



Because children deserve
a safe digital world





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Foreword

As we celebrate ten years of Internet Matters, it is with great pride that we share some of our achievements over the last decade. In 2014 we set out as a small team with big ideas and a clear goal: To help parents keep their children safe online.

The digital world has changed a lot since then. Children still use devices like smartphones and tablets to go online, but the places and spaces where they hang out have certainly evolved. Ten years ago TikTok, Fortnite and ChatGPT didn't exist and Instagram had only 200 million users compared to well over 2 billion today. Young people have embraced these developments and use new technologies and platforms to learn, create and socialise. They see no distinction between their online and their offline life, it's just life. As parents, carers and the adults who support them, it's fair to say that we have at times struggled to keep up.

Alongside the enormous benefits the digital world affords young people, its risks have also grown. With more children than ever accessing and sharing content and building relationships online, two thirds of young people tell us that they have had harmful or potentially harmful experiences. So our original goal has never been more important.

Since we launched internetmatters.org with our four founders, BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media O2, we've worked with over 20 industry partners over the last ten years and it is the strength of these relationships that allow us to deliver the work and impact you'll read about in the following pages.

We have evolved as an organisation, expanding our resources to also support professionals working with children, and through our research programme, we now deliver insights to industry, policymakers and the wider sector that represent the thoughts and experiences of real families. These insights also drive our many programmes to improve media literacy skills amongst both parents and professionals, as well as our campaigns to raise awareness of the steps parents can take to protect children and help them have positive experiences online.

The Online Safety Act now makes online platforms more responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their users, especially children, and provides more power to act when they fall short. However, it is still the trusted adult in a child's life who they will turn to when something goes wrong online.

So, as we move into our eleventh year, we continue to stand with parents to help them navigate an ever-changing digital landscape, to give them the tools and tips they need and to remind them to keep talking to their children about how to stay safe. Because we're parents too. And together we can make a difference.

Rachel Huggins
Co-CEO, Internet Matters



Foreword from the Founding Members



For a decade, Internet Matters has played a crucial role in providing parents, carers and professionals with the tools and resources to help children and young people stay safe online. As a founder of Internet Matters, Virgin Media O2 is committed to helping families game, study and connect with friends safely online. This activity is a key part of our sustainability strategy, the Better Connections Plan, and our goal to improve the digital skills of six million people by the end of 2025.

Nicola Green, Chief Corporate Communications & Corporate Affairs Officer, Virgin Media O2



As leaders in the industry, it is our responsibility to ensure young people today have the necessary skills to navigate their lives online. Through our 10-year partnership with Internet Matters we have collaborated on many projects not least of which is EE's Learn programme which includes PhoneSmart, giving young people an opportunity to learn online. Internet Matters has established itself as the go-to organisation for parents to get advice on online safety in the UK, and we look forward to many more opportunities to collaborate.

Marc Allera, CEO, EE, and BT's Consumer division

TalkTalk For Everyone

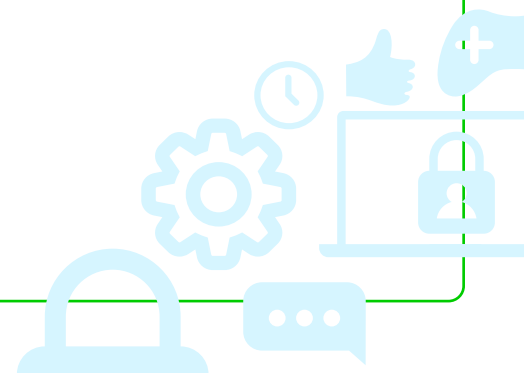
In 2024, the need for high-quality and accessible information about online safety remains as acute as it was ten years ago, if not more – for parents and young people to feel supported in the digital world. As a founding member of Internet Matters, we've championed its remarkable work and clear impact over the past 10 years - testament to the commitment and determination of its staff, members and partners to educate all. This report shows the continued value of collaboration across the whole internet value chain to make a significant impact on the digital wellbeing of children and young people. This work should continue in earnest over the coming years. At TalkTalk we know that providing fast, reliable and affordable connectivity must go hand in hand with a commitment to keeping customers safe online – a continuous piece of work to support over 4m households using the internet every day.

Dame Tristia Harrison DBE, Group CEO, TalkTalk



Over the past 10 years, Internet Matters has established itself as a reliable source of practical advice and support around online safety. As a founding member, Sky is committed to offering our customers the safest online experience. We look forward to building on a decade of progress, ensuring that everyone can enjoy the benefits of the internet with confidence.

Sophia Ahmad, Chief Consumer Officer, Sky



Vision and strategy

We inspire leading organisations to create together a future where children and young people are prepared to benefit safely from the impact of connected technology.

Our Impact Goals are based on three themes

Education

Ensuring every adult supporting a child, young person or vulnerable young person, whether a parent, professional or carer, has the skills to protect children from online harm by supporting children's media literacy, safety and wellbeing online.

Influence

Recognised as an organisation which accurately represents the views and experiences of parents and children in the public domain, and influences policy makers with reliable insight.

Collaboration

Providing organisations with a platform through which they can deliver and support programmes to ensure young people have media literacy skills to remain safe and well online.

We look to achieve impact across four audiences:



Parents & Carers



Professionals



Policymakers



Industry



With the overall aim of:
More positive action being taken to support children's safety and wellbeing online

Our partners and supporters

The work we do cannot be achieved without our partners and supporters, many of whom have given their consistent commitment for the full ten years since Internet Matters was formed.

Their support and vision of creating an industry-wide coalition has allowed us to work with parents and carers, professionals, policymakers and industry to support children's online safety and wellbeing.



Thanks also to



A decade of impact

From campaigns and partnerships to supporting professionals and vulnerable young people we're proud to have served the online safety & digital wellbeing needs of families across the UK and beyond.

1

A destination website

internetmatters.org has become a destination for parents, carers and teachers, with traffic **increasing from 600k visits in 2014 to 11m visits in 2023.**

2

Impactful campaigns

Our campaigns have **featured across multiple different media**, focussing on a wide range of online safety and digital wellbeing issues, with a common theme of supporting parents to take positive action.

3

Strong partnerships

Internet Matters' partners are **instrumental in evolving and developing** our resources, and getting our message heard.

4

Support for vulnerable young people

Our work to support the most vulnerable in society, who are more likely to experience online harms, has included **research and bespoke resources to help navigate a digital world.**

5

Grant awards

Over the years, we've been fortunate to receive grant funding from public bodies and private organisations to **fund research initiatives and other important work.**

6

Personal safety advice

My Family's Digital Toolkit was developed in response to research findings, and offers **personalised advice to support children** as they grow up in a digital world.

7

Understanding digital wellbeing

Our **unique Digital Wellbeing Index delivers annual insights** into the effect of digital technology on children's wellbeing, including both negative and positive impacts.

8

Supporting professionals

Wide ranging support for professionals includes **resources and training for Foster Carers, a schools information hub and Digital Matters**, our award-winning online learning platform for primary schools.

9

Increasing advocacy

Internet Matters leads and actively participates in many industry initiatives and working groups, and has **twice been invited to give evidence** to Parliamentary Select Committees.

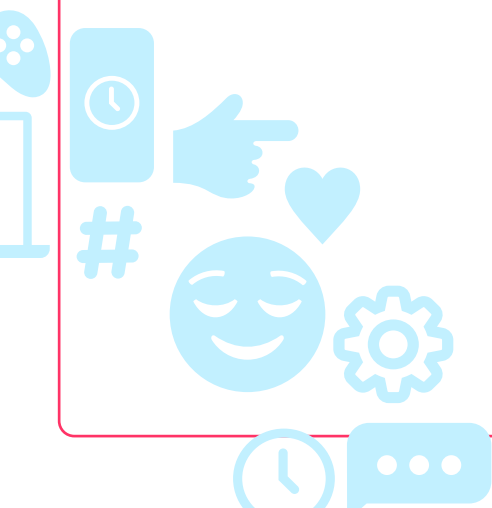
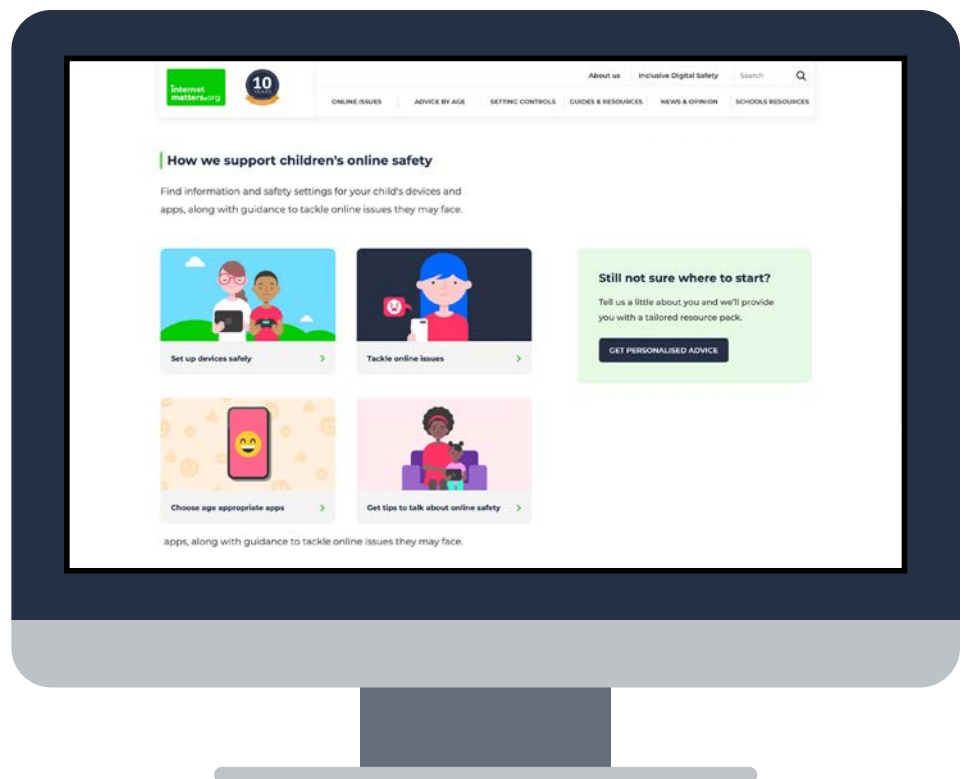
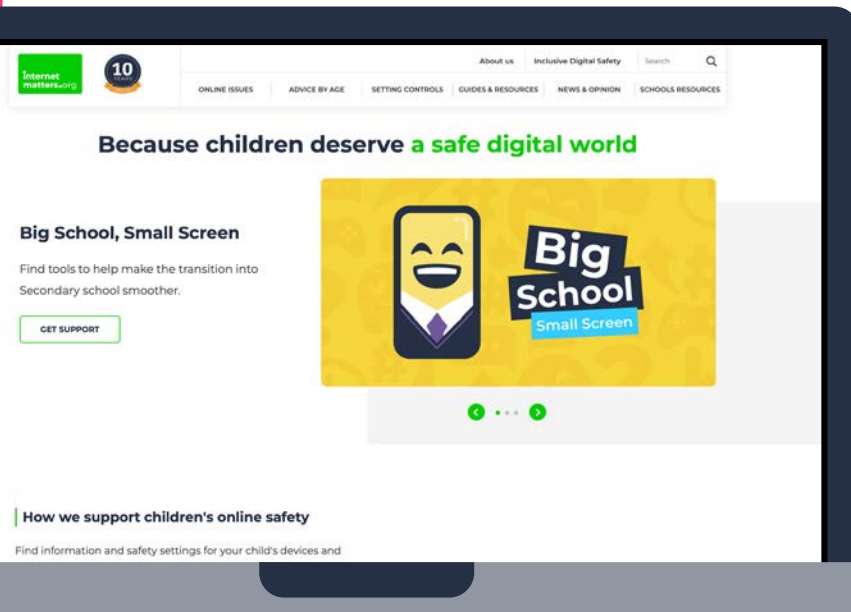
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Our theory of change

We measure our success by actions taken to help keep children safe online, and we are there alongside parents, carers and everyone looking after children **every step of the way.**

A destination website

www.internetmatters.org



“I was finding it hard to know where to start but this [website] really helped me focus in on what I need to know and what I need to talk to my kids about”

Parent, UK

Internetmatters.org has and always will be the cornerstone of our work. It’s where it all started. We launched with just a handful of pages focussed on supporting parents and carers to set controls on the most common connected devices and platforms and educating them about what their children might encounter online. Since then, its growth has been phenomenal.

Wide ranging content

Our step-by-step guides to understanding parental controls and privacy settings are still the most visited of all our pages and as the volume of apps that children have access to has increased, our resources have kept pace, year on year. They have been joined by comprehensive guides to online issues from cyberbullying to identifying fake news and activities from gaming and social media to online money management. Our website is also home to our suite of research reports, and a place to hear the voice of digital safety experts and parents sharing their own stories.

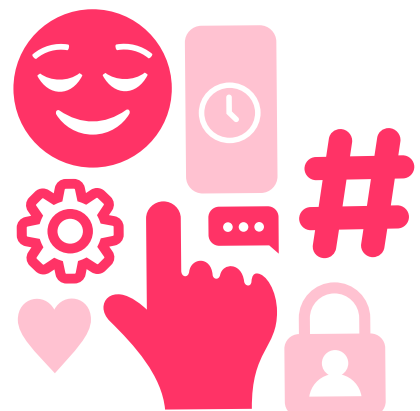
Acknowledging that vulnerable children are unfortunately more likely to experience harm online, we’ve expanded our range of resources to include advice for professionals working with children, providing tailored resources to ensure we meet their differing needs and those of the children they support.

We’ve also embraced the need for more interactive resources for parents and children to do together to make learning about online safety a shared and more engaging experience.

Accessible & engaging

In the last five years the website has become fully accessible for all users and available in 12 languages, allowing us to expand our reach across the globe with more than two thirds of our 11m+ website visitors now coming to us from outside the UK.

But most importantly, it drives action. 9 in 10 parents and carers who visit our site go on to take some form of action to keep their children safe online, whether its reviewing privacy settings or having a conversation. We’re continually striving to make our website comprehensive, relevant and give our users practical advice on how they can make a difference. We couldn’t be more proud of that achievement.



Impactful campaigns

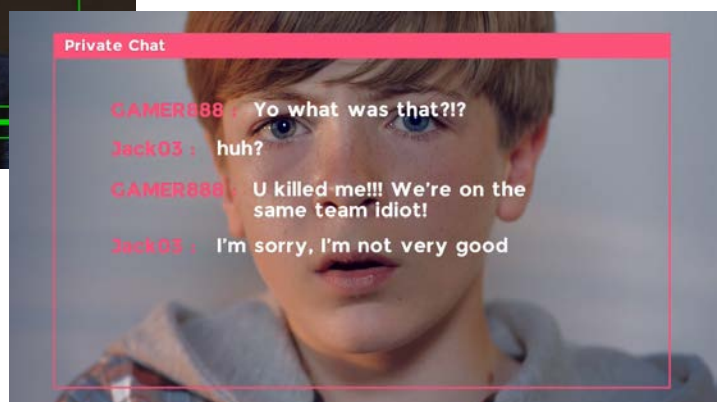
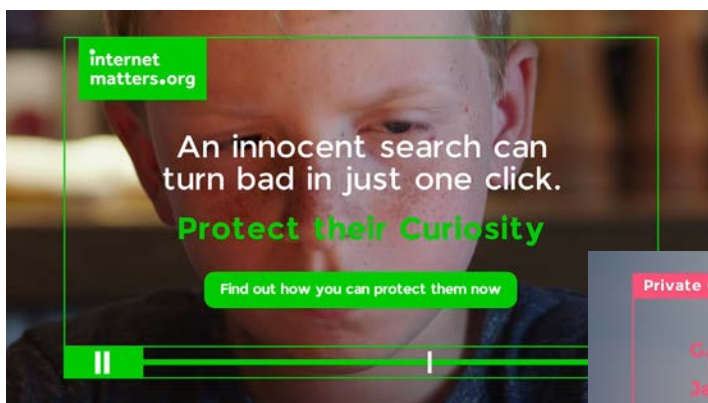
Encouraging parents to take positive action to support their children's safety and wellbeing online is a fundamental part of our work and we typically deliver a new campaign each year. We've covered many different online safety and digital wellbeing issues, but the common theme running through our campaigns is to reassure parents that we are there to hold their hand and cheer them on whilst they take positive action to help keep their children safe and well online.

A key factor that helps our campaigns have meaningful impact is the support of our partners in maximising their visibility. We particularly would like to thank Sky for providing pro bono TV advertising and Meta for pro bono advertising on their Facebook and Instagram platforms.

Protect Their Curiosity

In 2015 we launched Protect Their Curiosity - four videos that highlighted the issues of sexting, cyberbullying while gaming, viewing sexual content and viewing violent content online. Uncomfortable viewing for some, it was important to show how a child's innocent curiosity can turn into a distressing experience in as little as one click.

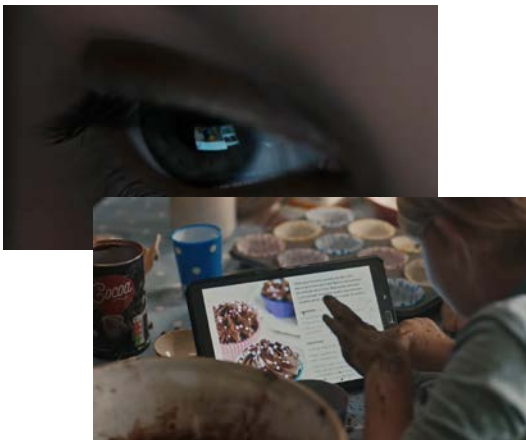
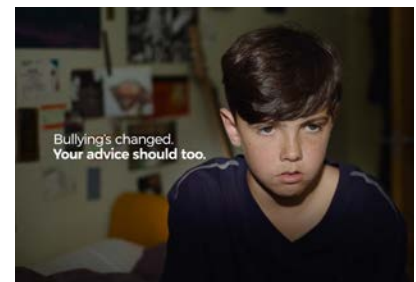
- **More than 1.5 million people** saw the videos in the first two weeks
- **Over half a million people** visited the 'Back to School' advice page
- **Over 6,000 parents** downloaded the 'Back to School' advice guide
- The campaign **won Gold at the DMA Awards, 2015**



Sticks & Stones

Then in 2016, our Sticks & Stones campaign urged parents to recognise that ‘Bullying has changed. Your advice should too’, emphasising how trapped cyberbullying can make children feel and the importance of talking to them.

- **Over 1.8m watched** the cyberbullying ‘Sticks & Stones’ video
- **67% of visitors** said they would talk to their child within one month
- **365,000 people visited** the new cyberbullying resource centre that month
- The campaign **won Silver at the DMA Awards, 2016**



Left to Their Own Devices

Back in 2019 we focussed on digital wellbeing and screentime, encouraging parents to find the right balance between online and offline activities. Left to Their Own Devices demonstrated the opposite ends of screen time usage, from isolated mindless viewing to creating shared experiences.

- The campaign was **viewed 2.2m times**
- Our social media activity **reached 8.7m people**

Online Facts of Life

In 2020 we created a campaign around real families talking about their own experiences in an attempt to normalise the conversations around online safety, to support parents to feel less overwhelmed and alone.

- **6 million+ video views** of our campaign
- **9 million+ parents reached** through our channels with 225 pieces of press coverage with **over 1.4m views**
- **390,000 parents visited** our dedicated hub of advice



Strong partnerships

The work we do cannot be achieved without our partners and supporters, many of whom have given their consistent commitment since the start of Internet Matters.

Over the last 10 years, we have been fortunate enough to work with leading organisations whose dedication to online safety has allowed us to make a significant impact in the lives of families and schools.



International gaming resources

Supercell joined us as partners in 2019 and together we collaborated to provide families with new advice and resources to help their children navigate the mobile gaming world safely. Not only did we create a new hub for families, but the gaming resources were translated into a range of different languages including English, French, German, Mandarin and Spanish. This enabled our resources to be accessible internationally and reach Supercell's global audience of gamers – unlocking a wider demographic of families to benefit from our free and expert resources.



Find The Fake & Find Your Balance

In partnership with Google, we collaborated on a project in 2021 in a post Covid world, to help families develop the tools to tackle fake news and misinformation. We worked with Professor William Watkins (Brunel University) to create a new hub offering top tips, resources and expert advice on the issue including an interactive 'Find the Fake' quiz. Over 150,000 people have interacted with the resources and over 75,000 have completed the quiz.

In 2023 we worked on Google's 'Find Your Balance' campaign to encourage conversations between parents and children where they could talk about online safety and wellbeing. The campaign ran on social media as well as placements across busy tube stations and featured on the Google stands at the Labour and Conservative party conferences. These campaigns helped raise awareness of Internet Matters and Google's safety features.



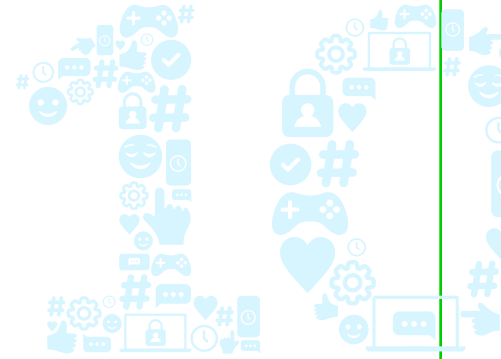
Demystifying Teens' Online Interactions

Research was commissioned by Roblox in 2021 to develop a greater understanding of how teens thrive online, and how they can be better supported. We found that whilst some teens were keen on creating content, they felt inhibited by their feelings of judgement from others. The majority of teens prioritised creating and joining online communities with other users with similar interests, as these online friendships enhance their feeling of belonging. Interestingly, teens thought more involvement from their parents would bring a better understanding of the benefits of their online lives. This work enabled us to demonstrate the positive and negative outcomes for teens engaging in the online world to policymakers.

Electronic Arts

Play Together/Play Smart

We worked with Electronic Arts to encourage parents to get familiar with the safety measures they can take to ensure their children are playing video games both smartly and safely. This included a new hub dedicated to providing parents with the tools and advice - supported by both football legend Ian Wright and comedian Katherine Ryan, to help raise awareness at launch in 2021. The hub highlights the simple steps parents can take to get involved, set boundaries, and support their children's development when gaming. We were able to connect over 600,000 parents to our resources and 55% parents who saw the campaign acted by switching on parental controls.



SAMSUNG

The Online Together Project

We launched 'The Online Together Project' in 2022, co-created with Samsung Electronics UK – an initiative that was designed to foster a positive and inclusive online environment for young people. Our first module focussed on gender stereotypes, and in 2023 we launched a new module: tackling online hate. Our age-appropriate and topical interactive tool offers young people, parents and teachers the opportunity to test potential responses to situations they may come across online and to encourage conversations with parents and children that help further their understanding of the topic and where to turn for help.



Intentional use: How agency supports young people's wellbeing in a digital world

Our report on intentional use, supported by TikTok, explores the importance of agency for young people, based on research across five European countries (including the UK) in 2022. It presents the views of teens and parents on what agency online looks like, how far they currently feel in control of their online lives and how they can be supported to have greater agency online. We found that whilst teens want to feel in control of their online behaviours and habits, in reality this is a challenge. Most teens do not use existing tools and features to manage their time online. As a result of this research, TikTok introduced new tools aimed at promoting positive digital habits.



Little Digital Helps

In 2023 we partnered with Tesco Mobile to develop and launch the "Little Digital Helps Toolkit", a comprehensive resource to assist parents and carers in managing the potential risks their children may encounter online. The toolkit asks parents a series of questions about their children's online habits, after which they are provided with a bespoke toolkit for their family. This provides a one-stop shop for all the things parents need to set controls and privacy settings on new and old devices that their children use, with plenty of advice on how to deal with and discuss online risks. Over 6,000 people have visited and engaged with the tool, with a 65% completion rate.



Alexa Utterances

We worked with Amazon Kids to develop a suite of sensitive utterances and responses integrated into Alexa (smart speaker) in 2023, to engage families in conversations around online safety best practice. Through Amazon Kids' support, we were able to utilise their insights to create and inform over 20 utterances that cater to both parents and children. In addition, Internet Matters were the official launch partner of Amazon's digital family well-being hub in the UK in 2023. Working closely together, we provided the latest resources with tips and practical applications that featured across their hub.

Support for vulnerable young people

It is important that the views and experiences of vulnerable children (such as those with health conditions, care experience or free school meals status) are not forgotten amongst broader efforts to keep children safe online. So in 2019 Internet Matters commenced a programme of work focused precisely on the needs of these children.

Building the evidence base

We partnered with Adrienne Katz from Youthworks and Dr Aiman El Asam from the University of Kingston on two research studies to explore these issues in greater depth. The first report, 'Vulnerable Children in a Digital World', found that vulnerable children were at a higher risk of experiencing specific online harms. The second report, 'Refuge and Risk', built on these findings through an even larger survey of 6,500 vulnerable children. Both studies also pointed to the considerable benefits afforded by digital technology to these children.

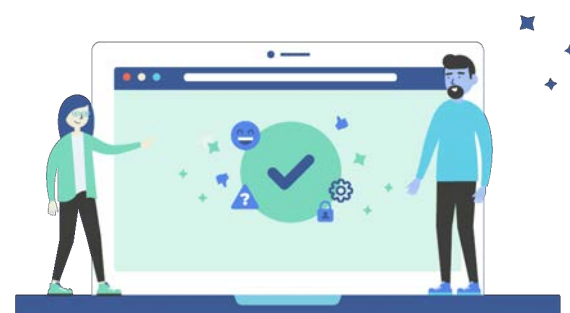
Our later report 'Changing Conversations', supported by Huawei, found that there was often a tendency for some education professionals to restrict vulnerable children's access to digital technology, in order to prevent them experiencing harm, ultimately leaving children ill-prepared to deal with challenges online when they do occur.

Bespoke resources

Our research showed that vulnerable children – and the adults supporting them – needed bespoke support. In partnership with Facebook, we developed 'Connecting Safely Online' – the first hub of its kind aimed at supporting parents, carers and young people with additional learning needs. The hub provided vital and comprehensive resources for both parents and children that were co-created to be widely accessible for those with SEND. Over the last year almost 100k people have visited the hub with our guide for children to manage 'chatting to strangers' being the most visited resource.

This was later followed by the 'Inclusive Digital Safety' hub, in collaboration with South West Grid for Learning which also supported children with care experience and those from the LGBTQ+ community. More recently we have also developed 'Fostering Digital Skills', a training course for foster carers, and BeeSmart a programme supporting care leavers in Manchester

Connecting
Safely Online,
supported by:



Influencing policy and practice

Finally, we have used our expertise in this area to influence policymakers and practitioners to provide greater and better support for vulnerable children – for example, through our leadership of the UKCIS Vulnerable Users Working Group. It has been positive to see Ofcom and DSIT (formerly DCMS) focus on vulnerable and hard-to-reach users in their media literacy strategies in recent years.

Grant awards



Department
for Education

Make a Noise

In November 2016 Internet Matters, the Anti-Bullying Alliance and Tootoot were awarded a grant from DfE to pilot an anonymous reporting tool for schools where young people could report any issues around bullying. Training for staff and online support resources for both staff and pupils complemented the reporting tool. The programme received a grant extension in 2018 and was successful in improving outcomes for those children that reported.



Home Office

Inclusive Digital Safety

In 2020 the Home Office provided £220,000 to South West Grid for Learning and Internet Matters to develop a new online hub to decrease the risk of online abuse perpetrated against children with vulnerabilities, including children with SEND, LGBTQ+ children, and looked after children. The hub provided support for vulnerable children themselves, their parents and carers, and the frontline professionals who work with them to keep them safe online, including from child sexual abuse.



Department for
Science, Innovation,
& Technology

Bee Smart

In January 2024, we concluded our year-long pilot project, Bee Smart, funded by DSIT and in collaboration with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the University of East Anglia (UEA). The project aimed to boost the media literacy of care leavers and the professionals who support them via a peer-to-peer approach. Following the project's conclusion, we released an evaluation report with the key learnings, compiled by Dr. Simon P Hammond from UEA.



NOMINET

Fostering Digital Skills

2021 saw Internet Matters partnering with The Fostering Network, the UK's leading foster care charity, and Dr Simon P Hammond from UEA for the award of a grant from Nominet to develop Fostering Digital Skills – an online and face to face training course for foster carers supporting children and young people. Content was developed through a co-creation process that involved foster carers and children themselves.

Prevention of self-generated CSAM

With funding from Nominet, we partnered with Praesidio Safeguarding to develop and test new strategies aimed at preventing sexual image-sharing among 11-13-year-olds. Through the research we worked with panels of young people, parents and professionals to explore the relative strengths of existing prevention messages. We also trialled innovative approaches to deliver these messages, including an interactive game and an on-platform 'nudge' technique.

Personalised safety advice

We know it can be hard for parents to find the right information to stay on top of their child's internet safety. Technology is always changing, and it often feels confusing and overwhelming. Parents told us they needed help to navigate it all – that's why we created My Family's Digital Toolkit.

Using insights from parents gained through our Digital Wellbeing research, the toolkit seeks to remove the complexity and provide time-poor parents with the key information they need to know. By answering a few simple questions, parents can get everything they need, all in one place, to support their child as they grow up in

the digital world. We provide tailored content depending on their child's age, what they do online and any concerns their parent has. It's all packaged up in a simple toolkit of personalised advice and tips that they can keep coming back to. We also send regular email updates so parents can stay on top of any changes or new tools to be aware of.

*To date, **almost 700k parents** have visited the My Family's Digital Toolkit webpage*



Understanding digital wellbeing

Too often, the impact of digital technology on children's lives has been discussed in overly simplistic terms, without acknowledgement of the diversity of children's online experiences.

In 2021, Internet Matters sought to establish a richer, more nuanced understanding of children's digital lives. Working with the University of Leicester, we developed a new framework of children's digital wellbeing, setting out both the positive and negative impacts of technology across four dimensions: social, emotional, developmental and physical.

This framework has since provided the foundation for our annual Digital Wellbeing Index research. Using a household survey of 1,000 children and their parents, we have measured children's digital wellbeing for the past three years.

Some findings have remained consistent across the three years of research. For example, the data has continually pointed to the importance of a supportive family environment: an area we explored further in 'Digital Parenting', in partnership with Google. Another consistent theme has been that those who report the most

significant benefits online often report the most significant challenges. This includes vulnerable children. Our 'Digital wellbeing on a budget' report explored the experiences of children receiving free school meals in particular.

The latest Digital Wellbeing Index report, published in January 2024, revealed a rise in the positive developmental, emotional and social experiences of children. However it also showed that two-thirds of children continue to report experiencing harm online, and that an increasing proportion of parents felt that digital technology was negatively impacting family time.

One of the most concerning findings from this year's research was the fact that teenage girls are more at risk of many of the harms of being online, including harassment and abuse. Our follow up report, 'So standard it's not noteworthy', suggested that for some teenage girls, and even some parents, these harmful experiences are becoming normalised.

We look forward to year four of the Digital Wellbeing Index, which will be published in early 2025.



Supporting professionals

Although much of our work supports parents and families directly, we recognise that it is often frontline staff in schools across the country that are dealing with not only teaching young people about online safety but managing harmful issues that have happened to children online.

In May 2022 we launched a dedicated space on our website for schools so that they could easily get access to resources designed to both support them and to be shared with their school community, and over the years more than 5.5k teachers have made use of the school resources hub.

The cornerstone of our resources for schools is Digital Matters, and in addition we have developed a series of plays for school children with PlusNet, a TikTok playbook for professionals and delivered training for staff in children's residential care homes with support from Ofcom.



Digital Matters

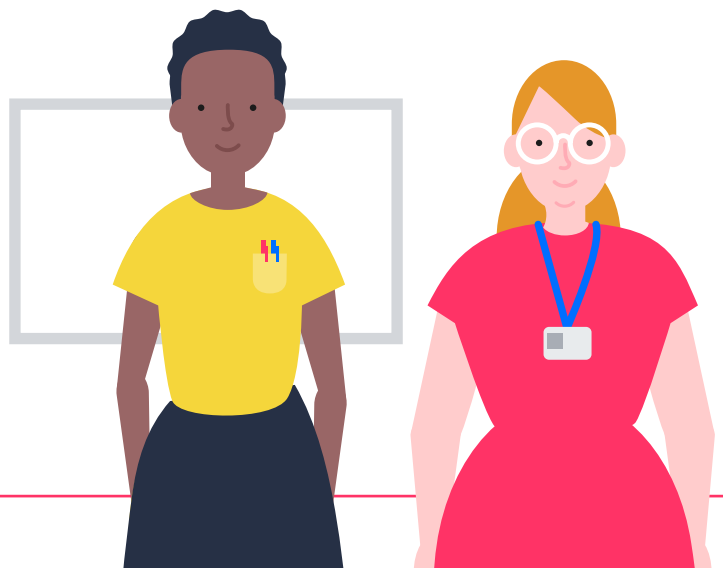
In a unique sponsorship agreement with ESET we developed a free interactive learning platform for children in the final stages of primary school, designed to teach media literacy skills and how to stay safe online. The platform is divided into two sections: Interactive Learning and Once Upon Online. Students start with Interactive Learning, led by their teacher, where they learn about the concept of staying safe online through small quiz-like activities and class discussion. Next, they go onto Once Upon Online, an interactive story, either in the classroom or with support at home. As they guide their character through realistic choices, they learn about the consequences of both positive and negative choices and when it's time to get support.

Over 4,000 schools have registered with Digital Matters, and we are proud that it was the winner of the Digital Leaders Impact Award 2023 – Education and a finalist at both the Bett 2023 awards and Teach Primary Awards.



Taking Care Online – Staff Training

In 2024 we were delighted that Ofcom chose to commission Internet Matters to deliver media literacy training to staff supporting children in residential care homes. The training was developed from the Fostering Digital Skills course for foster carers, which had been created previously in partnership with The Fostering Network and funded by Nominet. The course contained four modules to help carers understand young people's relationship with technology, how to manage risk, how to nurture their relationships around tech, and how to develop digital skills for the future. Over 150 staff have been through the training which is CPD accredited, and we look forward to sharing the full evaluation of the programme in the coming months.



Advocacy

UK Council for Internet Safety

The UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) was re-formed in 2018 with a new Executive Board, which Internet Matters was invited to join, enabling us to represent the views and experiences of families to three government ministers. Additionally, Internet Matters formed a new UKCIS working group focused on vulnerable users online, which regularly meets and has published a suite of resources aimed at improving online safety support for children in care.

UK Council for Internet Safety

The UK Council for Internet



HRH Duke of Cambridge's Cyberbullying Taskforce

Internet Matters played a key role in 2017 in the then HRH Duke of Cambridge's Cyberbullying Taskforce which convened industry and sector experts to develop an action plan to support and prevent cyberbullying amongst young people. Led by The Royal Foundation, the taskforce developed a set of commitments for industry to step up to, one of which was the Stop Speak Support campaign – a youth led code of conduct to provide guidance on what to do when they witness cyberbullying.



Making Sense of Media

Internet Matters' expertise was recognised in 2022

when Ofcom confirmed our appointment to the Advisory Panel for their Making Sense of Media programme of work. The Panel provides insight to support and challenge Ofcom's thinking. It acts both as a sounding board and critical friend, advising on and challenging their media literacy work. The Panel also helps connect Ofcom to the right expertise at the right time, so their work is informed by best practice across the sector.



Government Media Literacy Taskforce

In March 2022, The Government established the Media Literacy Taskforce made up of 18 cross-sector experts, including Internet Matters. The taskforce was charged with exploring the challenges relating to engaging 'hard to reach' citizens and identifying ways of tackling those challenges. Membership of the taskforce has enabled Internet Matters to play a key role in influencing government policy in this area, driving improvements in media literacy education.



Select Committees

We have had the privilege of being asked to give evidence at two House of Commons Select Committees. The first in 2018 was the Science and Technology Committee for its report "The impact of social media and screen-use on young people's health". More recently in 2023, we were asked to contribute to the Education Select Committee for their inquiry into the impact of screentime on children. At both we were able to cite our own independent research which underpins our work at Internet Matters



Digital Poverty Alliance

The Digital Poverty Alliance has a mission to end digital poverty by 2030. Bringing together organisations to collaborate on sustainable action against digital exclusion, they highlight that 26% of young people don't have access to a laptop or similar device which can have a dramatic impact on their education and career prospects. We have been delighted to be a Community Board member and part of their National Delivery Committee since the DPA was founded in 2021. We provide online safety advice for projects such as Tech4Families through which they donate devices to families in need.

Theory of Change

As we developed as an organisation and our audiences grew, we recently took some time to reflect on the impact we wanted to achieve. In 2023, working with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations we developed a Theory of Change for Internet Matters, seeking to clarify our impact goals for parents and carers, professionals, policymakers and industry and how we would measure our success in achieving them.

It was a thought-provoking process which really took us back to our core purpose. Regardless of the audience, our overall impact is to ensure:

More positive action is taken to support children's safety and wellbeing online

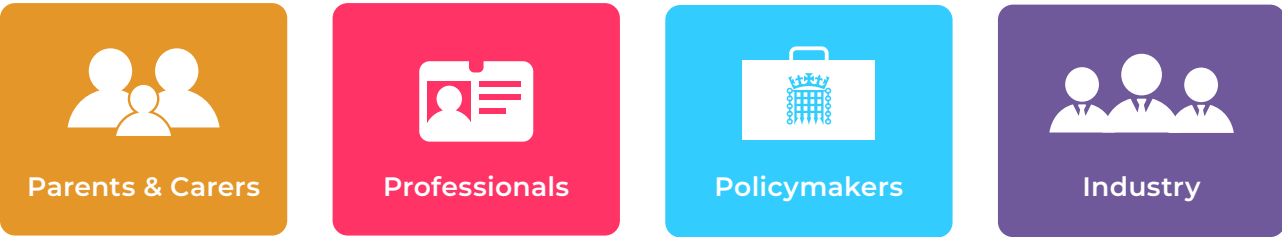
Whether you're a parent, teacher, social worker, civil servant or digital product designer, there is action we can all take to make the digital world a safer place for children to be, to benefit from and to thrive. This action obviously comes in different forms and we now have a clear framework to understand how our work contributes towards delivering this action leading to positive change for children and young people.



“9 in 10 parents and carers who visit our site go on to take some form of action to keep their children safe online.”

Evolving our brand and purpose

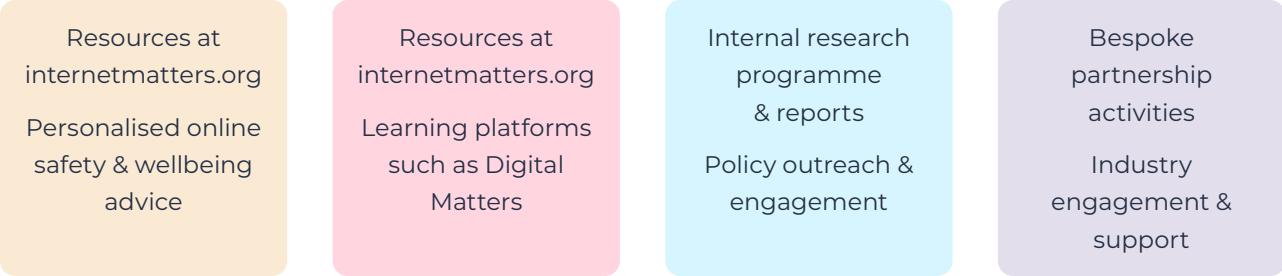
Stakeholders



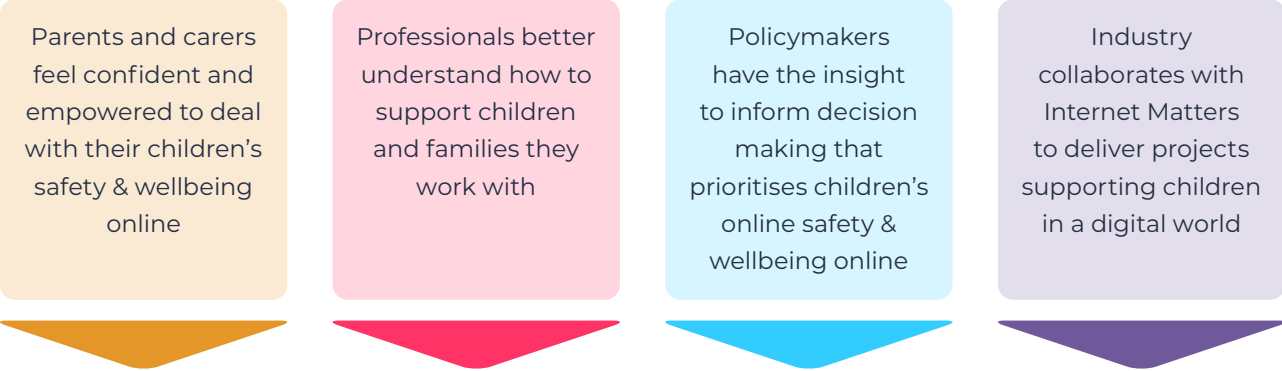
Research & Insight

Content & Communications

Activities



Outcomes



More positive action is taken to support children's safety and wellbeing online

23/24 – the year in numbers



11m

Global website visits



3.2m

UK website visits



1000

Media mentions
across broadcast,
print and digital

18

Partners



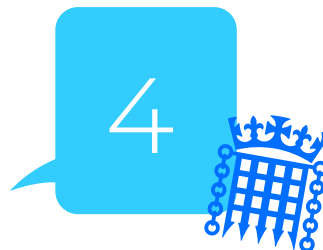
Global visitors who
actively engaged
with our content

98k



Community
engagement

4



Parliamentary
mentions

8



Published
reports

Helping parents to take positive action

What parents say about internetmatters.org



92%

It gives **practical steps** I can take to help keep my child safe online

95%

of parents **feel better prepared** to handle internet safety issues that their children may experience

94%

of parents say they are likely to recommend **Internet Matters as a trusted resource**

What parents do after visiting internetmatters.org



38%

Talked to my children **about being safe online more frequently**



34%

Spent **more time learning** about online safety



30%

Reviewed my child's online safety settings e.g. privacy settings on social media



29%

Set some rules/ boundaries about what my child/ children do online

23/24 Highlights

In the past year, Internet Matters has continued to make an impact in the online safety world, through our new and unique collaborations within the industry, pioneering research and campaigns and resources to support parents and professionals.

2023 also marked the year we introduced our new brand platform “Together, we’ve got this”. Starting with a new manifesto, we wanted to create a platform that shows parents, carers and teachers that we understand the digital world changes as fast as kids grow and that keeping on top of children’s safety can feel never ending. It acts as an articulation of our commitment to not only give tools and advice, but the encouragement and support to keep talking, keep learning, and keep updating to ensure every child stays safe and thrives in a digital world.

Our partners remain key to our success, and in 23/24 we’ve worked with our partners in a multitude of ways, from staff training with John Lewis to the Tesco Mobile ‘Little Digital Helps’ toolkit and working with Samsung to create a new interactive module focused on Online Hate. Notably, our Christmas ‘Festive Fortnight’

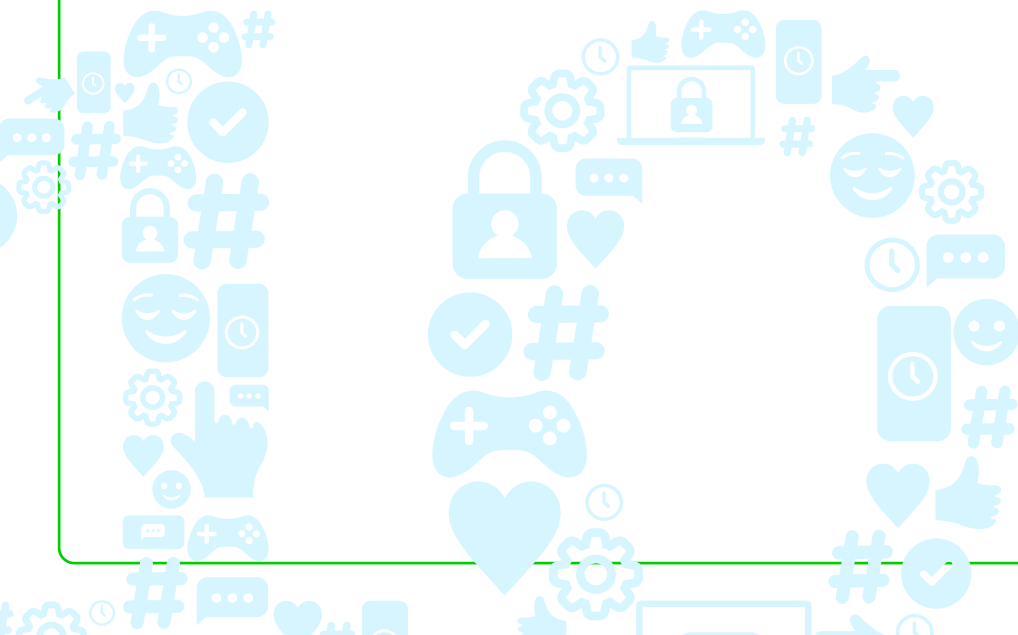
campaign, supported by 12 of our partners, truly showcased this collective commitment to fostering a safe digital world for children.

Additionally in 23/24 we partnered with Ofcom to deliver interactive online training to frontline workers in children’s residential care homes; this work is especially important as vulnerable children are more likely to experience online harms.

Reaching children through schools continues to be an area of focus, and our Digital Matters platform for KS2 primary pupils saw incredible growth during the year, including the launch of two new modules.

We have continued our focus on insight, and 23/24 was an unprecedented year in terms of the volume of research conducted, with seven research reports published including our annual Digital Wellbeing Index.

Our growing profile with the media, and in government and industry circles, highlights our critical role in helping to shape discourse and policy on matters of online safety for children and we look forward to continuing this work in the coming year and beyond.



Our manifesto

We're not just Internet Matters, we're parents too.
And to everyone that's trying to protect children, we get it.
It's hard to stay on top of online safety.
When their digital life is their private life.
And they don't want to talk, they just want to escape online.
When there's yet another social platform to get your head round.

The internet, and its dangers, change as fast as kids grow.
Only by keeping at it can we ensure young people are safe.
But together we can make a difference.

As parents ourselves, we're here to support, advise and cheer you on.
We'll walk you through every privacy setting and new technology.
Give you the tools and tips you need.
And remind you just how important it is to keep talking.
However tricky, however awkward.

You've got this, and we've got you.

Internet Matters. Together, we've got this.

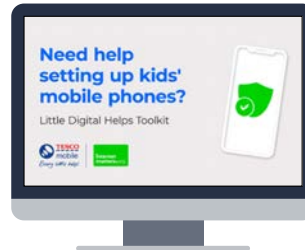


April – July 2023



Staff Training

We collaborated with John Lewis to address parental concerns around internet safety for their children when using electronic devices. Together we developed a comprehensive summer training programme for John Lewis Partners. We hosted two customised webinars for all 38 John Lewis store Product Specialists, enhancing staff understanding of safety settings on various devices and guiding them on using our resources to assist customers.



Little Digital Helps Toolkit

Tesco Mobile and Internet Matters developed the “Little Digital Helps Toolkit”, a new resource to help parents manage the potential risks their children may encounter online. The toolkit provides a one-stop shop for everything parents need to set controls and privacy settings on mobile devices that their children use, with plenty of advice on how to deal with and discuss online risks.

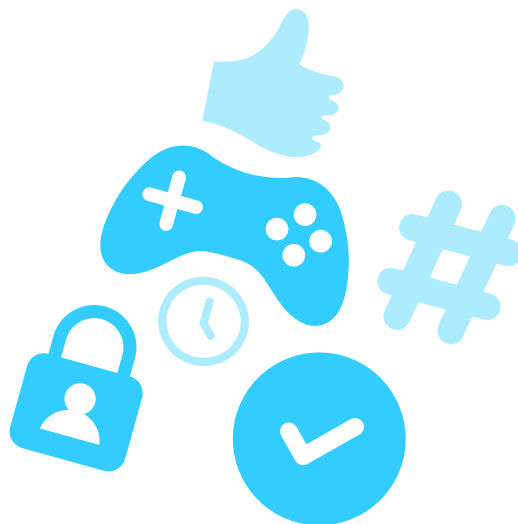
APR
23

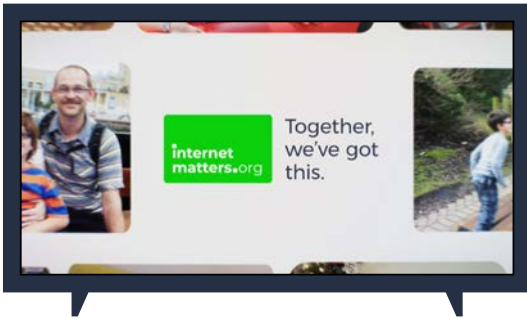
MAY
23



Digital Matters

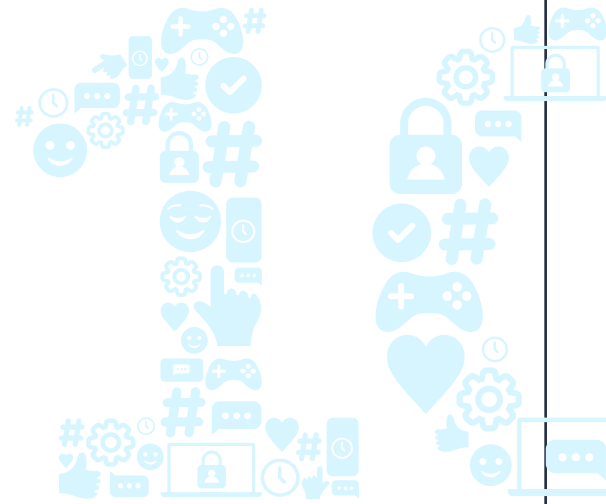
We launched “Introduction to Online Research,” a Digital Matters lesson aimed at empowering teachers to foster children’s critical thinking on copyright and online ownership. This resource equips children with skills to use online tools like generative AI to support their learning.





Together, We've Got This

Our brand platform, "Together, we've got this" launched on-site, TV, digital and social. It recognises that the digital world changes as fast as kids grow and that keeping on top of a child's safety feels never-ending. It reflects our commitment to offer advice, support, and encouragement for anyone working with children.



JUN
23



Online Hate

Creating in partnership with Samsung, we launched our second module of 'The Online Together Project' focussing on Tackling Online Hate. Aimed at parents, teachers and young people, the interactive tool encourages conversations and empowers young people to tackle online hate and challenge negative behaviours in their digital spaces.

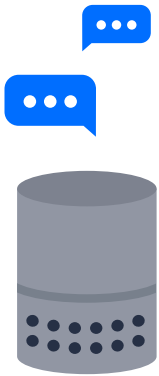
JUL
23



Decrypting Crypto: Exploring Children's Engagement with Cryptoassets

Nearly a quarter of UK teens aged 13 to 16 have either already invested in cryptocurrency or are planning to. This report summarises how children engage with cryptoassets, along with early evidence of the opportunities and risks. It presents new research into what families think and feel about cryptoassets, based on a nationally representative survey.

August – November 2023



Alexa utterances

We created a suite of over 20 sensitive utterances and responses to be integrated into Alexa for the UK. These were designed to engage with both parents and children to inform conversations around online safety best practice and promote Internet Matters as a source of trusted online safety advice.



Yubo join as a partner

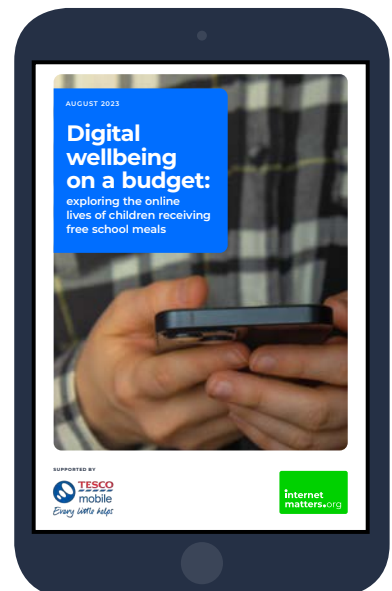
Yubo – a live social discovery app - joined Internet Matters as a partner in 2023, helping to drive their commitment to empowering Gen Z with the tools and knowledge to thrive in a digital world. Together, we are working to demonstrate how users on their app can navigate safely and confidently, understanding the tools to support and enable them to do so.

AUG
23



Digital Wellbeing on a Budget: exploring the online lives of children receiving free school meals

Using data from our Digital Wellbeing Index, this research explored the online lives of children receiving free school meals. Unsurprisingly, it found that these children have less access to technology than their peers. But it also found that they are more likely to experience harm too, pointing to the need for more support for this group.





***“It’s really easy to go down that path”*: Young people’s experiences of online misogyny and image-based abuse**

This report combined quantitative and qualitative research methods to explore young people’s experiences of online misogyny, including how harmful views may translate into attitudes and behaviours. We found that prominent online misogynist Andrew Tate holds an outsized influence among teenage boys and younger dads.



Internet Matters gives evidence to Select Committee

We had the privilege of giving evidence at a House of Commons Education Select Committee Inquiry into the impact of screentime on children. Citing our own research, we highlighted the importance of strengthening the link between schools and parents when it comes to screen time and digital wellbeing.

SEP
23

OCT
23

NOV
23

Theory of Change

Understanding and quantifying our impact is important for our organisation. In October, after extensive discussions, we launched our Theory of Change for the organisation, which redefined a unifying goal that applies to all our audiences, parents or professional, policymakers or partners, that is “More positive actions are taken to ensure children are safe and well online”



New Digital Matters module

Released for Anti-Bullying Week 2023, *Is it funny or is it hate?* explores how our words can hurt, even if they’re meant as jokes. In this lesson, children learn how to stop hate online and use words for kindness instead of hate.

December 2023 – March 2024

Festive Fortnight

Festive Fortnight

Our Christmas campaign focussed on tips to help parents get tech gifts 'set up safe' for children ahead of the big day, alongside a competition to win great prizes. With promotional support from our partners, we achieved significant website visits and new subscribers to our newsletter.



DEC
23

JAN
24



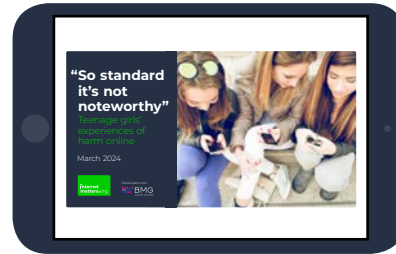
Children's Wellbeing in a Digital World: Year Three Index Report 2024

The latest annual report in our Digital Wellbeing Programme continues to show a rich picture of both the positive and negative impacts of technology on children's lives. In welcome news, the index scores suggest that children are benefitting more from digital technology than in the previous year – but it remains the case that two-thirds of young people report experiencing harm online.



Ofcom – Taking Care Online

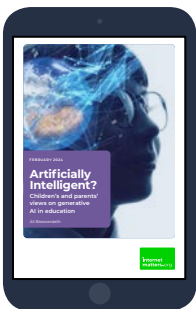
Dynamic media literacy and online safety training webinars tailored for professionals supporting care experience young people in care homes. The CPD certified training course was designed to equip front line workers with the skills and confidence to help guide children and young people in their care through the digital world.



“So standard it’s not noteworthy”: Teenage girls’ experiences of harm online

This research builds upon our Digital Wellbeing Index data with a deep-dive on the experiences of teenage girls aged 13-16. Through interviews with girls and parents, we found that whilst girls experience benefits from being online, their experiences are often marred by harassment and abuse from boys and men, and that this is becoming normalised within some families..

FEB
24



Artificially Intelligent? Children’s and parents’ views on generative AI in education

This report on generative AI and education highlights the integration of AI like ChatGPT into curricula for innovative teaching methods, while concerns arise about misinformation and declining critical thinking skills. As artificial intelligence evolves, so too will people’s relationships with it, undoubtedly impacting education, presenting both opportunities and challenges to children, parents, and schools.

MAR
24



Three join as a partner

Three re-joined Internet Matters as a partner in 2024. Their vision is to drive better connectivity and a commitment to take on the responsibility to help their customers feel safe online. This year we will collaborate with Three on upcoming campaigns to drive mass awareness and spread the message of online safety.

Working with others

Expert Advisory Panel

We would like to thank all the members of our Expert Advisory Panel, who provide us with invaluable guidance and expertise on various aspects of online safety and digital wellbeing for children and young people. Several of our members have been part of the EAP since its inception in 2014, and we are particularly grateful to them for their ongoing support.

This year, we have also been delighted to welcome Jessica Edwards, Senior Policy Advisor at Barnardo's.



Alison Preston,
*Making Sense of Media
Programme Lead, Ofcom*



John Carr, OBE,
Online Safety Expert



Jonathan Baggaley,
*Chief Executive,
PSHE Association*



Mark Griffiths,
*Professor of Behavioural Addiction,
Nottingham University*



Martha Evans,
*Director,
Anti-Bullying Alliance*



Dr. Simon P Hammond,
*Applied Psychologist and Lecturer in
Education, University of East Anglia*



Professor Victoria Nash,
*Director, Associate Professor,
Senior Policy Fellow
Oxford Internet Institute*



Will Gardner, OBE,
*CEO, Childnet
International/UK SICC*



Jessica Edwards,
*Senior Policy Adviser - Childhood
Harms, Barnardo's*

Thanks to contributors to the website and experts that have supported various projects

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- Sacha Lazimi (*Yubo*)
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- Rich Burn
- Becky Patel (*Tech She Can*)
- Rebecca Kantar (*Roblox*)
- Ibrahim Ajibade
- Ilona Brannen
- Kat Dixon

Looking forward

Having compiled this review of the impact of the first ten years of Internet Matters I have nothing but pride for all of the great work the people of our organisation have achieved, none of which would have been possible without the support of all of our generous partners. Internet Matters will always be a unique organisation that has collaboration at its heart.

The next ten years promise to be perhaps more challenging than the last. As technology evolves at an ever-increasing pace, we continue to play catch up, and the need for an organisation like Internet Matters only increases. In the next year we will focus on yet more emerging challenges that families are grappling with, offering our support, advice and guidance.

With much ongoing debate about bans of smartphones and social media, we will be helping parents and teachers to prepare primary school pupils transitioning to secondary school with everything they need to be ready and knowledgeable about how to use smartphones safely. A large part of this programme will focus on the risk of dangerous challenges online. Working with the mothers of Archie Battersbee and Isaac Kenevan, we will be raising awareness through sharing their personal stories.

We will also be able to share the outputs of our partnership with Roblox where we have undertaken research with neurodivergent young people, particularly those with autism. This has informed a new insight report about neurodivergent children's complex relationship with online gaming. This insight will be used to

produce new resources to help young people talk about their online experiences with the important adults in their lives and teach them the skills to set up and manage their online gaming activity.

Our research programme continues as ever, with a fourth Digital Wellbeing Index planned for the new year, however in the interim we will be looking at the rising challenge of deep fake technology, particularly around nudes. This continues an important strand of our work looking at the challenges that girls in particular face online. We'll also be looking at how effective reporting and blocking is understood and used by children and their parents.

As we pass this major milestone of ten years, I wanted to extend my thanks to all of our industry and third sector partners whose support has given us the platform from which we have built. I'd like to thank every member of the team at Internet Matters, both past and present, and finally I'd like to thank John Petter (previously BT), Baroness Dido Harding (previously TalkTalk), Stephen van Rooyen (previously Sky) and Tom Mockridge (previously Virgin Media) for having the strength of commitment to set aside their competitive natures to come together to create Internet Matters.

Carolyn Bunting, MBE
Co-CEO, Internet Matters



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