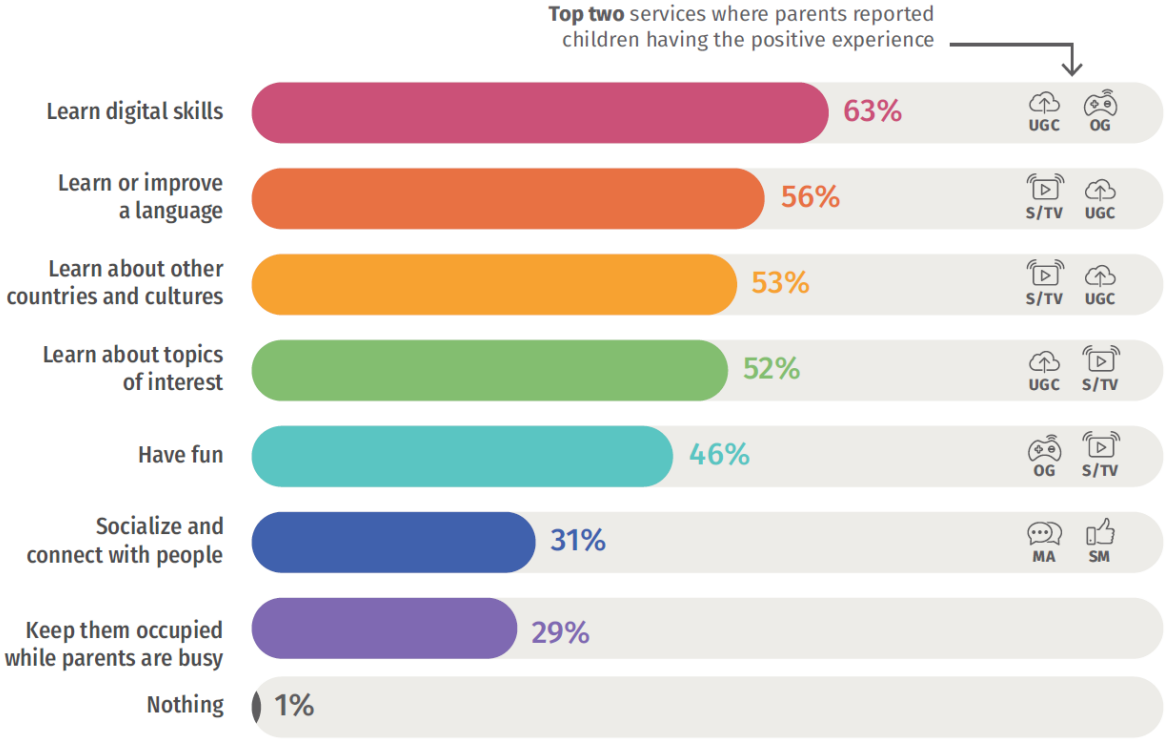
1. **What do parents think about their children's use of online services?** How do parents perceive the benefits, opportunities, concerns, and negative experiences these services offer their children?

2. **What do children experience when they use different online services?** What are the benefits and risks different online services pose to children?

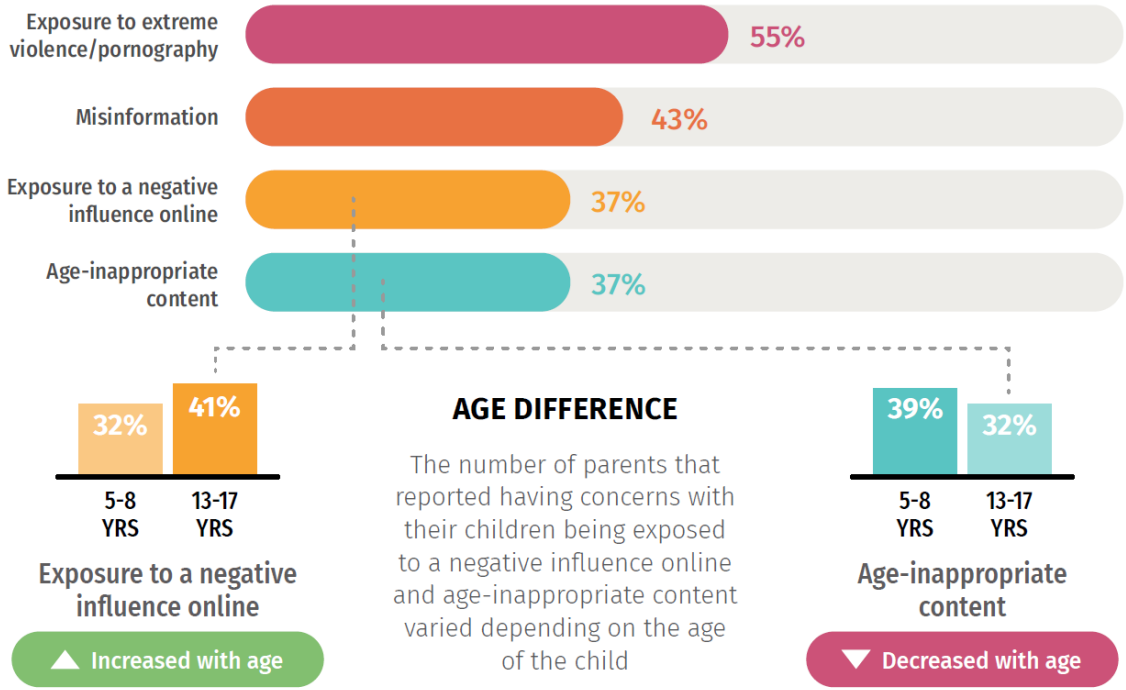
3. What role do parents play in ensuring that children are protected online? **How do parenting styles and approaches parents use to protect their children differ by online service?**

FINDINGS

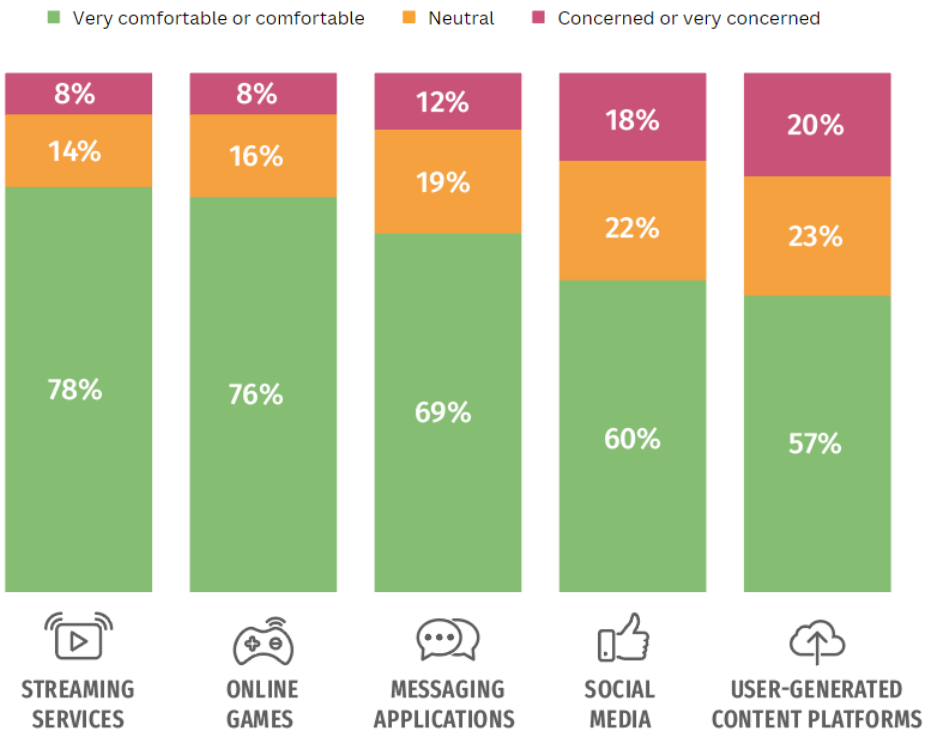
Parents view online services as a means for their children to achieve success and learning



Parents are mostly concerned about extreme content, misinformation, exposure to negative influences online, and age-inappropriate content



Not all risks are perceived equally; parents are more comfortable with streaming, online games, and messaging apps



Parents were most concerned with

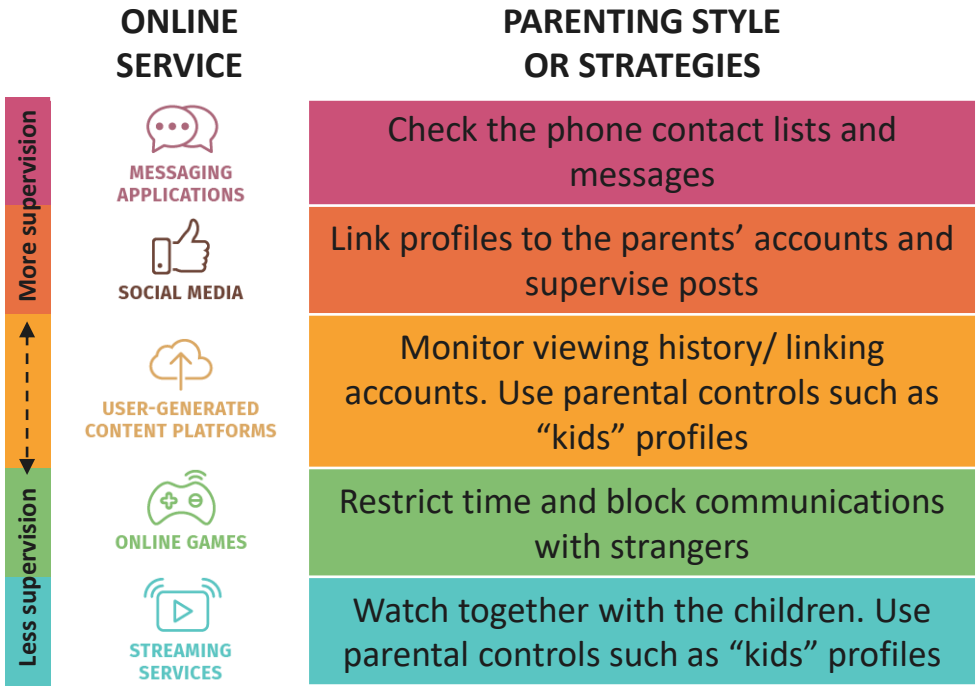
User-uploaded content

User-to-user communications

Parents were more comfortable with

Paid online services

Parents use different strategies to manage their children's online activities, depending on the service



Most parents considered their **strategies were effective to protect their children online** but would like **additional help**

Children expressed similar concerns to parents and tailor their safety approach based on the online service

CONCERNS

Communicating with strangers

*"avoiding talking to the person on the game, **because you cannot know if it is an old person**."– 13-year-old girl, Brazil.*

Undesired content

*"Like, **not looking up inappropriate things like that** [on UGC]."– 14-year-old girl, USA.*

SAFETY APPROACH

Social media and UGC

*"I would advise them to **keep your account private and don't accept requests from random people**."– 17-year-old girl, India.*

Online games

*"Bullying via online games with multiplayers. **When I find out bullying or people making funny on others I turn the mute option**." – 14-year-old boy, KSA.*

Key points to keep children safe online

1. Parents showed **different levels of risk perception and concern based on the type of service**, and **correspondingly deployed different parenting styles to manage their children's use of each service type**

An approach to safeguard children based on evidence, risk, and differentiation

2. Most parents considered their **strategies were effective to protect their children online** but would like **additional help**

Empowering parents with tools and awareness

3. **Collaboration amongst all stakeholders is critical**

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