



Power of Image

A report into the influence of
images and videos in young
people's digital lives

Foreword



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Digital skills for a digital generation

It is fair to say that in 2017 the internet is powered by images and videos.

From the ever-rising popularity of services like YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram to the pervasiveness of selfies, emojis and memes, while emerging trends like livestreaming and virtual reality look likely to further extend this.

The image and video driven digital world that young people inhabit can magnify the risks and pressures they face, while also offering fun new opportunities for self-expression and creativity.

With virtual reality headsets close to taking off as a family device, there will be a pressing need for children to critically evaluate even the most immersive and engaging content. Meanwhile livestreaming presents new pressures for risk-taking teens who will need even more support to handle impulsivity.

We need to ensure children and young people are:

1. **Critical thinkers:** able to evaluate online content, including images and videos which are particularly powerful influencers, and recognise how the content they are exposed to and the people they interact with can affect their own emotions, beliefs and behaviours.
2. **Kind communicators:** able to understand the feelings of others, with socio-emotional skills developed for a digital age and a passion for creating supportive online communities.
3. **Considered creators:** able to make responsible decisions when creating and sharing content, from photos and videos to conversations and comments.
4. **Helping hands:** able to support their peers and able to seek help from friends, family, school and wider to ensure that concerns are responded to early and effectively.
5. **Digital citizens:** able to 'Be the change' and take an active and empowered role in their online communities by taking action over the negatives and promoting the positives.

These digital and socio-emotional skills are essential now and will become even more important as new issues emerge and technology continues to develop.

We all have a role to play in empowering children with the skills they need, both now and as they embark on an adulthood where digital skills and emerging technologies will play a fundamental role in their lives.

Be the change: unite for a better internet

The Safer Internet Day theme this year sums it up – we have a shared responsibility to make the internet a better place and empower children with key skills. Whether that is schools and the wider children's workforce, or the internet industry, government, charities, policymakers, and parents, carers and children and young people themselves. We all have a role to play.

Executive Summary

For Safer Internet Day 2017, 1,500 young people aged 8-17 years took part in an online survey conducted by ResearchBods and commissioned by the UK Safer Internet Centre. The aim was to explore the role of images and videos in young people's digital lives and the influence this can have on their self-esteem, behaviour and emotions.

The findings reveal how pervasive the use of images and videos is among young people, and demonstrates the positive role this plays as well as the risks and pressures they may face as a result.

Images and videos play a central role in young people's digital lives

The majority of 8-17 year olds surveyed had shared a photo online (84%), rising from 73% of 8-12 year olds to 95% of 13-17 year olds, with 1 in 6 (17%) saying they had done this in the last hour.

8-17 year olds were asked what they had done in the last hour:

- 1 in 6 had shared a photo (17%)
- 1 in 8 had shared a selfie (12%)
- 1 in 25 had livestreamed (4%)
- 1 in 4 had used Snapchat (25%)
- 1 in 3 had used YouTube (31%)
- 1 in 3 had used Facebook (32%)
- 1 in 5 had used Instagram (22%)

Young people are using the power of image to make a positive difference

In the last year, 4 in 5 children aged 8-17 years (80%) said they had been inspired by an image to do something positive.

Over 2 in 3 (67%) said that in the last year they have posted an image or video on the internet for a positive reason, including to support friends (40%), to share something interesting with others (31%) and to encourage others to do something positive (17%).

" I shared videos and images of me with my friend to show her how much I care about her and how much her friendship means to me when she was going through a rough time <3 **"**

Teenage girl from the South East

While many of their experiences are positive, a significant number of young people have negative experiences

- 70% of 8-17s said they have seen images and videos not suitable for their age in the last year.
- Almost 2 in 5 (38%) have received negative comments on a photo they have posted; this can have a real impact on young people's expression, as 2 in 5 (40%) said that they sometimes don't post images because of worries about mean comments. Encouragingly, 80% said they have received positive comments on a photo they posted.
- More than 1 in 5 (22%) of 8-17s said that someone has posted an image or video to bully them.
- Almost half (45%) of 13-17 year olds have seen nude or nearly nude photos of someone they know being shared around their school or local community.

Teen girls are particularly likely to face pressures in our image-driven digital culture

On average young people take 12 selfies before they are happy to post one online, and 43% said they worry about how attractive they look when they share photos online, rising from 35% of boys to 51% of girls.

Almost a third (30%) of young people aged 8-17 years said they have felt sad about their appearance after seeing a particular image or video.

Furthermore, 45% have used a filter in the last year to make themselves look better, with 52% of girls saying they have done this compared to 38% of boys.

The survey identifies that 13-17 year old girls are particularly likely to experience these pressures, with almost two-thirds (61%) of them saying they worry about how attractive they look when sharing photos online and nearly half (47%) of them saying they have felt sad about their appearance after seeing a particular image or video online.

Majority of young people need more support to critically evaluate images and videos online

Images and videos can have a powerful influence on children's self-esteem, beliefs and behaviours, but the majority of young people find it hard to critically evaluate the images and videos they find online.

Despite 70% of 8-17 year olds recognising that images and videos can be misleading and don't always tell the full story, just a third (33%) of young people say they find it easy to check if the images and videos they find online are truthful. Almost half (48%) said they are more likely to trust something has happened if they see an image or video of it.

Many are taking risks with what images and videos they share and who they share them with

Along with critical thinking skills, we need to empower young people to make responsible decisions when creating and sharing content online.

Almost two-thirds of 8-17 year olds (65%) said they have shared an image or video directly with someone they only know online, with over a quarter (27%) saying they have done this in the last day.

Despite this, nearly 2 in 5 (38%) of 8-17s say they worry about losing control of an image they have shared online.

Nearly a third (30%) of 8-17 year olds have shared a photo they wouldn't want their parents or carers to see, rising from 1 in 5 children aged 8-12 years (21%) to 2 in 5 teens (40%).

Young people need support to manage their privacy while sharing images and videos

Over half (56%) of young people aged 8-17 years said they have shared images or videos on a public social media profile, with almost a third (31%) saying that most of the photos they share are on a public profile that can be seen by anyone.

Almost a quarter said they don't know how to control who can see what they post on social media (23%).

Only half of 8-17 year olds (51%) said they always think about what personal information they could be sharing before they post a photo or video online.



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