



# UK children's media literacy

Research Document

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## Section 1

# Executive summary

This report is designed to give an accessible overview of media literacy among UK children and young people aged 5-15 and their parents/ carers<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this report is to support people working in this area to develop and promote media literacy among these groups.

This report is the third full report since our survey began in 2005. It is therefore able to show trends over time for many of the questions asked. Due to different survey periods and focus, some comparisons are made with 2005 and 2007 data, and others with 2007 and 2008, and change over time is highlighted against either 2007 or 2008 accordingly.

### Children's access to, and use of, media

Households with children aged 5-15<sup>2</sup> have high levels of take-up of all the main media platforms, with considerable growth since 2007 for home internet access and Digital Video Recorders (DVRs) in particular. Children aged 8-15 in DE<sup>3</sup> households remain less likely than households with children in other socio-economic groups to have access to digital television, DVRs and the internet.

While home internet access has increased for households with children aged 5-15, the proportion of children who do not use the internet at all has remained consistent since 2007, accounting for one in four 5-7s (25%), around one in fifteen 8-11s (7%) and a very small proportion of 12-15s (1%).

Children in DE households are less likely than UK children as a whole to have access to the internet, digital television, games consoles and DVRs at home. With lower levels of internet access in the home, children in DE households are more likely than others to only use the internet at school (14% vs. 9%).

While a PC or laptop is the equipment most likely to be used to access the internet at home, one in seven parents of a child aged 5-15 with a games console (14%) state that their child uses their games console to access the internet (with this figure being substantially higher for 12-15s (21%). Just over one in ten parents of a child aged 5-15 with their own mobile phone (12%) states that their child uses a mobile phone to access the internet. However, accessing the internet through a mobile phone or games console does not appear to be replacing access through a PC / laptop, but rather is in addition to this form of access.

Children are likely to have a TV in their bedroom, with this being the case for half of 5-7s (49%), two-thirds of 8-11s (67%) and three-quarters of 12-15s (77%). Since 2008, older

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<sup>1</sup> The report comprises two waves of data; one wave of data from spring 2009 and one wave from autumn 2009. The data across both these waves have been combined to give an overall picture for the year, with this report following on from the interim report which was published in October 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Where possible, findings are shown for 5-15s as well as for the particular age groups (5-7, 8-11 and 12-15). However, some questions in earlier surveys, as well as particular questions in the current survey, were not asked of all age groups of children so in these cases findings are shown for 8-15s or for 12-15s.

<sup>3</sup> "DE households" can be defined as those households where the chief income earner is either a semi-skilled or unskilled manual worker, including those serving apprenticeships or those on the lowest levels of subsistence including all those dependent upon the state long term, casual workers and those without a regular income.

children are now more likely to have internet access and a games console (either fixed or portable) in their bedroom. One in eight children aged 8-11 (12%) and three in ten 12-15s (31%) have internet access in their bedroom. Seven in ten 8-11s (71%) and three in four 12-15s (74%) have a games console in their bedroom.

Children aged 12-15 continue to be more likely than younger children to use media away from the living room and without an adult present. Around half of children in each age group who ever play games, say they mostly play on their own. One in eight (13%) of 12-15s says they mostly play games with other people over the internet.

### **Children's and parents' attitudes and mediation strategies**

Parental attitudes towards the internet are mostly positive, with the majority of parents of children aged 8-15 whose child uses the internet at home stating that "The benefits of the internet for my child outweigh any risks" (68%) or that "I trust my child to use the internet safely" (85%). Four in five (79%) parents also agree that "My child has been taught at school how to use the internet safely", with three in five (61%) also agreeing that "My child knows more about the internet than I do". Parents of children aged 8-15 in DE households are more likely than all parents to disagree that "I trust my child to use the internet safely" and that "The benefits of the internet for my child outweigh any risks" and to agree that "My child knows more about the internet than I do". Since 2007, parents of 8-15s are now less inclined to agree with these statements about their child and the internet. For example, in 2007 93% of parents of children aged 12-15 agreed that "I trust my child to use the internet safely" and in 2009 this has decreased to 89% of parents of children aged 12-15.

A sizeable minority of parents of 8-15s have concerns about the media content that their child sees or hears. For example, four in ten parents of 5-7s and 8-11s (both 40%) say they are concerned about the content of the TV programmes their child watches. However by the time children are aged 12-15, their parents are more likely to be concerned about internet content (34%).

Parental rules for TV, the internet and games are in place for between 80-90% of 5-11s, and at a lower level for 12-15s. Rules for mobile phone use are in place for around seven in ten 8-15s (69%). Since 2008, there has been no change in the overall incidence of parental rules for any media. Rules about the internet are less common for 12-15s who say they mostly use the internet alone (65%) than for 12-15s who say they mostly use the internet with other people in the room (77%).

While there has been some increase in concern about the potential risks associated with internet usage, this is not matched by an increase in the use of rules, internet controls / filtering software, or use of safe search settings on search engine websites among parents of children who use the internet at home.

Currently, just over two in five (43%) parents of children aged 5-15 say they have controls or filtering software in place, a decrease since 2008 (49%). The reasons given for not having such controls set or software loaded vary depending on the age of the child - older children are more likely to be trusted to be sensible or responsible while younger children are more likely to be supervised or to be considered too young for it to be an issue. Fourteen per cent of parents of 5-15s without controls in place say they either haven't heard of, or don't know how to set up, internet controls or filtering software, which was also the case in 2008.

Since 2007, parents of children aged 5-15 with digital television services at home are more likely to have PIN or password controls set on their television. One in three households with multichannel television has set up access controls (32% compared to 28% in 2007) – although this remains lower than the use of internet controls or filtering software. Parents

who say they do not have digital television controls set up give various reasons, but most commonly say that they trust their child to be sensible / responsible, although one in six (16%) say they either haven't heard of, or don't know how to set up such controls, which was also the case in 2008.

One in five children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home say they have ever watched / downloaded TV programmes or films (21%), an increase of four percentage points on 2008. Those aged 12-15 who mostly use the internet on their own are more likely to be watching/downloading TV programmes or films than those who watch mostly with others – 36% vs. 22%.

Among those parents whose child watches TV or movies through a TV broadcaster's website, a majority (64%) are aware of the Guidance label system that exists on broadcasters' websites. One in eight (12%) parents whose child watches TV or movies through a TV broadcaster's website has set up PIN controls to regulate the viewing of such content with a guidance label.

While children have some dislikes associated with their use of media, relatively few children aged 8-15 have concerns about being exposed to media content that makes them "feel sad, frightened or embarrassed" or content that they feel is too old for them.

In terms of children's attitudes towards the internet, around one in six children state that "it's easier to keep things private or secret on the internet than it is in real life" (16%) with one in seven children aged 8-15 saying they "feel more confident online than they do in real life" (14%), or that "it's easier to talk about personal things on the internet" (14%).

### **Knowledge, understanding and creative usage of media among 8-15s**

While the majority of children aged 8-15 feel confident using media, one in seven children aged 12-15 (14%) do not feel confident using the internet for more creative activities (such as making blogs, sharing photos online or uploading short videos to the internet).

The majority make a distinction between the veracity of different television genres, for example, news, documentaries and reality programmes. One in four 12-15s (27%) who use search engines think that search engines only return results from websites with truthful information. Three in five children aged 12-15 (63%) who use the internet at home make at least one of the checks we asked about when visiting new websites, but a quarter (26%) say they tend to not make any checks.

Over two in five 12-15s (44%) think that downloading shared copies of music and movies should not be illegal.

Seven in ten (70%) 12-15s with the internet at home have a social networking site profile, compared to 52% in 2008. One in five (22%) 8-11s have set up such a profile, which has also increased since 2008 (from 16%). Children aged 12-15 with a social networking profile are now more likely to restrict access to their profiles so that they can be seen only by their friends (78% vs. 59%). Boys aged 8-15 are more likely than girls of this age-group to say that their profile can be seen by anyone (21% vs. 13%).

The minimum age for registering with social networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo or MySpace is thirteen. However, one in five children aged 8-12 that use the internet at home say they have a page or profile on Facebook (19%), one in ten (11%) on Bebo and one in twenty (four per cent) on MySpace. At an overall level, one in four (25%) home internet users aged 8-12 have a profile on at least one of these three sites, an increase from 15% in 2008.



Among those users aged 8-12 with a page or profile on either Facebook, Bebo or MySpace, one in ten (11%) say they have set their profile to be visible by anyone, with four in five (83%) setting their profile so that it can only be seen by friends, an increase from 67% in 2008. Four per cent prevent their profile being seen at all. Over eight in ten (83%) parents of these users are aware that their children visit social networking sites. Of these, 93% say they check what their child is doing. However one in six (17%) parents of this group is not aware that their child visits social networking sites.

Compared to all children aged 8-12 who use the internet at home and don't have a profile on these three sites, children of this age with a profile on these sites are more likely to use the internet on their own, internet rules are no more likely to be in place in these households and internet controls/ filtering software are less likely to be installed.

### **Learning about digital media**

Younger children aged 8-11 have a preference for learning about digital media from parents (57%) or at school (45%) whereas older children prefer to learn from their peers (51%).

A minority of children (21% of 8-11s and 36% of 12-15s) say they are taught about television at school, while seven in ten 8-11s (73%) and four in five 12-15s (84%) say they have lessons about the internet.

## Section 2

# Introduction

## 2.1 Background

Media literacy enables individuals, and society, to have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make full use of the opportunities presented by both traditional and new communications services. Media literacy also helps people to manage content and communications, and protect themselves and their families from the potential risks associated with using these services.

Ofcom's definition of media literacy is:

*'the ability to use, understand and create media and communications'.*

The promotion of media literacy is a responsibility placed on Ofcom by Section 11 of the Communications Act 2003. Under Section 14 (6a) of the Act we have a duty to make arrangements for the carrying out of research into the matters mentioned in Section 11 (1). Ofcom's work to promote media literacy is intended:

- to give people the opportunity and motivation to develop competence and confidence to participate in communications technology and digital society; and
- to inform and empower people to manage their own media activity (both consumption and creation).

This report provides an update to the *Children's Media Literacy Audits* published in 2006<sup>4</sup> and again in 2008<sup>5</sup>. In 2009, we adopted a six-monthly fieldwork schedule, to enable more frequent reporting and identification of emerging trends. This report is designed to give an accessible overview of media literacy among children and young people<sup>6</sup> aged 5-15 and their parents/ carers<sup>7</sup>, and is based on two waves of research conducted in spring 2009 and autumn 2009. Where possible, within the sample of children aged 5-15 and their parents, demographic analysis is conducted by age (of the child interviewed), by gender and by household socio-economic group.

The key objectives of this research are:

- to provide a rich picture of the different elements of media literacy across the key platforms of television, radio, the internet and mobile phones; and
- to identify emerging issues and skills gaps that will help to target both Ofcom's and stakeholders' resources for the promotion of media literacy.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media\\_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/children/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/children/)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media\\_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml\\_childrens08/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/ml_childrens08/)

<sup>6</sup> References to children in this report are used to refer to children and young people

<sup>7</sup> References to parents in this report are used to refer to parents and carers

## 2.2 How we monitor media literacy

In order to monitor media literacy using research we used the following measures to represent some of the key areas of media literacy (see box below).

- Take-up and use of media in the home
- Children's and parents' attitudes and mediation strategies
- Children's understanding of the media they use, checks made and privacy settings
- Learning about media

## 2.3 Research methodology and analysis

This report draws on the following surveys:

**Media Literacy Audit Tracker with children and parents:** a quantitative survey that involved a total of 2131 in-home interviews with children aged 5-15 and their 2131 parents/carers from April to May 2009 and from September to October 2009.

**Young People's Media Usage survey:** a quantitative tracking survey, conducted in 2007 and 2008, which was devised to provide Ofcom with continued understanding of children's behaviour in the UK communications markets. 3,696 interviews with parents and children aged 5-15 were conducted during 2007, with 2,066 interviews with parents and children aged 5-15 conducted during 2008. All interviewing was done in the home.

**Media Literacy Audit:** a quantitative survey that involved 1,536 in-home interviews with parents and children aged 8-15 from June to August 2005, and 2,068 in-home interviews among the same demographic from October to December 2007.

It reports on the two waves of the *Media Literacy Audit Tracker 2009* with children and parents. We make comparisons between this research and the *Young People's Media Usage* survey, conducted in 2007 and 2008, as well as the *Media Literacy Audits* conducted in 2005 and 2007. Therefore, some trends are shown for 2005 and 2007, and some for 2008 and 2009, depending on which survey the historic data comes from.

Significance testing at the 95% confidence level was carried out. This means that where findings are commented on in the report, there is only a 5% or less probability that the difference between the samples is by chance. Statistically significant findings are indicated in the figures in the report by circles or arrows.

Where possible, findings are shown for 5-15s as well as for the particular age groups (5-7, 8-11 and 12-15). However, some questions in earlier surveys, as well as particular questions in the current survey, were not asked of all age groups of children so in these cases findings are shown for 8-15s or for 12-15s.

### Section 3

## Children's access to and use of media

This section look at children's access to, and use of, media devices in their households and elsewhere, weekly media consumption, regular media activities undertaken on devices, the media device they would miss the most, where they tend to use specific media and who is with them at the time.

#### Key findings

- Since 2007, household take-up of digital television (92% vs.88%), internet (82% vs. 75%), games consoles (89% vs. 84%) and digital video recorders (DVRs) (39% vs. 21%) have increased for households with children aged 5-15.
- Increased access to the internet at home means that three in four children aged 5-15 now use the internet at home.
- Since 2007, there has been an increase in children aged 5-15 with a games console in their bedroom (65% vs. 60%) and children aged 8-11 and 12-15 are now more likely to have the internet in their bedroom (12% vs. 9% for 8-11s and 31% vs. 27% for 12-15s).
- A sizeable minority of children aged 12-15 use their mobile phone (14%) or their games console to access the internet (18%), although such use is in addition to using a PC/ laptop for internet access as opposed to being instead of PC based access.
- Since 2008, children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home are now more likely to mostly use the internet in the living room (65% vs. 57%) with one in six 8-15s (16%) mostly using the internet in their bedroom.
- In 2009 close to two in five children aged 5-15 mostly use the internet on their own, with this incidence increasing with the age of the child, accounting for more than half of 12-15s (57%) – these measures have not however changed since 2008.
- There has been an increase in the range of media activities undertaken regularly by children.
- One in five children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home say they have ever watched/ downloaded TV programmes or films (21%), an increase of four percentage points on 2008. Those aged 12-15 who mostly use the internet on their own are more likely to be watching such content than those who watch mostly with others – 36% vs. 22%.

### **3.1 Higher take-up<sup>8</sup> of digital TV and internet in the home although access in DE households is still lower than those of other socio-economic groups**

Households with children aged 5-15 have high levels of access to digital television, the internet, games consoles (either games consoles that are connected to a television or handheld / portable games players) and to radio.

Around nine in ten children aged 5-15 (92%) live in a household with a digital television service. Since 2007, take-up of digital television has increased for 5-7s (90% vs. 85%) for 8-11s (91% vs. 87%) and for 12-15s (93% vs. 90%).

Four in five children aged 5-15 (82%) live in a household with access to the internet through a PC or laptop. As with digital television, take-up of the internet at home has also increased since 2007 among households with a child aged 5-7 (78% vs. 68%) as well as among 8-11s (81% vs. 71%) and 12-15s (85% vs. 77%).

Nine in ten children aged 5-15 (89%) live in a household with a games console. Since 2007, access to games consoles has increased for households with 5-7s (84% vs. 74%) and 8-11s (93% vs. 87%) but has not changed for 12-15s.

Boys aged 8-15 are more likely than girls to live in households with a games console, and this is evident for each age group: 5-7s (87% vs. 81%), 8-11s (96% vs. 89%) and 12-15s (92% vs. 84%). This consistent divide between boys and girls across each age group is not evident for any other type of media in the home.

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<sup>8</sup> The terms 'access to' and 'take-up' are used interchangeably within this report and refer to circumstances where a particular device is present in the household. These terms do not, however, imply that the device is necessarily used by the child. The term 'use' relates to a device that is present in the household and that the child actually makes use of.

**Figure 1: Access to key platforms in the home, by age and socio-economic group – 2005<sup>9</sup>, 2007 and 2009<sup>10</sup>**



QP3A/B/G/H – I'm going to read out a list of different types of equipment that you may or may not have in your home, and which your child may or may not use (prompted responses, single coded)

Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 (3696 aged 5-15 in 2007, 2131 aged 5-15 in 2009, 985 aged 5-7 in 2007, 576 aged 5-7 in 2009, 772 aged 8-11 in 2005, 1354 aged 8-11 in 2007, 774 aged 8-11 in 2009, 764 aged 12-15 in 2005, 1357 aged 12-15 in 2007, 781 aged 12-15 in 2009) / SEG profile reflects parents of children aged 8-15 (209 AB in 2005, 500 AB in 2007, 269 AB in 2009, 355 C1 in 2005, 720 C1 in 2007, 367 C1 in 2009, 329 C2 in 2005, 625 C2 in 2007, 347 C2 in 2009, 559 DE in 2005, 815 DE in 2007, 549 DE in 2009) - significance testing shows any differences between 2007 and 2009.

Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Compared to 2007, take-up of digital television and the internet has increased for those households with children aged 8-15<sup>11</sup> in socio-economic groups C1 (93% vs. 89% for TV and 92% vs. 81% for the internet), and DE (89% vs. 85% for TV and 69% vs. 56% for internet), while those children aged 8-15 in C2 households are now more likely to have access to the internet at home (86% vs. 74%).

C1 households with children aged 8-15 are now as likely as AB households to have digital television and internet access at home. Moreover, C1 households with children aged 8-15 are now similar to AB households in that they are as likely to have the internet at home as they are to have digital television.

Access to games consoles has increased since 2007 in AB households with children aged 8-15 (94% vs. 90%) and for C1 households (93% vs. 88%) but has not changed for C2 households (91%) or for DE households (86%).

Two in five children aged 5-15 (39%) now live in a household that has a Digital Video Recorder (DVR)<sup>12</sup>. Take-up of DVRs has increased across all three age groups since 2007 from 19% to 36% for 5-7s, from 23% to 36% for 8-11s and from 22% to 43% for 12-15s.

<sup>9</sup> Data for 5-7s is shown as N/A in 2005 as the research was only undertaken with those aged 8-15. Data for 8-11s and 12-15s is shown as N/A for Games consoles as the questions in 2005 are not directly comparable to those that were asked in subsequent years

<sup>10</sup> Data shown for game consoles in 2007 are taken from one question which did not distinguish between a games console connected to a TV and a handheld/ portable games console. Data shown for games consoles in 2009 are derived from two questions which distinguished between a games console connected to a TV and a handheld/ portable games device.

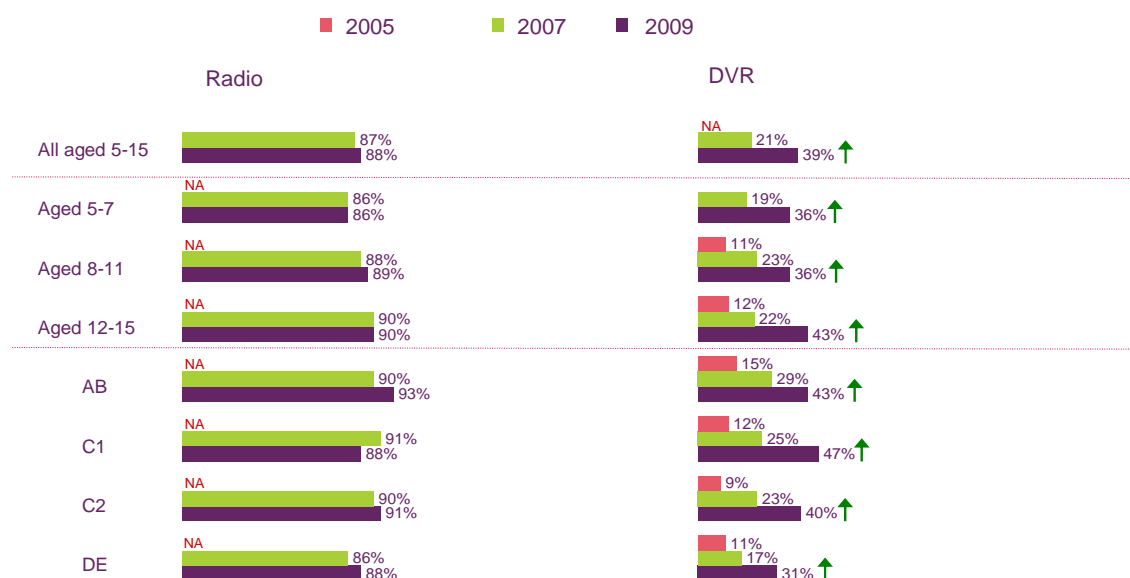
<sup>11</sup> When showing data relating to 2005 in any of the Figures, the corresponding socio-economic group analysis is based on children aged 8-15 (rather than those aged 5-15) in order to compare the same groups over time

<sup>12</sup> Also known as a Personal Video Recorder or PVR.

The DVR is the only device that has seen an increase in take up among households with children aged 8-15<sup>13</sup> among all four socio-economic groups (AB, C1, C2 and DE).

Nine in ten children aged 5-15 have access to a radio within the home and this figure has remained constant since 2007 for 5-7s, 8-11s and 12-15s.

**Figure 2: Access to key platforms in the home, by age and socio-economic group – 2005<sup>14</sup>, 2007 and 2009**



QP3A/B/G/H – I'm going to read out a list of different types of equipment that you may or may not have in your home, and which your child may or may not use (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 (3696 aged 5-15 in 2007, 2131 aged 5-15 in 2009, 985 aged 5-7 in 2007, 576 aged 5-7 in 2009, 772 aged 8-11 in 2005, 1354 aged 8-11 in 2007, 774 aged 8-11 in 2009, 764 aged 12-15 in 2005, 1357 aged 12-15 in 2007, 781 aged 12-15 in 2009) / SEG profile reflects parents of children aged 8-15 (209 AB in 2005, 500 AB in 2007, 269 AB in 2009, 355 C1 in 2005, 720 C1 in 2007, 367 C1 in 2009, 329 C2 in 2005, 625 C2 in 2007, 347 C2 in 2009, 559 DE in 2005, 815 DE in 2007, 549 DE in 2009) - significance testing shows any differences between 2007 and 2009.  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

DE households with children aged 8-15 remain less likely than households with children in other socio-economic groups to have access to digital television, DVRs and the internet.

### 3.2 Three in four children aged 5-15 now use the internet at home

As well as asking about the presence of certain media in the home, parents were asked about their child's use of the various media within the home (Figure 3). Three in four of all children aged 5-15 (75%) use the internet at home, with an increase since 2007 for each of the three age groups of children, accounting for three in five 5-7s (63% vs. 50%), three in four 8-11s (76% vs. 65%) and four in five 12-15s (83% vs. 75%).

Personal ownership of a mobile phone by children accounts for one in ten 5-7s (9%), one in two 8-11s (50%) and nearly nine in ten 12-15s (88%) and has remained the same across all three age groups since 2007.

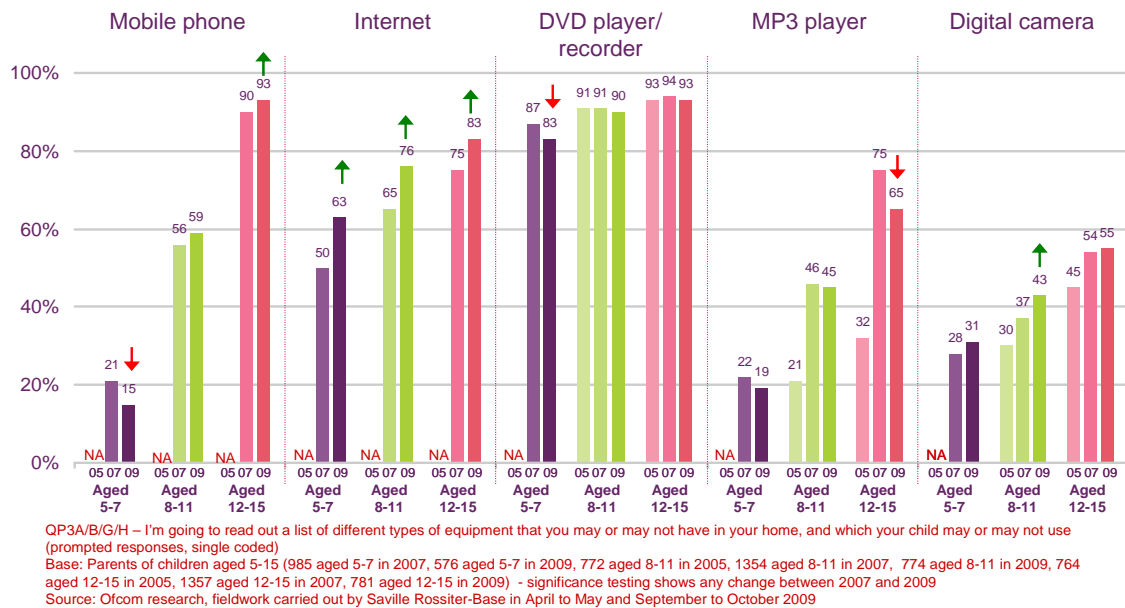
<sup>13</sup> When showing data relating to 2005 in any of the Figures, the corresponding socio-economic group analysis is based on children aged 8-15 (rather than those aged 5-15) in order to compare the same groups over time.

<sup>14</sup> Data for 8-11s and 12-15s is shown as N/A for Radio as the questions in 2005 are not directly comparable to those that were asked in subsequent years.

Figure 3 shows children's use of a mobile phone, and includes circumstances where the child is using a mobile phone that belongs to someone else in the household. Usage has decreased for 5-7s (15% vs. 21%) remained stable for 8-11s (59% vs 56%), and increased for 12-15s (93% vs. 90%).

Use of certain media at home is lower among children aged 8-15 in DE socio-economic groups compared to other socio-economic groups - the internet (63%), MP3 players (46%), and digital cameras (33%). This reflects the lower household take-up of media among this group.

**Figure 3: Media used by children at home, by age – 2005<sup>15</sup>, 2007 and 2009**



### 3.3 Two in three children with a mobile phone have acquired their phone by the time they are 10 years old

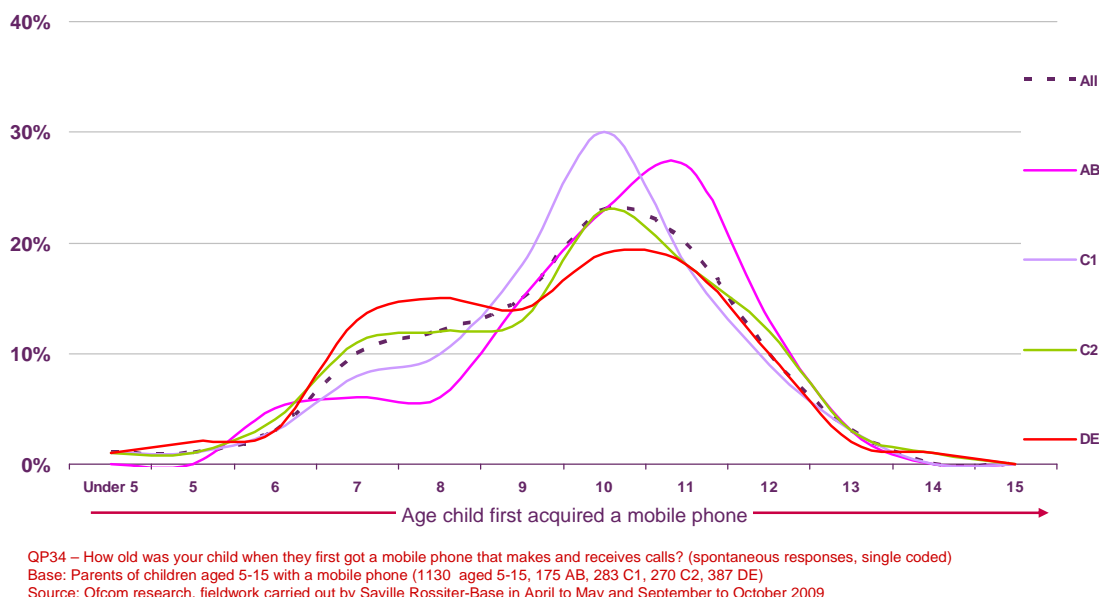
In addition to asking about their child's use of a mobile phone, parents were also asked the age at which their child first acquired a mobile phone.

<sup>15</sup> In 2005, data for 8-11s and 12-15s use of mobile phone and use of internet is shown as N/A as the questions in 2005 are not directly comparable to those that were asked in subsequent years.



Figure 4 shows how mobile phone acquisition among children with a mobile peaks at the age of 10. Two in three children aged 5-15 with a mobile phone (65%) have acquired their first mobile phone by the time they are 10 years old. Figure 4 also shows the variation by socio-economic group; fewer children with a mobile phone in AB households (53%) have acquired their phone by the time they are 10 years old.

**Figure 4: Age at which child first acquired a mobile phone - 2009**



Girls are more likely than boys to have a mobile phone by the time they are ten years old (68% vs. 61%). There has been no change since 2007 in the proportion of children who have acquired a mobile phone by the time they are ten.

### 3.4 Since 2008, all children are now more likely to have a games console in their bedroom

Parents were also asked which media were used in their child's bedroom.

Virtually all children aged 5-15 (99%) have access to a television at home. The incidence of having a television in the bedroom, however, increases with each age group; accounting for one in two 5-7s (49%), seven in ten 8-11s (67%), and three in four 12-15s (77%). The incidence of having a television in the bedroom has decreased since 2008 among 12-15s.

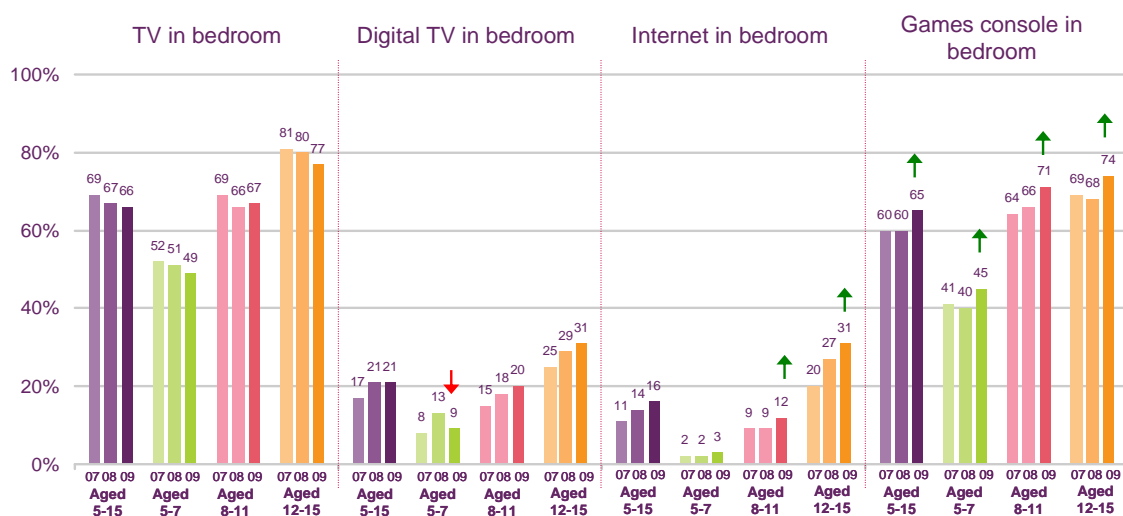
While many children aged 5-15 have a television in their bedroom, relatively few have a digital television service in their bedroom. Again, the incidence of having a digital television service in the bedroom increases with each age group; accounting for almost one in ten 5-7s (9%), two in ten 8-11s (20%), and three in ten 12-15s (31%). There has, however, been a decrease since 2008 for 5-7s with a digital television service in their bedroom (9% vs. 13%).

After television, games consoles are the second most common type of media present in children's bedrooms; accounting for slightly fewer than one in two 5-7s (45%), and seven in ten 8-11s (71%), and three in four 12-15s (74%). Access to a games console in the bedroom has increased since 2008 for 5-7s (45% vs. 40%), 8-11s (71% vs. 66%) and 12-15s (74% vs. 68%).

Although most households with children aged 5-15 have access to the internet (82%), fewer children aged 5-15 have access to the internet via a PC / laptop in their bedroom. The incidence of having access to the internet in the bedroom increases with each age group; accounting for less than one in twenty 5-7s (3%), but one in eight 8-11s (12%), and one in three 12-15s (31%). Internet access in the bedroom has increased since 2008 for both 8-11s (12% vs. 9%) and 12-15s (31% vs. 27%).

Among those children aged 5-15 with a games console / games player in their bedroom, around one in seven (16%) use it to access the internet; accounting for 8% of 5-7s, 13% of 8-11s and 23% of 12-15s.

**Figure 5: Media in children's bedrooms – 2007, 2008 and 2009**



QP3A/B – I'm going to read out a list of different types of equipment that you may or may not have in your home, and which your child may or may not use (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 (3696 aged 5-15 in 2007, 2066 aged 5-15 in 2008, 2131 aged 5-15 in 2009, 985 aged 5-7 in 2007, 563 aged 5-7 in 2008, 576 aged 5-7 in 2009, 1354 aged 8-11 in 2007, 748 aged 8-11 in 2008, 774 aged 8-11 in 2009, 1357 aged 12-15 in 2007, 755 aged 12-15 in 2008, 781 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing shows any change between 2008 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and October to November 2009

In 2009, children aged 5-15 in AB socio-economic groups were less likely than all children to have a television (50% vs. 66%) or digital television in their bedroom (15% vs. 21%). Children in DE households are less likely to have the internet in their bedroom compared to all children (13% vs. 16%).

### 3.5 Internet usage within the home has increased for all children aged 5-15

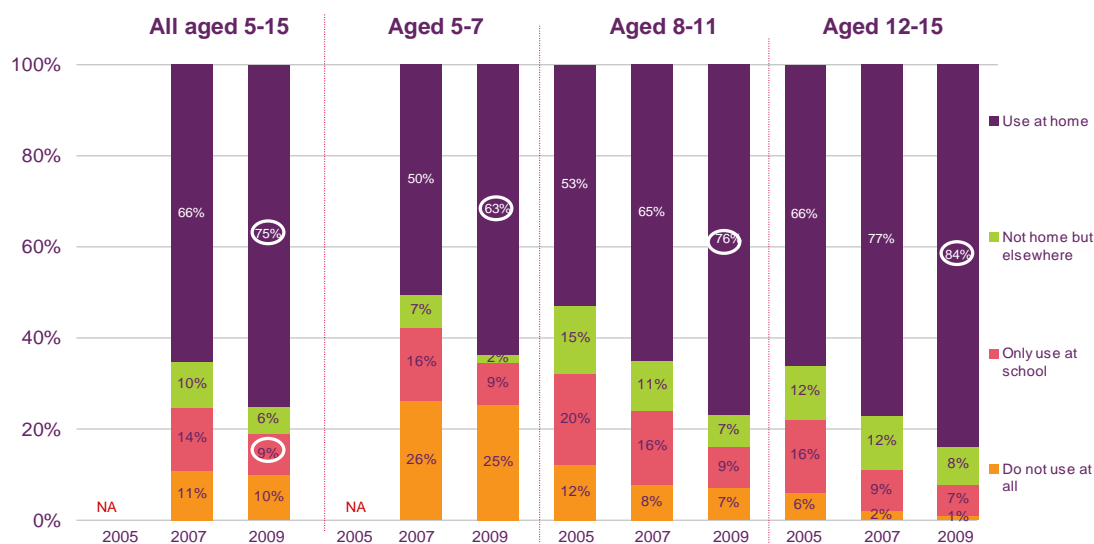
In addition to establishing with parents whether their child uses the internet at home, children were asked whether they used the internet anywhere else; including at school, at a library, at the houses of relatives or friends, via a portable device such as a portable media player, games player or mobile. Figure 6 shows where the internet is used by 5-7s, 8-11s, 12-15s and how this has changed over time. Four distinct groups are shown: those who use the internet at home (and may well use it elsewhere); those who use it elsewhere (and may well use it at school but excluding home use); those who use it only at school; and those who don't use it at all.

The incidence of using the internet at all (in any location) has not changed for any age group since 2007, and accounts for three in four 5-7s (75%), over nine in ten 8-11s (93%) and almost all 12-15s (99%). As noted earlier, a higher proportion of children aged 5-15 use the

internet at home compared to 2007; now accounting for three in five 5-7s (63% vs. 50% in 2007), three in four 8-11s (76% vs. 65%) and four in five 12-15s (84% vs. 77%).

Around one in ten of each group only use the internet at school: 5-7s (9%), 8-11s (9%), and 12-15s (7%). One in ten (10%) of all 5-15s do not use the internet at all, in any location.

**Figure 6: Where the internet is used by children – 2005, 2007 and 2009**



QP3B/ QP18A/ QP18B/ QC25 – SUMMARY OF WHERE THE INTERNET IS USED (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 (3696 aged 5-15 in 2007, 2131 aged 5-15 in 2009, 985 aged 5-7 in 2007, 576 aged 5-7 in 2009, 772 aged 8-11 in 2005, 1354 aged 8-11 in 2007, 774 aged 8-11 in 2009, 764 aged 12-15 in 2005, 1357 aged 12-15 in 2007, 781 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing shows any change between 2007 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

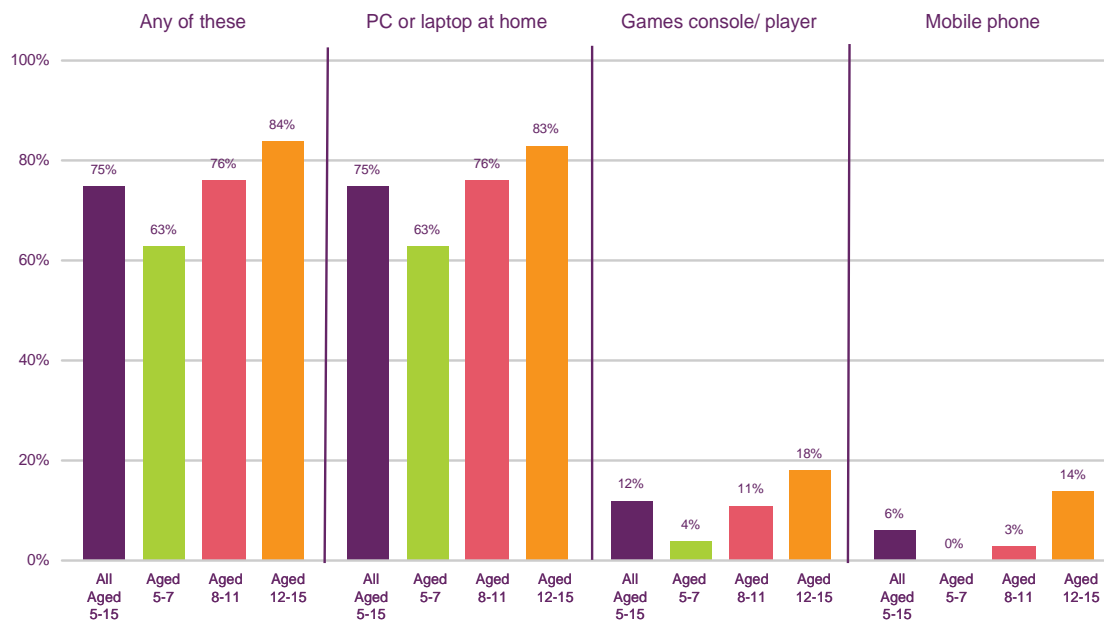
In addition to asking parents about their child's use of the internet through a computer or laptop at home, parents were asked whether their child uses alternative devices to access the internet.

While three in four children aged 5-15 (75%) use the internet at home through a PC or laptop, one in eight (12%) goes online via a games console / games player, and one in 20 (6%) via a mobile phone.

The likelihood of accessing the internet through any of these devices increases with age. Boys aged 5-15 are more likely than girls to access the internet via each of these three devices. While there are no differences by socio-economic group in terms of accessing the internet through a mobile phone, children in DE households aged 5-15 are less likely than all children to access via a games console, although again this is likely to be due to lower household access to this specific device.

The proportion of children in each age group that access the internet through any of the three devices is nearly identical to the proportion of children in each age group that access via a PC or laptop. This shows that any use of the internet via a games console or mobile phone is very much in addition to using a PC or laptop, rather than accessing through these devices instead of through a PC or laptop. While not shown in Figure 7, only one per cent of all children aged 5-15 accessed the internet through either a mobile phone or games console and not through a PC / laptop.

**Figure 7: Devices used to access the internet, by age - 2009**



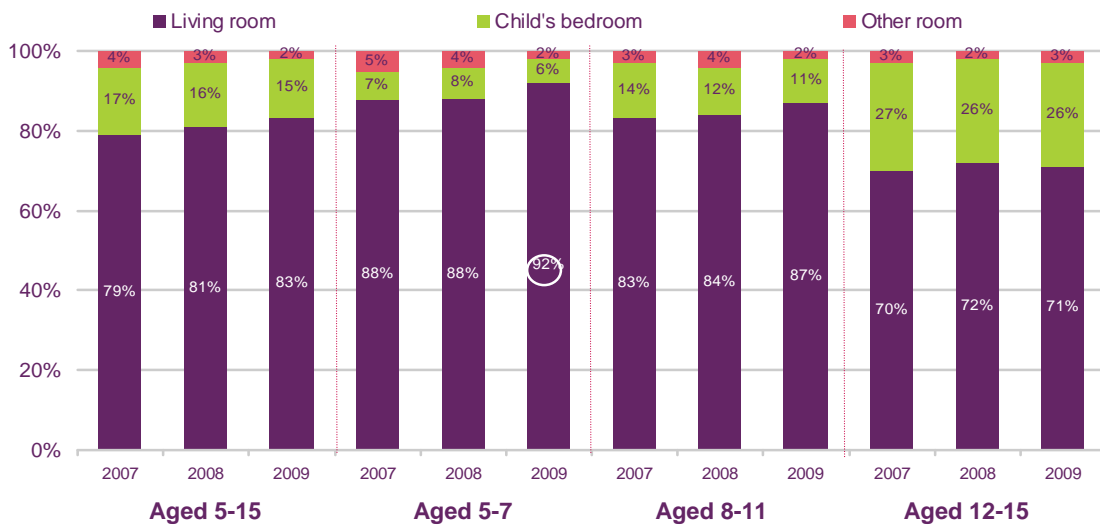
QP3B/ QP21/ QP22 – I'm going to read out a list of different types of equipment that you may or may not have in your home, and which your child may or may not use / Can your child's mobile phone/ games player be used to get onto the internet? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 (2131 aged 5-15, 576 aged 5-7, 774 aged 8-11, 781 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

### 3.6 Older children are more likely to use media away from the living room and without an adult present

Children in households with a television and those who use the internet at home were asked where in the house they most often used the device.

While two-thirds of all children aged 5-15 (66%) have a television in their bedroom, children in each of the three age groups say they most often watch television at home in the living room. The incidence of children mostly watching television in the living room declines with each age group. This data show an increase since 2008 in 5-7s mostly watching television in the living room (92% vs. 88%).

**Figure 8: Where the child mostly watches television – 2007, 2008 and 2009**



QC1B– In which room do you watch TV at home most often? (spontaneous responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 5-15 who watch TV at home (3652 aged 5-15 in 2007, 2050 aged 5-15 in 2008, 2108 aged 5-15 in 2009, 964 aged 5-7 in 2007, 556 aged 5-7 in 2008, 567 aged 5-7 in 2009, 1336 aged 8-11 in 2007, 741 aged 8-11 in 2008, 764 aged 8-11 in 2009, 1352 aged 12-15 in 2007, 753 aged 12-15 in 2008, 777 aged 12-15 in 2009) – sig testing reflects any change between 2008 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

There are relatively few differences between boys and girls aged 5-15 in terms of where they most often watch television at home. Among children aged 8-11, however, boys are more likely than girls to watch mainly in their bedroom (13% vs. 8%), while girls are more likely than boys to watch mainly in the living room (91% vs. 84%).

Turning to where children mostly use the internet, less than one in twenty 5-7s (3%), one in ten 8-11s (10%) and three in ten 12-15s (29%) mostly use the internet in their bedroom. These figures have not changed since 2008. The living room continues to be the most often-mentioned location for internet use for each of the age groups, and this has increased among 8-11s since 2008 (70% vs. 62%) and among 12-15s (54% vs. 47%).

**Figure 9: Where the child mostly uses the internet – 2007, 2008 and 2009**



QC10B– In which room do you use the internet most often at home? – (spontaneous responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home (2397 aged 5-15 in 2007, 1449 aged 5-15 in 2008, 1567 aged 5-15 in 2009, 477 aged 5-7 in 2007, 308 aged 5-7 in 2008, 340 aged 5-7 in 2009, 875 aged 8-11 in 2007, 527 aged 8-11 in 2008, 582 aged 8-11 in 2009, 1045 aged 12-15 in 2007, 614 aged 12-15 in 2008, 645 aged 12-15 in 2009) – sig testing shows any changes between 2008 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Children aged 5-15 in DE households are more likely than all children to most often use the internet in the living room (71% vs. 65%). Since 2008 children in AB and C1 households are

now more likely to use the internet in the living room (65% vs. 47% for AB and 65% vs. 56% for C1).

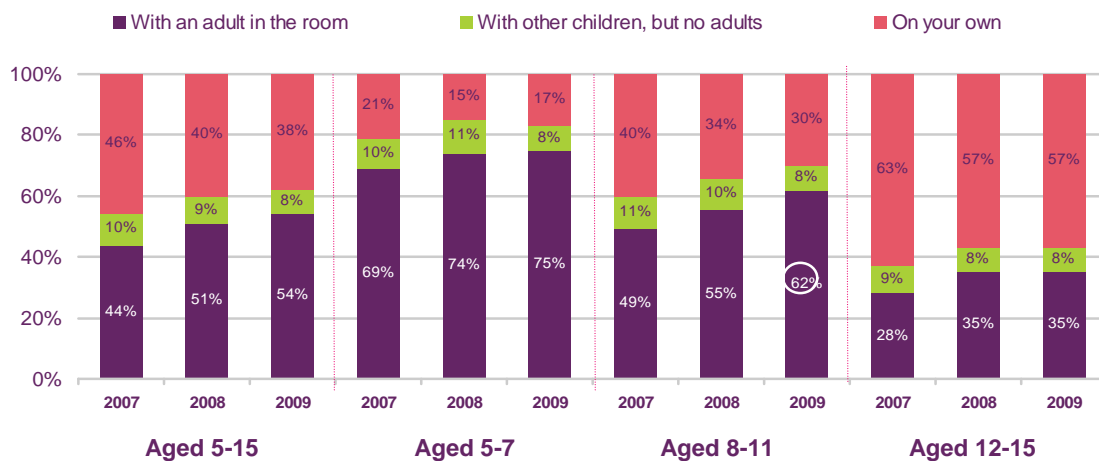
Children who use the internet at home were asked to say if anyone was with them most of the time they used the internet, and whether this was an adult or other children.

The majority of 5-7s and 8-11s spend most of the time using the internet with an adult in the room (75% and 62% respectively). However, the incidence of children who spend most of the time using the internet on their own increases with each age group. Those who mostly use the internet on their own account for one in six internet users aged 5-7 (17%), three in ten aged 8-11 (30%) and over half of those aged 12-15 (57%).

In terms of the demographic profile of children aged 8-11 who mostly use the internet alone, there are no differences by gender, but they are more likely than those who mostly use the internet in the presence of others to live in C1 households (35% vs. 26%) and are less likely to live in DE households (18% vs. 31%). There are no differences in the social grade or gender profile of those aged 12-15 who mostly use the internet alone compared to those who mostly use in the presence of others.

Internet users aged 8-11 are now more likely than in 2008 to use the internet with an adult in the room (62% vs. 55%).

**Figure 10: Who is with the child when using the internet – 2007, 2008 and 2009**



QC11 – Thinking about when you're using the internet at home, do you spend most of the time using... (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home (2397 aged 5-15 in 2007, 1449 aged 5-15 in 2008, 1567 aged 5-15 in 2009, 477 aged 5-7 in 2007, 308 aged 5-7 in 2008, 340 aged 5-7 in 2009, 875 aged 8-11 in 2007, 527 aged 8-11 in 2008, 582 aged 8-11 in 2009, 1405 aged 12-15 in 2007, 614 aged 12-15 in 2008, 645 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing shows any change between 2008 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

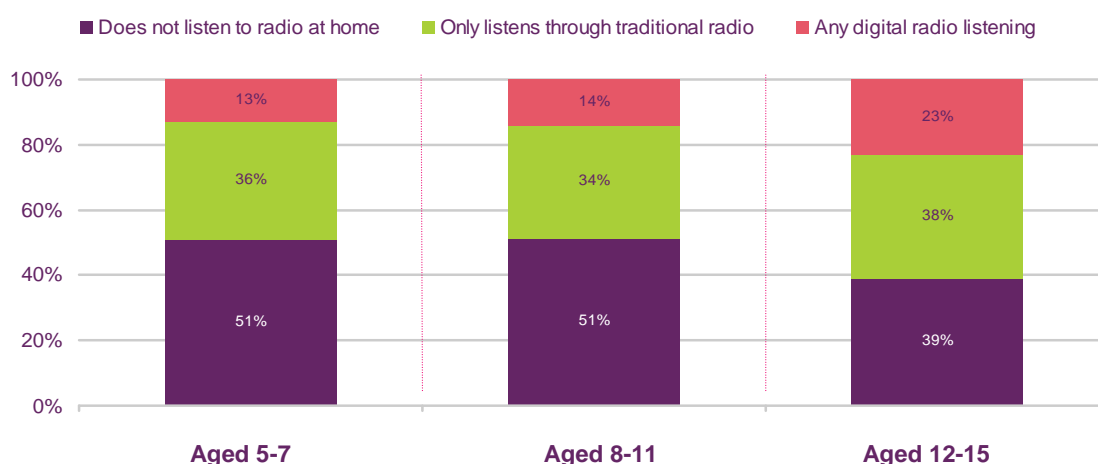
### 3.7 One in four children aged 12-15 listens to digital radio at home

Parents were also asked about their child's radio listening within the home.

Patterns of radio listening within the home among 5-7s and 8-11s are very similar. Half of all children aged 5-7 and 8-11 (49%) listen to the radio at home. One in eight (13% for 5-7s and 14% for 8-11s) listens to digital radio (either through a DAB radio set, through their digital TV service or over the internet).

Three in five 12-15s listen to the radio at home (61%) and one in four (23%) listens to digital radio.

**Figure 11: Radio listening at home, by age – 2009**



QP15 – Does your child ever listen to the radio in these ways in your home? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-11 and children aged 12-15 (576 aged 5-7, 774 aged 8-11, 781 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

### 3.8 Increase in children's regular<sup>16</sup> use of a range of media

All children aged 5-15 were asked about a list of eight media activities, such as watching television and listening to an MP3 player, and were asked to say which, if any, they do regularly, defined in this research as 'almost every day'.

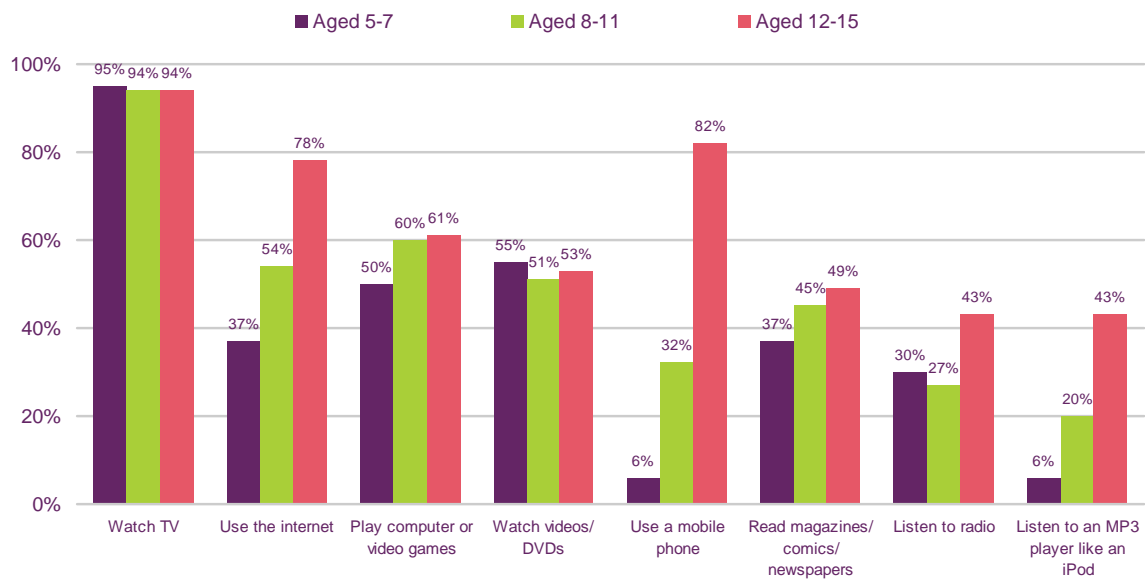
Two media are regularly used by children in each of the three age groups to a similar degree: almost all children watch television almost every day and around half of children watch videos or DVDs almost every day.

Regular use of the internet, mobile phones and MP3 players increases with each age group.

Playing computer or video games and reading magazines, comics or newspapers are two media activities undertaken to a similar level by both 8-11s and 12-15s – and at a higher level than among 5-7s.

Across the eight media that we asked about, the breadth of media used on a regular basis increases with age.

<sup>16</sup> In this context, 'regular' refers to an activity which the child states they do almost every day.

**Figure 12: Regular media activities undertaken, by age – 2009**

QC39A – Which of the following do you do almost every day? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 5-15 ( 576 aged 5-7, 774 aged 8-11, 781 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rosstiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

In 2009, there were some differences within the overall population of children aged 5-15 in terms of their regular media activities.

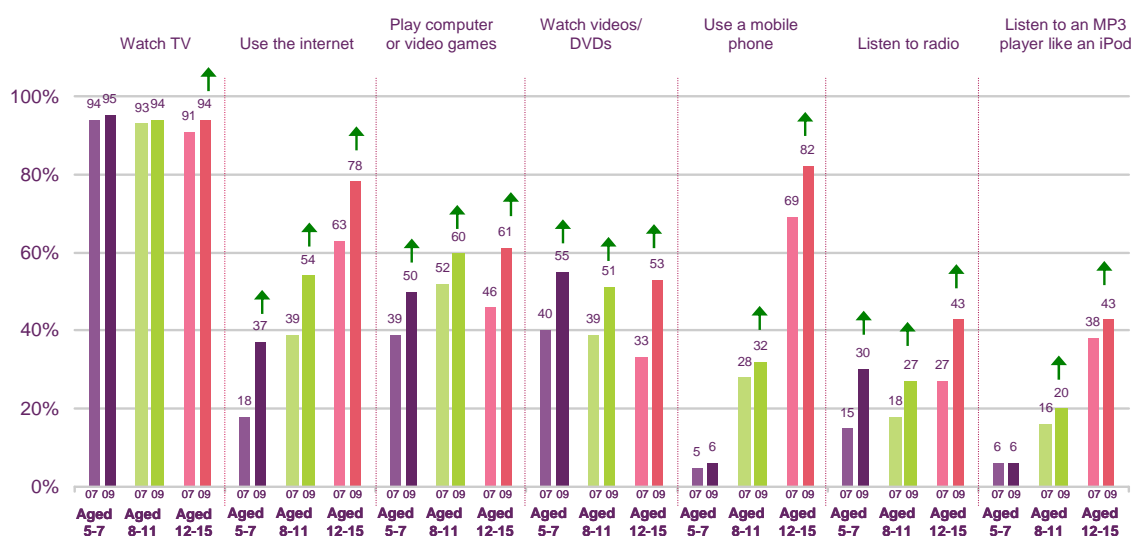
Boys within each age group are more likely than girls to say that they play computer or video games almost every day (58% vs. 42% for 5-7s, 71% vs. 49% for 8-11s and 72% vs. 48% for 12-15s) and boys aged 12-15 are also more likely than girls aged 12-15 to watch television almost every day (96% vs. 92%). In contrast, girls aged 8-11 are more likely than boys aged 8-11 to regularly use a mobile phone (37% vs. 27%) and girls aged 12-15 are more likely than boys to read magazines, newspapers or comics almost every day (55% vs. 42%).

Since 2007, there have been some changes in the patterns of regular media use among children. All children aged 5-7, 8-11 and 12-15 are more likely to regularly use the internet, watch videos / DVDs, play computer games and listen to the radio. In addition, the oldest children, aged 8-11 and 12-15 are now more likely to regularly use a mobile phone and to listen to an MP3 player while 12-15s are also more likely to regularly watch television.

While boys in each age group are more likely than girls to regularly play computer or video games, since 2007 there has been an increase in both boys and girls aged 5-7, 8-11 and 12-15 who play games almost every day.



**Figure 13: Regular media activities undertaken – 2007 and 2009**



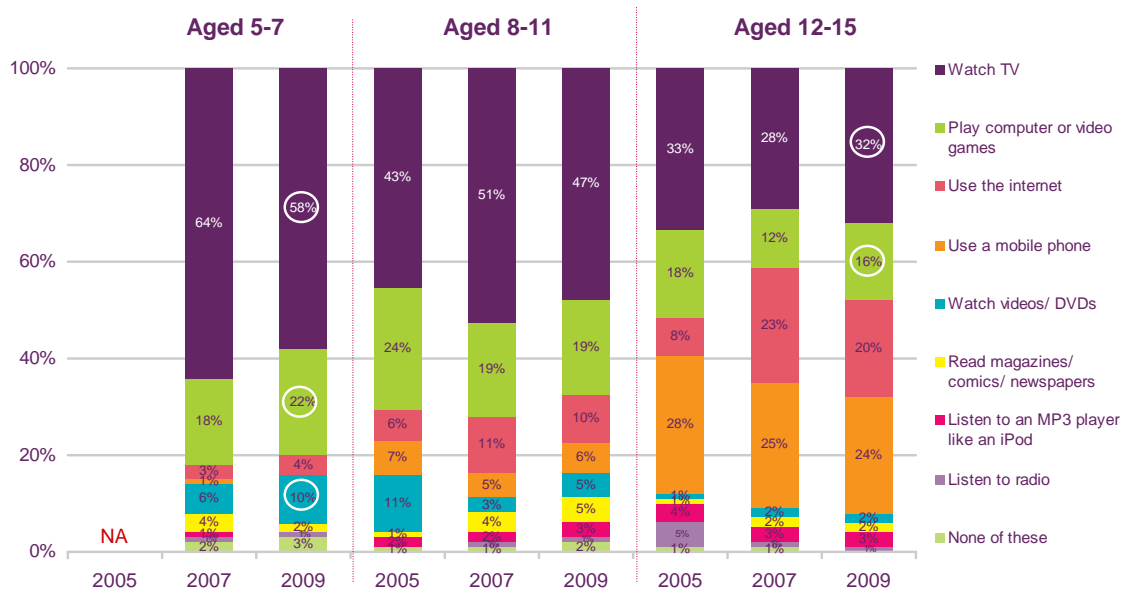
QC39A – Which of the following do you do almost every day? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 5-15 (985 aged 5-7 in 2007, 576 aged 5-7 in 2009, 1354 aged 8-11 in 2007, 774 aged 8-11 in 2009, 1357 aged 12-15 in 2007, 781 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing shows any differences between 2007 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rosstiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

### 3.9 Preference for television declines as children get older

When asked which of the activities they carried out regularly they would miss the most if it were taken away, there is an overall preference for television. However, this preference declines with the child's age, and a preference for the internet and mobile phones increases with age. While television is the preferred medium for over half of 5-7s (58%) and close to half (47%) of 8-11s, just one in three 12-15s (32%) says this.

The broader range of media used by older children clearly influences their media preferences; four media (computer games, internet, mobile phone, television) are nominated by more than one in ten children aged 12-15 as the medium they would miss the most, compared to two media (computer games and television) named by at least one in ten children aged 5-7 and aged 8-11.

**Figure 14: Media activity would miss the most – 2005<sup>17</sup>, 2007 and 2009**



QC39B – Which one of the things you do almost every day, would you miss doing the most if it got taken away? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 5-15 (985 aged 5-7 in 2007, 576 aged 5-7 in 2009, 772 aged 8-11 in 2005, 1354 aged 8-11 in 2007, 774 aged 8-11 in 2009, 764 aged 12-15 in 2005, 1357 aged 12-15 in 2007, 781 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing show any difference between 2007 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rosstier-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Children aged 5-7 are less likely than in 2007 to miss watching television (58% vs. 64%) and are more likely to miss playing computer or video games (22% vs. 18%) or watching videos / DVDs (10% vs. 6%). Since 2007 there has been no change in the most missed activity among 8-11s. In contrast, children aged 12-15 are now more likely to miss watching television (32% vs. 28%) and to miss playing computer or video games (16% vs. 12%).

In 2009, as in previous years, there are some clear differences by gender in terms of children's media preferences. Among 8-11s and 12-15s, boys are more likely than girls to miss playing computer or video games (30% vs. 7% for 8-11s and 28% vs. 3% for 12-15s).

Girls aged 8-11 and 12-15 are more likely than boys of these ages to miss using their mobile phone (8% vs. 4% for 8-11s and 34% vs. 15% for 12-15s) and to miss watching videos / DVDs (7% vs. 3% for 8-11s and 3% vs. 1% for 12-15s).

In addition, girls aged 8-11 are more likely than boys aged 8-11 to miss watching television (53% vs. 40%) while the oldest girls (aged 12-15) are more likely than the oldest boys to miss reading magazines, comics or newspapers (3% vs. 1%).

### 3.10 The range of online activities increases with age

Children who use the internet at home were prompted with a range of internet activities and were asked to say which they ever do online, and how often they do them<sup>18</sup>.

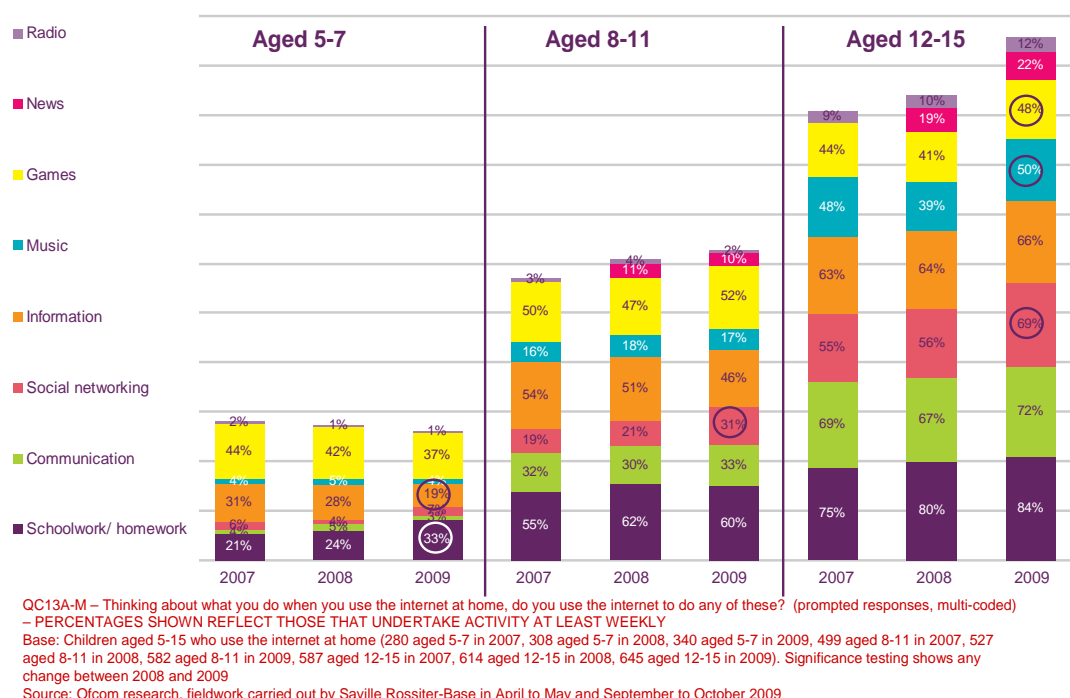
These uses have been grouped into eight types, in order to assess breadth of use of the internet.

<sup>17</sup> In 2005 the equivalent question asked "Which one of these things would you miss doing the most?"

<sup>18</sup> These activities in no way represent an exhaustive list of all the potential activities that children can undertake online. In order to draw comparisons over time Figure 15 only shows those activities that children were asked about in a consistent manner in 2007, 2008 and 2009 – some activities have therefore been excluded

- Schoolwork / homework – relates to finding information online for their studies
- Communication – relates to uses such as sending or receiving email or using Instant Messaging services
- Social networking – relates to visiting social networking websites like Facebook or Bebo, or virtual worlds (like Habbo)
- Information – relates to looking for information on websites about things that interest them, or looking at blogs or wikis (only asked of 8-15s)
- Music – relates to downloading or playing music over the internet
- Games – relates to playing games on websites or online
- News – relates to visiting news websites (only asked of 8-15s in 2008 and 2009)
- Radio – relates to listening to radio over the internet

**Figure 15: Internet activities carried out at least once a week by users – 2007, 2008 and 2009**



The relative height of the columns indicates the proportion of children carrying out these different activities, and as such represents breadth of use. Breadth of use has a clear link to the age of the child, with 5-7s having the narrowest use of the internet and 12-15s the broadest use.

Children aged 5-7 mostly use the internet at least weekly for games (37%), schoolwork (33%) and information (19%). One in fourteen 5-7s (7%) also say they visit virtual worlds or social networking websites at least weekly. A majority of children aged 8-11 say they use the internet for schoolwork (60%) and for games (52%) with close to half (46%) also using it for

information purposes. Communication and social networking are the next most popular categories, with one in three 8-11s using the internet for these purposes (33% for communication and 31% for social networking). One in six 8-11s (17%) also uses the internet at least weekly for music and one in ten for news (10%)<sup>19</sup>.

A majority of 12-15s use the internet at least weekly for four of the eight categories: schoolwork (84%), communication (72%), social networking (69%) and information (66%).

Children aged 5-7 who use the internet at home are less likely now than in 2008 to use it at least weekly for information purposes (19% vs. 28%)<sup>20</sup> but are more likely to now use the internet for schoolwork / homework (33% vs. 24%). Social networking is the only weekly activity that children aged 8-11 are now more likely to undertake on a weekly basis, compared to 2008 (31% vs. 21%). A greater degree of change since 2008 is apparent among 12-15s as it is now more common for the oldest children to use the internet weekly for each of the following activities: social networking (69% vs. 56%) music (50% vs. 39%) and games (48% vs. 41%).

In 2009, there are some differences in the breadth of use of the internet by gender. Girls aged 8-11 are more likely than boys of this age to use the internet on a weekly basis for communication (38% vs. 29%) and for social networking (36% vs. 25%). Boys aged 12-15 are, however, more likely to use the internet weekly for games (60% vs. 36%) and for news (26% vs. 18%).

Older children (aged 8-15) were also asked whether they watched or downloaded content such as user-generated content (watch or download videos made by people / the general public like on YouTube), music videos, whole TV programmes / films or clips from TV programmes or films.

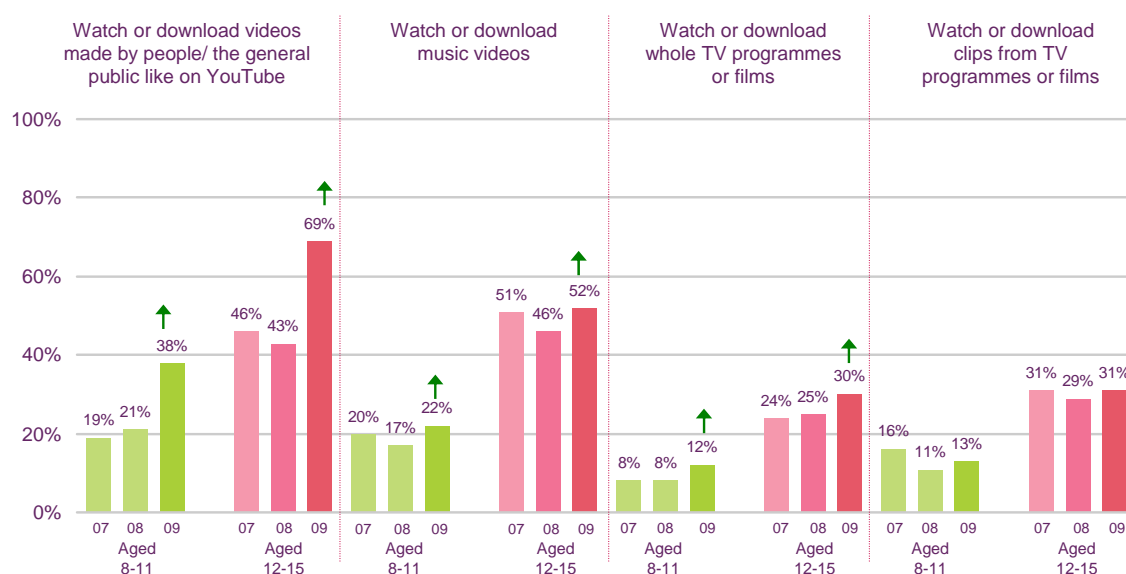
One in five children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home says they have ever watched or downloaded whole TV programmes or films (21%), an increase of four percentage points since 2008.

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<sup>19</sup> While 5-7s appear to have a narrower use of the internet, these data look at those activities undertaken online at least weekly. 5-7s do use the internet for these purposes but not always on a weekly basis.

<sup>20</sup> While 5-7s are now less likely to use the internet at least weekly for information purposes, this could be attributable to a change in the way the question was worded in 2009.

**Figure 16: Watching/ downloading activities carried out by users aged 8-15 – 2007, 2008 and 2009<sup>21</sup>**



QC13A-M – Thinking about what you do when you use the internet at home, do you use the internet to do any of these? (prompted responses, multi-coded) – PERCENTAGES SHOWN REFLECT THOSE THAT UNDERTAKE ACTIVITY EVER  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home (499 aged 8-11 in 2007, 527 aged 8-11 in 2008, 582 aged 8-11 in 2009, 1045 aged 12-15 in 2007, 615 aged 12-15 in 2008, 645 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing shows any change between 2008 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Children aged 12-15 are more likely to have ever watched or downloaded each of these types of content than those aged 8-11. Two in five 8-11s (38%) who use the internet at home have ever watched / downloaded user-generated content with around one in five (22%) also watching / downloading music video content. At least one in eight (12%) 8-11s has also watched / downloaded TV programmes or films (in full or in part). Among 12-15s, seven in ten (69%) of all those who use the internet at home have ever watched / downloaded user-generated content, with half of this age group also watching / downloading music videos (52%). Three in ten 12-15s (30%) have also ever watched / downloaded TV programmes (in full or in part).

It is more common for boys rather than girls aged 8-15 to watch or download user-generated content (59% vs. 49%)

All four of these activities are more likely to be undertaken by children aged 12-15 who mostly use the internet alone compared to those that mostly use the internet in the presence of others: watch/ download videos made by people/ the general public like on YouTube (77% vs.58%), to watch/ download music videos (60% vs. 42%), watch / download whole television programmes (36% vs. 22%), and to watch/ download clips from TV programmes or films (36% vs.23%).

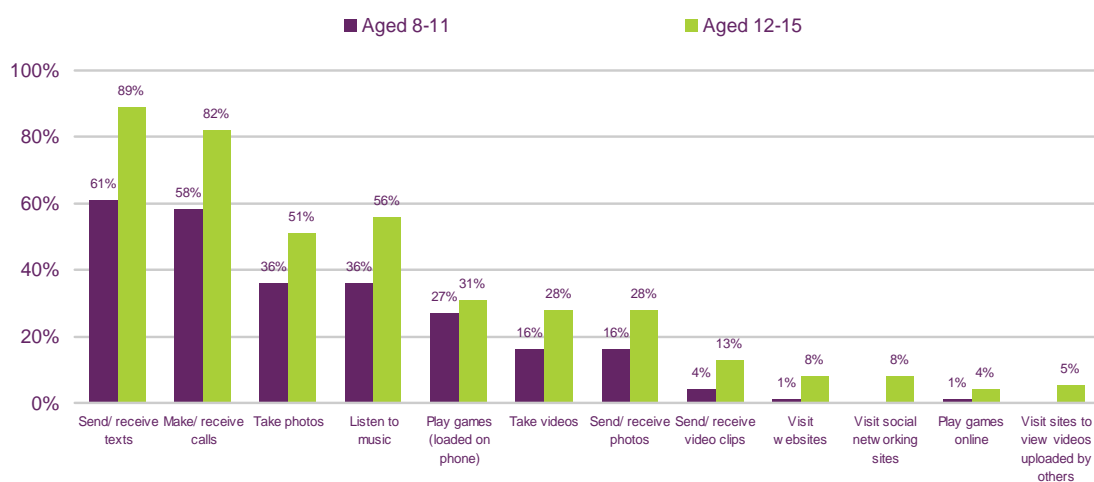
In addition, children aged 8-11 who mostly use the internet on their own are more likely than those who mostly use the internet in the presence of others to watch / download videos made by people / the general public like on YouTube (49% vs. 33%) and to watch / download music videos (29% vs. 19%).

<sup>21</sup> Figure 15 shows those activities undertaken at least weekly, while Figure 16 refers to activities ever undertaken.

### 3.11 Older children use their mobile phone for a broader range of activities than younger children

Children with their own mobile phone were prompted with fifteen types of use and were asked to say which they ever do with their mobile phone and how often<sup>22</sup>. Figure 17 shows the proportion of children aged 8-11 and 12-15 who carry out each of these activities with their mobile phone at least once a week.

**Figure 17: Mobile phone activities carried out at least once a week by owners - 2009**



QC36A-O – Thinking about what you use your mobile phone for, do you use it to do any of these? (prompted responses, multi-coded) - PERCENTAGES SHOWN REFLECT THOSE THAT UNDERTAKE ACTIVITY AT LEAST WEEKLY  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 with their own mobile phone (392 aged 8-11, 684 aged 12-15) - Only showing activities undertaken at least weekly by 3% or more, among either age group  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

In 2009, a majority of 8-11s and 12-15s continue to use their mobile phones predominantly for calls and for sending texts. A majority of 12-15s also use their phones for taking photos and for listening to music. Older children (12-15) are more likely to carry out eleven out of the twelve activities shown on a weekly basis than children aged 8-11. However, children aged 8-11 are as likely to play games that are loaded on the phone as those aged 12-15.

Among 8-11s, there is only one difference by gender, with boys of this age more likely than girls to play games loaded on the phone at least weekly (33% vs. 22%). In contrast, there are several differences by gender among the oldest children (12-15). Boys are more likely than girls to play games that are loaded on the phone (36% vs. 25%) and to send or receive video clips (16% vs. 10%) on a weekly basis. Girls aged 12-15 are more likely than boys to send or receive texts (93% vs. 85%), to make or receive calls (85% vs. 79%) and to use their phone to take photos (58% vs. 45%).

Compared to 2008, 8-11s with their own mobile phone are now more likely to use their phone on a weekly basis for three activities: to make or receive calls (58% vs. 50%), to take photos (36% vs. 29%) and to listen to music (36% vs. 25%). In 2009 12-15s are more likely to use their mobile for five activities: sending or receiving texts (89% vs. 86%), making or receiving calls (82% vs. 73%), listening to music (56% vs. 47%), playing games loaded on the phone (31% vs. 27%) and sending or receiving photo messages (28% vs. 20%).

<sup>22</sup> Figure 17 shows twelve out of these fifteen activities, the three activities not shown are only undertaken weekly by less than three percent of children aged 8-15.

### 3.12 One in five boys aged 12-15 who plays games mostly plays with other people over the internet

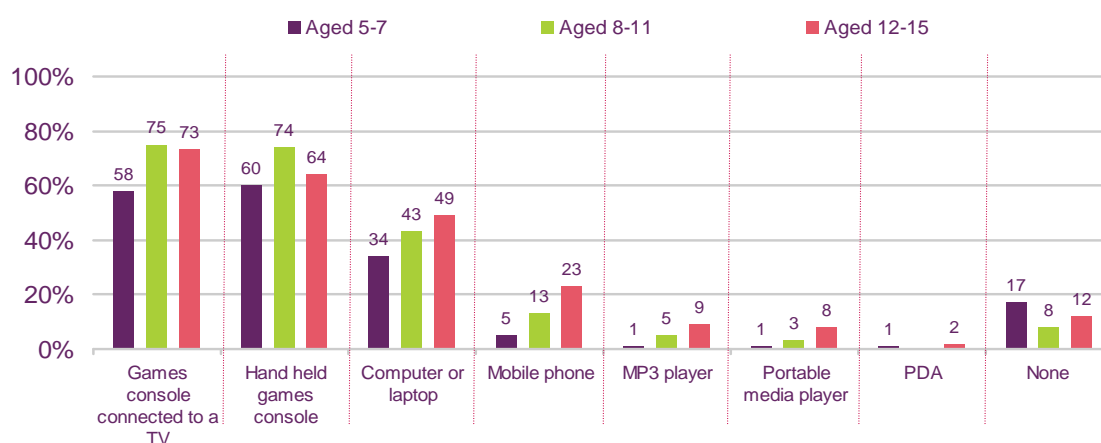
All parents were shown a list of devices and were asked to say which, if any, their child uses to play games at home or elsewhere.

Most children in each of the three age groups use at least one of the devices to play games, accounting for eight in ten 5-7s (83%), nine in ten 8-11s (92%) and nine in ten 12-15s (88%).

Games consoles connected to a television and handheld / portable games consoles are the most commonly-used devices for gaming; used by six in ten or more children in each age group - 58% for 5-7s, 75% for 8-11s and 73% for 12-15s for games consoles connected to a television and 60% for 5-7s, 74% for 8-11s and 64% for 12-15s for portable games consoles. In comparison, fewer children ever play games using a computer or laptop; one in three 5-7s (34%), four in ten 8-11s (43%) and one in two 12-15s (49%).

Playing games using a mobile phone varies considerably across the age groups, reflecting the considerable differences in levels of access to a mobile phone. While half of 8-11s (50%) and nine in ten 12-15s (88%) have their own mobile phone, it appears that few are using their phone for playing games. Gaming through other devices such as an MP3 player, portable media player or PDA is a niche activity, even among 12-15s.

**Figure 18: Devices used for gaming, by age - 2009**

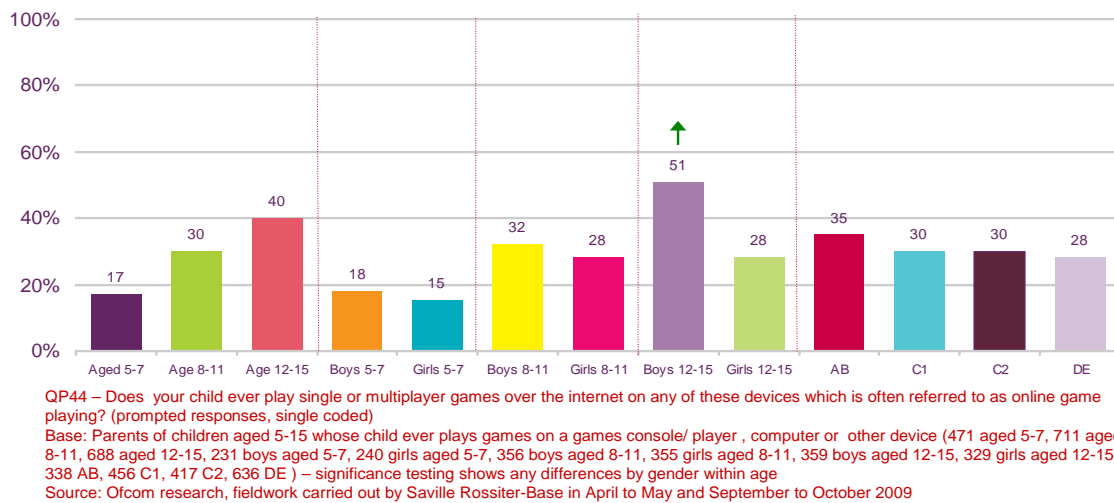


QP43- Does your child ever play games at home or elsewhere in any of these ways? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 (576 aged 5-7, 774 aged 8-11, 781 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

As noted earlier, boys are more likely than girls to say they play games as a regular activity. It is still the case, however, that most girls in each of the three age groups do play games using these devices. Much of the overall difference in gaming between boys and girls is due to the higher use among boys of games consoles connected to a television.

Parents of children aged 5-15 who use any of the devices for gaming were also asked whether their child had ever played single or multiplayer games over the internet. A significant minority of children who play games have ever played online; one in six 5-7s (17%), three in ten 8-11s (30%) and two in five 12-15s (40%). Among those children who ever play games, playing online is more common among boys aged 12-15 than among girls of this age (51% vs. 29%). There is no difference in playing games online by socio-economic group.

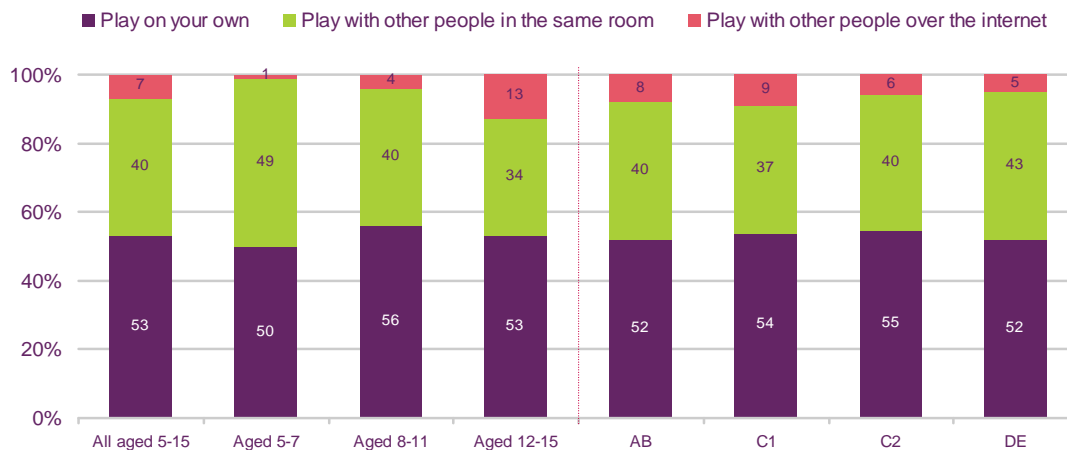
**Figure 19: Online gaming by age, gender and socio-economic group - 2009**



Children were asked to say which of the following three options best described the people with whom they most often played games on a computer, games console or other device: play on your own, play with other people in the same room or play with other people over the internet.

Figure 20 shows that more than half of all children aged 5-15 (53%) say they most often play on their own, and this does not vary by the age of the child. Children aged 12-15 are the only group in which a sizable minority say that they most often play with other people over the internet (13%) with this figure rising to one in five (20%) for boys aged 12-15. Results do not differ by socio-economic group.

**Figure 20: Who the child mostly plays games with - 2009**



QC31 - When you play games on your computer, games console or any other way, do you most often.....(prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 5-15 who ever play games (1880 aged 5-15, 471 aged 5-7, 711 aged 8-11, 698 aged 12-15, 342 AB, 455 C1, 422 C2, 640 DE)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Parents of children aged 5-15 whose child uses a games player at home were also asked whether their child uses the games player to go online. One in seven children aged 5-15 (14%) uses their games player to access the internet, with incidence increasing with age, accounting for one in twenty of all children aged 5-7 who use a game player (5%), one in eight 8-11s (12%) and one in five 12-15s (21%).



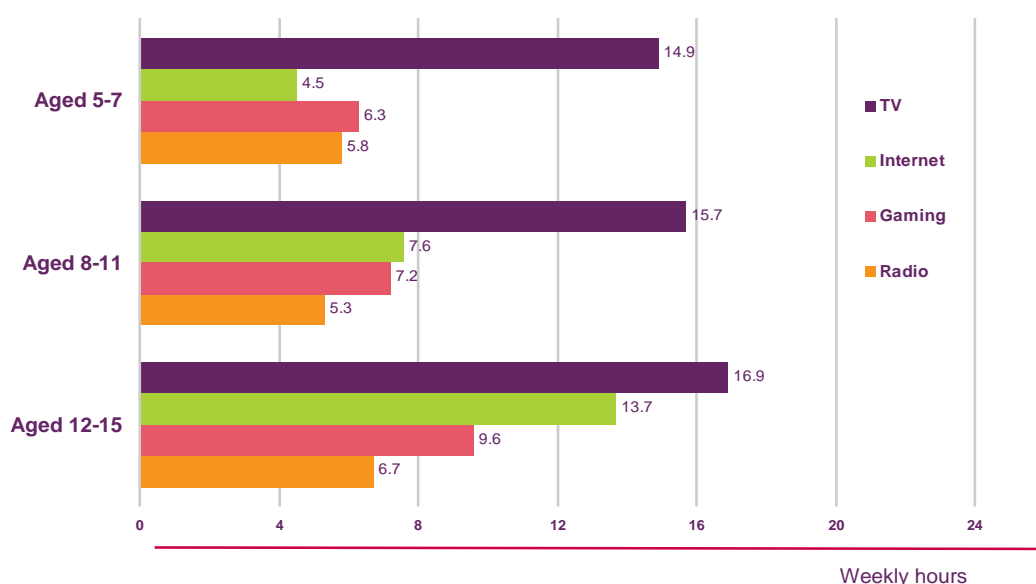
Boys aged 5-15 who use a games console / player are more likely than girls to access the internet in this way (18% vs. 8%). Compared to 2008, 12-15s who use a games console / player are now more likely to access the internet through it (21% vs. 14%).

Children aged 8-11 who mostly use the internet on their own are more likely to use a games player to access the internet compared to those who mostly use the internet in the presence of others (23% vs. 13%).

### 3.13 Television continues to have the highest level of consumption

Parents of younger children (aged 5-11), and the older children (aged 12-15) themselves, were asked to estimate the hours spent at home using each of the four media of television, radio, internet and games players / consoles on a typical school day and on a typical weekend day<sup>23</sup>. Because these estimates are self-reported it is likely that a degree of under- and over- reporting will be present and the estimates should be taken as indicative only.

**Figure 21: Weekly hours of media consumption at home among users, by age - 2009**



QP8A-B/ QC3A-B/ QP23A-B/QC12A-B/ QP45A-B/ QC23A-B/QP16A-B/QC7A-B – How many hours would you say he/ she spends [USING MEDIUM] on a typical school day/ on a weekend day?  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-11 who use each medium at home and children aged 12-15 who use each medium at home (VARIABLE BASE)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

In 2009, children aged 12-15 said that they watched 16.9 hours of television per week, which is a higher volume than both those aged 5-7 (14.9 hours) and those aged 8-11 (15.7 hours). While there are no differences at an overall level by age or by gender there are differences by socio-economic group. Children aged 5-15 in DE households are likely to watch more television at home per week compared to all children (17.4 hours vs. 16.0 hours). In contrast, children in AB and C2 households watch less television at home per week (14.3 hours for ABs and 15.1 hours for C2s).

Use of the internet at home increases with the age of the child. Children aged 5-7 use the internet for 4.5 hours in a typical week compared to 7.6 hours for 8-11s and 13.7 hours for 12-15s.

Television therefore has a higher level of home consumption than the internet, although the difference in consumption of these two media becomes less marked for children aged 12-15.

<sup>23</sup> Estimates of hours shown are not based on all children, but on all children who use each of the media at home.

While children aged 5-15 in DE households are less likely to have home internet access, those who do have access use the internet at home for a greater number of hours in a typical week compared to all children aged 5-15 (10.1 hours vs. 9.2 hours).

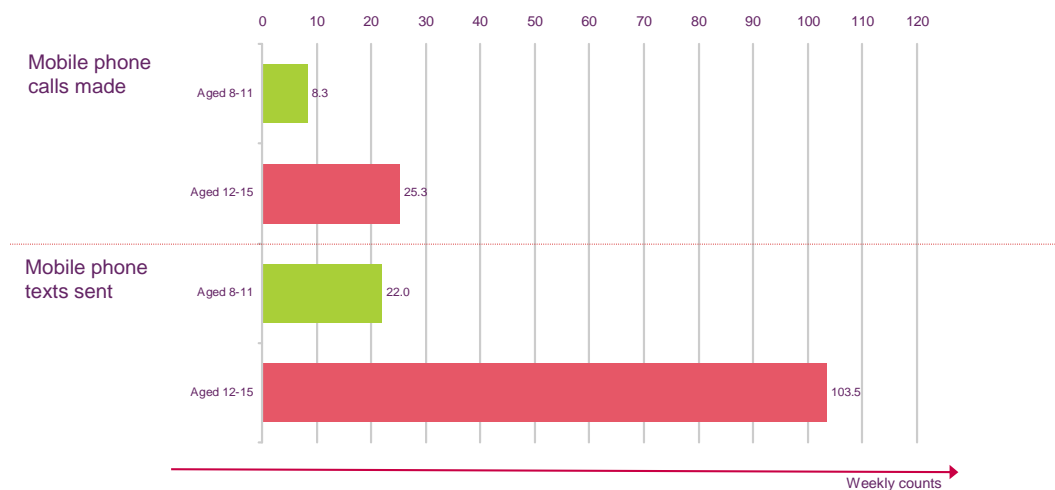
As with home internet use, game playing increases with the age of the child. When compared to their time spent using the internet at home, children aged 5-7 spend more time playing games than they do using the internet (6.3 hours vs. 4.5 hours), children aged 8-11 spend a similar amount of time using both media (7.2 hours for gaming vs. 7.6 hours for the internet) while children aged 12-15 spend more time using the internet at home than they do playing games (13.7 hours vs. 9.6 hours).

Within each age category, boys spend more time game playing in a typical week than girls. Children aged 5-15 in DE households also spend more time game playing than all children (8.6 hours vs. 7.9 hours).

Radio consumption among 12-15s (6.7 hours) is higher than for both 5-7s (5.8 hours) and 8-11s (5.3 hours). The hours spent listening to radio at home do not vary by gender for 5-11s but girls aged 12-15 spend more time listening to the radio than boys of this age (7.4 hours vs. 6.0 hours).

Parents of 5-11s and children aged 12-15 were also asked about the volume of calls made and text messages sent through their mobile phone in a typical week<sup>24</sup>. As with other key media, mobile phone consumption (both voice calls and text messaging) increases with age. There are no differences in the volume of calls made by gender for either 8-11s or 12-15s, but girls aged 12-15 send roughly 33% more texts than boys of this age in an average week (120 texts vs. 87 texts).

**Figure 22: Weekly calls made and text messages sent by users - 2009**



QP35A-B/ QP36A-B – How many calls/ texts would you say he/ she makes/ sends using his/ her mobile phone on a typical school day/ on a weekend day? - (spontaneous responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 8-11 whose child has their own mobile phone and children aged 12-15 with their own mobile phone (VARIABLE BASE)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

<sup>24</sup> Figure 22 only shows data relating to 8-11s and 12-15 as there were too few 5-7s with their own mobile phone to report on.

## Section 4

# Children's and parents' attitudes and mediation strategies

This section looks at parental attitudes towards their children's use of the internet and the extent to which parents have specific concerns about the internet, mobile phones and any games that they play, as well as addressing parents' attitudes towards the potential impact of mobile location services. It goes on to examine the mediation strategies that parents use – including rules and controls. Finally, it also covers children's attitudes to their use of media.

It is also possible to look at parental rules and mediation strategies relating to the internet by whether or not the child uses the internet unsupervised. There are two ways that children could be considered to be unsupervised: those that state they mostly use the internet on their own; or those that mostly use the internet in their bedroom. We have opted to look at those that mostly use the internet on their own because it represents a larger proportion of children and because use of the internet outside the bedroom could be unsupervised.<sup>25</sup> In terms of any degree of overlap between these two measures, one in four children aged 8-11 (23%) and close to half of 12-15s (45%) who mostly uses the internet alone also say that they mostly use the internet in their bedroom.

### Key findings

- Parental attitudes towards their child's use of the internet is mostly positive with four in five parents (81%) of children aged 5-15 trusting their child to use the internet safely.
- Two in five parents of children aged 5-7 and 8-11 (40%) are concerned about the television content their child may view, with one in three parents (34%) of 8-11s and 12-15s having concerns about the online content their child may be exposed to. Parents of these older children (aged 8-15) are also as likely to be concerned about who their child may be in contact with online.
- Parental rules about television, the internet and for games are in place for between 80-90% of 5-11s and for the majority of 12-15s.
- Since 2007 there has been an increase in parental controls being set on multichannel television services (32% vs. 28%).
- Since 2008, however, parents are less likely to have internet controls / filtering software loaded on their PC/ laptop (43% vs. 49%).
- One in six children aged 8-15 who use the internet for communication purposes (i.e. for sending emails, social networking, instant messaging etc) say that it's easier to keep things private or secret on the internet than in real life (16%) and one in seven feel more confident online than they do in the real world (14%).

<sup>25</sup> It is not possible to look at those children aged 5-7 who mostly use the internet on their own compared to those that mostly use in the presence of others because of low base sizes. It is, however, possible to conduct this analysis for 8-11s and 12-15s.

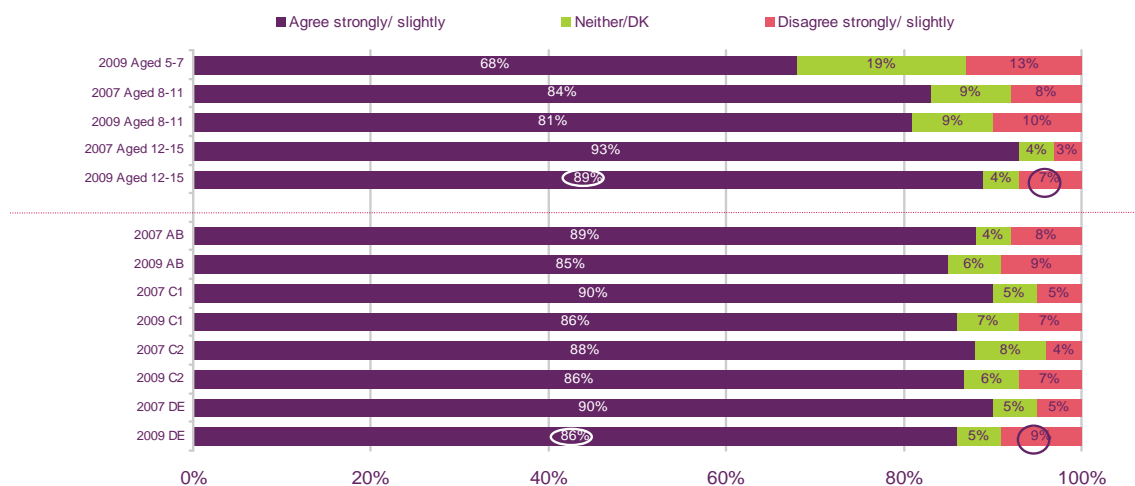
### 4.1 The majority of parents trust their child to use the internet safely

Parents of children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about their child's use of the internet:

- I trust my child to use the internet safely
- The benefits of the internet for my child outweigh any risks
- My child has been taught at school how to use the internet safely
- My child knows more about the internet than I do

The vast majority of parents agreed with the statement “I trust my child to use the internet safely” (81%). One in ten parents across all 5-15s (9%) disagrees that they trust their child to use the internet safely. Parents’ agreement that they trust their child increases with each age group.

**Figure 23: Parental agreement – "I trust my child to use the internet safely", by age and socio-economic group – 2007 and 2009**



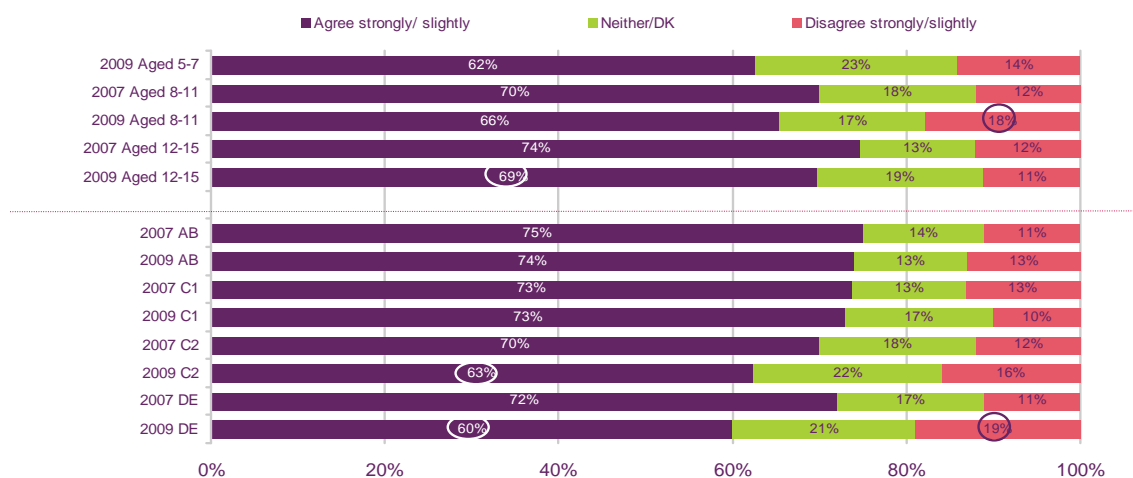
QP30B – Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements in relation to your child? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children who use the internet at home (340 aged 5-7 in 2009, 663 aged 8-11 in 2007, 582 aged 8-11 in 2009, 768 aged 12-15 in 2007, 645 aged 12-15 in 2009, 298 AB in 2007, 242 AB in 2009, 463 C1 in 2007, 324 C1 in 2009, 346 C2 in 2007, 291 C2 in 2009, 309 DE in 2007, 351 DE in 2009) - SEG information is based on children aged 8-15 only – significance testing shows any changes between 2007 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Since 2007, parents of 12-15s and parents of 8-15s in DE households are now less likely to agree with this statement (89% vs. 93% for 12-15s and 86% vs. 90% for 8-15s in DE households).

Parents were also asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that “The benefits of the internet for my child outweighs any risk”. The majority of parents also agree with this statement. Parents of 12-15s are more likely to agree than parents of 5-7s, but are no more likely to agree than parents of 8-11s. One in seven parents of children aged 5-15 (14%) disagrees with this statement, with parents of 8-11s being the most likely to disagree (18%).

Among children aged 8-15, parents in DE households are more likely than all parents to disagree that the benefits of the internet outweigh the risks (19% vs. 14%) while parents in AB and C1 households are more likely than all parents to agree (74% for AB and 73% for C1 vs. 68%).

**Figure 24: Parental agreement – “The benefits of the internet for my child outweigh any risks”, by age and socio-economic group – 2007 and 2009**



QP30A – Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements in relation to your child? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children who use the internet at home (340 aged 5-7 in 2009, 663 aged 8-11 in 2007, 582 aged 8-11 in 2009, 768 aged 12-15 in 2007, 645 aged 12-15 in 2009, 298 AB in 2007, 242 AB in 2009, 463 C1 in 2007, 324 C1 in 2009, 346 C2 in 2007, 291 C2 in 2009, 309 DE in 2007, 351 DE in 2009) - SEG information is based on children aged 8-15 only – significance testing shows any changes between 2007 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

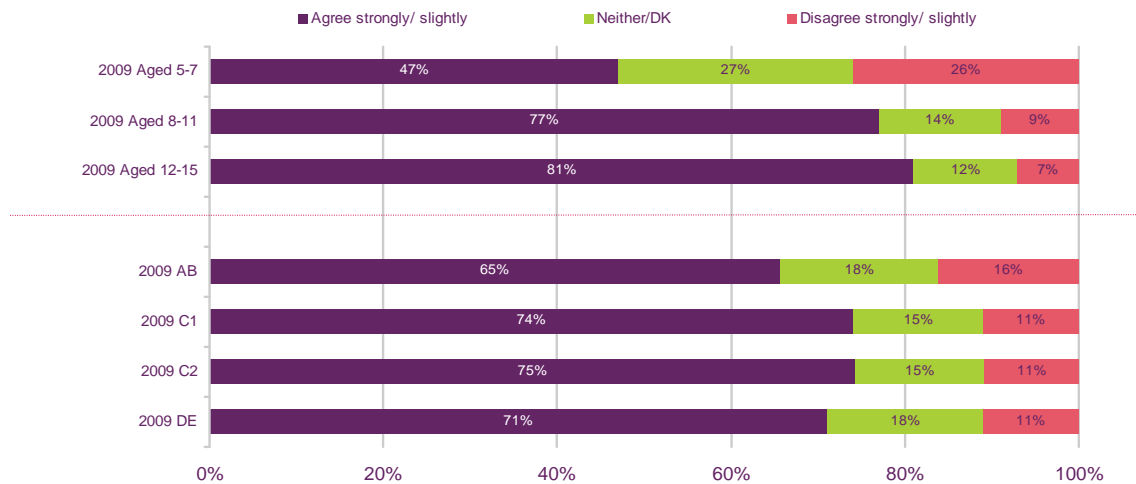
Compared to 2007, there has been an increase in disagreement among parents of children aged 8-11 (18% vs. 12%) and among parents of children aged 8-15 in DE households (19% vs. 11%). Parents of children aged 12-15 are now less likely to agree with this statement (69% vs. 74%), as are parents of children aged 8-15 in C2 and DE households (63% vs. 70% and 60% vs. 72% respectively).

Parents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that “My child has been taught at school how to use the internet safely”<sup>26</sup>. Around half of parents of 5-7s agree with this statement (47%), while a majority of parents of 8-11s and 12-15s agree (77% for 8-11s and 81% for 12-15s). Conversely, one-quarter (26%) of parents of children aged 5-7 disagree with the statement compared to one in ten parents of 8-11s (9%) and one in fourteen parents of 12-15s (7%).

Parents of children aged 5-15 in AB households who use the internet at home are more likely than all parents to disagree with the statement (16% vs. 12%).

<sup>26</sup> There is no comparable data for 2007 with regard to this statement as the question wording was changed from “My child has been taught at school how to use the internet safely and effectively”.

**Figure 25: Parental agreement – “My child has been taught at school how to use the internet safely”, by age and socio-economic group - 2009**

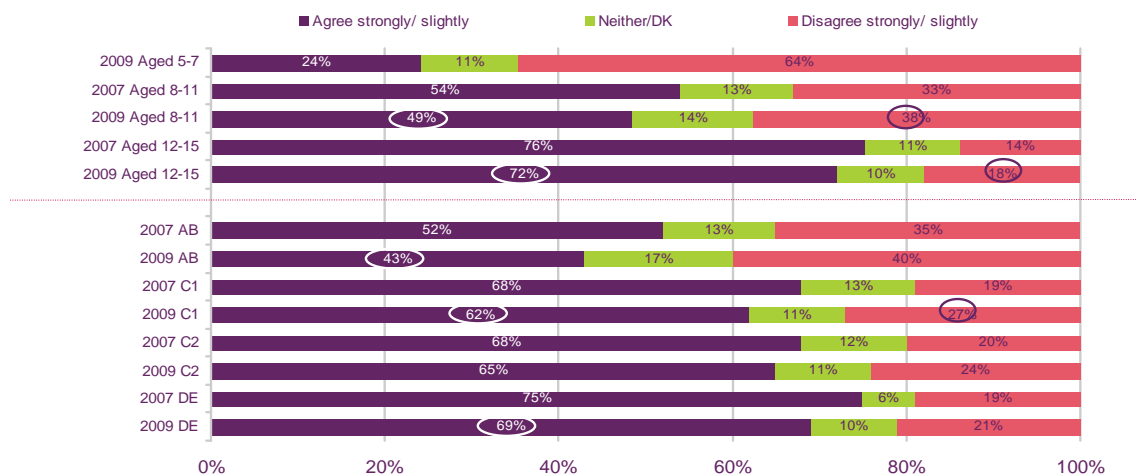


QP30C – Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements in relation to your child? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children who use the internet at home (340 aged 5-7, 582 aged 8-11, 645 aged 12-15, 327 AB, 412 C1 in 2009, 372 C2 in 2009, 435 DE in 2009)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Parents' agreement that "My child knows more about the internet than I do" increases with each age group while disagreement decreases with each age group, with three in five parents of a 5-7 disagreeing (64%) compared to one in five parents of a 12-15 year old child (18%).

Parents of children aged 8-15 in AB households are also more likely to disagree compared to all parents (40% vs. 28%). Parents in DE households, however, are more likely to agree (69% vs. 61%).

**Figure 26: Parental agreement – “My child knows more about the internet than I do”, by age and socio-economic group – 2007 and 2009**



QP30D – Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements in relation to your child? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home (340 aged 5-7 in 2009, 663 aged 8-11 in 2007, 582 aged 8-11 in 2009, 768 aged 12-15 in 2007, 645 aged 12-15 in 2009, 298 AB in 2007, 242 AB in 2009, 463 C1 in 2007, 324 C1 in 2009, 346C2 in 2007, 291 C2 in 2009, 309 DE in 2007, 351 DE in 2009) – SEG information is based on children aged 8-15 only – significance testing shows any change between 2007 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Compared to 2007, parents of children aged 8-11 and 12-15 are more likely to disagree that their child knows more about the internet than they do (38% vs. 33% for 8-11s and 18% vs. 14% for 12-15s) and are also less likely to agree. Parents of children aged 8-15 in AB, C1 and DE households are now also less likely to agree.

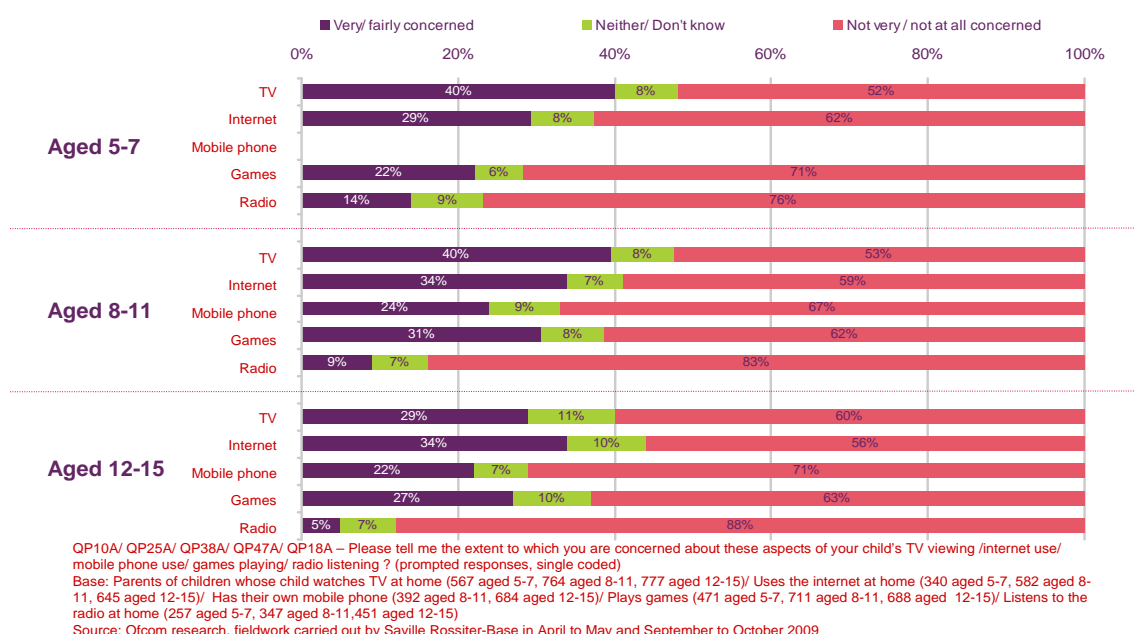
## 4.2 Parents are as likely to be concerned about media content as they are about who their child is in contact with through the media

Parents were asked specific questions about their child's use of different media, in order to gauge the extent to which they are concerned about:

- their child's exposure to potentially harmful or inappropriate content; and
- the contact their child may have with others through those media.

Figure 27 shows parents' concerns about the content that their child encounters or engages with for each media. A minority of parents are concerned about the content that their child engages with, across each of the media. At an overall level, parents of children aged 5-7 and 8-11 are most concerned about television content, followed by online content, whereas parents of 12-15s are most concerned about online content.

**Figure 27: Parental concerns about media content, by age - 2009<sup>27</sup>**



Compared to all parents of children aged 5-15 who use the relevant media, parents in AB households are more likely to be concerned about their child's exposure to online, gaming and radio content. In contrast, parents of children in DE households are more likely not to be concerned about their child's exposure to TV and mobile phone content.

Parents of children who use the internet at home, have their own mobile phone or ever play games through a gaming device<sup>28</sup> were asked how concerned they are about the contact their child may have with others when using these media.

As with concerns about media content, a majority of parents across all three age groups state that they are not concerned about who their child may be in contact with.

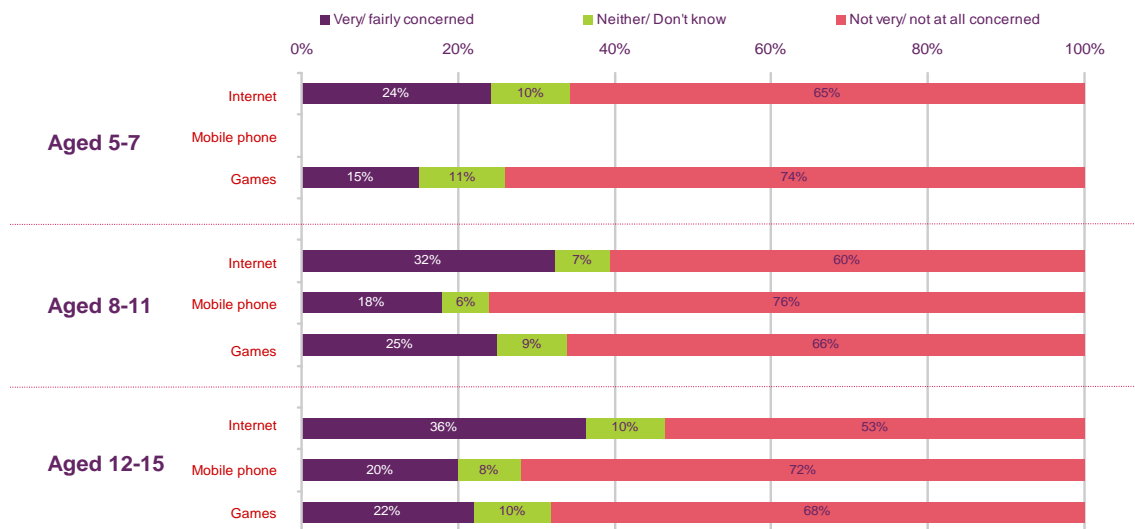
<sup>27</sup> There is no data shown for children aged 5-7 for mobile phone as there were only 54 children of this age with their own mobile phone.

<sup>28</sup> The question about who their child is in contact with through their gaming device allowed a Not Applicable option in case their child did not use the gaming device/ games player to game online or to access the internet – those parents that answered Not Applicable have therefore been excluded from the base.

Parents of children in all three age groups are more likely to have concerns about who their children are in contact with when using the internet than they are to have concerns about who their child is in contact with through their mobile phone or gaming device.

Parents of 8-11s and 12-15s are more likely than parents of 5-7s to be concerned about who their child is in contact with when using the internet or when using their gaming device. Among parents of 8-15s, concern about who their child is in contact with through their mobile phone does not vary by the age of the child.

**Figure 28: Parental concerns about who their children are in contact with, by age - 2009**



QP25C/ QP38C/ QP47C - Please tell me the extent to which you are concerned about these aspects of your child's internet use/ mobile phone use/ games playing?  
 Base: Parents of children whose child uses the internet at home (340 aged 5-7, 582 aged 8-11, 645 aged 12-15)/ Has their own mobile phone (392 aged 8-11, 684 aged 12-15)/ Plays games through a gaming device (324 aged 5-7, 539 aged 8-11, 558 aged 12-15 – excludes those stating Not Applicable)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Across all three media, parents with children aged 5-15 in AB households are more likely to be concerned about who their child is in contact with when using these media compared to all parents of children aged 5-15.

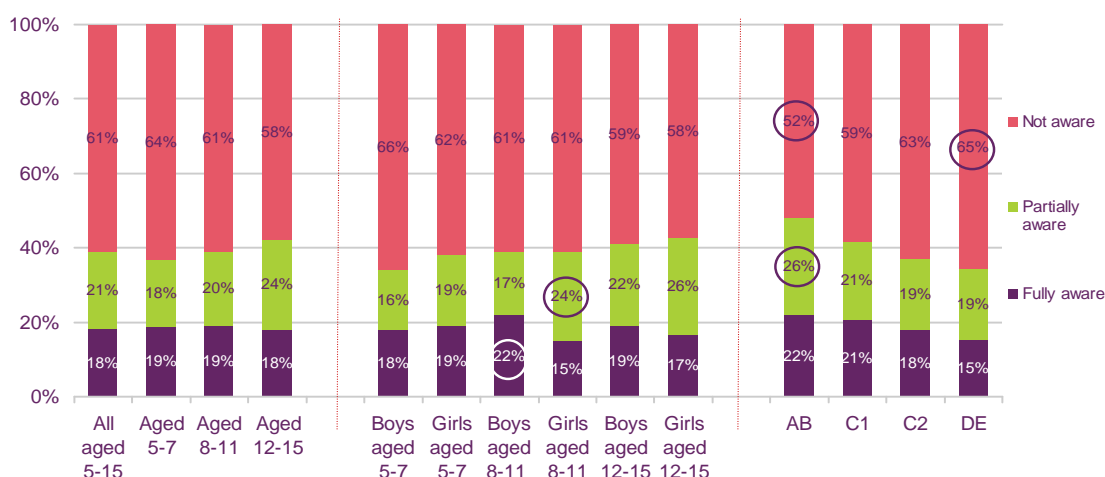


### 4.3 Parents see benefits in mobile location services<sup>29</sup> but are concerned that these could expose their child to risk

All parents were shown a description of mobile location services and were then asked whether they were fully aware, partially aware or not aware that services such as these were available through some mobile phones.

Around four in ten parents of 5-15s (39%) are aware of mobile location services at an overall level (either full or partial awareness), with parents of 12-15s being more likely to be aware at an overall level than parents of 5-7s (42% vs. 36%).

**Figure 29: Parental awareness of mobile location services, by age, gender and socio-economic group - 2009**



QP41 – Some mobile phones or other mobile devices have services that allow parents to track the whereabouts of their children. (DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE VIA SHOWCARD) Were you aware that services like this were available through mobile phones? IF AWARE: Would you say you were fully aware or partially aware? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 (576 aged 5-7, 774 aged 8-11, 781 aged 12-15, 272 boys aged 5-7, 304 girls aged 5-7, 373 boys aged 8-11, 401 girls aged 8-11, 385 boys aged 12-15, 396 girls aged 12-15, 375 AB, 507 C1, 472 C2, 751 DE) significance testing shows any differences by age within gender or by socio-economic group compared to all parents all children aged 5-15  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Parents of children aged 5-15 in AB socio-economic groups are more likely than all parents to be aware of mobile location services at an overall level (48% vs. 39%) while parents in DE households are less likely to be aware (35% vs. 39%) .

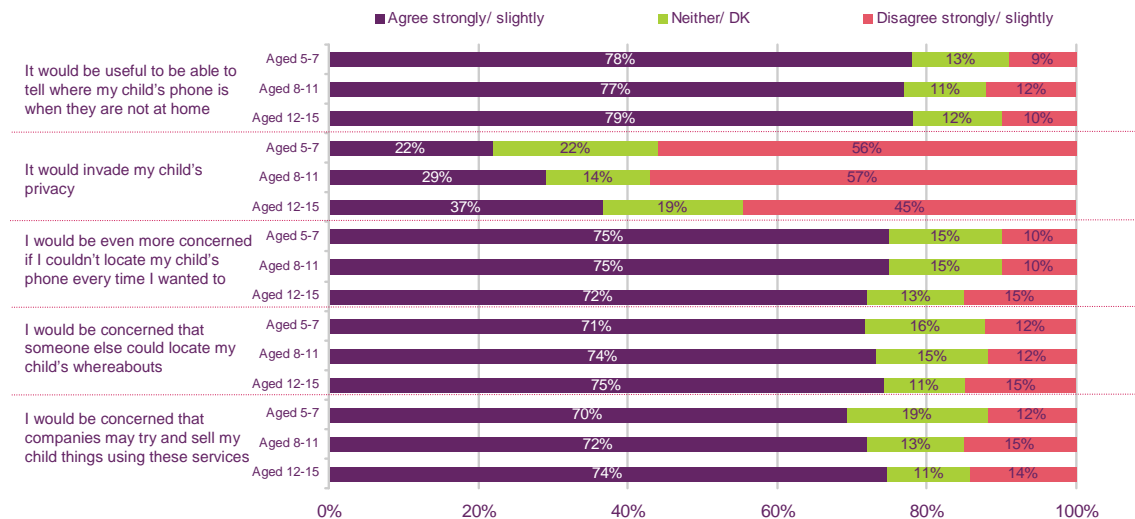
<sup>29</sup> Mobile Location Services generally consist of those that either allow the mobile phone user to locate himself or herself (e.g. for navigation or finding “Where’s my nearest chemist/cash machine/cinema etc.?”) - often referred to as ‘active’ services - or services whereby a mobile phone user, once s/he has enabled and consented to the service, can be located by another, when that other person initiates a location request - often referred to as ‘passive’ services.

A number of data sources are used to deliver mobile location services, such as the Global Positioning Systems (GPS) satellite, open cell ID, wi-fi location and/or cell location data supplied by the mobile networks (the last of these are the subject of a code of practice developed by nine leading location service providers (“LSP”) in the UK and the five mobile network operators and agreed between the police, the Home Office and child protection agencies in 2004. Under the terms of the Code, in addition to consent being required initially for the phone (more accurately, the SIM card) to be tracked, random SMS reminders must be sent to the phone.

All parents were prompted with a series of five statements relating to mobile location services and were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each one. The responses to these five statements are shown in Figure 30.

While most parents agree that mobile location services would be useful for them to help locate their child, they also agree that the services could lead to more concerns if they could not locate their child when they wanted to or if it could enable someone else to locate their child. Relatively few parents agree that “It would invade my child’s privacy”, although agreement increases with the age of the child.

**Figure 30: Parental attitudes to mobile location services, by age - 2009**



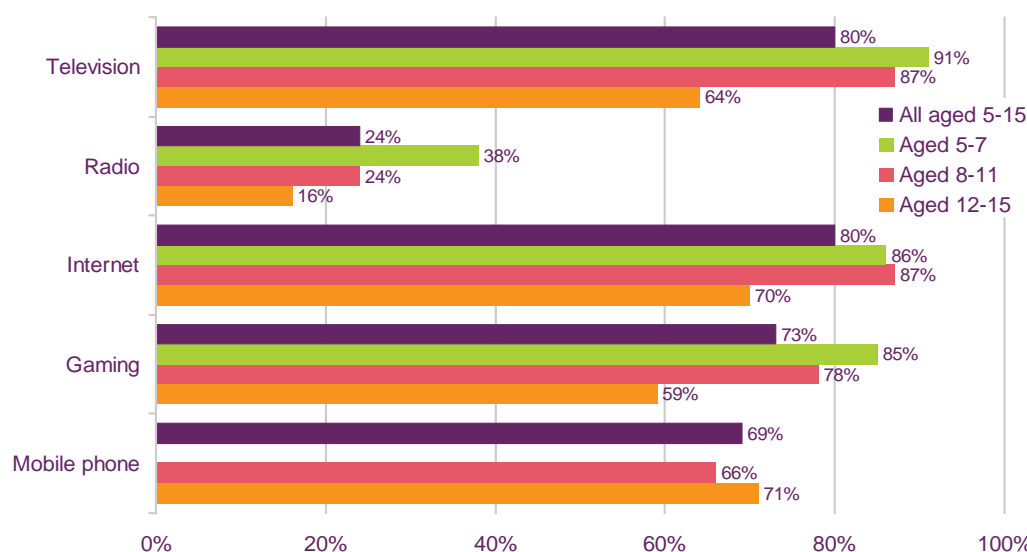
QP42- Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements in relation to your child? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 (576 aged 5-7, 774 aged 8-11, 781 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

#### 4.4 A majority of parents have rules in place for most media

Parents of children aged 5-15 were prompted with a list of rules and restrictions relating to each of the key media platforms (television, radio, internet, games consoles/ players, mobile phone) that their child used, and were asked to say which rules they had in place for their child (see Figures 32 to 36 for these lists).

The majority of parents have rules in place concerning access to, and use of, all platforms aside from radio, with rules for television and the internet the most common. For all platforms, with the exception of mobile phones, younger children (aged 5-7 and 8-11) are more likely to have rules in place compared to older children (12-15).

**Figure 31: Parental rules about use of media, by age - 2009<sup>30</sup>**



QP9/ QP17 /QP24 / QP37/ QP46 – Do you have any of these rules or restrictions about the (MEDIA) that your child watches/ listens to/ uses? (prompted responses, multi-coded)

Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 who use each medium at home (VARIABLE BASE)

Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

For television and gaming it is possible to look at the presence of rules in the household by whether the child aged 5-7, 8-11 or 12-15 mostly uses the media on their own or in the presence of others. When looking at these two distinct groups, there are no differences in the presence of rules among any of these three age groups of children for either of these media.

For rules associated with internet use, base size issues only allow us to conduct analysis among children aged 8-11 and 12-15. While there are no differences for children aged 8-11, parents of children aged 12-15 who mostly use the internet on their own are less likely to have rules about the internet in place than those whose child mainly uses the internet in the presence of other people (65% vs. 77%).

#### **4.5 Parents of younger children are more likely to have rules for television viewing**

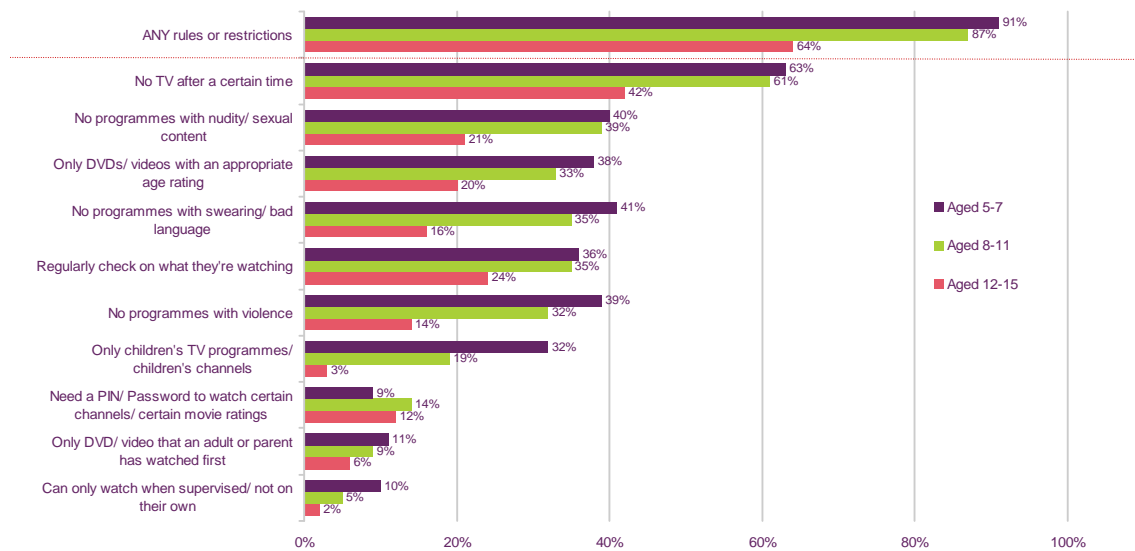
Household rules for television viewing are more commonly in place for children aged 5-7 (91%), than those aged 8-11 (87%), or aged 12-15 (64%).

The most common rule relating to television viewing for children of all ages relates to not viewing television after a certain time of day. This is a rule for around two in five 12-15s (42%), with all other rules being present for one in five (20%) or fewer 12-15s .

Compared to 2008, parents of children aged 5-15 are no more likely to have rules or restrictions in place (80% vs.78%) although more parents now have rules about no television after a certain time (55% vs. 47%). There are, however, some rules that parents of 5-15s are less likely to have in place. It is less common for parents to prevent their children from watching programmes with nudity / sexual content (33% vs. 41%) or with swearing / bad language (30% vs. 37%) or violence (27% vs. 35%). It is also less common for them regularly to check on what their children are watching (31% vs. 34%).

<sup>30</sup> Data is not shown for mobile phone use among 5-7s due to the low base size.

**Figure 32: Parental rules for television, by age- 2009**



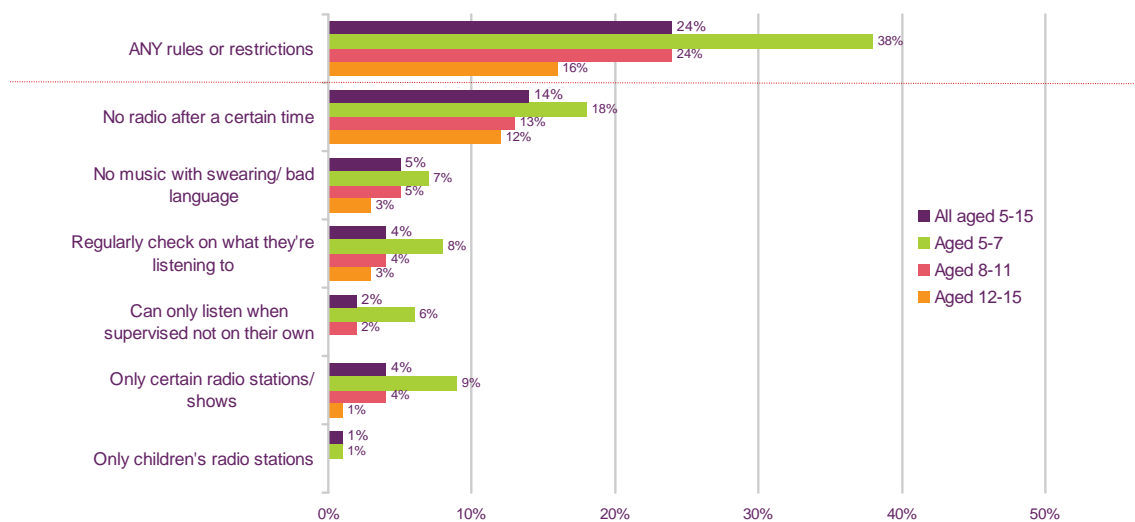
QP9– Do you have any of these rules or restrictions about the TV, videos and DVDs that your child watches? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 whose child watches TV at home (567 aged 5-7, 764 aged 8-11, 777 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

#### 4.6 Few parents have rules in place for radio listening

Rules about radio listening are more common for children aged 5-7 (38%), or 8-11 (24%), than for children aged 12-15 (16%).

One in four children aged 5-15 (24%) who ever listen to radio at home have any rules about listening, and these most frequently relate to not listening after a certain time of day. Parents of 5-15s in AB households are more likely than all parents to have any rules in place regarding radio listening (31% vs. 24%) and are also more likely to regularly check on what their child is listening to (8% vs. 4%).

**Figure 33: Parental rules for radio, by age - 2009**



QP17– Do you have any of these rules or restrictions about radio that your child listens to? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 whose child listens to radio at home (1055 aged 5-15, 257 aged 5-7, 347 aged 8-11, 451 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

## 4.7 Most parents have rules for their child's use of the internet

Four in five parents of children aged 5 -15 (80%) say they have put in place any of the rules asked about relating to internet use. These rules are more common for children aged 5-7 (86%), or 8-11 (87%), than for children aged 12-15 (70%).

No single rule is in place for a majority of children in any of the three age groups. However, close to half of parents of 8-11s (48%), and around two in five parents of 5-7s (40%) and 12-15s (38%), regularly check what their child is doing online, and four in ten parents of 5-7s (38%) only allow their child to visit children's websites. A similar proportion (one in three) of 5-7s, 8-11s and 12-15s are not allowed to use the internet after a certain time.

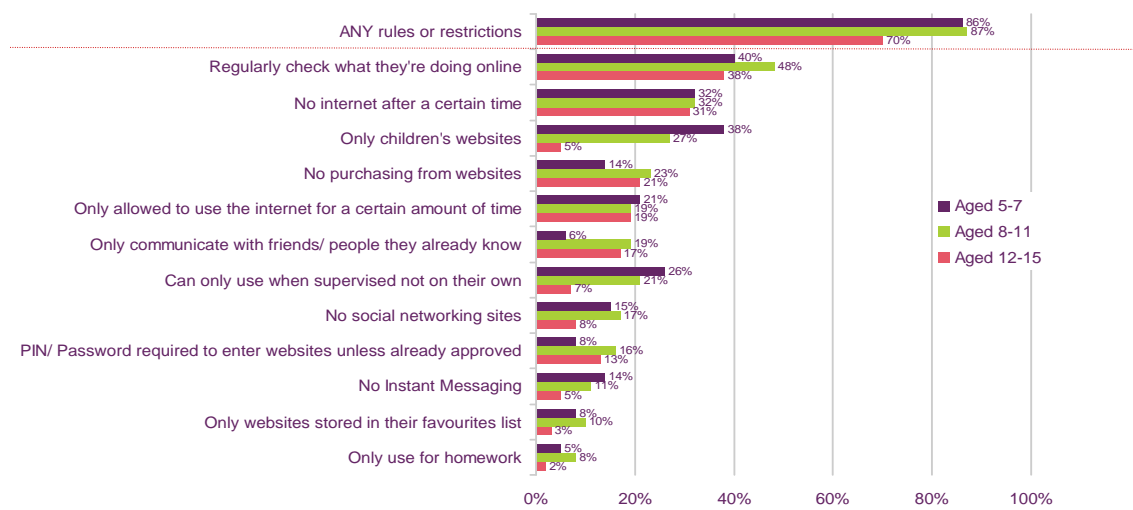
For rules associated with internet use, base size issues only allow us to conduct analysis among children aged 8-11 and 12-15. While there are no differences for children aged 8-11, parents of children aged 12-15 who mostly use the internet on their own are less likely to have rules about the internet in place than those whose child mainly uses the internet in the presence of other people (65% vs. 77%).

Children aged 12-15 who mostly use the internet on their own are less likely to have their parents regularly check what they are doing compared to those children aged 12-15 who mostly use the internet in the presence of others (32% vs. 47%).

Among 8-11s, rules relating specifically to online communication are more likely to be in place for those that mostly use the internet on their own compared to those that mostly use it in the presence of others, namely: only communicate with friends / people they already know (28% vs. 15%), no use of social networking sites (25% vs. 14%) and no use of Instant Messaging (15% vs. 9%).

Some rules are more prevalent in AB households compared to all households with children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home, namely, no internet after a certain time (41% vs. 32%), only being able to use when supervised and not on their own (19% vs. 16%) and no use of Instant Messaging (14% vs. 9%).

Parents of 5-15s are now more likely than in 2008 to have a rule about not using the internet after a certain time (32% vs. 24%). Four specific rules are less likely than in 2008 to be in place for 5-15s: using the internet only when supervised (16% vs. 19%), use of PIN / passwords to enter websites that are not already approved (13% vs. 21%), no Instant Messaging (9% vs. 12%) and only visiting websites stored in their favourites list (7% vs. 10%).

**Figure 34: Parental rules for the internet, by age - 2009**

QP24 – Do you have any of these rules or restrictions about the access that your child has to the internet? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 whose child uses the internet at home (340 aged 5-7, 582 aged 8-11, 645 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

#### 4.8 Parents of younger children are more likely to have rules for gaming

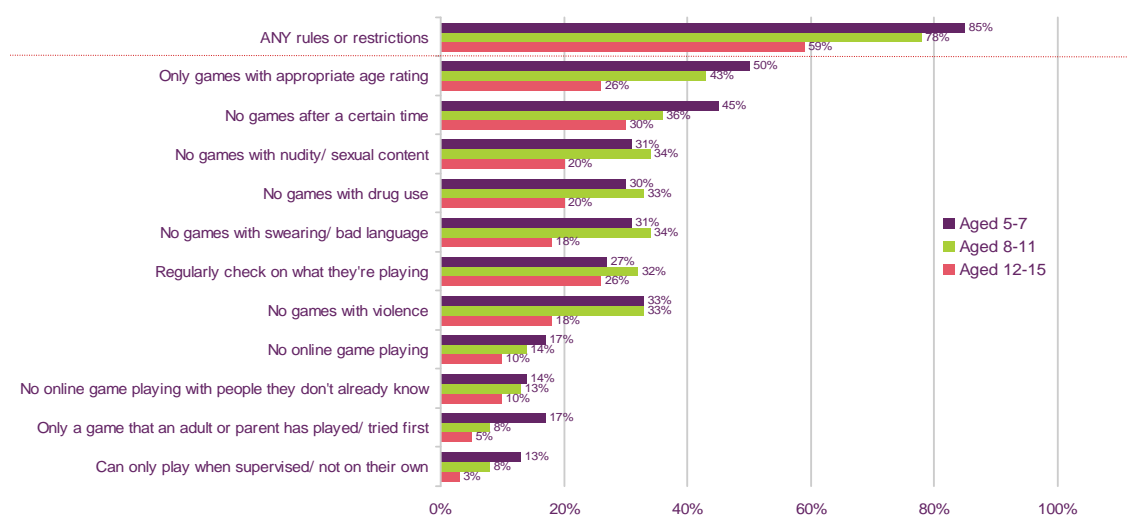
Most parents whose child plays games on a gaming device (fixed or portable games console/ computer/ mobile phone/ portable media player etc) have rules or restrictions about the games their child plays. Rules are more likely to be in place for children aged 5-7 (85%), or 8-11 (78%), than for children aged 12-15 (59%).

Around half of parents of 5-7s have rules restricting the games played to those with a suitable age rating (50%) as do at least two in five parents of 8-11s (43%), although this is less common among parents of 12-15s (26%). Rules about the specific content of games played (i.e. no games with nudity / sexual content or with drug use or violence or bad language) are set by around one in three parents of 5-7s or 8-11s (33%) and by around one in five parents of 12-15s (20%). The rule that no games are played after a certain time is more common in AB households (44% vs. 36%) and less common in DE households (32% vs. 36%) when compared to all households.

Compared to 2008<sup>31</sup>, not allowing games to be played after a certain time is the only rule that appears to have become more common among parents of 5-15s (36% vs. 28%). There are, however, five rules regarding gaming that are less likely in 2009 than in 2008: only allowing games with an appropriate age rating (39% vs. 45%), no games with nudity / sexual content (28% vs. 34%), no games with drug use (28% vs. 32%), no games with swearing (27% vs. 32%) and no games with violence (28% vs. 32%).

<sup>31</sup> When comparing data between 2008 and 2009, it is important to note that the findings may not be strictly comparable, as in 2009 the definition of gaming was expanded to include not just PC based and games console/ games player gaming, but also any gaming on a portable device such as a smartphone/ mobile phone, portable media player, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) or MP3 player.

**Figure 35: Parental rules for gaming, by age - 2009**



QP46 – Do you have any of these rules or restrictions about the games your child plays whether on a games console, a computer or any other device? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 whose child ever plays games on a games console/ player or computer (471 aged 5-7, 711 aged 8-11, 688 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

#### 4.9 Most parents have rules for their child’s use of a mobile phone

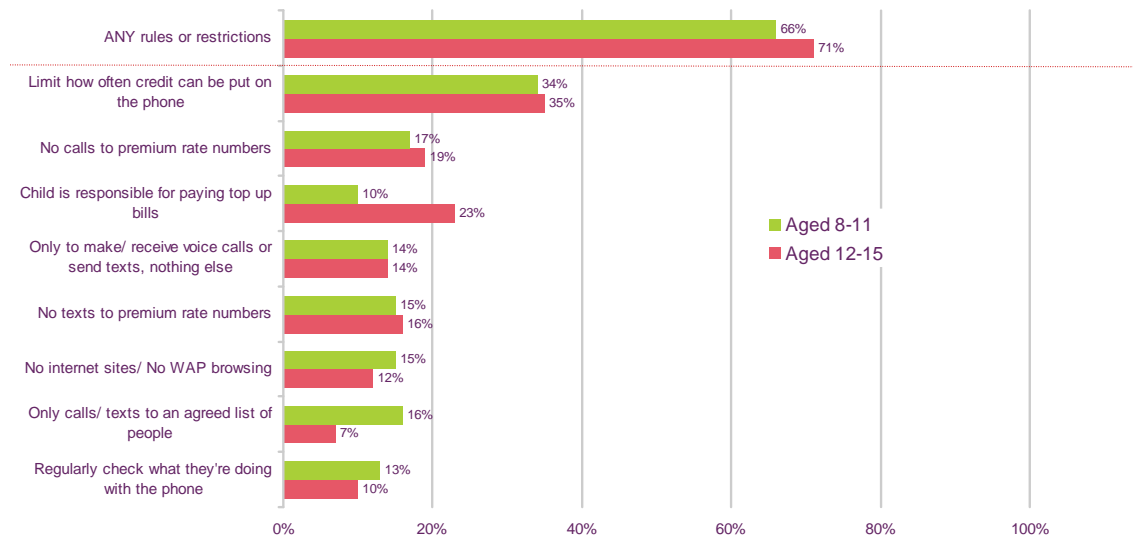
Most parents whose child has their own mobile phone have put in place at least one of the rules that we asked about; with parents of 12-15s more likely to have rules in place than parents of 8-11s (71% vs. 66%)<sup>32</sup>. Many of the rules and restrictions for mobile phone use appear to relate to the cost associated with using the phone rather than the possibility of encountering inappropriate or potentially harmful content.<sup>33</sup>

Parents of children aged 5-15 with their own mobile phone in AB households are more likely than all children to have rules in place regarding no calls to premium rate numbers (27% vs. 18%), using their phone to only make / receive voice calls or send texts and nothing else (20% vs. 15%) and no texts to premium rate numbers (24% vs. 15%). Children in DE households are less likely to have any rules in place (63% vs. 69%) and to have in place a rule where the child is responsible for paying top-up bills (13% vs. 18%).

Parents of children aged 5-15 are less likely now than in 2008 to have rules in place about limiting how often credit can be put on the phone (35% vs. 39%). However, parents are now more likely to say that their child’s phone can only be used to make or receive calls or to send texts (14% vs. 9%).

<sup>32</sup> Data relating to 5-7 year olds with their own mobile phone is not shown due to the low base of 54 children aged 5-7 with their own mobile phone.

<sup>33</sup> The overall incidence of parental rules about mobile phone usage does not vary among 12-15s by whether the child does or does not use their mobile phone to access the internet. Base size issues prevent similar analysis among children aged 5-7 or 8-11.

**Figure 36: Parental rules for mobile phones, by age - 2009**

QP37 – Do you have any of these rules or restrictions about the use that your child makes of his/ her mobile phone? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 8-15 whose child has their own mobile phone (392 aged 8-11, 684 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

#### 4.10 More parents have set access controls on their multichannel TV service

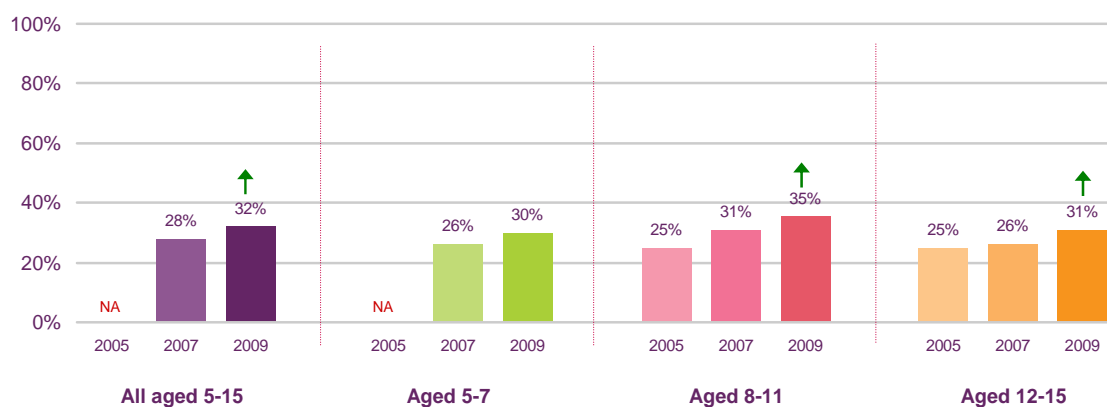
As noted earlier, around nine in ten 5-15s (92%) live in a household with a multichannel television service. Parents of children in these households were asked whether there are any controls set on the service so that their child can only watch particular channels or types of programmes once a PIN number or password has been entered. Around one in three households with a multichannel television service say they have set these controls (32%), and this is more likely among parents of 8-11s (35%) than among parents of 5-7s (30%) or 12-15s (31%). There has been an increase in the incidence of setting access controls for multichannel television services since 2007 across households with children aged 8-11 and aged 12-15.

The incidence of access controls being set is higher in households with a satellite (40%) or cable television service (45%), and considerably lower in households with Freeview (18%)<sup>34</sup>. Since 2007, there has been an increase in the incidence of using access controls for cable services (45% vs. 30%) and in Freeview households (18% vs. 12%). Access controls are also more likely to be in place in households with a DVR compared to households without (46% vs. 32%).

<sup>34</sup> This could be because parental control functionality is not universal for set top boxes or digital televisions that offer Freeview television services.



**Figure 37: PIN or password controls set on television services – 2005<sup>35</sup>, 2007 and 2009**



QP11 Are there any controls set on your TV service so that your child could only watch particular channels or types of programmes once a PIN number or password has been entered?/ WORDING IN 2005 - Have you or has anyone in your household set any controls on your TV service so that particular channels can only be watched by using a PIN number or password? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 with multi-channel TV in the household and whose child watches TV at home (3219 aged 5-15 in 2007, 1936 aged 5-15 in 2009, 825 aged 5-7 in 2007, 517 aged 5-7 in 2009, 513 aged 8-11 in 2005, 1173 aged 8-11 in 2007, 702 aged 8-11 in 2009, 521 aged 12-15 in 2005, 1221 aged 12-15 in 2007, 717 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing shows any change between 2007 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rosstiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

In addition to being more likely to have rules in place about their child's television viewing, parents of children aged 5-15 in AB socio-economic groups are more likely than all parents to say they have set any access controls on their multichannel television service (38% vs. 32%).

Parents in DE socio-economic groups are less likely, with one in four having set them up (27% vs. 32%). Parents in households with any access controls on their multichannel television service were shown a list of five types of control and were asked to say which they used<sup>36</sup>. As shown in Figure 37, one in three parents of children aged 5-15 with multichannel television have controls in place (32%).

The types of controls set up do not vary significantly by the age of the child. Compared to other types of controls, parents of 5-15s are less likely to have set controls to block certain channels after a specific time of day. Parents of boys aged 5-15 are more likely than parents of girls to remove adult channels from the Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) (39% vs. 29%). It is also more common for parents in DE households, when compared to all parents, to remove adult channels from the EPG (46% vs. 34%) and to block specific channels from being viewed at any time of day (43% vs. 34%) while parents in C2 households are less likely to block films depending on their age rating (21% vs. 33%).

These parents were asked whether their child knows the PIN or password necessary to override the television access controls. Knowledge about how to override these access controls increases with the age of the child, accounting for just two per cent of 5-7s, one in ten 8-11s (10%) and one in four 12-15s (26%).

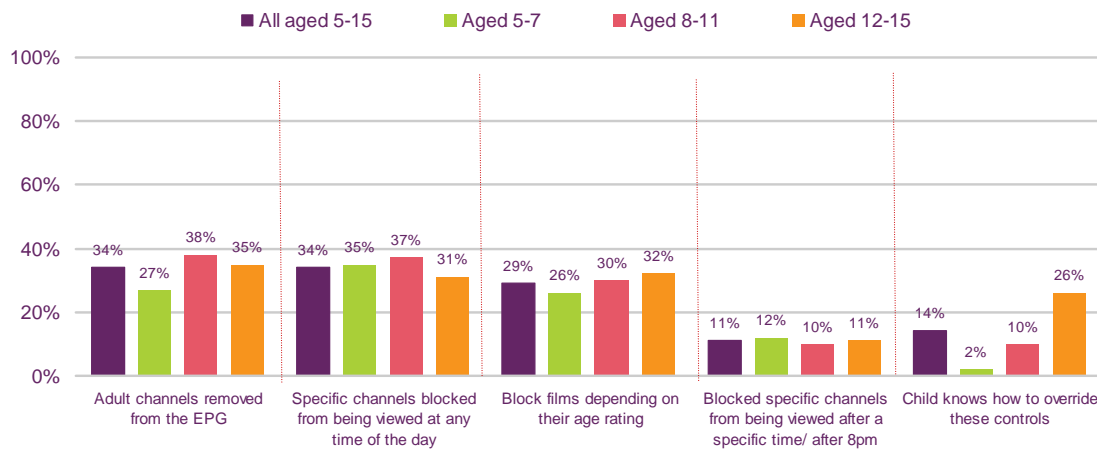
One specific access control that can be used with a DVR was asked of parents with a DVR that had television controls enabled. Half of all households with a child aged 5-15 that have

<sup>35</sup> In 2005 the question was worded slightly differently – 'Have you or has anyone in your household set any controls on your TV service so that particular channels can only be watched by using a PIN number or password'.

<sup>36</sup> Please note that different types of access controls are available on different multichannel TV services. However, all parents who had any controls in place were asked about all types of controls.

television controls set and a Digital Video Recorder (DVR) in the home ensure that a PIN is required to view a recording originally broadcast after 9pm (47%).

**Figure 38: Types of access controls in place for multichannel television, by age - 2009**



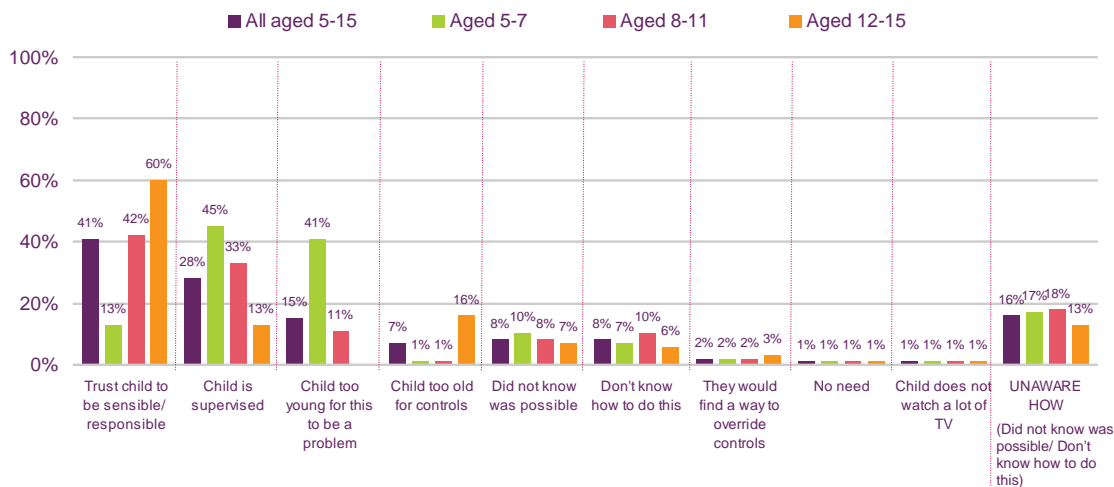
QP13/QP14 – Do you use these parental controls in any of these ways? (prompted response, multi-coded) /Does the child know the PIN or password to override these controls? (spontaneous response, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 with multichannel TV in the household and parental controls set (601 aged 5-15, 151 aged 5-7, 237 aged 8-11, 213 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Those parents who do not have any access controls set up for their multichannel television service were asked to say why (Figure 39). Their reasons tend to differ depending on the age of the child.

The main reason given is that the parents trust their child to be responsible. Parents of children aged 5-15 in C1 households were also more likely to give this reason compared to all parents (49% vs. 41%) while parents in DE households were less likely to state it was because they trust their child to be responsible (34% vs. 41%).

Some parents responded that they did not know how to set access controls, or did not know that these settings were possible. Being unaware of access controls in either of these ways accounts for 16% of all who do not have these settings in place, and is more common among parents of 5-15s in DE households (21%) and less common in C2 households (11%) when compared to all parents of children aged 5-15. Those in households with a Freeview service are also more likely to be unaware of access controls in either of these ways (20%).

**Figure 39: Reasons for not having set up access controls for the multichannel television service, by age - 2009**



QP12- Can you tell me why that is? (spontaneous responses, multi coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 who have multi-channel TV in the household and no controls set (1312 aged 5-15, 359 aged 5-7, 457 aged 8-11, 496 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

#### 4.11 Internet controls / filtering software are now less common in households of children aged 5-7 and 12-15

Parents of children who use the internet at home were asked whether any controls are set or any software loaded to stop their child viewing certain types of website. Some 43% have these controls in place, and this is more likely among parents of 8-11s (49%) than among parents of 5-7s (39%) or 12-15s (41%). As noted earlier, parents of 8-11s are also more likely to have set access controls for a multichannel television service.

Children aged 8-11 that mostly use the internet on their own are more likely to have internet controls / filtering software loaded compared to children aged 8-11 who mostly use the internet in the presence of others (55% vs. 46%).

Since 2008, the incidence of having internet controls / filtering software has decreased among parents of 5-15s (43% vs. 49%) which is driven by a decrease among 5-7s (39% vs. 46%) and 12-15s (41% vs. 46%).

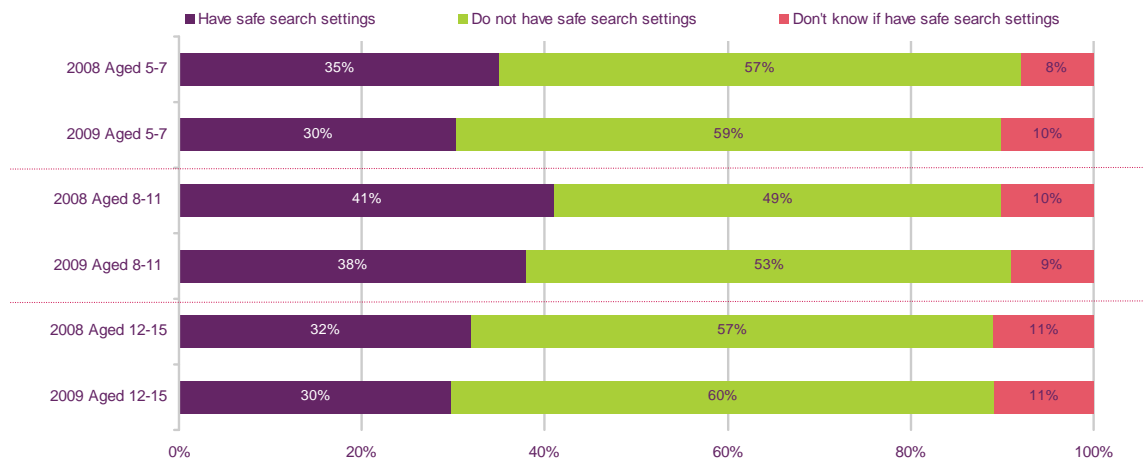
**Figure 40: Internet controls / filtering software loaded, by age – 2007, 2008 and 2009**



QP26- Are there any controls set or is any software loaded to stop your child viewing certain types of websites? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home (2397 aged 5-15 in 2007, 1449 aged 5-15 in 2008, 1567 aged 5-15 in 2009, 477 aged 5-7 in 2007, 308 aged 5-7 in 2008, 340 aged 5-7 in 2009, 875 aged 8-11 in 2007, 527 aged 8-11 in 2008, 582 aged 8-11 in 2009, 1045 aged 12-15 in 2007, 614 aged 12-15 in 2008, 645 aged 12-15 in 2009). Significance testing shows any changes between 2008 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Parents of children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home were also asked whether they have settings that allow only safe searches on search engine websites. As with internet controls more generally, this is more likely among parents of 8-11s (38%) than among parents of 5-7s (30%) or 12-15s (30%). There has been no statistically-significant change in the incidence of having safe search settings in place since 2008 by age of child, or by gender.

**Figure 41: Safe search settings on search engine websites, by age – 2008 and 2009**



QP28 – Do you have settings that allow only safe searches on search engines such as Google? (prompted responses, single coded)

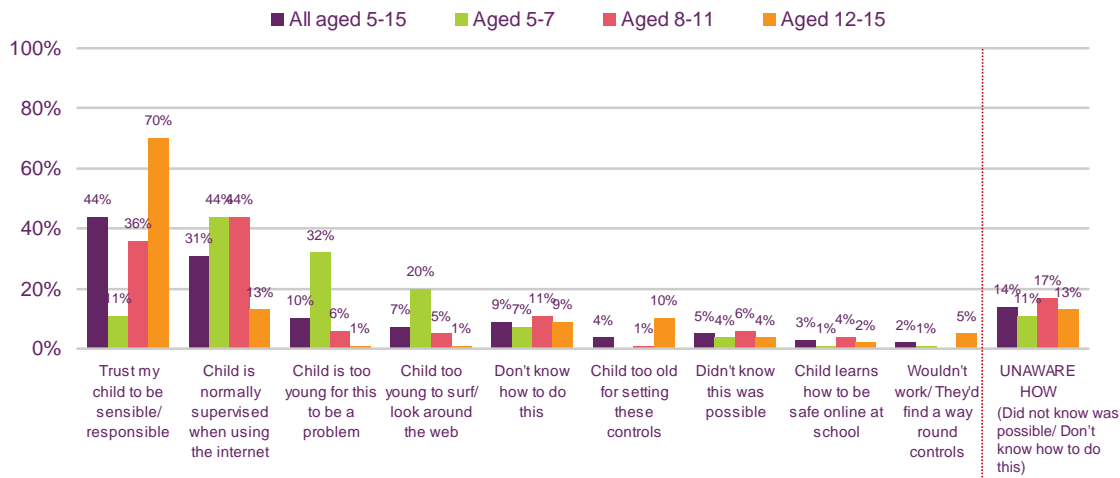
Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 who use the internet at home (308 aged 5-7 in 2008, 340 aged 5-7 in 2009, 527 aged 8-11 in 2008, 582 aged 8-11 in 2009, 614 aged 12-15 in 2008, 645 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing shows any change between 2008 and 2009

Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

The reasons given by parents for not setting internet controls / filtering software tend to differ by age of the child, as Figure 42 sets out. The main reason given by parents of 5-7s and 8-11s is that their child is normally supervised when using the internet (44%) Among parents of 12-15s, seven in ten (70%) trust their child to be responsible, with one in eight (13%) stating that they do not set internet controls because their child is normally supervised.

Some parents do not use internet settings / filtering software either because they don't know how to do this, or are not aware this is possible. Being unaware of internet controls in either of these ways accounts for one in seven (14%) parents of 5-15s who do not have settings in place, and this is broadly comparable across each of the three age groups of children.

**Figure 42: Reasons for no internet controls / filtering software loaded, by age - 2009**

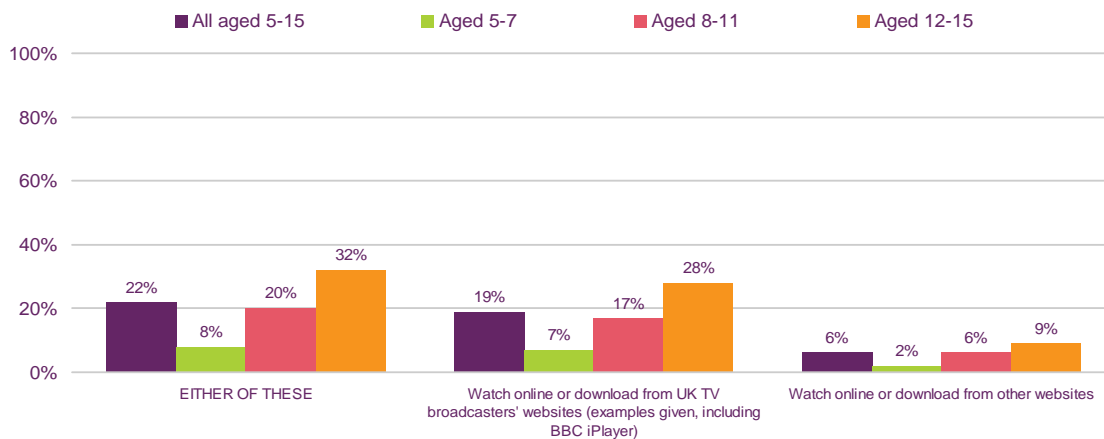


QP27- And can you tell me why that is? (spontaneous responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 without any controls set or software loaded to stop their child viewing certain types of websites (789 aged 5-15, 170 aged 5-7, 272 aged 8-11, 347 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

#### 4.12 A significant minority of children are watching or downloading television content on broadcasters' websites

Parents of children who use the internet at home were asked whether their child ever downloads or watches TV programmes or films over the internet. The incidence of watching television content via UK television broadcasters' websites increases with age, with this activity undertaken by one in fourteen 5-7s (7%), one in six 8-11s (17%) and over one quarter of 12-15s (28%).

**Figure 43: Watching television programmes and films online, by age - 2009**



QP31 - Does your child watch TV programmes or movies in any of the following ways? (prompted response, multi-coded)  
 Base: Parents of children who use the internet at home (1567 aged 5-15, 340 aged 5-7, 582 aged 8-11, 645 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

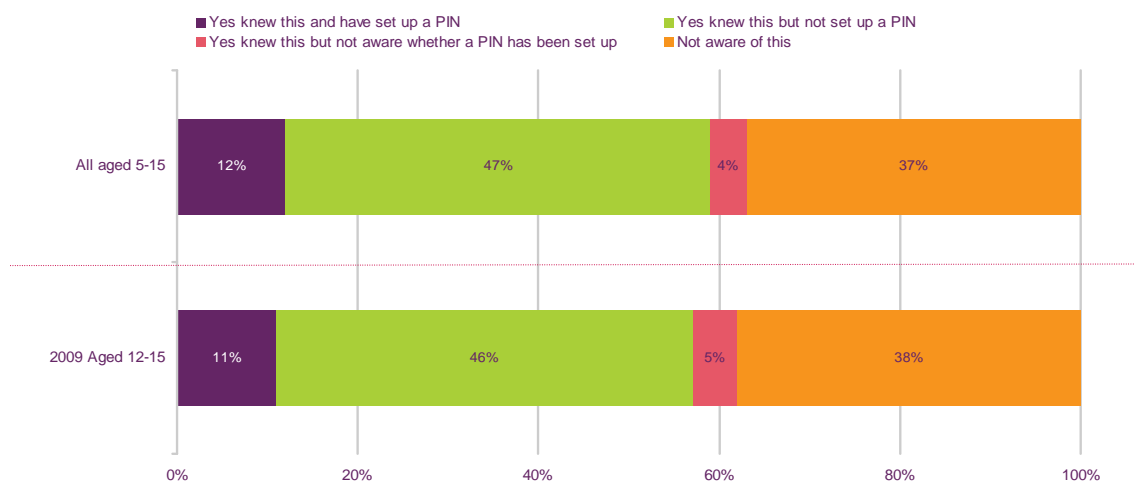
Parents of children aged 5-15 in AB households are nearly twice as likely as parents of children in DE households to say their child undertakes this activity (25% for AB vs. 13% for DE).

Parents of 8-15s whose child mostly uses the internet on their own are more likely than parents of 8-15s whose child mostly uses the internet in the presence of others to say that their child watches / downloads content from broadcasters' websites (29% vs. 11% for 8-11s and 32% vs. 24% for 12-15s).

Parents of children aged 5-15<sup>37</sup> whose child watches/downloads content from broadcasters' websites were asked whether they were aware that these sites show Guidance labels for programmes that may include content that is unsuitable for young audiences. These parents were also asked whether they had set a PIN which needs to be entered before viewing programmes that have a Guidance label.

The majority of parents of 12-15s whose child watches / downloads content from broadcasters' websites are aware that broadcasters show Guidance labels (63%) for programmes that may include content that is unsuitable for young audiences. However, a smaller proportion, one in eight parents of 12-15s (12%), has actually set up a PIN which needs to be entered before viewing programmes that have a guidance label.

**Figure 44: Awareness and use of PIN controls on broadcasters' websites, by age - 2009**



QP32/33 – Did you know that the broadcaster's websites like the BBC iPlayer and ITV Player show Guidance labels for programmes that may include content that is unsuitable for young audiences, (such as violence, sex, drug use or strong language)? / Have you set a PIN on the websites that you or your child use to watch or download TV programmes or movies – which needs to be entered before viewing programmes that have a Guidance label? (spontaneous responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 5-15 whose child watches TV programmes or movies online / downloaded from TV broadcaster's website (292 aged 5-15 174 aged 12-15) Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

### 4.13 Low awareness of filtering for mobile phone internet access

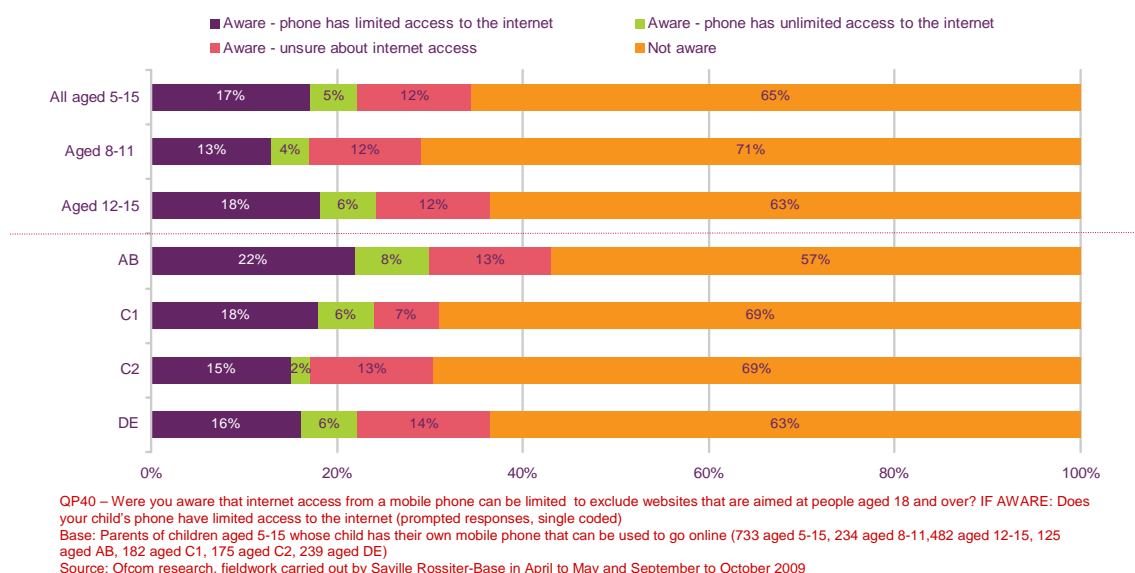
Parents whose child has their own mobile phone which can be used to get onto the internet, were asked whether they were aware that internet access through mobile phones can be limited to exclude content on websites broadly suitable only for people aged 18 and over<sup>38</sup>. Where the parent was aware of this, they were asked if their child's phone had this filter in place.

<sup>37</sup> Figure 44 only shows data for all 5-15s and 12-15s because of the low base of only 28 parents of children aged 5-7, and 90 parents of children aged 8-11 at this question.

<sup>38</sup> Mobile operators offer a filter to the mobile operator's Internet access service so that the Internet content can be restricted. The filter is set at a level that is intended to filter out content approximately equivalent to commercial content (content provided directly by the operator or a contracted third-party) with a classification of 18.

Around one in three parents is aware of these mobile phone filtering controls (35%), with parents of 12-15s being more likely to be aware than parents of 8-11s (37% vs. 29%). One in six (17%) parents of children aged 5-15, whose mobile phone can be used to access the internet, has this filter in place.

**Figure 45: Awareness and use of filtering for mobile phone internet access, by age and socio-economic group - 2009<sup>39</sup>**



#### 4.14 Children's dislikes about media do not tend to vary by age

Children aged 8-15 who use each of the relevant media were prompted with a list of possible things that they may not like about television / radio / mobiles / using the internet and game-playing over the internet and were asked to nominate which, if any, apply to them. The aim of these specific questions was to establish children's views on two key areas - accessing content that made them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed or accessing content that they felt was too old for them.<sup>40</sup>

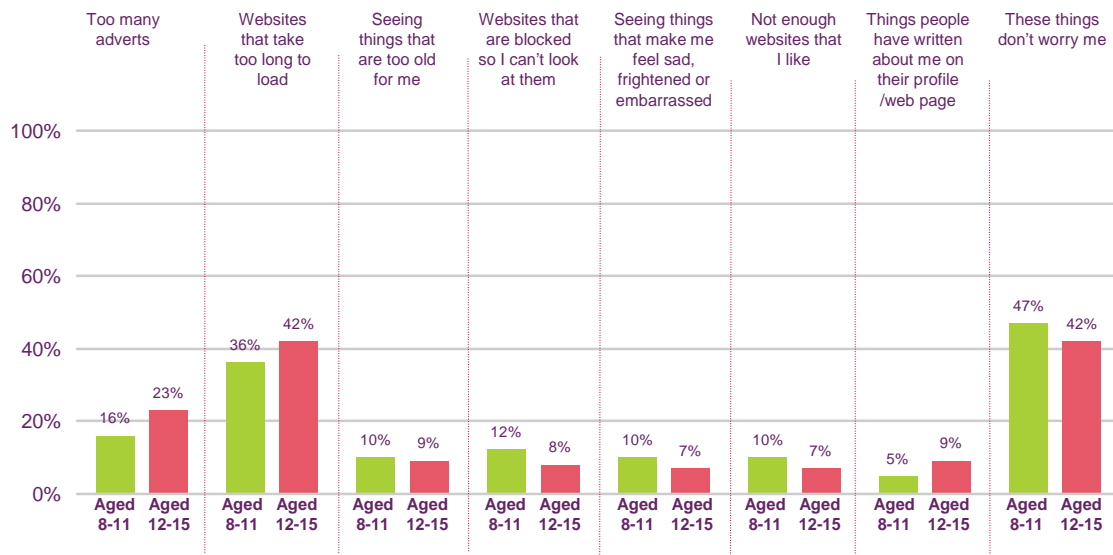
Children aged 8-15 were prompted with a list of seven possible things that they may not like about using the internet and were asked to specify which, if any, applied to them (Figure 46).

Both children aged 8-11 and 12-15 are most likely to state "websites that take too long to load" as the issue that they dislike the most (36% for 8-11s and 42% for 12-15s). One in ten 8-11s (10%) dislikes seeing things that are too old for them or seeing things that make them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed. A similar proportion of 12-15s also share these dislikes.

<sup>39</sup> It is not possible to show data for 5-7s due to the low base of only 17 respondents.

<sup>40</sup> The aim of these questions was to establish the extent to which children may have these specific concerns about the media that they engage with. As this is a sensitive area, the questions were designed to prevent upset or distress to children by using language that focused on possible dislikes rather than actual concerns.

**Figure 46: Children's dislikes about the internet, by age – 2009**



QC15 – Which of these things if any, are things you don't like about the internet? (prompted responses, multi coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home (582 aged 8-11, 645 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

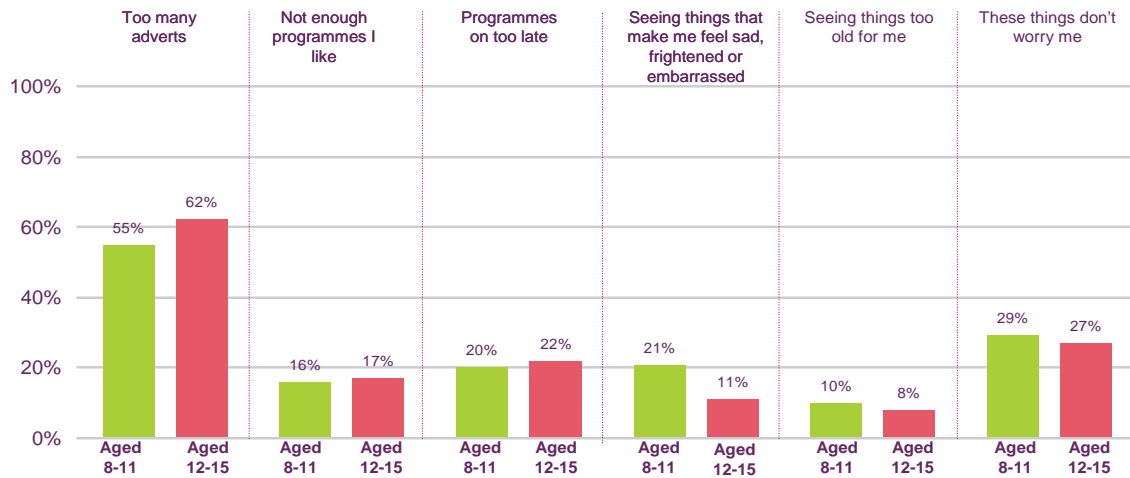
Across the key concerns there is one difference by gender. Girls aged 8-11 are more likely than boys of this age to dislike seeing things that make them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed (14% vs. 6%).

For television, the most common complaint among the majority of both 8-11s and 12-15s is that there are too many adverts. Older children are more likely than younger children to dislike this (62% vs. 55%). One in five 8-11s (21%) dislikes seeing things on television that make them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed compared to one in ten (11%) of 12-15s. In addition, one in ten of both 8-11s (10%) and 12-15s (9%) dislike viewing content that they feel is too old for them.

Across the key concerns, girls aged 12-15 are more likely than boys aged 12-15 to dislike seeing things that make them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed (15% vs. 7%) – while children aged 8-15 in AB households are less likely than all children aged 8-15 to dislike seeing things that make them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed (10% vs. 16%).



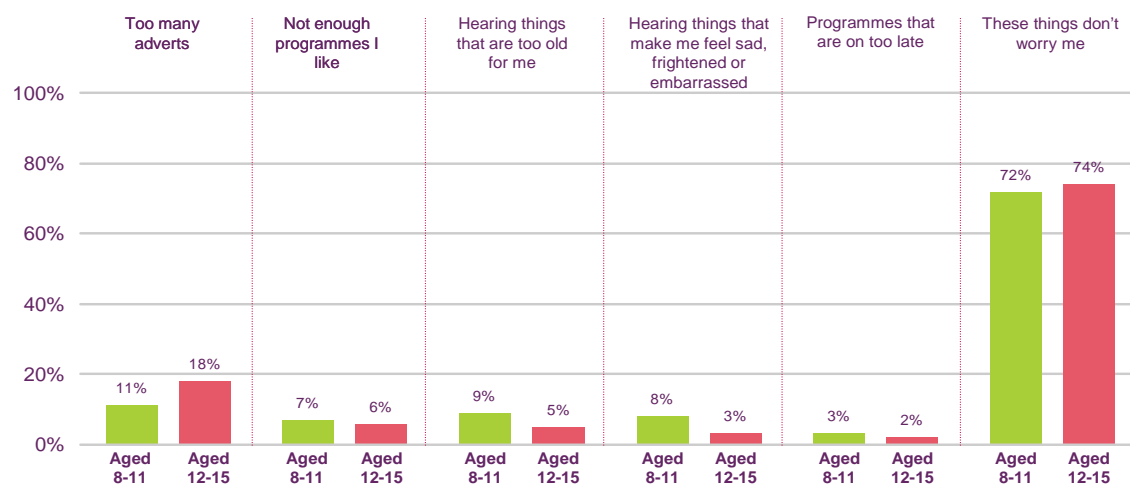
**Figure 47: Children's dislikes about television, by age – 2009**



QC5 – Which of these things if any, are things you don't like about TV? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who watch TV at home (764 aged 8-11, 777 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Children aged 8-15 were prompted with the same list of dislikes for radio. Close to three in four children aged 8-11 (72%) and 12-15 (74%) say that “these things don't worry me”. One in twelve 8-11s (8%) dislike the fact they hear things that make them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed and around one in ten (9%) dislike hearing things that are too old for them.

**Figure 48: Children's dislikes about radio, by age – 2009**

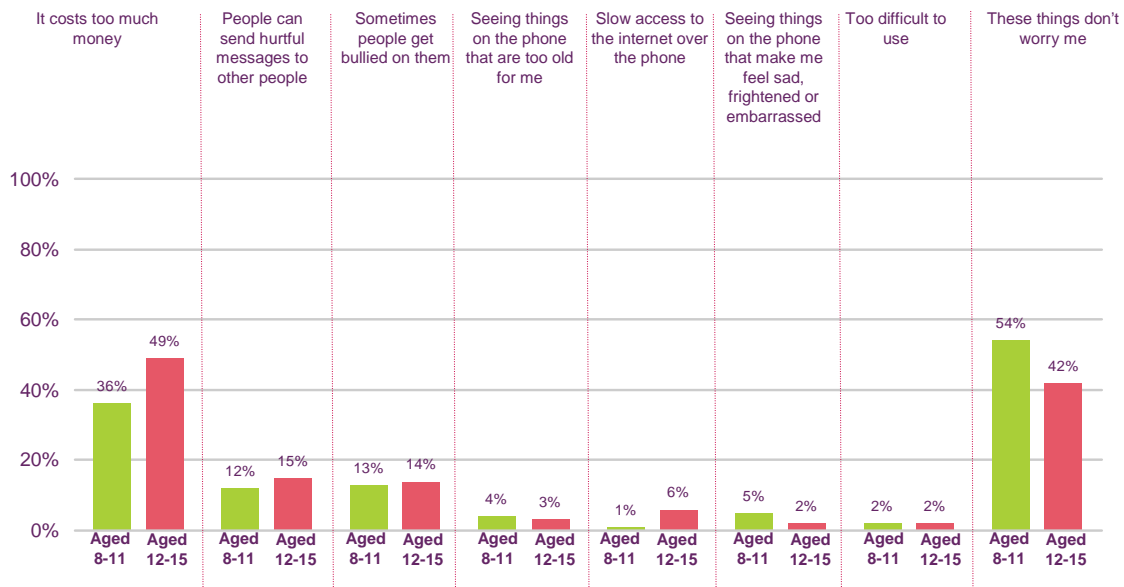


QC9 – Which of these things if any, are things you don't like about radio? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who listen to radio at home (347 aged 8-11, 460 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May 2009

When looking at dislikes about mobile phones, cost issues prevail, with one in three 8-11s (36%) and one in two 12-15s (49%) stating this as a dislike. One in eight (12%) 8-11s and one in seven (15%) 12-15s dislikes the fact that people can send hurtful messages to other people. Similar proportions of both age groups also dislike that sometimes people can get bullied on them (around one in eight -13%). Dislikes about seeing things that are too old for them or seeing things that make them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed are limited to around one in twenty of each age group (5%).

Girls aged 12-15 are more likely than boys to be concerned that people can send hurtful messages to other people (19% vs. 11%), to be concerned that sometimes people can get bullied on them (19% vs. 10%) and to dislike seeing things on the phone that make them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed (4% vs. 0%).

**Figure 49: Children's dislikes about mobile phones, by age – 2009**



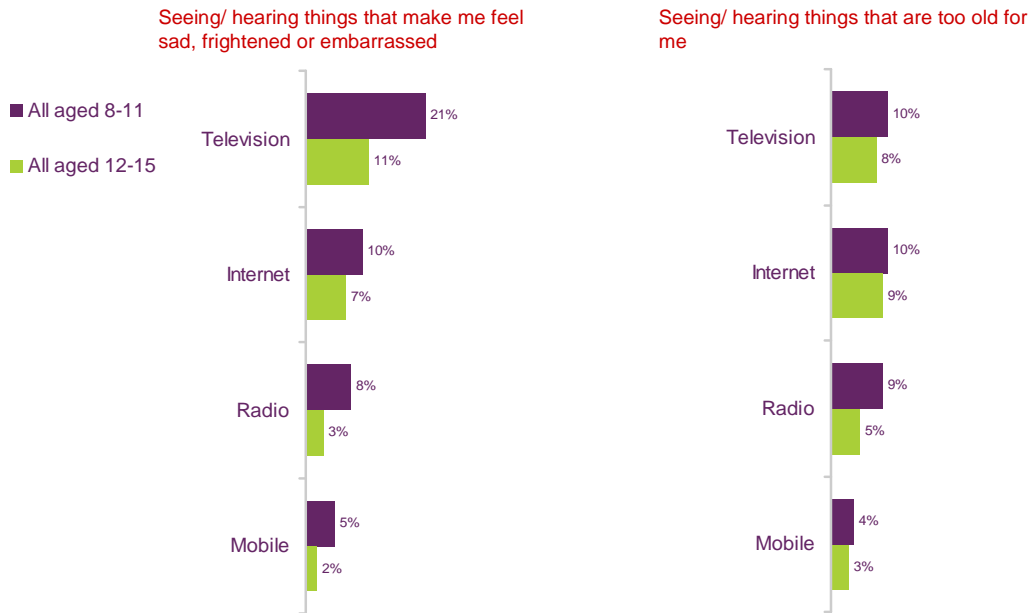
QC38 – Which of these things if any, are things you don't like about mobile phones? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who have a mobile phone (392 aged 8-11, 684 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Across television, internet, radio and mobile phones, it is possible to compare the two specific dislikes of “seeing / hearing / reading things that are too old for me” and “seeing/hearing things that make me feel sad frightened or embarrassed” as they were asked consistently across these four media<sup>41</sup>. Figure 50 below shows that children aged 8-11 are most concerned about viewing television content that makes them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed. Children of this age are as likely to dislike seeing things that they feel are too old for them on television as they are to dislike seeing this type of content online.

Children aged 12-15 are as likely to dislike seeing things on television that make them feel sad, frightened or embarrassed or that are too old for them as they are to dislike seeing this type of content online.

<sup>41</sup> The bases for each of these media vary, however, as the questions were only asked of users of each of these media, rather than asked of all children.

**Figure 50: Comparison of selected dislikes across television, internet, mobile phones and radio, by age - 2009**

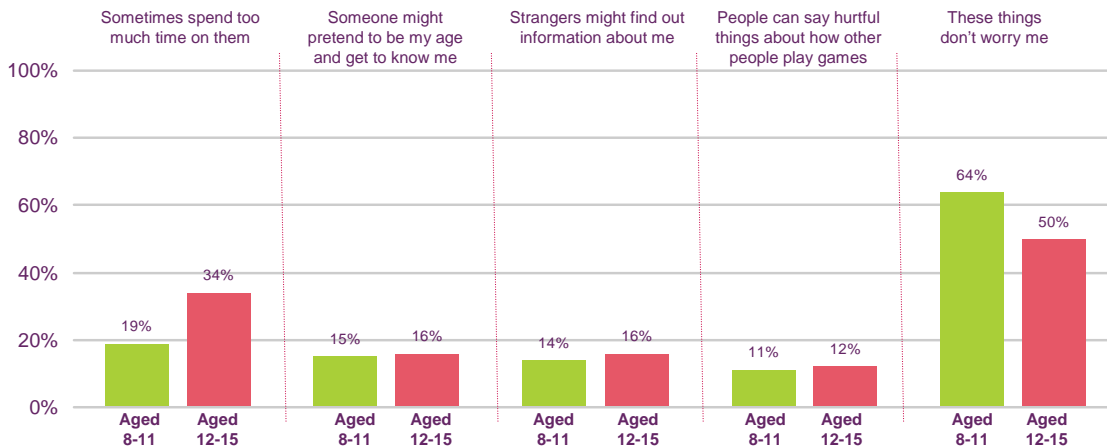


QC5/ QC15/ QC9/ QC38 – Which of these things if any are things that you don't like about [MEDIA] (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who use each media (VARIABLE BASE)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

In 2009, children aged 8-15 who ever play games online through a gaming device were also prompted with a list of four possible dislikes about online game playing and asked which if any applied to them (Figure 51).

A similar proportion of 8-11s and 12-15s dislike the fact that someone may try to befriend them (15% and 16%) or that strangers might find out information about them (14% and 16%).

**Figure 51: Children's dislikes about online gaming, by age - 2009**



QC33 – Which of these things if any, are things you don't like about playing games over the internet? (prompted responses, multi coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who ever play games online (219 aged 8-11, 329 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

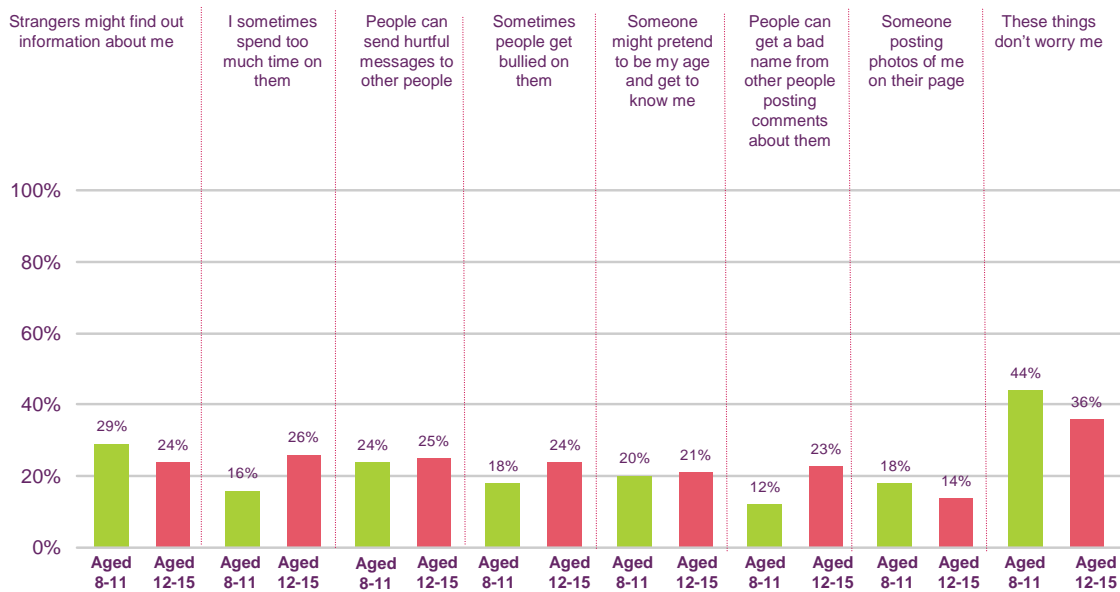
Children aged 8-11 and aged 12-15 with an active social networking profile were prompted with a list of seven possible things that they may dislike about social networking sites. Figure 52 shows that there are two areas that 12-15s are more likely to dislike than 8-11s: “I

sometimes spend too much time on them” (26% vs. 16%), and “people can get a bad name from other people posting comments about them” (23% vs. 12%).

Among 8-15s there are two differences by gender, with girls being more likely to be concerned than boys that “sometimes people can get bullied on them” (26% vs. 18%) and that “someone might pretend to be my age and get to know me” (24% vs. 17%).

There is only one difference by socio-economic group with children aged 8-15 in DE households being more concerned than all 8-15s that people can sometimes get bullied on them (30% vs. 22%).

**Figure 52: Children’s dislikes about social networking sites / virtual worlds, by age - 2009**



QC22 – Which of these things, if any, are things that you don't like about sites like Bebo, Piczo, hi5, Facebook or MySpace?  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who have a social networking site profile that is currently active (129 aged 8-11, 442 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

#### 4.15 Nearly all children aged 8-11 and the vast majority of 12-15s say they would tell someone if they saw something online they found to be worrying, nasty or offensive

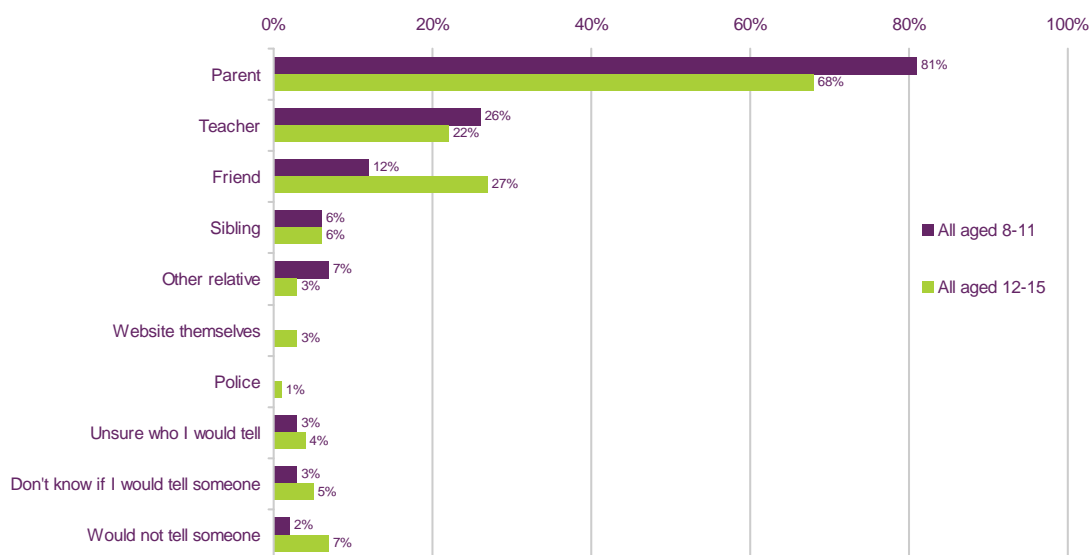
Children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home or elsewhere were asked whether they would tell someone if they saw something online that they found to be worrying, nasty or offensive in some way. If they would tell someone, they were asked who that person would be.

Nearly all 8-11s (95%) and close to nine in ten 12-15s (88%) say that they would tell someone. Children aged 12-15 are more likely than 8-11s to say they would not tell someone (7% vs. 2%) or to be unsure about whether they would tell someone (5% vs. 3%).

The majority of both age groups of children would tell a parent, with younger children being more likely to do so than older children (81% vs. 68%). Younger children would also be more inclined to tell other relatives (7% vs. 3%) while older children would be more likely than younger children to tell a friend (27% vs. 12%). There are differences by gender, with girls aged 12-15 being more likely than boys to tell parents (75% vs. 61%) and to tell friends (30% vs. 23%). Boys of this age are more likely than girls to be unsure about whom they would tell

(6% vs. 2%) or to be unsure whether they would tell anyone (7% vs. 3%). Children aged 8-15 in DE households would be more likely than all children aged 8-15 to tell a teacher (30% vs. 24%).

**Figure 53: Reporting online content that is considered by the child to be worrying, nasty or offensive, by age - 2009**



QC26 – If you saw something online that you found worrying, nasty or offensive in some way, would you tell someone about it? IF YES – Who would you tell? (Shows spontaneous responses from 1% or more of all internet users aged 8-15) (spontaneous responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home or elsewhere (711 aged 8-11, 771 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

#### 4.16 One in six children aged 8-15 think it's easier to keep things secret or private online than it is in real life

Children aged 8-11 and 12-15 who use the internet at least weekly for 'communication purposes' such as send emails, use Instant Messaging software, visit social networking websites or visit virtual worlds, were prompted with a series of statements about the internet and were asked which ones, if any, they agreed with (Figure 54):

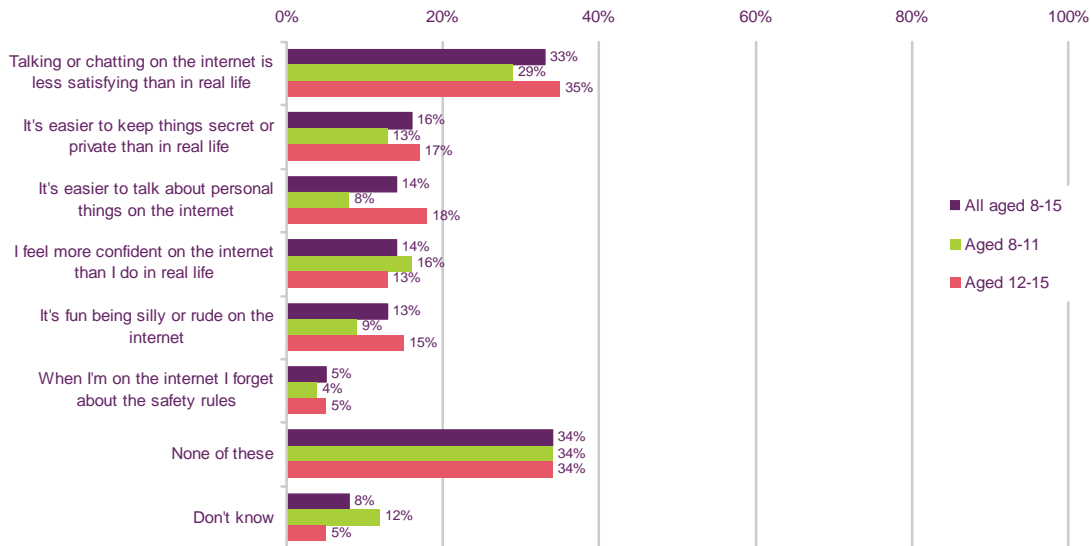
- Talking or chatting on the internet is less satisfying than in real life
- It's easier to keep things secret or private on the internet than in real life
- It's fun being silly or rude on the internet
- It's easier to talk about personal things on the internet
- When I'm on the internet I forget about the safety rules
- I feel more confident on the internet than I do in real life

Around one in seven aged 8-15 (14%) agree that "I feel more confident on the internet than I do in real life" with one in six aged 8-15 (16%) stating that "It's easier to keep things secret or private than in real life". One in eight 8-15s (13%) also feel that "It's fun being silly or rude on the internet" with boys aged 8-15 more likely than girls of this age to think this (19% vs. 7%).

Four per cent of children aged 8-11 and 5% of children aged 12-15 agree that “When I’m on the internet I forget about the safety rules”.

Around one in six children aged 12-15 (18%) agrees that “It’s easier to talk about personal things on the internet”

**Figure 54: Children’s opinions of the internet, by age – 2009**



NQC15 – Here are some things that people have said about the internet. Which ones do you agree with? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who use the internet for email, instant messaging, social networking or character creation (417 aged 8-15, 150 aged 8-11, 267 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

## Section 5

# Knowledge, understanding and creative usage of media among 8-15s

This section looks at the extent to which mainly older children (aged 8-15) understand their media environment. It looks at children's confidence in using media and assesses their understanding of different types of television and online content and their understanding of how search engines operate. It also looks at their opinions about downloading content, the types of checks made when visiting new websites and their experience of using the internet for creative activities (predominantly social networking).

Due to potential comprehension issues, none of these questions were asked of the youngest children (aged 5-7), some of the questions were asked of children aged 8-11, and all the questions were asked of children aged 12-15.

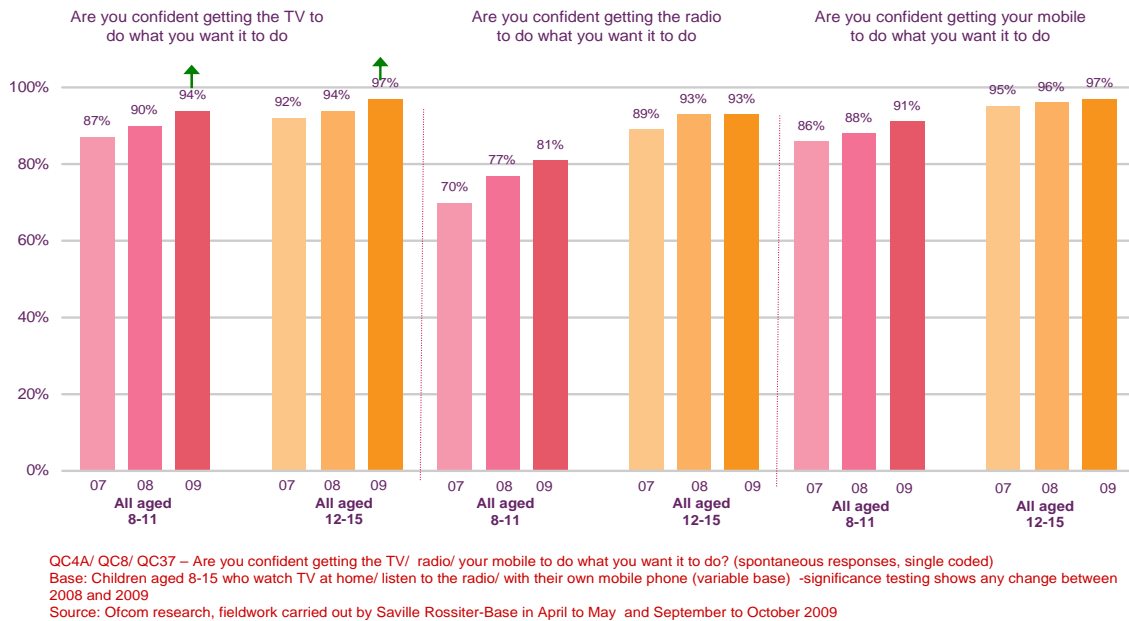
### Key findings

- The vast majority of children aged 8-15 feel confident using media, although one in seven aged 12-15 do not feel confident using the internet for more creative activities such as blogging or uploading short videos.
- While one in four children aged 12-15 (27%) who use search engines think that search engines only return results from websites with truthful information, half of all children of this age (49%) make some kind of critical judgment about search engine results, thinking that some of the sites returned will be truthful while others may not be.
- Since 2007, children aged 12-15 are less likely to say they make any checks when visiting new websites (51% vs. 56%).
- Seven in ten children aged 12-15 with the internet at home (70%) say they have a social networking site profile, an increase from 52% in 2008. One in five (22%) 8-11s also has a social networking profile, which has also increased since 2008 (from 16%). Since 2008, older children are now more likely to say they restrict access to their social networking profile so that it can only be seen by their friends (78% vs. 59%).
- One in four children (25%) aged 8- 12 who uses the internet at home says they have a profile on at least one of the following three social networking sites: Facebook, Bebo or MySpace. This proportion has increased from 15% in 2008. The minimum age for registering with these sites is thirteen years old.
- Eighty three per cent of these children say they have their profile set so that it can only be seen by friends, and 4 per cent have a profile that can't be seen. Over eight in ten (83%) parents of these users are aware that their children visit social networking sites. Of these, 93% say they check what their child is doing. However one in six (17%) parents of this group is not aware that their child visits social networking sites.
- Over two in five 12-15s (44%) think that downloading shared copies of music and films should not be illegal.

## 5.1 Children say they are confident using media

Children aged 8-11 and 12-15 were asked whether they felt confident getting television, radio and mobile phones to do what they want them to do. Figure 55 shows that 8-11s and 12-15s are confident in using each medium, with confidence increasing with age. Confidence is lowest for radio in both age groups.

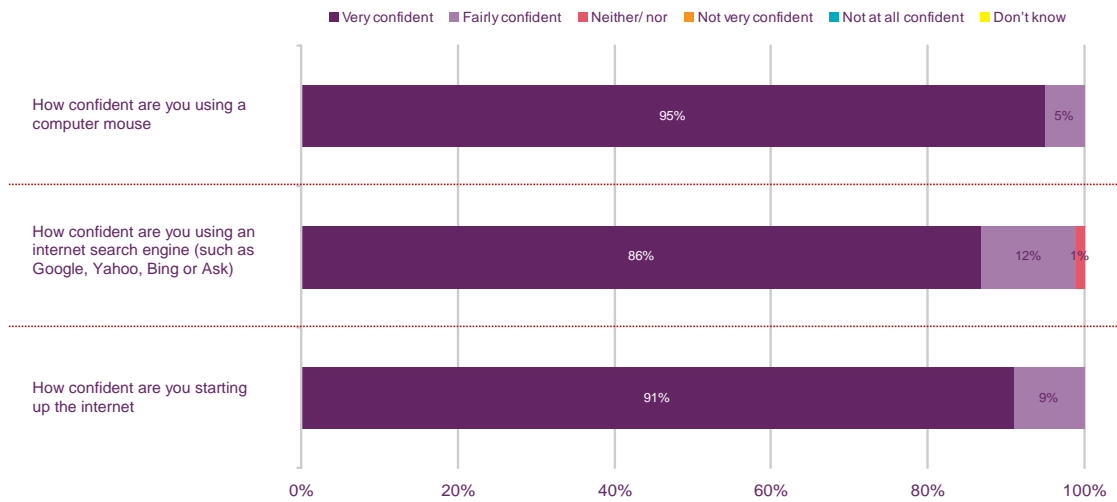
**Figure 55: Users' confidence with media, by age – 2007, 2008 and 2009**



Those aged 12-15 who use the internet at home were asked how confident they were in performing certain activities associated with using the internet, namely using a computer mouse, using a search engine and starting up the internet (in order to get online). Virtually all 12-15s feel confident undertaking each of these activities.



**Figure 56: Confidence in performing activities associated with internet use among 12-15s - 2009**

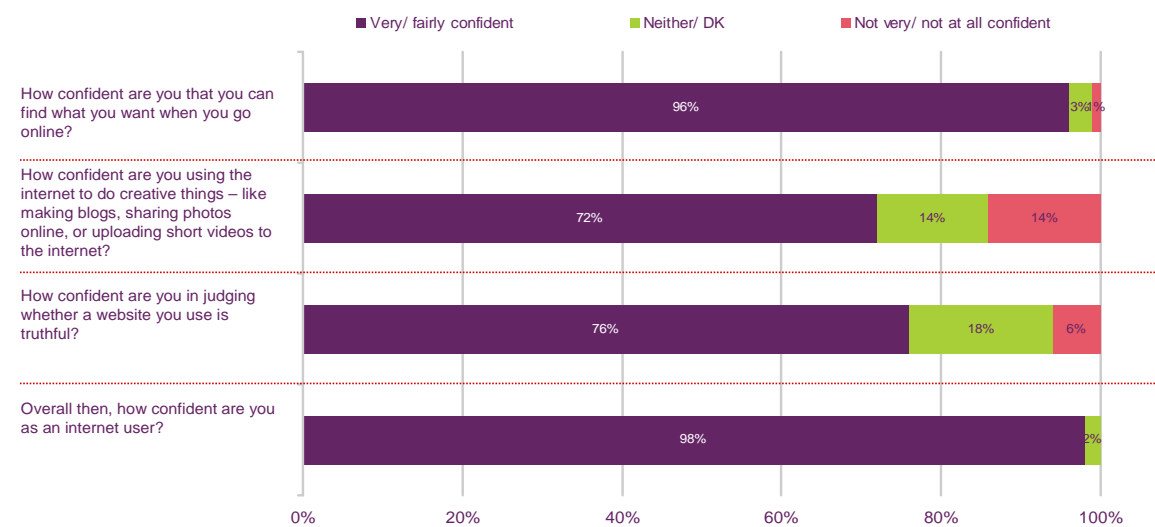


QC17E-F – I'm going to read out some questions about confidence using the internet, for each one please say which of the options on the card applies to you. (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 12-15 who use the Internet at home (326)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

The level of confidence does not vary by gender or socio-economic group.

In addition to asking about their confidence in performing these activities, 12-15s were asked about their confidence in making use of applications on the internet and in making judgments about internet content. Figure 57 shows that while 98% of 12-15s are confident overall in their use of the internet their degree of confidence varies depending on the activity undertaken. Confidence in finding what they want when they go online mirrors their overall confidence in their use of the internet. However, one in 20 children aged 12-15 (6%) feels not very / not at all confident in judging whether a website used is truthful while one in seven (14%) feel not very / not at all confident in using the internet for more creative activities.

**Figure 57: Confidence in using the internet for various activities among 12-15s - 2009**



QC17A-D – I'm going to read out some questions about confidence using the internet, for each one please say which of the options on the card applies to you (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 12-15 who use the Internet at home (645 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

In 2009 there was only one activity that showed a difference by gender. Boys aged 12-15 are more likely than girls to be confident in judging whether a website they use is truthful. Children aged 12-15 in AB households are more likely to be confident in this way compared to all children aged 12-15 who use the internet at home (85% vs. 76%).

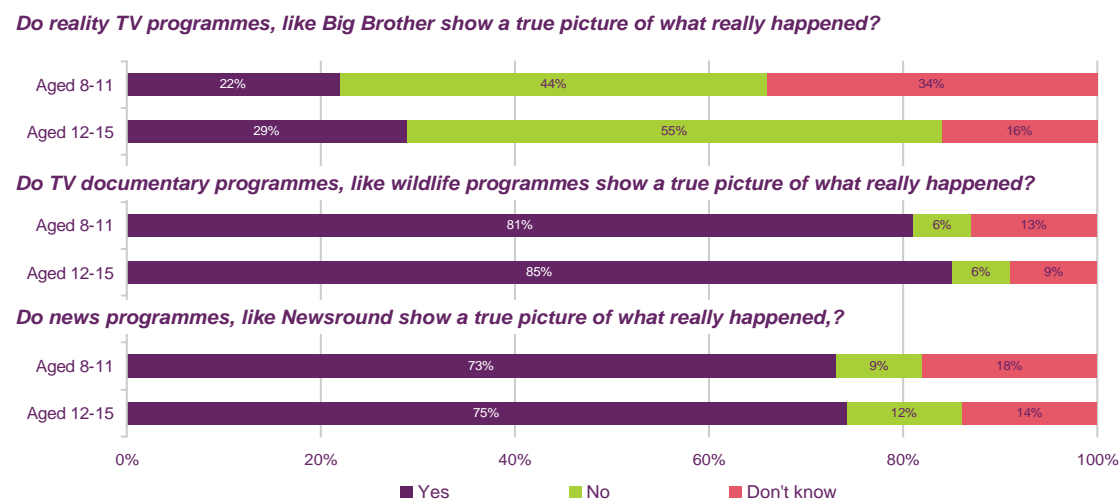
## 5.2 Children feel able to differentiate between the truthfulness of different types of television content

Children aged 8-11 and 12-15 who watch television at home were asked, for various genres of television programmes, whether they believed that what they were viewing reflected a true picture of what really happened – with the aim of understanding whether they accepted television content at face value or applied some degree of ‘critical understanding’ to filter the information shown in such programmes. Children were therefore asked whether they felt that reality TV programmes (like *Big Brother*), TV documentary programmes (like wildlife programmes) or news programmes (like *Newsround*) show a true picture of what really happened. The results are shown in Figure 58 below<sup>42</sup>.

Children in both age groups are more likely to believe that either documentary or news programmes are more likely than reality television programmes to show a true picture of what really happened.

With regard to reality television programmes, close to a majority of 8-11s and 12-15s say that they do not give a true picture of what really happened. However 22% of 8-11s and 29% of 12-15s think they do. More 8-11s are unsure (34%) than 12-15s (16%).

**Figure 58: Children's belief in television content, by genre**



QC4B-D– Here are some questions about how you feel about TV. Could you give me a Yes or No for each one please? (spontaneous responses, single coded)  
Base: Children aged 8-15 who watch TV at home (Base varies) - NB EXCLUDES THOSE WHO DO NOT WATCH EACH TYPE OF PROGRAMME  
Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

There are some differences by gender across these television genres. Boys aged 8-11 are more likely than girls of this age to state that they do not believe that reality television programmes show a true picture of what really happened (48% vs. 40%). Boys of this age are more likely than girls to state that news programmes show a true picture (76% vs. 70%). There is only one difference by gender for the oldest children, with girls aged 12-15 being more likely than boys of this age to believe that news programmes do not show a true picture (14% vs. 9%).

<sup>42</sup> The data shown in Figure 58 for both age groups excludes those children who do not watch each type of programme.

By socio-economic group, children aged 8-15 in AB households are more likely than all children to say that reality television programmes do not show a true picture of what really happened (60% vs. 50%) while those in DE households are more likely to state that they do (33% vs. 26%).

### **5.3 8-15s also apply a level of 'critical understanding' regarding the truthfulness of online content**

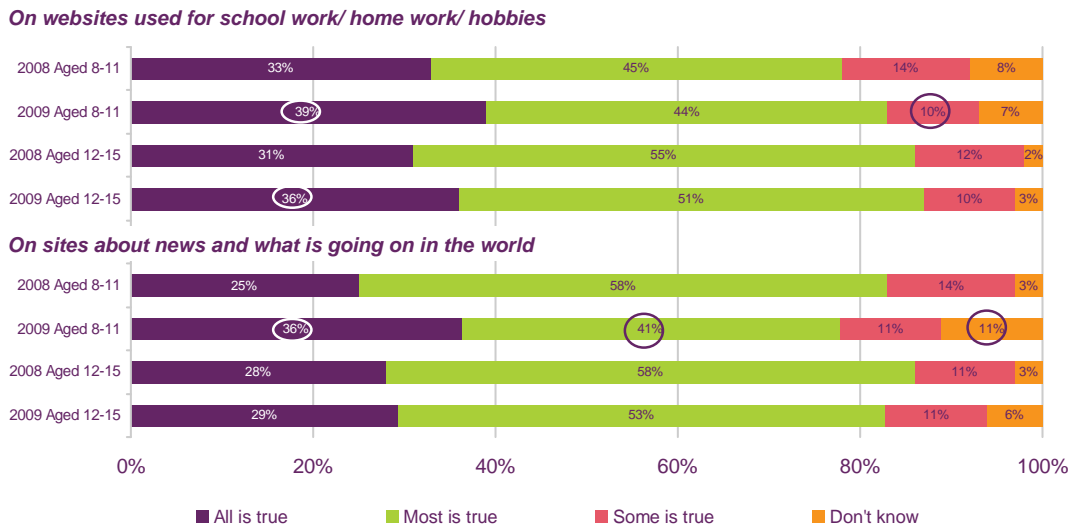
Children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home were asked how frequently they visited certain types of websites. Children that had ever visited four particular types of websites: those used for schoolwork / homework / hobbies, those used for news purposes, those where user-generated content is posted (such as blogs or sites like Wikipedia) and social networking sites, were then asked whether they believed that all of the information, most of the information or some of the information on these types of site is true.

Figure 59 shows the results for the first two categories of website. For both websites used for schoolwork / homework / hobbies and those used for news content, a majority of both age groups believe that all or most of the information is true.

More than four in five 8-11s (84%) and nearly all 12-15s who use the internet at home have ever visited websites for schoolwork / homework / hobbies. Those aged 12-15 are more likely than those aged 8-11 to believe that all or most of the information is true (87% vs. 83%). There are no differences by gender, with children aged 8-15 in AB households that have ever visited sites for this purpose being less likely to believe that all the information is true compared with all children aged 8-15 (29% vs. 38%). Compared to 2008, 8-11s and 12-15s are now more likely to believe that all the information on these types of websites is true.

One in four (25%) of 8-11s and nearly half (46%) of 12-15s who use the internet at home have ever visited sites about news and what is going on the world, and both age-groups are as likely as each other to believe that information on these types of sites is all or mostly true. Boys aged 8-15 are more likely than girls to believe that all the information on news websites is true (36% vs. 26%).

**Figure 59: Children's belief in websites used for information and news purposes, by age – 2008 and 2009**



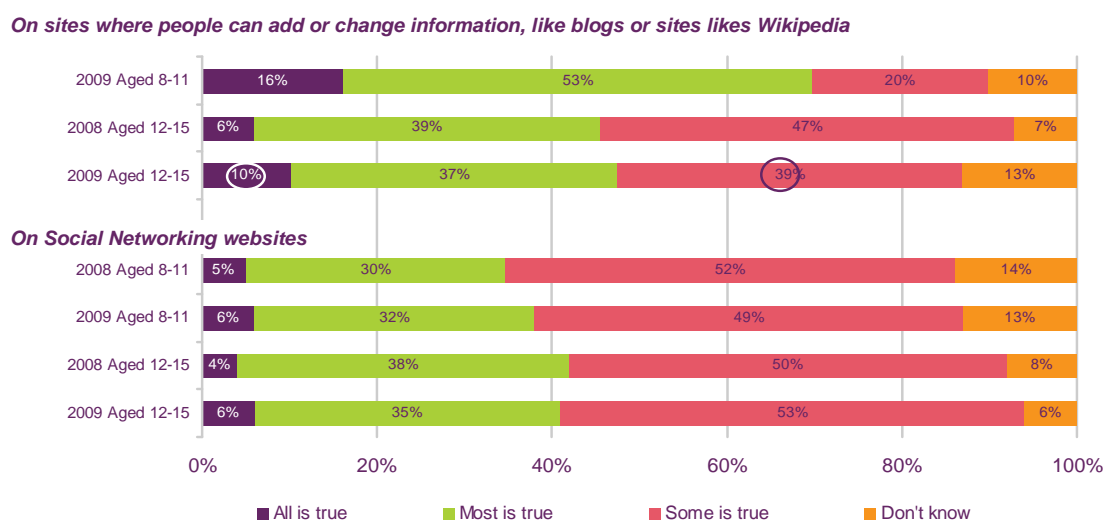
QC14B/ C- When you use the internet to visit .....Do you believe that all of the information you see is true, most of it is true or just some of it is true? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who use the internet to visit relevant websites (VARIABLE BASE) - significance testing shows any change between 2008 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

One in five (18%) of 8-11s and half of 12-15s (48%) who use the internet at home have ever visited sites where people can add or change information, like blogs or sites like Wikipedia. Children aged 8-11 are more likely than 12-15s to believe that the information on these types of sites is all or mostly true (70% vs. 48%). Boys aged 8-15 are more likely than girls of this age to believe that all or most of the information is true (59% vs. 46%). Compared to 2008<sup>43</sup>, 12-15s are more likely to believe that all the information is true (10% vs. 6%).

Three in ten (30%) 8-11s and four in five (79%) 12-15s who use the internet at home have ever used the internet to visit social networking sites. Around two in five of both age groups (40%) believe that all or most of the information on social networking sites is true. There are no differences in belief by gender, or by socio-economic group.

<sup>43</sup> It is not possible to show a comparison over time for 8-11s due to the low base of 79 respondents in 2008.

**Figure 60: Children's belief in user-generated content and social networking websites, by age – 2008 and 2009**



QC14A/ D- When you use the internet to visit .....Do you believe that all of the information you see is true, most of it is true or just some of it is true? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who use the internet to visit relevant websites (VARIABLE BASE) – significance testing shows any change between 2008 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

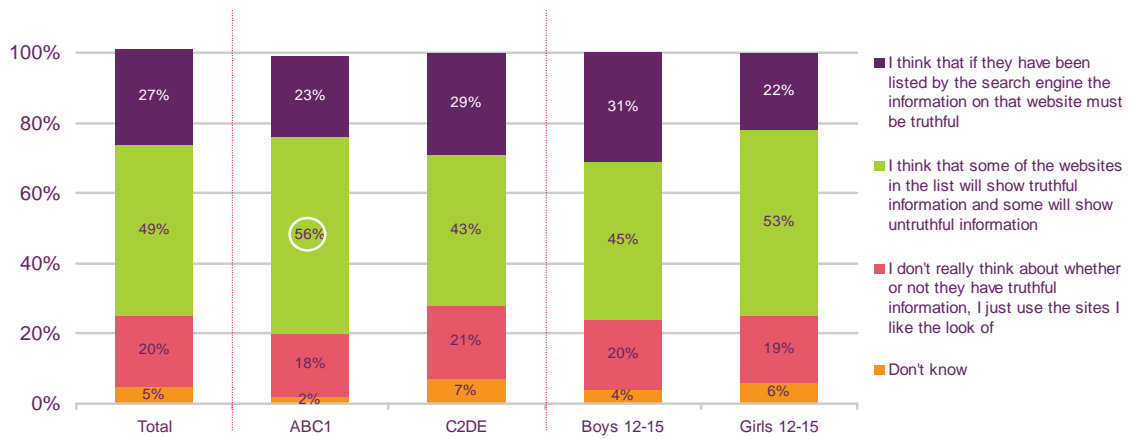
Children aged 12-15 who ever use search engines (95% of all home internet users) were asked about the truthfulness of information that was returned by the search engine. Children were asked which of the following statements is closest to their opinion:

- I think that if they have been listed by the search engine the information on the website must be truthful;
- I think that some of the websites in the list will show truthful information and some will show untruthful information; and
- I don't really think about whether or not they have truthful information, I just use the sites I like the look of.

Half of all children aged 12-15 (49%) make some type of critical judgment about search engine results, thinking that some of the sites returned will be truthful, while others may not be. This is more likely to be the case among children in ABC1 households compared to those in C2DE households (56% vs. 43%).

One in four children aged 12-15 (27%) opts for the statement that the information returned by search engines must be truthful and one in five (20%) says they don't really think about the veracity of sites but just tend to use the sites they like the look of. There are no differences in these findings by gender.

**Figure 61: Children's understanding of results listed by search engines**



NQC24 – Which one of these is the closest in your opinion about the truthfulness of the information in the websites that appear in the results pages? (prompted responses, single coded)

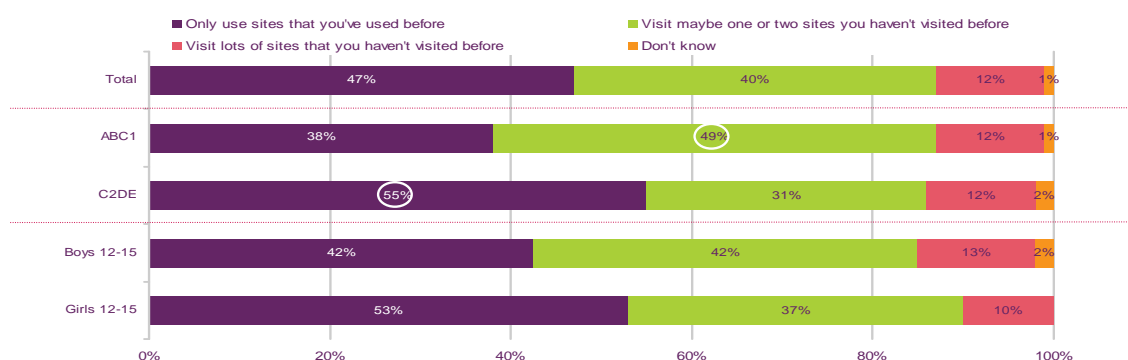
Base: Children 12-15 who ever use search engines to find out about other websites or search for information (313 aged 12-15, 154 ABC1, 155 C2DE, 158 Boys aged 12-15, 155 Girls aged 12-15) – significance testing shows any change by ABC1/ C2DE or by gender

Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

## 5.4 One in four internet users aged 12-15 does not make any checks when visiting new websites

Children aged 12-15 who use the internet at home were asked to say whether, in most weeks, they only used sites that they've used before, visit one or two sites that they haven't visited before or whether they visit lots of sites that they haven't visited before. Close to half of 12-15s (47%) only visit sites that they have visited before with two in five (40%) visiting one or two new sites. There are no differences by gender. Children in ABC1 socio-economic groups are less likely than those in C2DE households to only visit sites they've used before (38% vs. 55%) and more likely to visit one or two new sites a week (49% vs. 31%).

**Figure 62: 12-15's experience of visiting new websites, by gender and socio-economic group - 2009**

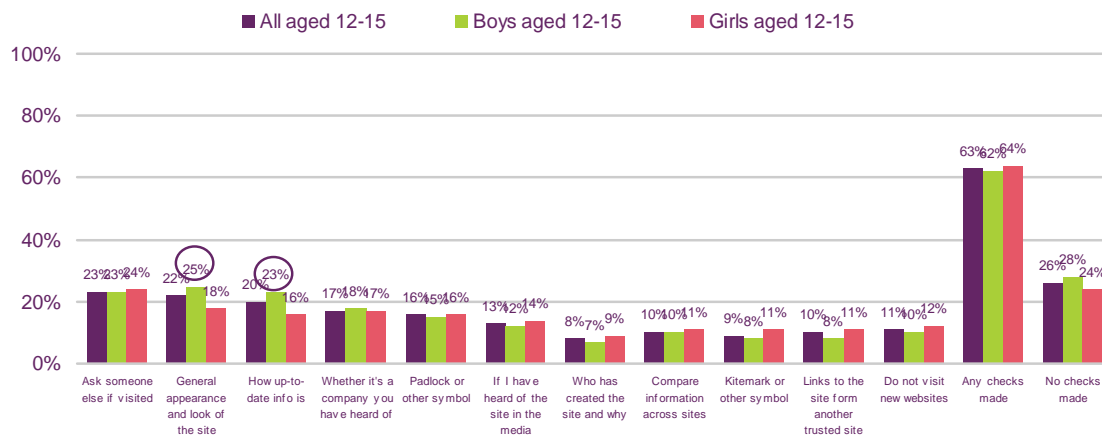


NQC16 – In most weeks when you use the internet, would you say that you...? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children 12-15 who use the internet at home (326 aged 12-15, 163 ABC1, 159 C2DE, 167 Boys aged 12-15, 159 Girls aged 12-15) – significance testing shows any change between ABC1/ C2DE or by gender  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Children aged 12-15 who use the internet at home were shown a list of types of checks that could be made when visiting new websites and were asked to say which, if any, of these things they would check.

Close to two-thirds of 12-15s (63%) said they would check at least one of the things on the list. One in four 12-15s who use the internet (26%) does not make any of these checks. One in ten (11%) said that they do not visit new websites. There are no differences between boys and girls or by socio-economic group in terms of not making checks, and just two differences between boys and girls in the types of checks made – checking how up to date a site was, and checking the general appearance and look of the site, which boys say they do more frequently than girls.

**Figure 63: Checks made by 12-15s when visiting new websites, by gender**



QC16 – Thinking about new websites you visit. Which, if any of these things would you check? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 12-15 who use the internet at home (645 aged 12-15, 323 boys aged 12-15, 322 girls aged 12-15) – significance testing shows any change by gender  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May 2009

We asked a similar question regarding checks made when visiting new websites as part of the 2007 research, but with fewer options presented to children from which they could select their response. Comparing only those options shown in both 2007 and 2009, children aged 12-15 are now less likely to make any of these checks (51% vs. 56%)

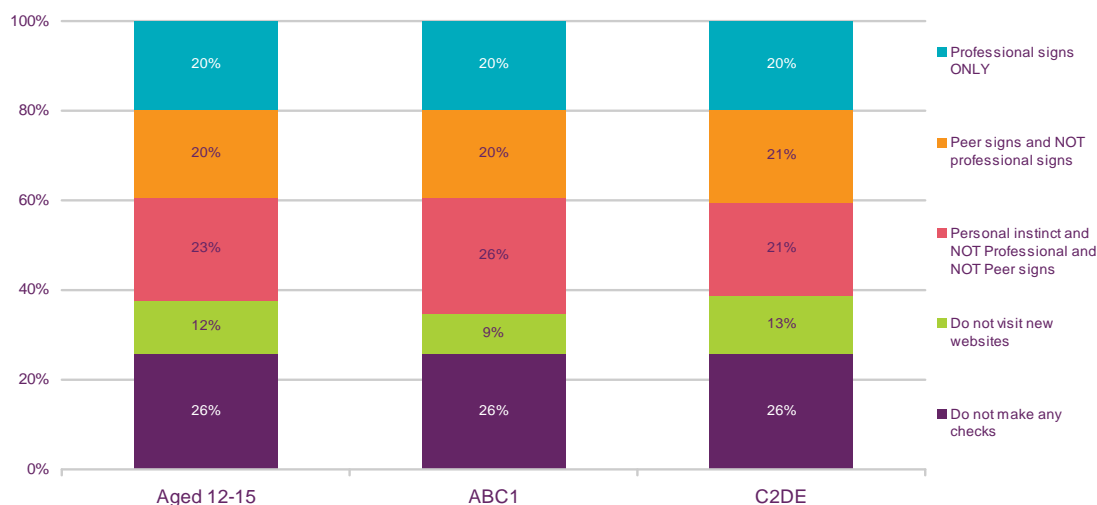
It is possible to group the types of checks made when visiting new websites into three distinct categories:

- relying on any professional signs (e.g. padlock);
- relying on peer signs (e.g. ask someone else if they have been to the website or if I have heard of the site on TV / radio / newspaper/ magazine); and
- relying on personal instinct (e.g. how up to date the information was, who has created the page and for what reason etc).

Figure 64 also compares the types of checks made by children when visiting new websites, having imposed a hierarchy on the type of checks made, if any. The hierarchy prioritises judgements made on professional signs (such as a padlock), followed by peer signs and then personal instinct. This way of looking at the data shows that there is a fairly even distribution across these three categories with around one in five (20%) of 12-15s who use the internet at home relying on each of professional signs, on peer signs and on personal instinct, with the remaining two in five (40%) either not making any checks or not visiting new websites. Results do not vary by socio-economic group or by gender.



**Figure 64: Checks made by 12-15s when visiting new websites, by age and socio-economic group - 2009**



QC16 – Thinking about new websites you visit. Which, if any of these things would you check? (prompted responses, multi-coded) Professional signs (e.g. Kitemark, padlock); Peer signs (e.g. Peer review, recommendation from friends); Personal instinct (e.g. Company I've heard of, looks professional etc)  
 Base: Children aged 12-15 who use the internet at home (645 aged 12-15, 291 ABC1, 343 C2DE)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May 2009

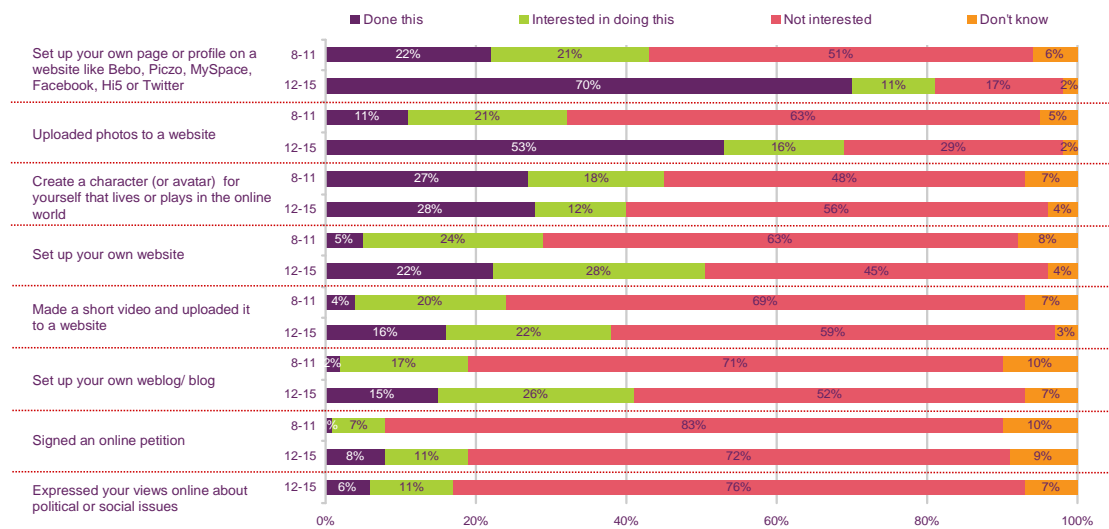
## 5.5 Older children are more likely to have undertaken, and to be interested in undertaking, creative activities online

Children aged 8-11 and 12-15 were prompted with various types of creative activities associated with digital technology. For each type of activity they were asked if they had already done this, were interested in doing this or were not interested in doing it.

Of the activities asked about, the majority of 12-15s say they have set up a profile on a social networking site (70%) making this the most popular creative activity. This is followed by uploading photos to a website (53%). A sizeable minority have experience of creating an avatar that lives or plays in the online world (28%) and of setting up their own website (22%). No single activity has been undertaken yet by a majority of 8-11s, with the most popular activity for this age group being creating an avatar (27%), followed by setting up a social networking profile (22%) and uploading photos to a website (11%).

In 2009, children aged 12-15 were also asked about their experience of expressing their views online about political or social issues. One in twenty children of this age (6%) has ever done this, with a further one in ten (11%) interested in doing this. While actual experience of expressing views online about political or social issues does not vary by socio-economic group, interest does. Children aged 12-15 in AB and C1 households are more likely to be interested compared to those children in DE households (14% for AB and 15% for C1 vs. 5% for DE).

**Figure 65: Children's experience of creative activities, by age - 2009**

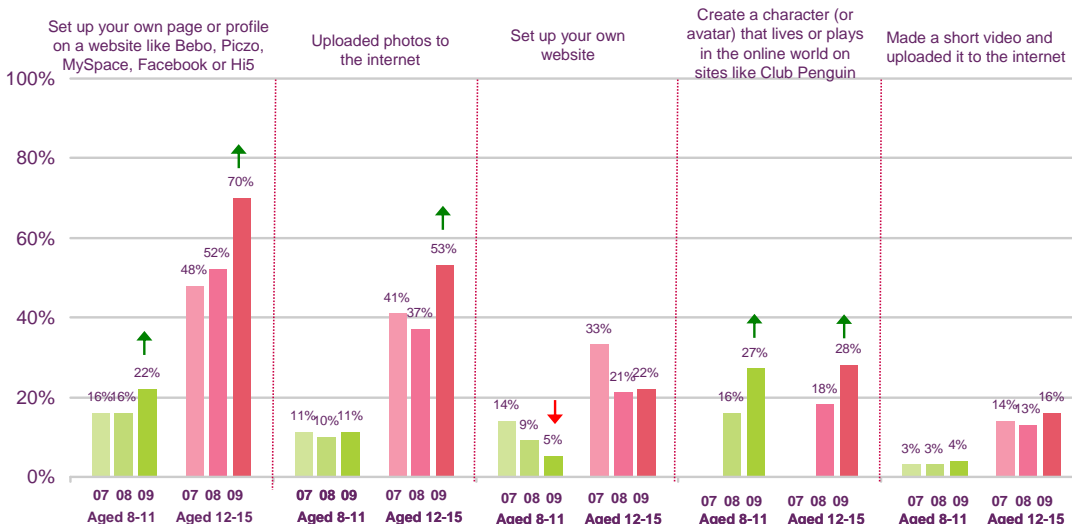


QC18 – I'd like to read out a number of things people might do. For each one, could you please tell me if you've done it, you'd be interested in doing it, or not interested? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home (582 aged 8-11, 645 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

There are several activities that girls are more likely to have undertaken than boys: setting up a social networking profile (75% vs. 65% for 12-15s), uploading photos to a website (31% vs. 23% for 8-11s), setting up their own website (26% vs. 19% for 12-15s) and setting up their own blog (18% vs. 12% among 12-15s).

Figure 66 shows the change over time in children's experience of the key creative activities. Since 2008 there has been an increase in setting up social networking profiles among 8-11s (22% vs. 16%) and among 12-15s (70% vs. 52%). Creating avatars is also more likely to be undertaken by both age groups since 2008 (27% vs. 16% for 8-11s and 28% vs. 18% for 12-15s). Children aged 12-15 are now more likely to say they have uploaded photos to the internet (53% vs. 37%) while 8-11s are now less likely to have set up their own websites (5% vs. 9%).

**Figure 66: Children's experience of creative activities, by age - 2007, 2008 and 2009**



QC18 – I'd like to read out a number of things people might do. For each one, could you please tell me if you've done it, you'd be interested in doing it, or not interested? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who use the internet at home (499 aged 8-11 in 2007, 527 aged 8-11 in 2008, 582 aged 8-11 in 2009, 1045 aged 12-15 in 2007, 614 aged 12-15 in 2008, 645 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing shows any change between 2008 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

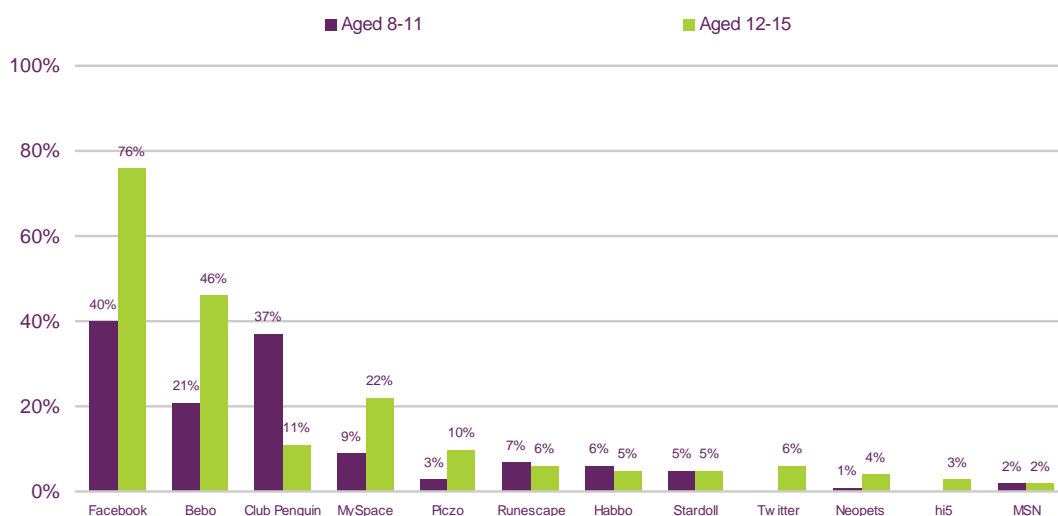
## 5.6 Facebook has increased in popularity among 8-11s and 12-15s

Those children aged 8-15 who say they either have a social networking profile or have created an avatar that lives or plays in the online world – which represents nearly two in five (38%) of those aged 8-11 who use the internet at home and three in four (73%) of those aged 12-15 who use the internet at home - were asked about the websites that they have a profile on / have created a character on<sup>44</sup>.

There are four main websites that children say they use: Facebook, Bebo, Club Penguin and MySpace. Children aged 12-15 are more likely than those aged 8-11 to say they have a page or profile on Facebook, Bebo and MySpace while children aged 8-11 are more likely than 12-15s to have a character on Club Penguin. Facebook is by far the most popular site for 12-15s, as three in four (76%) of this age group who have a social networking profile or have created an avatar say they have a page or profile on this site, with around one in two (46%) with a page or profile on Bebo. One in five (22%) of 12-15s say they use MySpace.

A similar proportion of 8-11s with either a social networking profile or an avatar that lives or plays in the online world say they have a page or profile on Facebook (40%) or have created an avatar on Club Penguin (37%), with one in five (21%) having a page or profile on Bebo. All other sites that children mentioned were used by around one in ten or fewer of 8-11s or 12-15s, with one in twenty (6%) of 12-15s with a profile on Twitter.

**Figure 67: Social networking websites/ virtual worlds that children have a page or profile on, or have created a character/ avatar, by age - 2009**



QC19 – Which sites do you have a page or profile on, or have your own character that you have created? (spontaneous responses, multi coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who have a social networking site profile or have created a character that lives/ plays in the online world (221 aged 8-11, 474 aged 12-15) - SHOWS SPONTANEOUS RESPONSES FROM 2% OR MORE OF ALL RESPONDING  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

There are some differences by gender among children aged 12-15<sup>45</sup>. Girls of this age are more likely than boys to use Facebook (80% vs. 71%) and Stardoll (9% vs. 0%) whereas boys are more likely to use Runescape (9% vs. 3%). By socio-economic group there are no differences in terms of 8-15s' use of Facebook, MySpace or Club Penguin. Children who use

<sup>44</sup> Children were asked about traditional social networking websites and also about sites where they can create avatars that live or play in the online world, in order to get an accurate estimate of the relative usage of sites such as Club Penguin or Habbo.

<sup>45</sup> It is not possible to break this out by gender within age for 8-11s as less than 100 boys aged 8-11 were interviewed.

Bebo are less likely to live in AB households (23% vs. 38%) and more likely than all 8-15s with a social networking profile to be in C2 households (46% vs. 38%).

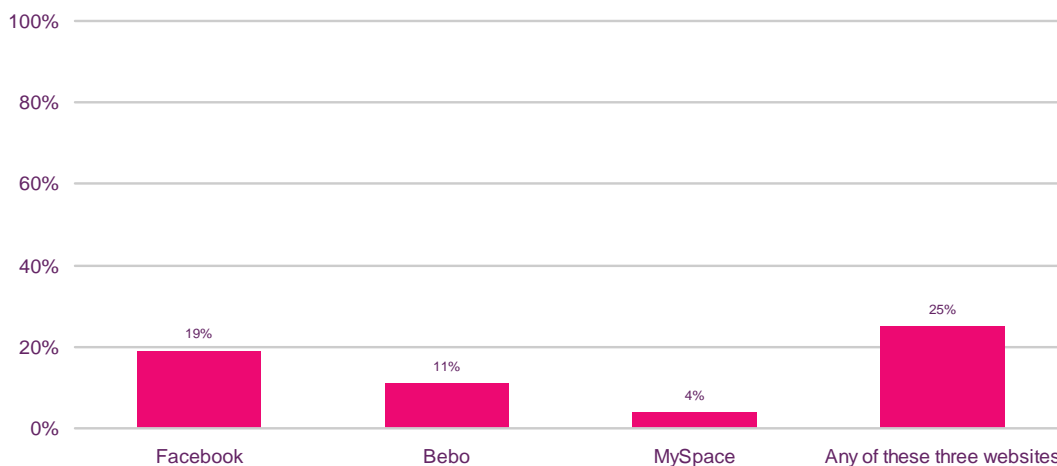
Compared to 2008, use of Facebook has increased across both age groups of those who use social networking sites (from 19% to 40% for 8-11s and from 37% to 76% for 12-15s) while use of Bebo has decreased (from 36% to 21% for 8-11s and from 69% to 46% for 12-15s). MySpace has also seen a decrease in users of both age groups (from 19% to 9% for 8-11s and from 36% to 22% for 12-15s).

### 5.7 One quarter of home internet users aged 8-12 say they have a profile on Facebook, Bebo or MySpace

The minimum age for setting up a profile on social networking sites like Facebook, Bebo and MySpace is thirteen. Figure 68 shows that one in five home internet users aged 8-12 say they have a page or profile on Facebook (19%), one in ten says they have a profile on Bebo (11%) and one in twenty (4%) that they have a profile on MySpace.

Overall, one in four (25%) of home internet users aged 8-12 say they have a page or profile on any of these three websites and there are no differences in this incidence by gender or by socio-economic group. Compared to 2008, this group of 8-12s are more likely to have a profile on these sites (15% in 2008).

**Figure 68: Children aged 8-12 with a profile on Facebook, Bebo or MySpace**



QC19 – Which sites do you have a page or profile on, or have your own character that you have created?  
 Base: Children aged 8-12 who use the internet at home (747)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Those aged 8-12 with a social networking profile on any of these three websites are no more or less likely to have rules about internet use than those children aged 8-12 that do not have a profile on any of these three sites. Parents of these social networking site users aged 8-12 are more likely to say that their children do not have internet controls set or filtering software loaded (54% vs. 45%). These users are also more likely to mostly use the internet on their own (42% vs. 29%) and to mostly use the internet in their bedroom (20% vs. 8%) compared to those children aged 8-12 who use the internet at home but do not have a profile on any of these three sites.

Users of these three sites aged 8-12 with a mobile phone are also more likely than those children aged 8-12 that do not have a profile on any of these three sites to access the internet through their mobile phone (16% vs. 6%). Users of these three sites aged 8-12 with

a games console/ games player are also more likely to access through their games console/ games player (21% vs. 15%).

### 5.8 12-15s are now more likely to say they restrict access to their social networking site profile

Four in five 8-15s with an active social networking site profile or page say that it can only be seen by their friends (79%), and this does not vary by the age of the child. However, a similar proportion of both 8-11s and 12-15s say that their profile can be seen by anyone (15% for 8-11s and 18% for 12-15s).

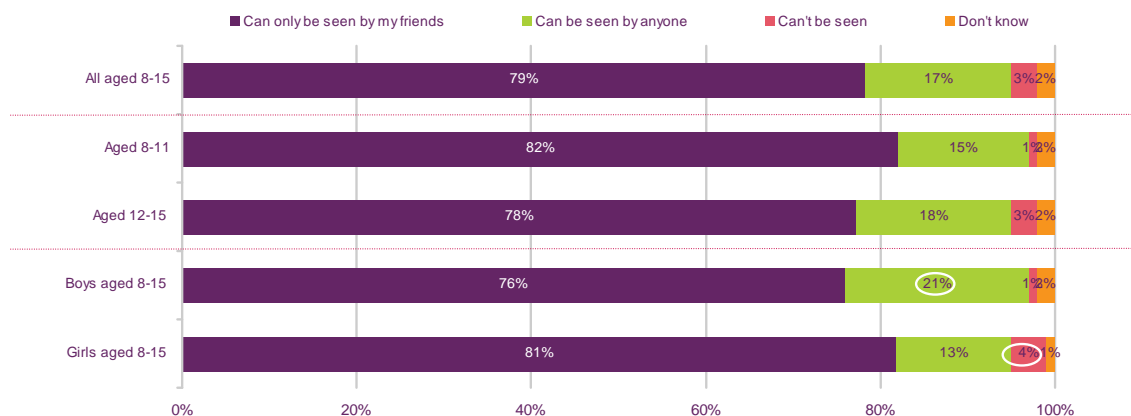
Boys aged 8-15 are more likely than girls to say it can be seen by anyone (21% vs.13%) while girls are more likely to say that their profile cannot be seen at all (4% vs. 1%).

Children aged 12-15 who mostly use the internet on their own are more likely to state that their profile can be seen by anyone compared to those of this age who mostly use the internet with other people present (21% vs. 13%).

Compared to 2008, 12-15s are now more likely to ensure their profile can only be seen by their friends (78% vs. 59%) and less likely to say that it can be seen by anyone (18% vs. 32%)<sup>46</sup>.

Among those users aged 8-12 with a page or profile on either Facebook, Bebo or MySpace, one in ten (11%) says they have their profile set to be visible by anyone, with four in five (83%) setting their profile so that it can only be seen by friends and 4% preventing their profile being seen at all. In 2008, 67% of this age group said their profile could only be seen by friends.

**Figure 69: Visibility of social networking profile/ page among 8-11s and 12-15s - 2009**



QC20 – And do you know if this profile can be seen by other people? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who have a social networking site profile that is currently active (571 aged 8-11, 129 aged 8-11, 442 aged 12-15, 265 Boys aged 8-15, 306 girls aged 12-15) - significance testing shows any differences by age and by gender  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

In addition to asking children about the visibility of their social networking profile, parents were asked whether their child visits websites which can be used to chat with other users, and if so, whether they check what their child is doing<sup>47</sup>.

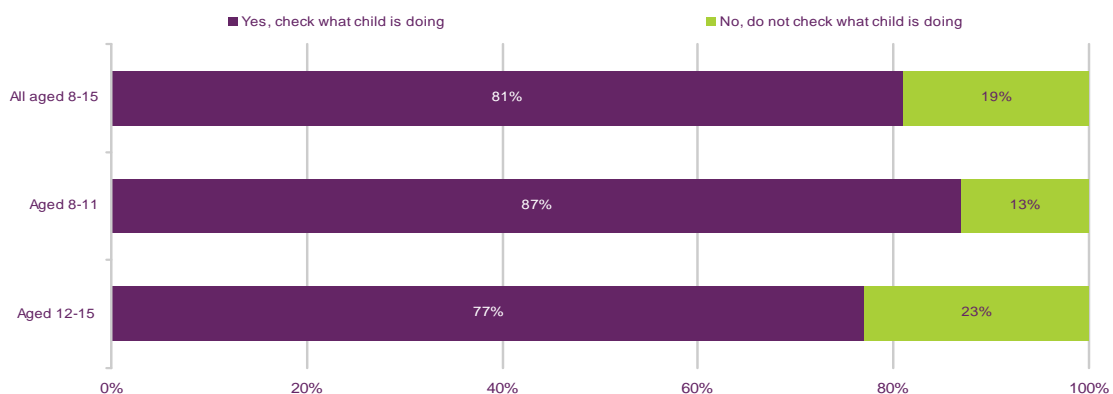
<sup>46</sup> It is not possible to show a comparison since 2008 for 8-11s due to the low base in 2008 of 89 respondents.

<sup>47</sup> It is not possible to show data for 5-7s due to the low base of 60 respondents.

Four in five parents of children aged 8-15, whose child visits websites which can be used to chat with other users, say they check what their children are doing (81%), with parents of children aged 8-11 being more likely to make checks than parents of children aged 12-15 (87% vs. 77%). There are no differences in whether checks are made by the child's gender or by socio-economic group.

Over eight in ten (83%) parents of the children aged 8-12 with a page or profile on either Facebook, Bebo or MySpace are aware that their children visit social networking sites. Of these, 93% say they check what their child is doing. However one in six (17%) parents of this group is not aware that their child visits social networking sites.

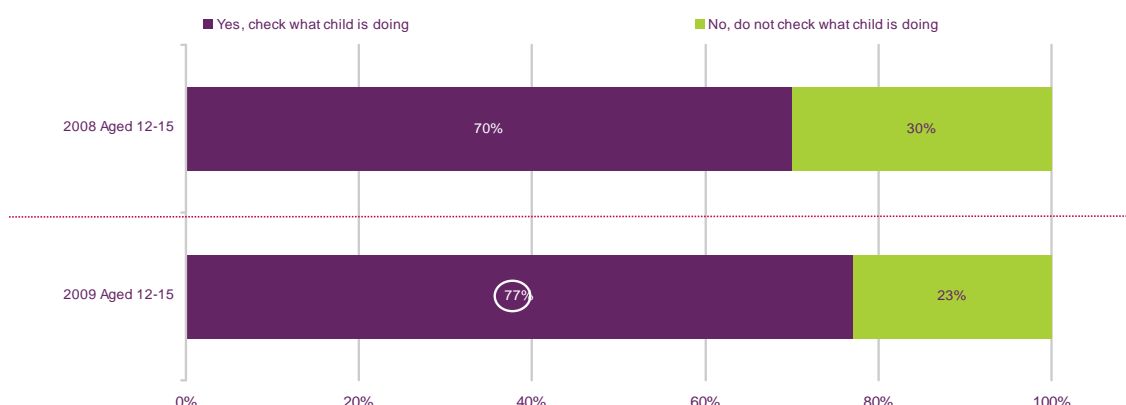
**Figure 70: Parental checking of social networking and virtual world site activity, by age**



QP29 – Does your child visit websites which can be used to chat with other users – I mean websites like Bebo, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Piczo, Habbo, Club Penguin or Stardoll? IF YES: Do you tend to check what they are doing online when they are visiting these types of sites? (spontaneous responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 8-15 whose child uses the internet at home and whose child visits websites which can be used to chat with other users (695 aged 8-15, 255 aged 8-11, 440 aged 12-15)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Since 2008, parents of 12-15s are now more likely to check their child's visits to social networking sites (77% vs. 70%).

**Figure 71: Parental checking of social networking site and virtual world activity, among 12-15s<sup>48</sup> – 2008 and 2009**



QP29 – Does your child visit websites which can be used to chat with other users – I mean websites like Bebo, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Piczo, Habbo, Club Penguin or Stardoll? IF YES: Do you tend to check what they are doing online when they are visiting these types of sites? (spontaneous responses, single coded)  
 Base: Parents of children aged 8-15 whose child uses the internet at home and whose child visits websites which can be used to chat with other users (202 aged 12-15 in 2008, 440 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing shows any change between 2008 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

## 5.9 One in ten 12-15s says they use social networking sites to contact people they do not know

Children aged 8-15 with an active social networking profile were prompted with a list of activities that they could possibly undertake when visiting these types of website.

- Talk to friends / family.
- Talk to people I don't know.
- Talk to people who are friends of friends.
- Look at other people's pages without leaving a message
- Listen to music / find out about bands.
- Look for old friends / people I've lost touch with.
- Look at or join in with campaigns and petitions.

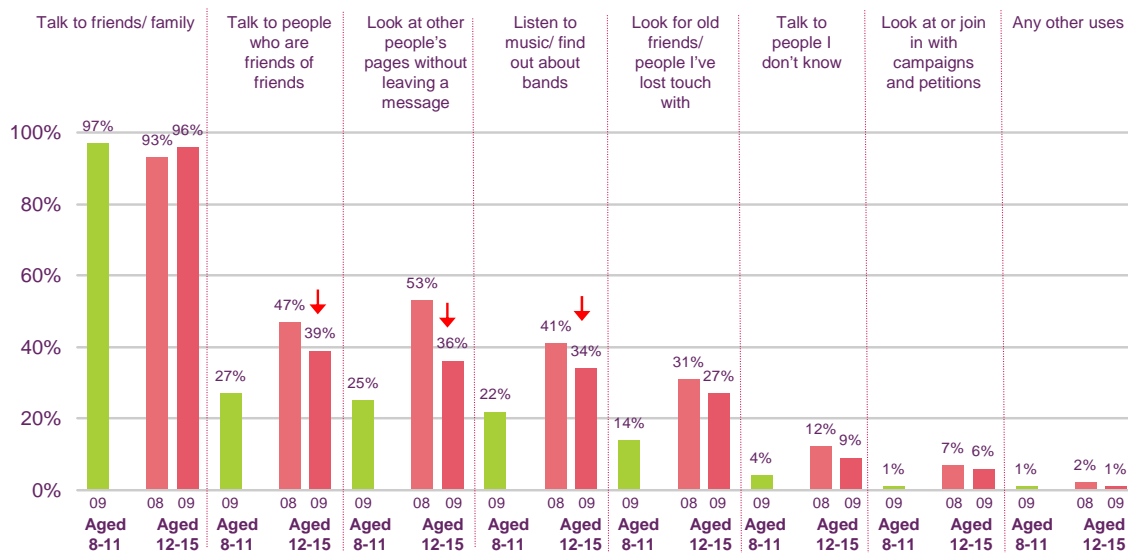
Nearly all 8-11s (97%) say they use these types of sites to talk to friends or family with one in four talking to friends of friends (27%). Four per cent state they talk to people they don't know.

Nearly all 12-15s (96%) say they talk to friends/family. Two in five talk to friends of friends (39%), around one in three (36%) look at other people's pages without leaving a message or listen to music/ find out about bands (34%). One in four 12-15s also use these sites to search for friends or people they have lost contact with (27%). Compared to 8-11s, a larger proportion of 12-15s talk to people they don't know through these sites (9%).

<sup>48</sup> Due to the low base of only 90 children aged 8-11 in 2008, it is only possible to show data for children aged 12-15.

There are some differences by gender among older children<sup>49</sup>. Girls aged 12-15 are more likely than boys of this age to talk to friends or family (98% vs. 94%) while boys are more likely than girls to talk to people they don't already know (13% vs. 6%) or to look at or join in with campaigns or petitions (9% vs. 3%). Children aged 8-15 in AB households are less likely than all children aged 8-15 to use these types of websites to talk to friends or family (87% vs. 94) or to talk to people who are friends of friends (20% vs. 34%). Children in DE households are more likely to use these sites to talk to people who are friends of friends (45% vs. 34%).

**Figure 72: Types of use of social networking sites, by age – 2008<sup>50</sup> and 2009**



QC21 – Do you regularly use these sites for any of the things shown on this card? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 who have a social networking site profile that is currently active (129 aged 8-11 in 2009, 322 aged 12-15 in 2008, 442 aged 12-15 in 2009)  
 – significance testing shows any change between 2008 and 2009 among 12-15s  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

Compared to 2008, children aged 12-15 are less likely to use the sites to talk to people who are friends of friends (39% vs. 47%), to look at other people's pages without leaving a message (36% vs. 53%) or to listen to music / find out about bands (34% vs. 41%).

### 5.10 Over two in five 12-15s think that downloading shared copies of music and movies for free should not be illegal

Children aged 12-15 were also asked about their attitudes to downloading music and movies from the internet. All children were told about downloading shared copies of music and movies from the internet<sup>51</sup> and asked whether they were aware that downloading shared music and movies for free is often illegal, and whether they thought it should be. Around one in five 12-15s (18%) is unsure whether it should be illegal, with two in five (38%) thinking that it should be illegal. More than two in five (44%) think that downloading in this way should not be illegal. Results do not differ by socio-economic group, but do differ by gender, with boys more likely to believe that downloading in this way should not be illegal (48% vs. 40%).

<sup>49</sup> Due to the low base size of boys aged 8-11 in 2009 who visit social networking sites it is not possible to show any time series data for this audience.

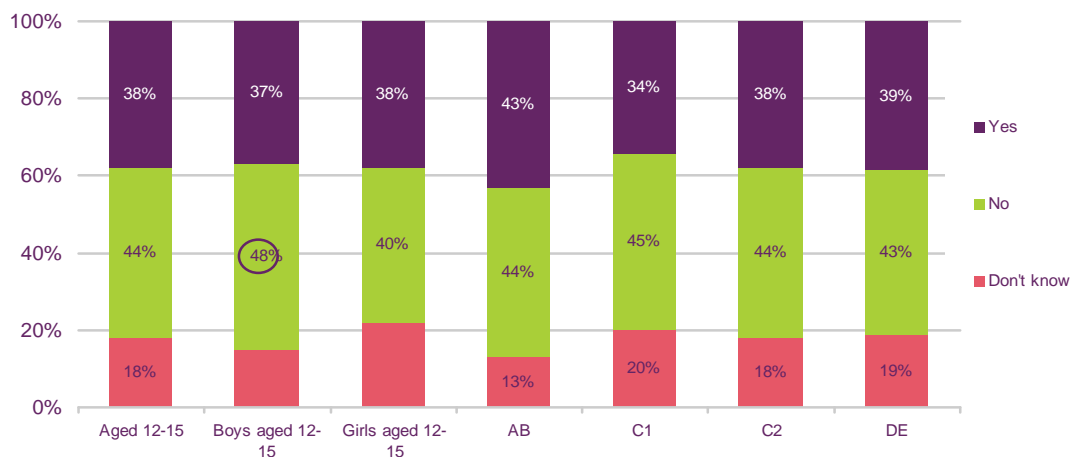
<sup>50</sup> Due to the low base size of children aged 8-11 in 2008 who visit social networking sites it is not possible to show any time series data for this audience.

<sup>51</sup> Children were provided with the following description: 'Music and movies can be downloaded from the internet in two main ways – by paying at an online shop like iTunes or Tesco.com or by downloading for free from a site where someone else has shared their copy of the music or the movie. Sharing content for free in this way is often illegal'.



One in two children aged 12-15 (49%) who have ever downloaded music from the internet<sup>52</sup> feel that downloading shared copies of music or movies should not be illegal, compared to two in five (37%) who have never downloaded music or movies from the internet.

**Figure 73: Whether downloading shared copies of music and movies should be illegal among 12-15s, by gender and socio-economic group - 2009**



QC28 – (DESCRIPTION OF DOWNLOADING MUSIC AND MOVIES FROM THE INTERNET) - Do you think that downloading music and movies for free in this way should be illegal? (spontaneous response, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 12-15 (781 aged 12-15, 385 boys aged 12-15, 396 girls aged 12-15, 133 AB, 190 C1, 177 C2, 269 DE) – significance testing shows any change by gender or by socio-economic group  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

<sup>52</sup> It is not known whether this is conducted legally or illegally.

## Section 6

# Learning about media

This section looks at children's preferences for learning about digital technology and their experience of this type of learning through school.

### Key findings

- Younger children aged 8-11 have a preference for learning from parents (57%) or at school (45%) whereas older children prefer to learn from their peers (51%).
- A minority of children (21% of 8-11s and 36% of 12-15s) say they are taught about television at school, while seven in ten 8-11s (73%) and four in five 12-15s (84%) say they have lessons about the internet.

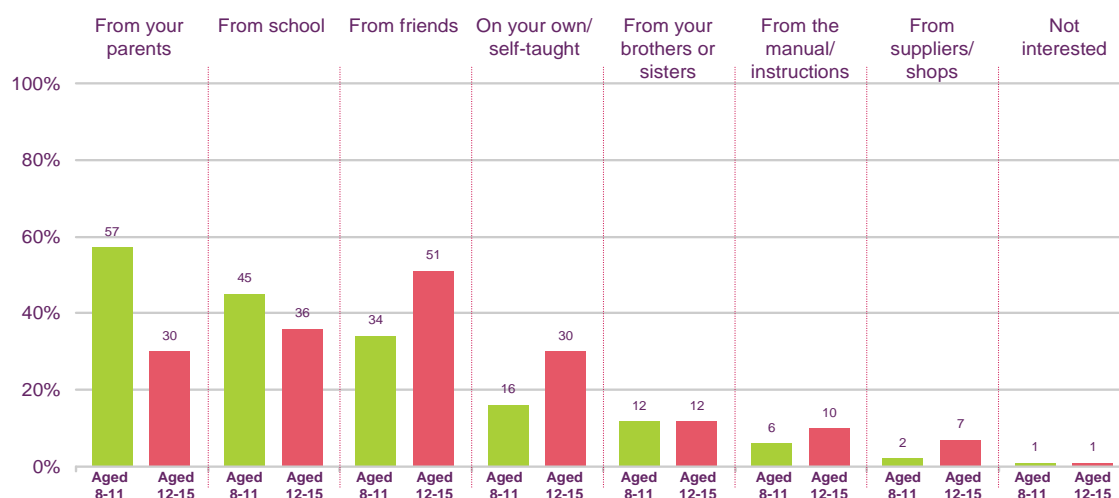
### 6.1 Younger children prefer to learn from parents or at school while older children prefer to learn through friends or on their own

Children aged 8-15 were shown a list of possible ways to learn about digital technology such as the internet, mobile phone and digital television, and were asked to say which, if any, they preferred.

Figure 74 shows that children in each of the age groups prefer to learn through a variety of sources. Children aged 8-11 are more likely than 12-15s to prefer to learn from their parents (57% vs. 30%) or from school (45% vs. 36%).

Girls aged 8-11 are more likely than boys aged 8-11 to prefer to learn at school (48% vs. 41%) while boys of this age would prefer to learn from their siblings (14% vs. 9%). Preferred ways to learn about digital technology do not vary by gender among 12-15s.

**Figure 74: Children's preference for learning about using digital technology – 2009**



QC40 – Which if any, of these ways would you prefer to learn about using the internet, mobile phones, digital TV and so on? (prompted responses, multi-coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 (774 aged 8-11, 781 aged 12-15 in 2009)  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009

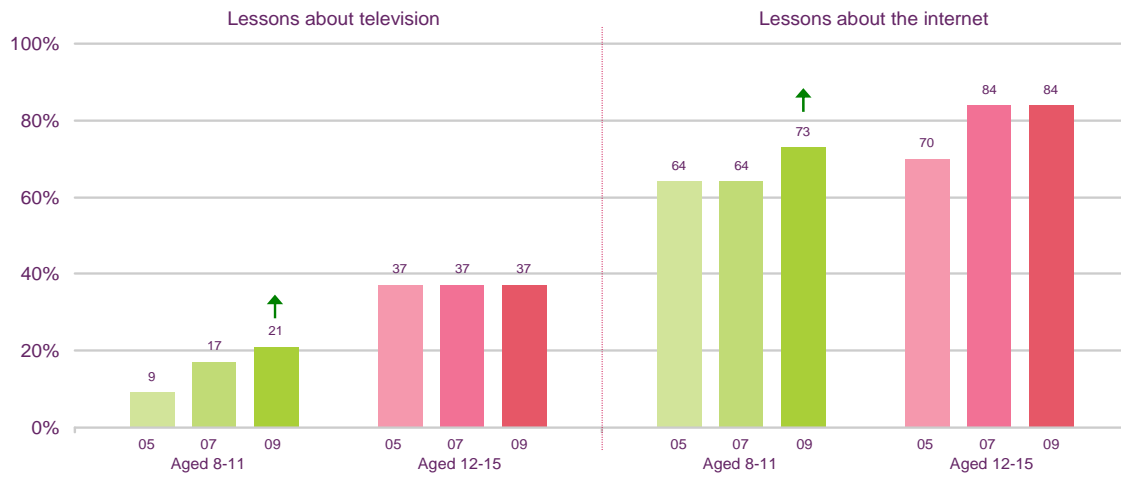
## 6.2 Most children have learned about the internet at school, although fewer have learned about television

Children aged 8-15 were asked whether they have any lessons at school about television or about the internet.

As shown in Figure 75, while children aged 12-15 are more likely than those aged 8-11 to have learned about television at school, this accounts for a minority in each age group (37% vs. 21%). Since 2007 children aged 8-11 are more likely to say they have learned about television at school (21% vs. 17%).

Most children aged 8-15 have experience of learning about the internet at school, with this being more common among 12-15s than 8-11s (84% vs. 73%). Compared to 2007, children aged 8-11 are more likely to have lessons about the internet at school (73% vs. 64%). Children aged 12-15 are, however, more likely to have lessons about the internet at school than they were in 2005 (84% vs. 70%).

**Figure 75: Lessons about digital technology- 2005, 2007 and 2009**



QC41/42/43/44 – Do any of your lessons at school teach you about TV / about the Internet? (prompted responses, single coded)  
 Base: Children aged 8-15 (772 aged 8-11 in 2005, 1354 aged 8-11 in 2007, 774 aged 8-11 in 2009, 764 aged 12-15 in 2005, 1357 aged 12-15 in 2007, 781 aged 12-15 in 2009) – significance testing shows any change between 2007 and 2009  
 Source: Ofcom research, fieldwork carried out by Saville Rossiter-Base in April to May and September to October 2009